



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Tuesday, October 22, 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
Tuesday, October 22, 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: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Anti-Poverty fundraisers Patrick Jackson and Richard Lawrence

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to some incredible local supporters of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition: Patrick Jackson and Richard Lawrence and Bennie the dog.

This fall, all three undertook a 200-kilometre walk to raise money for the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's Voices Influencing Change group. A walk of the Nahanni Range Road from Tuchtua to the Tungsten mine in the Northwest Territories is a journey very few, if any, have been ambitious enough to undertake. But for Patrick Jackson, a veteran of long, miserable walks for important causes, the journey was worth the destination. In 2021, Patrick walked the Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle to raise \$13,000 for the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. The following year, he made the trek from Dawson to Whitehorse, raising almost \$25,000. How he managed to convince the seemingly rational Richard Lawrence into accompanying him for the adventure, we may never know. We know that Bennie the dog simply had no choice.

Over the course of almost two weeks, the trio marched on the unsupported journey on the traditional territory of the Kaska Nation through sections of alder forest swarming with mosquitoes into open valleys and up over the treacherous, snow-covered Nahanni Pass. Though a difficult first few days that tested the patience, endurance, and sheer will of all three, they continued. On their longest day on the road, they covered 27 kilometres.

Their goal was to raise \$15,000. Each day, as Patrick, Richard, and Bennie walked the hard-packed earth, their donations grew, and each day they grew closer to Summit Pass, a dangerous section of narrow switchback roads covered in snow. As I understand it, Patrick and Richard were so focused on their goal that they walked right up over the pass without realizing it, until the road started to go downhill.

After 12 days and over 200 kilometres, the trio surpassed their fundraising goals and raised \$16,000 for the Yukon Anti-

Poverty Coalition. This money will go directly to Voices Influencing Change — an incredible group of individuals with lived experience of homelessness, poverty, and other forms of social exclusion. This work makes the Yukon a better place.

Patrick and Richard represent two outstanding Yukoners whose humility, perseverance, and action remind us that everyone can make a difference in this world, no matter who you are. Their dedication and commitment during this walk inspired Yukoners to make a difference and engage them in their fundraising efforts.

Thank you to Patrick, Richard, and, of course, Bennie for inspiring us to support our community in making the difference.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Patrick Jackson and Richard Lawrence.

On August 31, 2024, the duo embarked on the 200-kilometre walk along the Nahanni Range Road to raise money for the Anti-Poverty Coalition's Voices Influencing Change program and the Connects program.

The Voices Influencing Change program began in 2017 as a safe and inclusive space for participants to receive leadership training and advocacy opportunities and peer support. The walkers raised money to contribute to the homeless and vulnerable population and to help their community.

A veteran walker, in 2021, Patrick walked 405 kilometres along the Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle, raising \$13,000. In 2022, he walked 525 kilometres from Dawson City to Whitehorse, raising \$25,000. His partner that trip was Butters, a friend's Australian shepherd who thought Butters needed a good walk.

On the 200-kilometre Nahanni Range Road walk, Patrick was joined by Richard Lawrence, and it was Richard's first long-distance walk in Yukon. Another one to be recognized is Bennie, a shelter pup who was found on the side of the road. What a champ he became. With love and care, he overcame so much to become a protector and a champion walker.

Neither Patrick nor Richard are strangers to this House. Most of us know them as the "fixers of all things technology" related to our offices. They are part of a team that keeps our systems moving and our machines working.

I think that, as they work at their daily jobs fixing, they are dreaming of the next open road and adventure they will embark on. I for one would love to hear about some of the encounters and stories from these trips, because I imagine there are a few.

So, thank you for all you do, Patrick and Richard. Your journeys have uplifted so many.

Applause

MLA Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to thank and celebrate Patrick, Richard, and Bennie for their 2024 fundraising walk to raise money for Voices Influencing Change.

Voices Influencing Change is an advocacy and support group of people with lived experience of homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion. Its members know all too well

how often decisions are made about poverty and homelessness without participation from the people who will be most affected.

Voices Influencing Change aims to change this by building and creating spaces where the voices of people with lived experience are respected and amplified. Last spring, they released a booklet called *Voices Influencing Change: Our Story*, which is a wonderful read, and I encourage everyone in this House to read it.

This brings me back to Patrick, Richard, and Bennie. Early in September, they set out on a 200-kilometre walk along the Nahanni Range Road. Patrick is well known for his long-distance walks raising money for the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and its projects. This year, he was joined by first-time walker Richard Lawrence and their friend and companion, Bennie the dog, who I think we can all agree is a very, very good boy.

Walking that far is not an easy undertaking. They went entire days when they saw no more than a single car. They finished on time and surpassed their fundraising goal. They raised an astounding \$16,000 for Voices Influencing Change.

I can't think of a better example of walking the walk when it comes to commitment to social justice. When speaking on the radio, Patrick said that it's amazing to see what the road can do. I would like to say that it's amazing to see what Yukoners like them can do when it comes to taking care of each other.

So, congratulations to Patrick, Richard, and Bennie on their successful journey and fundraising. Thank you for your commitment to your community, and I hope you've had some well-deserved rest.

Applause

In recognition of Poverty and Homelessness Accountability Week

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and the Safe at Home Society.

Poverty and homelessness should concern us all, Mr. Speaker, because it speaks to the health of our communities. Organizations such as the Anti-Poverty Coalition are highly aware of this and work to raise awareness and encourage an end to both in the Yukon through a range of actions and initiatives. One of the most positive and successful initiatives is called Whitehorse Connects.

Whitehorse Connects literally connects guests — homeless Yukoners, those living in poverty — with service providers who offer things that we all take for granted — things such as haircuts, flu shots, tax preparation, vet services, and much, much more.

Whitehorse Connects is conducted on three days each year and relies on numerous volunteers, so we celebrate them too for coming together and demonstrating the care that we have for each other in this community. The next one will be held tomorrow, October 23, and will be from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.

I also would like to pay tribute to the Safe at Home Society, Mr. Speaker. Safe at Home is conducting this year's point-in-

time count today, and this is an indicator of homelessness. We know that last year's count indicated that 197 individuals did not have stable housing. This is in addition to the unknown number of Yukoners who couch surf, live out of their vans, stay with friends, leave the territory, or make another plan due to their inability to secure housing. It's a timely reminder that the renovation work that Safe at Home has undertaken with the former High Country Inn is indeed both meaningful and much needed. When the Hearth, as it's known, does reopen, it will provide 67 supportive housing units and the potential to transform countless lives with critical supports that provide safety, dignity, and opportunities for growth.

I am also pleased to acknowledge that the Safe at Home Society will begin operating a 17-unit supportive housing program in the upcoming weeks at 408 Alexander Street. This initiative will offer secure, supervised housing and focus on enhancing tenant supports and strengthening community well-being and safety.

Thank you to all of our guests who have joined us today for their incredibly important work. Their tireless advocacy, initiatives, and meaningful work contribute to a healthier society. Mr. Speaker, we ask so much of our non-governmental organizations. They provide such amazing care and services to our communities. We can all help magnify their efforts by providing support, be it time, money, or skills, and help contribute to a healthy, more caring community.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition ahead of their Whitehorse Connects event, which brings together community members and service providers three times a year for access to services and entertainment.

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, held by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition each year since 2005, takes place this week under a new handle: "Poverty and Homelessness Accountability Week".

Poverty and homelessness are interconnected social issues. Coming from a developing country, I know poverty. It refers to the lack of sufficient income or resources to meet basic needs, such as food, shelter, health care, and education.

It often leads to homelessness when individuals or families are unable to afford housing. The affordability crisis that we are currently facing has left many individuals without the means to afford necessities like rent or mortgage payments. In Yukon, the cost of housing has risen faster than wages, making it difficult for low-income families to secure stable living conditions.

This week is designed to raise awareness of issues such as poverty and homelessness and aims to take action to address them. In a world where the most vulnerable often go unseen, Whitehorse Connects stands as a beacon of compassion and action. Whitehorse Connects is one of many actions that is community growth and volunteer based. Through the tireless efforts of its volunteers, staff, and community partners — thank you for being a source of strength. Your work uplifts not just individuals but the spirit of an entire community.

It was started in October 2008 as a part of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week and brings together businesses, non-profits and other organizations, and volunteers to offer information, services, goods, and refreshments to those who have a need and wish to participate.

Whitehorse Connects is more than just a charity; it is a family, a support system, and a bridge to hope. For many of our vulnerable community members, health and human services are not easily accessible throughout the year. Tomorrow, visitors can expect to find a range of services available, including haircuts, legal services, veterinary services, tax preparation, and so much more.

Thank you to all who volunteer your time and your services for our community. This has been an incredibly successful initiative and it is truly wonderful to see people coming together for such a good cause.

Salamat po.
Applause

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Whitehorse Connects and Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. The theme of this year's Poverty and Homelessness Action Week is "Accountability for Action".

Kristina Craig, the executive director of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, said it beautifully — quote: "Poverty and homelessness are not just issues of scarcity — they are issues of equality and human dignity ... We need concrete actions, not just commitments, to address the systemic inequities found in the Yukon."

As part of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, there will be an actions for accountability rally on Friday where everyone can come and share their ideas for action from the Yukon government.

On Wednesday, Whitehorse Connects will also be happening. Whitehorse Connects is a pillar of compassion, community, and advocacy. Through Whitehorse Connects, the Anti-Poverty Coalition fosters a space where everyone is welcome regardless of their circumstances. Connects offers connection, care, and respect to individuals who may otherwise feel isolated. Whether it is providing warm meals, clothing, essential services, or simply a listening ear, they create a community of inclusivity and kindness.

This initiative exemplifies the power of unity and collective action in building a more just and compassionate Yukon. Whitehorse Connects shows the best parts of our community. It's about support and dignity for everyone. One of my favourite features of Connects is the portraits offered by Gary and Brienne Bremner. The portraits by the Bremners are incredible, but what is truly precious are people's reactions to these photos.

To truly understand the impact of Whitehorse Connects, you have to see it in person. Its impact over the years is immeasurable, and it happens because of the hard work and generosity of many people.

We thank everyone involved with Whitehorse Connects and Poverty and Homelessness Action Week: the staff at the

Anti-Poverty Coalition, the volunteer coordinators and helpers, and all of the people who donate their services and time. Our community is a better place because of the work you do.

Mahsi' cho.
Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House remembers the service and sacrifice of Corporal Nathan Cirillo on the 10th anniversary of his tragic death while standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates Ruth Massie on her election as chief and Michelle Telep on her election as deputy chief of the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates Premier-designate Susan Holt, the first female Premier in New Brunswick's history, on her majority win.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to congratulate Premier-designate Susan Holt of New Brunswick for joining every other provincial or territorial Premier, except Yukon, in opposing the Liberal carbon tax.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to commemorate the anniversary of the terrorist attack on Parliament Hill and the death of Corporal Nathan Cirillo by lowering the flags at the Jim Smith Building to half-mast on October 22 of each year.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to require winter tires on all Government of Yukon fleet vehicles from October 1 to April 30.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to issue a statement rejecting the privatization of health care infrastructure and cancel RFP 2024-9-3932.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Health care infrastructure

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has spent eight years neglecting the needs of Yukon hospitals. Over six-and-a-half years ago, Yukon hospitals provided the Liberal government with a plan to upgrade the OR area at Whitehorse General and add space for more beds. The Whitehorse General Hospital surgical services renewal project was dated January 2018. The Liberals have never allowed the public to see it. When I asked about it in April, the minister claimed not to be aware of it despite the fact that the Yukon Medical Association called it an urgent priority during the 2021 election.

Why is the Liberal government hiding this 2018 hospital expansion proposal from the public? Will the Premier finally agree to release it immediately?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I guarantee you: Yukon government's not hiding anything. The Yukon government has needed to obtain the report from the Whitehorse General Hospital and the Hospital Corporation. I can also indicate that the Whitehorse General Hospital, through the support of the Yukon government, has enabled the Hospital Corporation to increase capacity to perform surgeries in addressing that crucial need for timely and accessible health care here in the territory.

Using core funding that's provided for in budget 2024-25, we have worked to add staff and to extend surgical hours at Whitehorse recently, optimizing operations to support a projected 4,400 surgeries this year alone. This is designed to shorten wait times and to improve Yukoners' ability to receive critical care in a timely fashion here at home.

Mr. Cathers: Yesterday, the minister of health admitted that investment in health infrastructure — quote: "... is absolutely desperately needed and has been ignored for a long time — too long." Mr. Speaker, she is right. For the past eight years, the Liberal government has ignored Yukon Hospital Corporation's plea for more money. Even an independent report by Ernst & Young confirmed years of chronic underfunding of our hospitals under this Liberal government.

Yesterday, we learned that the Premier's solution to this will be a P3 model to privatize Yukon hospitals. Why is the Liberal government even considering privatizing all or parts of Yukon hospitals?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the only people talking about privatizing any kind of health care here in the territory is the opposition. It is completely and utterly false information.

Yukoners need to know that we are working hard to improve our health care system on the basis of what is in *Putting People First*, on the basis of what we have heard from Yukoners, and I think our record over the last eight years very much stands to show exactly what that might be.

The budgets that have increased Yukon Hospital Corporation funding year over year have not been supported by

the opposition, and that is simply not acceptable to Yukon citizens. We work to meet the funding needs from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and, year over year, we provide funding through core and additional transfer payment agreements with the hospital.

I can also confirm that, in 2025-25, the first supplementary estimate has budgeted \$120.8 million for Yukon Hospital Corporation services as well as \$8.7 million for capital expenditures. This is an increase that has shown our dedication to the hospital and shown that we are dedicated to providing services to Yukoners at our Yukon —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cathers: Instead of supporting Yukon Hospital Corporation's 2018 plan to add more OR capacity and more beds at the Whitehorse hospital, the Liberal government chose not to invest in needed hospital infrastructure. This Liberal government sat on the plan for expanding the hospital for over six and a half years. The current health crisis is the result of years of Liberal neglect.

Now the Premier wants to use it as an excuse for privatization of our hospitals. The Premier himself talked yesterday about P3s for — quote: new infrastructure with the Yukon Hospital Corporation. He also talked about it for nursing stations and made it clear that he's looking at partnerships for companies to own health infrastructure. Our hospitals should be owned by the Yukon government, and the Premier has no mandate to privatize them.

Will he abandon the Liberal plan to privatize hospital infrastructure and admit that it was a mistake to even consider it?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, what would be a mistake is to not consider every possible option to provide the best possible service to Yukoners. Since 2018-19, we have increased the Yukon Hospital Corporation's O&M funding from \$68.2 million to \$120.8 million, which represents an overall increase of 77.2 percent.

While most funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation is provided through the Yukon hospital services O&M and capital budgets, additional funding is provided through other channels as well. We have proved our dedication to providing services that Yukoners need at our Yukon hospitals. We have stated repeatedly and proved our commitment with action.

Question re: Health care system

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Premier told local media and the Legislative Assembly that he had received a letter from Dr. Alex Kmet, the president of the Yukon Medical Association, that — quote: "... pointed to the success of the Northwest Territories government in building the new hospital in Yellowknife, which is exactly that — a public/private partnership." He went on to the media scrum and told reporters that Dr. Kmet wrote a letter that spoke in very favourable terms about the hospital in Yellowknife and the P3 model used in its construction.

Mr. Speaker, the only letter that we have seen from Dr. Kmet that has anything to do with the NWT is his support for that territory's new family medicine residency program.

Can the Premier please table this letter that he has supposedly received from Dr. Kmet that he referenced yesterday that expresses the support of the YMA for a public/private partnership at the hospital?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive health system review — and Health and Social Services — maintains 54 specialized buildings and facilities, such as long-term care homes, group homes, clinics, immunization clinics, health centres, and others. In consultation with the Yukon Medical Association and Yukon Hospital Corporation, we released an RFP for a comprehensive health infrastructure review.

The RFP closed on October 17, 2024, and evaluation is ongoing. The RFP does not call for privatization of health care infrastructure or health care services. Let's be clear: The RFP does not call for what the opposition is saying it is calling for. That is incorrect information that is being given to Yukoners and does them a disservice.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, after his performance yesterday, I am not surprised that the Premier is benched today, but I encourage the minister of health to listen very closely to the question that I am asking, because I am asking about the letter that he referenced — the Premier referenced — yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear about this as well. Yesterday, the Premier clearly claimed to reference a letter that he said he got from the president of the YMA that allegedly supported a P3 model used in the construction of Stanton hospital in Yellowknife. This is strange to us, Mr. Speaker, because the only letter that we have seen from the YMA that makes any reference to the NWT at all is their letter expressing support for the new family medicine residency program and speaks nothing about Stanton hospital.

So, will the Premier agree to table this letter that he said he has received from the YMA about the NWT hospital, or will he admit that he just made it up?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, the intention of the review that I have been talking about is to provide critical information to guide territory-wide infrastructure investment and upgrades, including some hospital improvements, over a 30-year period. A 30-year strategy plan will ensure that services and facilities are available when they are needed and can be well-maintained as our population grows and can grow with the needs of the community. This is a plan like has never been done before in Health and Social Services or by any government with respect to looking forward at health infrastructure. It is not what was done by the members of the opposition when they decided to build two hospitals — in Dawson City and in Watson Lake. It is not what was done by them when they were considering building hospitals at all.

The scope of the report is intended to be a comprehensive look at all infrastructure needs, including the Yukon Hospital Corporation, which operates, of course, three acute care hospitals — infrastructure needs operated by the Department of Health and Social Services and others.

I look forward to the work that is being done and a report that will come.

Mr. Dixon: While the information provided by the minister is interesting, it is certainly not anything to do with the question that I have asked. I have asked directly a question of the Premier because he referenced what he called a letter from the YMA yesterday. He was very clear; he said it right here in the Legislature.

He got a letter, he said, from the YMA that pointed to the success of the Northwest Territories government in building the new hospital in Yellowknife, which is exactly that — a public/private partnership.

This is important, Mr. Speaker, because this was one of the main justifications that he gave yesterday when asked why on Earth he was considering any privatization or P3 at the hospital. He said it was because the YMA told him it was a good idea. Now we have learned that the YMA never actually said that.

So, will the Premier admit that he made that up and apologize to the YMA for putting words in their mouth?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that Yukoners have the correct information about the scope of the work that is being done to look at health care infrastructure as we go forward here in the territory.

The RFP sets out objectives to provide a better picture of the territory's actual health system, including determining if there are target areas to explore alternative procurement approaches when possible. Considering partnerships of all kinds — whether P3, among other models — we must consider chapter 22 of the Yukon First Nation indigenous governments and the responsibilities that exist under chapter 22. Procurement approaches are not a central component of the RFP, but the intent and the objective are to set out expectations for a fulsome report exploring all procurement pathways so that decision-makers are fully informed.

Let's be clear: The opposition is talking about privatization. We have an obligation to Yukoners to explore all options fully, including bearing out the challenges associated with different options. We must gather all the information and assess it to determine what would be the best route forward, not something that the opposition is in favour of doing.

Question re: Health care system

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Premier about this government's interest in privatizing our health care system. The Premier told media that he trusted public servants to come up with the best options for best practices.

While I fail to believe that interest in public/private partnerships came out of thin air without any involvement from the Liberals, I do agree that we should trust our public servants and I think he should take his own advice.

This government should trust teachers — public servants — when they come to the bargaining table, but instead we've seen these public servants publicly shamed by this government.

The government should trust our nursing home attendants, lab techs, social workers, and nurse practitioners when they tell us that they aren't being valued for the work that they do.

So now I ask the Premier: Is he willing to listen and, more importantly, to act when public servants say that they don't feel valued?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There was a lot in the preamble and then, of course, the rest of the question. I think it's talking in general about the relationship around organized labour and the Yukon government. What I will say is, yes, we absolutely — although the opposition wants to put wedges in those relationships, we have two very important roles.

The first important role is to make sure that we do support and respect folks who are working within the Yukon government, whether they are nurses who work in health care, teachers — we are all affected by those individuals every day. When things get really bad, they are the people we go to, to look after us. They are the individuals who are teaching our children. Absolutely, we walk with respect to all those individuals, but we also have an obligation, which is the courageous conversations when it comes to the negotiations of collective agreements, because every day, we walk in here and opposition on both sides ask for more, more, more — and then at least one in the opposition says: Don't spend, spend, spend. So, everybody in the media hears it; every Yukoner hears it every day. So, we have an obligation to look at what is happening — cross-jurisdictionally, across the country — and make sure that we respect our organized labour, but we also have an obligation to negotiate in good faith on behalf of all Yukoners.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, no one is putting bigger wedges in the way of progress than this government. The Premier told the House yesterday that his government was looking at public/private partnerships because they were — and I quote: “Respecting the comments made by the doctors in our community...”

Last April, the Yukon Medical Association released survey results showing that only seven percent of Yukon doctors feel supported and valued by the current government, so I find it hard to match what doctors are saying about feeling hurt and unsupported with what the Premier is saying about listening.

Since 2018, doctors have been telling this government that the hospital cannot keep up with just two operating rooms. This government has waited six years to even begin looking at options to expand infrastructure, yet the Premier seems to expect that Yukoners will believe that the Liberals are listening to doctors.

When is the Premier going to actually start respecting comments made by doctors?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely respect comments made by the Yukon Medical Association. My meetings with the Yukon Medical Association, I think, have been solid meetings. I think they have always put forward strong concepts. We've talked about in those meetings with their entire executive — at our last meeting — the need for increased infrastructure when it comes to operating infrastructure. That's the reason as well, this spring, that we kicked off the process that the minister clearly delineated today in her answers to the questions.

But there are two or three things that the member opposite touched on. It was: Do we respect doctors? Absolutely — and I want to thank the Yukon Medical Association for inviting me to speak at their annual general meeting this year. I will

absolutely accept that and be there with the minister, and I thank you for that opportunity in my role.

Secondly, I think what was shocking today is that we also have an obligation to look at self-government agreements, and we have an obligation to respect chapter 22. For the NDP today to get the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin to get up and make that comment without clearly understanding that this is also about making sure that chapter 22 is considered in any infrastructure that the Yukon government did — I think there was a lack of thinking in that.

Again, we will look at our self-government agreements. We are always going to look to work with First Nation governments and, of course, we respect the doctors of the Yukon.

Ms. White: We heard a lot from the Premier yesterday about listening to best practices and about valuing our public servants, and we believe that we should do both of those things. One of the best ways we can value our public servants is to protect them at work, and we can do that by following the best practices that most other Canadian jurisdictions have taken up and who provide presumptive cancer coverage to wildland firefighters.

Today, I have a letter for tabling from wildland firefighters asking for presumptive cancer coverage. So, I can't imagine a better example of valuing our public servants than listening to and protecting the wildland firefighters themselves, who risk their lives to protect us.

So, can the Premier explain why this government won't listen to wildland firefighters or best practices and provide presumptive cancer coverage for them?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy — sounds like a new question to me, Mr. Speaker, but I will answer it, for sure, because it's an important subject. Really, what we're talking about in this government is preventing workplace disease and preventing workplace injuries — and that's really where we're going to have to start.

I have said from the get-out that we are tracking the research to see which cancers wildland firefighters are exposed to so that we can actually look at what preventive measures we can take to make sure that these individuals do not get sick. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to prevent illness and injury, because by the time a person is sick, it's too late. I want to make sure that we put our flag in the sand of prevention, and if we can prevent those illnesses, then families and workers are better off.

So, I am doing the research to see what cancers wildland firefighters are exposed to in the territory. I committed to do that; we're still doing that. I am also looking at ways to prevent illness and injury at the front end, and that is also work that is ongoing. I'm going to continue throughout my term in this role.

Question re: Dawson City community funding and support

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday, residents of Dawson heard the Premier try to explain away the concerns that the outgoing mayor has raised about the erosion of services that support Dawson residents and the business community. What was not

answered was the actual question the outgoing mayor asked, so I will put it to the minister now: What is the Yukon government doing to help residents, businesses, and organizations restore and/or retain important services in Dawson?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Right out of the gate, I want to thank the outgoing Dawson mayor, Bill Kendrick, for his letter, which my office received mere hours after the results of the election on Thursday night. The questions asked in the former mayor's letter are important and one we're always happy to discuss with the municipal leadership at any point.

We have had, with Dawson and with most mayors, actually — with all mayors in the territory — an open and robust conversation. My phone number has been given to each and every mayor and councillor in the territory to call me on any issue at any time, and I just gave my number to the new incoming Mayor of Whitehorse. I have started that whole relationship-building as well.

The bottom line is that I regularly communicate with municipal leadership to have conversations about how Yukon government is providing assistance to our communities. These conversations are a two-way conversation and one that I hope we can continue with the re-elected and newly elected officials in each of the Yukon's municipalities, especially in Dawson City.

Ms. Van Bibber: While he listed a number of specific concerns, the outgoing mayor also raised a point that we continue to hear from rural residents across the Yukon. Here's what Mayor Kendrick said — and I quote: "Services that were once more present in our community appear to be more and more centralized in Whitehorse."

Why is the Liberal government centralizing so many government services in Whitehorse, and why aren't they doing more to help grow our rural communities?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I think that there has been this line of questioning, specifically from the Member for Porter Creek North, over the last two weeks, so I will be quick. Maybe this an opportunity for the member to clarify something for the House. I have heard over and over again from the member that we have cut funding to the chamber in Dawson, and that is not factual. That is not factual. There was \$15,000 that was requested that we provided to help with the preparation for the Gold Show about a year ago, and that was because the money that ran the chamber was always from the Gold Show. They also received \$100,000 of federal money to help them with a strategic plan.

I am just going to leave it there, because I think that this is the tip of the iceberg in all of this narrative. Could maybe the member opposite, for the third question, also just let us know which funding has been cut? Because there has actually been no funding cut — even though that has been repeated for two weeks in the House.

Question re: Whistle Bend development

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear concerns about traffic in Whistle Bend, particularly traffic in and around the new school area. In the original development agreement for the school, the Yukon government was required to install

pedestrian-controlled signals at the intersection of Casca, Olive May Way, and Aksala prior to the school opening. If this was a commitment of the development agreement to build the school, why wasn't this done?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand and speak about our commitment to new infrastructure within education. I am very pleased and excited that we have opened the first new Whitehorse elementary school in over 20 years in the neighbourhood of Whistle Bend in Whitehorse. Whistle Bend Elementary School opened its doors in August 2024. I think that folks have come out, and I did see the member who is posing the questions today at the initial open house and maybe even the day of the opening of the school.

I know that the member opposite is very aware of the campaigns that we had going during the opening of the school year to remind people that we actually have a new school open, which is brand new — a new school zone. Certainly, a lot of work was done, from the administration side in the Department of Education, to talk about traffic safety and to remind citizens of the new school. Certainly, I will continue to build on the answer as we go forward.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows, this has been an issue raised by the school council and the school community as a whole. While most people appreciate that there are crossing guards as an interim solution, this is not what was originally promised. When I asked the city about this in August, I was told that the pedestrian-controlled signals would be installed by October.

Can the minister tell my constituents the new timeline for this work?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, active transportation and infrastructure, of course, is an important component of reducing emissions and fostering healthy communities.

In the discussions that I've had with the Member for Porter Creek Centre over the course of the last year and a half or two years with respect to the development of Whistle Bend school, there is certainly now the benefit that there is a local school where one would anticipate that a number of the students can bicycle, they can walk, and they can get to their school without straining the internal combustion engine infrastructure in the Whistle Bend area.

The new Whistle Bend school has been constructed to accommodate children riding bikes in front of the school and with the trails behind the school integrating into the Whistle Bend trail system to allow students to actively commute to school. We know that the student count right now is in the 300 range or so. I admit that the Minister of Education would have better numbers than me, but the capacity is 425 students eventually in this purpose-built, fantastic structure, and certainly I provide kudos to Ketz Construction and all of the subcontractors for their great work on this school.

Mr. Speaker, we are installing traffic lights this fall on Olive May Way and Casca Boulevard —

Speaker: Order, please.

Question re: Extended producer responsibility

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, last week, we asked the Minister of Community Services about the new EPR program, and he asked us to ask the Minister of Environment. So, yesterday, I asked the Minister of Environment and he said that he didn't know. I'm hoping he has been briefed up now and can respond to the question I asked.

We have learned that at least one organization is collecting fees for materials under the new EPR program. Can the minister tell us why this is, when he confirmed yesterday that the program isn't intended to be implemented until next year?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question from the member opposite and for the indulgence to familiarize myself with this specific circumstance.

The producer responsibility organization Interchange Recycling began charging environmental handling charges, also known as EHCs, to its Yukon members on July 1, 2024 for hazardous products, including lubricating oil, antifreeze, oil filters, diesel exhaust fluid, and automotive containers. The fee charged by Interchange Recycling is not set or regulated by the Government of Yukon. It is a result of businesses working with businesses in the private sector and the agreement between Interchange Recycling and their members.

As a condition of membership with Interchange Recycling, businesses are required to remit an environmental handling charge fee. This is true for their membership in British Columbia as well as in the Yukon. Interchange Recycling has decided to charge its Yukon members the environmental handling charge fees to assist with the development of the stewardship plan, not just implementation.

The Government of Yukon is not collecting the fees and Interchange Recycling was not expected to consult with the government on the environmental handling charge fees.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, it looks like the third time is the charm. We got some sort of an answer there.

So, according to the website of Interchange Recycling, they are a pro under the Yukon EPR system. They also say that all organizations or suppliers doing business in the Yukon are asked to register with them so that they can start collecting fees on several different products.

So, this is for the minister: Can the minister tell us if those fees have been approved by the Yukon government? If so, where does that money go and who is responsible for tracking it?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the question from the member opposite, but respectfully, I did just answer that question.

Interchange Recycling has decided to charge its Yukon members the environmental handling charge fees to assist with the development of the stewardship plan, not just implementation.

The Government of Yukon is not collecting the fees. Interchange Recycling was not expected to consult with the government on the EHC fees. Communication about the fee would have come directly from Interchange Recycling to their membership and not from the Government of Yukon.

EPR, as I indicated yesterday, will be implemented in the Yukon for hazardous products once Interchange Recycling's stewardship plan is approved, which is anticipated for 2025.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, so, that is news to all the businesses that we heard from. Can the minister tell us how it was communicated to Yukon businesses that this organization was going to start collecting fees from them? Why did they need to learn this today in the Legislature instead of from the government outreach?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the third time is the charm.

This is a result of businesses working with businesses in the private sector. This is an agreement between Interchange Recycling and their members. As a condition of membership with Interchange Recycling, businesses are required to remit an EHC fee. This is true for their membership in British Columbia as well as in the Yukon.

Interchange Recycling has decided to charge its Yukon members the EHC fees to assist with the development of the stewardship plan, not just implementation. The Government of Yukon is not collecting the fees and Interchange Recycling was not expected to consult with government on the EHC fees. Communication about the fee would have come directly from Interchange Recycling to their membership and not from the Government of Yukon.

As I indicated in my prior response, EPR will be implemented in the Yukon for hazardous products once Interchange Recycling's stewardship plan is approved, which is anticipated for 2025. I thank all parties, including all the private businesses, for their ongoing work on the implementation of this stewardship plan.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 23, 2024. It is Bill No. 308, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 23, 2024. They are Motion for the Production of Papers No. 30, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, and Motion No. 378, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

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. 40, entitled *Act to amend the Clean Energy 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: Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 40: *Act to amend the Clean Energy Act (2024)*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 40, entitled *Act to amend the Clean Energy Act (2024)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, to begin with, I would like to welcome, from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Deputy Minister Paul Moore and the director of the Energy branch, Shane Andre. I appreciate them being here today to help us to provide information about the amendments that are being proposed today for the *Clean Energy Act*.

In 2022, the *Clean Energy Act* came in. I am just looking back in time to try to understand, but I thought that we were one of the early adopters of that. I have since learned that there are a few provinces, and more on coming on board, where they are introducing an act like the *Clean Energy Act*. It is something that allows us to have accountability and information exchange around commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We brought in the main act in 2022, but there are still pieces in it that we want to update, and today we are considering one of those updates, and it is around mining-intensity targets. Overall, this is about greenhouse gas reduction targets, and we need to make sure that all sectors of our economy play a part in reducing our collective greenhouse gas emissions.

I just want to give a shout-out to the mining sector. I thought that it was going to be difficult getting them on board with this, but I think — I will say that I think they look at this issue of climate change and — well, it is not universal; not everyone agrees with how we are approaching it, but they want to make sure that they are protecting the environment, and they understand that this is important. I think that it also aligns with trying to reduce waste, period. So, whenever we have use of diesel or other fossil fuels that we can reduce, this is great news generally.

Legislating this target under the *Clean Energy Act* will help promote action, transparency, and accountability by requiring

the government to track and publicly report on planned or existing actions as well as results achieved. An intensity-based target is the best approach to help the mining industry drive its emissions down, regardless of how many mines are in operation or not.

In developing the target, we asked Yukon First Nations, Yukon environmental organizations, the mining industry — of course — and the public for input on options for a mining-intensity target back in 2022. We heard a range of views that informed the target that we have in front of us today.

We let the industry know about it and the public — I think late in 2023, the Minister of Environment and I announced it at one of the *Our Clean Future* updates. I would just like to thank everyone — the folks from the department, the folks from industry — on preparing the mining-intensity target and getting us to this point where we bring it forward here under an amendment to the *Clean Energy Act* and to their commitment to reducing emissions.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I look forward to questions in debate today.

Mr. Kent: I thank the officials for being present here today to support the minister as we get into some questions during Committee of the Whole. I also want to thank them for the briefing on the act that we had a week or so ago — and just also recognize and thank the minister for the letter that he sent to me and the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King, dated yesterday, that includes some responses to the briefing that we received on the *Clean Energy Act*.

During my time here this afternoon, I'll be looking for some updates on where we're at overall with the *Clean Energy Act* and then, of course, drill down a little bit on the mining-intensity targets and what exactly they are going to mean for the industry and as a whole.

In the letter in response to the briefing that the minister sent us yesterday, on page 3 of that document — that is where the *Clean Energy Act* amendments' briefing material is. It says that the proposed mining-intensity target approach will be the first of its kind in Canada. So, I'm just curious if the minister can tell us why the government decided to take this approach and what jurisdiction, if any, they have modelled this approach after when it comes to greenhouse gas emission reductions for the mining industry.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, here in Canada, the federal government now has an equivalent of the *Clean Energy Act*, and so does British Columbia, Manitoba, Québec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Some of those are pretty new. None of them have used an intensity-based target. None of them have separated that out.

We do have other examples that are similar in Canada — for example, the output-based pricing system. I'm just going to refer to it as the OBPS. For folks following along, it's just a system that the federal government uses that uses a pricing model for emissions reduction, but it has intensity levels or thresholds built into it. If you're a different size of mine, for example, you'll fall into different categories of the output-based pricing system — the OBPS.

No one has taken that and turned around and put it into the equivalent of a clean energy act. So, intensity-based is not new and a clean energy act is not new. There are examples now — an increasing number of examples around the country, but putting the intensity-based into the *Clean Energy Act* is new.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify then, in that document that the minister sent us yesterday, it says, on page 3 — and I'll quote: "The proposed Mining Intensity Target approach will be the first of its kind in Canada."

So, I just want the minister to clarify his last statement that it's not new, because this document suggests that it is a brand new approach to how this will be undertaken within the country.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Intensity-based targets themselves alone are not new. I just gave an example of where they are used. The *Clean Energy Act* or its equivalent is not itself new, though it is fairly new. None of the clean energy acts that we can see in Canada have put intensity-based in them. That's what is new. This is the first time that one of these acts will include their intensity-based targets in those acts, so that accountability, transparency, and reporting — those sorts of things — is what will happen. We are tying it to this target as well. What's new is that this is the first intensity-based target that will come under a clean energy act.

Mr. Kent: The statement in here that the proposed mining-intensity-target approach will be the first of its kind in Canada — although it doesn't say in the document that we were provided yesterday, the minister is saying then that the mining-intensity target exists; it just doesn't exist in legislative form or in a clean energy act — is that what the minister is telling us?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I was just talking about the output-based pricing system — the OBPS. That is national in nature and has application here in the Yukon. That is an intensity-based type of pricing mechanism. It is a way to bring down emissions with an intensity-based element to it, and the mining sector can be subject to it depending on the size of the mine that we're talking about. I think it exists as well in British Columbia.

What is new and what we were referencing in the note back to the members opposite was that this is the first time where that target will be legislated as a commitment that the government is working to meet.

Mr. Kent: You know, the minister will hopefully forgive me for the confusion here, because the letter says that the mining-intensity-target approach will be the first of its kind in Canada.

The minister talked about the output-based pricing system — I think he called it — the OBPS. Can he tell us how that differs from the mining-industry target? He referenced in his previous answer that there is an application — I believe a current application — in the Yukon. Can he give us an example of how those OBPSs are applied here now?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm going to do my best to answer this question. I'm also going to just flag that there is someone from the Department of Finance who is the expert on the output-based pricing system, so I am hopeful that they are listening and will let me know if I get anything wrong. If I do, I will do my best to get back to the members opposite.

First of all, the member asked how the output-based pricing system works in terms of intensity. So, for many products — industrial sort of systems — they will be on intensity, which means that there is a certain threshold for the amount of emissions for — let's say — gold. There is an amount of gold produced and then there is an expectation of emissions around that. If your emissions are higher than that, then you will be paying into the output-based pricing system. So, it is a pricing system — hence the name.

The intensity part of it is around various products, but it isn't just to do with mining; it has to do with many industrial processes. Then there is another threshold which is sort of this range that says: If you are a certain size — or think of it as ounces of gold produced or you can think of it as greenhouse gas emissions — there is a certain range in which an industrial activity has an opportunity to opt in to the output-based-pricing system, and then there is a threshold in which they are now required. So, once they are a certain size, they have to be part of it; that is a federal system. The pricing system is designed, yet again, to work to help reduce emissions over time.

I am not sure if I have answered the questions for the member opposite. It is an intensity-based system.

I think the question that the member asked was: How does it apply to the Yukon? If we had, for example, some large factory here that was producing something, then they might be subject to it — what I am guessing is something like a car manufacturer or something like that. That is not very typical for us. The place where we have the potential to come into the output-based pricing system is with mining, and I think that Victoria Gold was getting very close to that upper threshold where it would have to go into it. This was before the slide happened, of course. That is sort of the example that we know of here in the territory where there would be involvement in the in the output-based pricing system.

Mr. Kent: Just to be clear then, there is no current application in the Yukon. That is what I thought I heard the minister say — that there was an application in the Yukon for the OBPS — and then he referenced some similar applications in — I think in British Columbia is what he mentioned. I'm just wanting him to clarify for us where in British Columbia the OBPS would be applicable so that we can look into getting a sense for how that works and then how that differs from what we are talking about here with respect to mining-intensity targets.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My understanding is that recently Victoria Gold had crossed the threshold where it would be obligated to begin its part in the output-based pricing system — the federal system. I don't think they had been in it for a year yet and I had not heard any reporting under that, so let's say they were entering the output-based pricing system.

So, it does have application here in the Yukon and, of course, Victoria Gold — there was an opportunity, if they wished, to have entered into the output-based pricing system. There are upsides and downsides to that choice, and they had been, for a couple of years, in that intermediate ground where they had the option to choose to be part of it or not. But I believe

that they had just crossed the threshold where they now were required to be part of it.

In British Columbia, they have their own output-based pricing system. I am not overly familiar with it. I'm pretty sure that it has to align with the federal system, but it would be similar in nature in that it is a pricing system and that there is an intensity-based target within it, but I don't have that specific information.

I know that here the Department of Finance has been working on the federal system in looking at how it would apply to industrial operations here in the Yukon. Victoria Gold was the first that would have been part of the output-based pricing system.

Mr. Kent: So, can the minister tell us what that threshold is? Is it based on absolute emissions for — I guess we used Victoria Gold and the Eagle Mine project as the example. Is it based on their absolute emissions on when they will meet that threshold? What is the threshold where the OBPS would kick in?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The thresholds for the output-based pricing system for jurisdictions where the federal carbon-pricing backstop applies is, if you're between 10,000 tonnes annually of greenhouse gas emissions to 50,000 tonnes annually of greenhouse gas emissions, then there is the option to be in the system. If you are over 50,000 tonnes, then it would be required that you are a part of it.

Mr. Kent: So, those are based on absolute emissions and the Eagle Mine was approaching the 50,000-tonne threshold. Am I correct?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We're checking to make sure, but our recollection is that Victoria Gold was over that threshold now, and so it was entering into the output-based pricing system or would have been very shortly. We're checking on the tense of our verbs here to try to make sure it's right. But they were close; let's say that.

The intensity part of this is not in the thresholds about where the output-based pricing system comes in. It's rather what the level of emissions per unit of product — it's in the pricing system where the intensity-based side of this lives.

Mr. Kent: So, in the opposition briefing document that we received during the briefing — so, I'm just moving over to a different document — it says that the intensity-based approach differs from the absolute emissions approach taken with the *Clean Energy Act's* 45-percent greenhouse gas emissions reduction target by 2030.

That was obviously in the bill that we debated a couple of years ago. It goes on to say that while an intensity-based approach measures emissions per unit of production or economic output, an absolute emissions approach focuses on reducing the total quantity of greenhouse gas emissions.

So, the absolute emissions approach is something that I think most Yukoners would be able to understand, but the intensity-based approach, measuring emissions per unit of production or economic output — can the minister explain that for us, what exactly that means? Is it based on an ounce of gold, an ounce of silver, or a pound of copper? Is that the unit of

production that it's based on? What exactly is meant by "economic output"?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The Department of Finance was just letting me know that Victoria Gold wasn't quite there in their emissions yet — there was anticipation that Victoria Gold would be there; that's just in those earlier questions.

What's an intensity-based target? Let's just start with that high level of what the point of this is. The Yukon has been subject to periods of time when there's a lot of mining, and then there have also been periods of time when there has been very little mining. When you set an absolute target, what has happened twice that I know of here in the Yukon is that the government of the day stood up and said that they had reached their emissions reductions targets because mining stopped. Then they said: Yes, we did it; we got our emissions down — but that was never what was trying to happen. If what you do is you give an absolute target, I have seen twice now when the territorial government has indicated that they reduced emissions when really what happened was mining slowed down or stopped.

So, you want to make sure — the reason why we go for an intensity-based target is to follow that trend. If there is more mining — just a reminder, when we are talking about mining, some of the minerals that we are getting, many of the minerals — not gold, but many of the minerals that we are getting are going to be incredibly important — critical — in order to make the transition away from fossil fuels.

You need mining in the first place for some things, but if what you do is — those mines as they come on or, in other cases, even the remediation of mines comes on and they swamp your system, because they are just so much bigger than your population is, you will be out of whack. So, the solution is to get to an intensity-based target. Really, the way for Yukoners to think of it is: more mining happening, then you have to have a percentage of that mining reducing its emissions all of the time. This is that intermediate target that is being set for 2035. There is another target that is set for 2050, which is zero emissions, and then it doesn't matter whether it's intensity or absolute, because at that point, zero is zero.

Okay, how do you actually do that? How do you — what does an intensity-based target — you usually talk about not just whether you have more mines but: What is the output of those mines? What is their level of activity? You can think of it as an ounce of gold, but when the team has been working in the background, they would argue that it's probably easier to work with other measures and start to make them more universal, like the amount of ore that you have to move around — the tonnes of rock you move. You want to be careful that you don't create some sort of unit of productivity that someone would start to claim that they're doing more things, but no one in the mining industry wants to move any more rock than they have to. So, there are ways to get back, but you can think of it — or Yukoners should think of it — as the productivity of this group of mines.

If we have more mines or fewer mines, then the emissions target goes up with more mines and reduces down with fewer

mines, but it keeps us honest about working to reduce emissions over time.

Mr. Kent: The minister mentions specifically gold and then other commodities that may be critical minerals. Is there a difference between how the intensity targets will apply to projects that mine critical minerals versus projects that mine gold or precious metals?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, there is a difference in that copper and zinc are different from gold, but it is not a difference in that — there isn't a number that says: okay, you get a different target, because you are a critical mine, or you get a different target, because you are a precious minerals mine. The targets are based on the production of those mines and their size, effectively. We are always working to try to make it as simple for the industry — and for our own transparency or data collection reasons, to just make it as simple as possible.

There is nothing that would differ the mining-intensity target based on whether they are mining for critical minerals or whether they are mining for precious metals or whether it is a blend, but what is different is that copper has a different density than gold. In the work that the department has done, they feel that the best proxy for both of those is going to be around the tonnes of ore moved, and that is likely to be the baseline for the intensity that is used.

Mr. Kent: The minister brought up critical minerals and gold or precious metals, so that is why I asked if there was going to be a difference. From what I understand, he is suggesting that there won't be any difference — the intensity targets will be applied evenly based on per unit of production or economic output.

In that document that the minister sent to opposition members yesterday, again, on page 3, it says — quote: “With respect to how the emissions intensity will be calculated and what the Government of Yukon will report on, details of how the emissions intensity will be calculated and reported on are still being developed and would be finalized if/when the legislation is passed.”

I am just curious why that work wasn't done prior to the legislation arriving here on the floor — that the minister and his colleagues are asking us to vote in favour or against this legislation without knowing exactly how the emissions intensities are going to be calculated. I am just wondering why he brought the legislation forward prior to providing details of how those calculations will be done.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I keep getting additional information from colleagues at the Department of Finance, so I am just going to keep sharing that.

In 2022, Victoria Gold decided to opt into the output-based pricing system. They hadn't yet crossed the threshold for the mandatory level. 2023 would have been their first year of submitting data.

Typically, when it comes to emissions, your submission lags by a bit. So, if it's 2023 data that — I'm not even sure whether they had submitted data yet. I would have to check, but this would have been to the federal output-based pricing system.

Okay, next, the member asked about how we are calculating the intensity piece. I think there is a general understanding that it is the size of the mine that matters. We've always understood that, and I think that the industry has recognized that.

Then how the calculation is based is the team at the Energy branch has done all of this work. I have been describing some of it to colleagues today around using proxies that are equivalents. There were more questions I found around the intensity piece that had to do with things like the Faro mine clean-up and remediation, but we continue to make sure that dialogue is happening with the industry.

Finally, like the member opposite is suggesting: Why bring this legislation forward here today, because shouldn't we have all of those details ironed out? Well, the member opposite has already said that he is not voting for this, so it's an interesting comment. It's almost like a suggestion that he would vote for it if this were in place — I don't think so. So, you know, even the conversation around this — that declaration was made at second reading and the vote happened, but you know, those pieces about how the intensity-based target or the productivity is calculated and how it is compared doesn't change the principle of what we are doing here. The principle is that we need to set an interim target. That target needs to be significant, considering that we are heading toward a target of zero for 2050 and that it is — you need to provide that clear direction to the industry so that it can have the time to change its business practices to get toward lower emissions and then zero emissions ultimately.

So, it is important to put these things in place and to show the government's commitment to them. That is what this really is today, that we are committing to it. I understand from the Official Opposition that they are not interested in this. That is their prerogative. Groan or not, this has been an argument throughout, so it is important that we put in place these obligations to government to work with industry to reduce these emissions over time, and that's the important factor here.

Mr. Kent: So, in the opposition briefing document, it says that the proposed bill to amend the *Clean Energy Act* would set in legislation an intensity-based greenhouse gas emissions reduction for the mining sector for 2035 and subsequent years.

So, we know that the goal is 45-percent intensity reduction by 2035. However, in the letter that the minister sent us yesterday, he did say details of how the emissions intensity will be calculated and reported on are still being developed and won't be finalized until after the legislation is passed, if indeed it does pass the Legislature.

So, I don't understand why that work wasn't done prior to the legislation coming here. The main point of the legislation, as communicated to us by the government, is to set in legislation an intensity-based emissions reduction for the mining sector, but we have no idea how that is going to be calculated.

So, can the minister explain this to me — how this sequence works and how Yukoners should be confident that

we're expected to pass legislation without any idea on how the emissions intensity is going to be calculated at this point?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To suggest that the member opposite has no idea when, for the past 20 minutes or so, I have been describing it is kind of a bit of a stretch.

We pass legislation in this House often, and that legislation has regulations that are coming. It feels like the same argument: We don't know what those regulations are going to say, so we shouldn't pass this act. Come on. The opposition has a goal to criticize and to challenge and, in some ways, to seek to not support the movement of legislation.

I will ask the department officials what timelines look like, and when I get back up, I will share what that looks like, but it will not change this number — this 45 percent by 2035. It will not change the principle that we understand that mines have different sizes. I have often used the analogy to suggest that, if we were doing this for grocery stores, we could compare Superstore to the Independent to Super A to Riverside, and we could see that they are all different sizes, and we would just base it on the amount of food that is being sold.

But you have actually got to get in there and figure out the difference between a banana and a loaf of bread, so that is what we are talking about here — is how to make those different calculations. We will continue to work with the industry around — and I will get an answer on timeline in a second.

Mr. Kent: So, our job as Official Opposition is to hold the government accountable. We have a piece of legislation in front of us that is designed to set in legislation an intensity-based greenhouse gas emissions reduction for the mining sector for 2035 and subsequent years. The minister and his colleagues have already done that. They set — in 2023, the mining intensity target was set at 45-percent intensity reduction by 2035, according to a government news release, but they have no details. Perhaps the minister, when he is on his feet next, will give us some idea of when this will come in, but I think back to the fall of 2021 when we passed the *Lands Act* for resource road regulations — a regulation that the minister at the time promised would be ready in the spring, and here we are three years later, and that regulation still is not complete.

The minister will forgive me if I have trouble taking him at his word. I mean, we have only got essentially 10 years to reach this target, and the minister and his colleagues can't tell us how the emissions intensity will be calculated at this point. Again, I can point to several examples where the minister has missed deadlines. We looked at the Beaver River land use plan, for instance. That was supposed to be ready in 2020, and here we are coming up on five years later in March, and still nothing there.

That said, I am going to move on to another set of questions with respect to this proposed legislation. In that document provided to opposition members yesterday, it says — quote: "Regarding penalties for not meeting the proposed mining intensity target, as drafted the legislative amendments do not contemplate penalties for not meeting this proposed industry standard. In this way it is consistent with all other targets included in the *Clean Energy Act*." Obviously, there are no penalties for not meeting this target in 10 years.

The one question that I did want to ask the minister is with respect to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board process — the YESAA process. Will it be illegal for the YESAA process, in their recommendations, to include intensity targets when they are doing their assessments, either of smaller-scale placer mines or some of the larger mines? Because if those recommendations go forward to the decision bodies and the decision bodies include them in their decision document, the water use license and the appropriate mining licences will not be able to deviate from that decision document.

I just want to get that sense from the minister as to how these intensity targets work with respect to YESAA, given that the minister has told us — and it is in the legislation — that there are no penalties for not meeting the proposed intensity targets.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Several points — the member opposite began talking about timelines that are pushed out, and I freely acknowledge that there are those, but those delays are unfortunate. Where they are my responsibility, I will try to own them. Resource road regulations are an example where I know that the department has been working very hard to get those in, but they are still on the way. We did the work ahead of time which led to those coming, and I still disagree that we should have not done the work ahead of time to enable the resource road regulations; I think that they are important. Yes, they are delayed.

Earlier this year, the team at the Energy branch had hired a consultant to do some of the work around the productivity measures around it. We published that report; it's called the "ERM report". I will get hold of it for the members opposite, but it was shared with industry and it was shared publicly. I will seek to table that report for the members.

I can tell you that what that report says is that the best form of determining the size of the mine and its productivity is dirt moved — so, ore moved around. That is what they recommend as the unit of measure to determine the size of the mine. Then when it comes to remediation, it gets a little bit more complicated, so I think it's going to come down to things like dirt moved and water treated. That's what that report is suggesting and that's how we are working with industry, and our intention will be to land on that next year, as I have already indicated. This is about the way in which we measure the size of a mine.

The member asked about the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board and their work. What I will say is that YESAB makes recommendations and the decision bodies make the decisions. Those come back to the government to take those decisions. What our approach has been is not to penalize any sector. We're talking about mining today, but, of course, there are many sectors — the tourism sector, the agriculture sector, and we have all sorts of sectors of our economy. With all them, we have worked to find solutions and worked together as Yukoners to reduce our emissions over time. That's what we will continue to do.

Mr. Kent: Just to understand that then, with respect to any YESAB recommendations, the decision bodies, when

developing the decision documents, will reject or vary any recommendations that include intensity targets for mining.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When I was first elected 12 years ago to city council, I was told about this principle where you're supposed to not — it's about the power of future governments. A future government can, of course, make their own determinations and decisions, so I will talk about our government.

Of course, what they could also do is take the *Clean Energy Act* and rescind it. A future government could do that, but when they do that, they would have to stand up in this Assembly and, in front of Yukoners, explain why they are withdrawing all of that. That's the point. When we bring this and put it in place, it's to make it hard for us — those of us here in this Assembly, the place where we pass laws — to just ignore this issue of climate change.

It's an incredibly difficult issue, because the emissions that we put out today are going to impact for generations to come. In fact, the emissions from a decade and more ago are the things that we feel today. It's preloading into the climate. So, it's important that we put in place these pieces.

I think the member asked about what would go into the permits and things like that. Currently, where I would look is not the *Clean Energy Act*. Where I would look is in new minerals legislation. Well, our current legislation — which I just want to acknowledge — is way, way out of date by a century or so. So, it's a great thing that we are working to update that legislation. I have not heard from the table that's working on new minerals legislation anything about this, but that's the place where you would look to have the conversation about what we need to do with licensing and permitting.

Mr. Kent: So, for the minister, if a company has entered YESAB and is looking for a permit to operate either a hard rock mine or to renew a licence for a placer mine, if the YESAB recommendations say that — I mean, we have these *Clean Energy Act* amendments that will be passed, and the minister has been clear to us in a letter sent yesterday that the legislative amendments do not contemplate penalties for not meeting this proposed industry standard, similar to the original act passed that said that all targets in the *Clean Energy Act* are also not subject to any penalties if they're not met.

But, again, I think something that could penalize either a placer mine or a hard rock mine is if the YESA board includes in their recommendations a plan for the company to come up with how they are going to meet these 45-percent reductions by 2035 as set out in the legislation.

So, all I'm looking for is some clarity from the minister with respect to how that will be handled.

So, will the decision bodies reject or vary any recommendations that say that a company has to adhere to this? I guess, then, for a small placer mine or a hard rock mine, do they then have to include in their YESAA process some sort of plan to meet these emission reduction targets even though there are no penalties for not meeting them, as the legislation is written? Will there be conversations with YESAB to not ask for this, because it is something that is not supposed to include any penalties?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Okay, a couple of points, Madam Chair. The first one is that the *Clean Energy Act* came in two years ago. It was my birthday two years ago; I remember — it was a good day. Since then, I have not seen anything come through YESAB for any of the applications that have dealt with land development, agriculture, or forestry. I have never seen anything that has come to us around the *Clean Energy Act*. Could it have? The member opposite seems to be concerned that it could, but it has not. I have stood up and said — and he has said as well — that this is not about penalties; this is about setting in place a responsibility for government and future governments to work to achieve this — and for good reason. We have all of these serious, serious problems that we are facing — impacts to our world — that we need to deal with this problem.

The one thing that we have contemplated is that we would request companies to share information with us about fuel use so that we can report back as we aggregate that data. That is the one thing that we have asked of them or that would make a change. Other than that, we are working to incent this, because we see it as good for the environment and good for their bottom line if we can help them to move off of fossil fuels.

This is not about penalties. We don't anticipate issues with YESAB. I am always happy for departments to have conversations, but we don't see the concern that the member opposite is raising, but out of an abundance of caution, I will make sure that I ask the Energy branch to check in with YESAB.

Mr. Kent: Thank you; I appreciate that from the minister.

I did want to ask about establishing the baselines. Maybe the minister could explain a little about what the baselines will be for these intensity targets. Again, in the opposition briefing notes, it says, "Establishing multiple baselines for the mining sector (e.g. one each for quartz and placer, or for individual quartz mines and post-production sites) enables the government to increase transparency within a sector under one overall sectoral target."

I'm just curious about how the baselines are going to be established or if they are established now. If they are established, can the minister tell us what they are?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The way that the work is being done is to — sorry; just one second, Madam Chair.

What the team has been doing is taking a look at past data, and I want to thank the industry for sharing as much information as they could with us. The way that I have asked the department to do it is to sort of look over a decade and see what emissions have been like at different times and then to try to come up with averages. A few points that I will make and share with members opposite — or Yukoners, I guess —

The first one is that some of the data that we wanted to get access to we don't have access to, and this act will enable this — or this amendment to the act — sorry — will enable that. So, there is some financial data that the Department of Finance has but which we are not able to utilize, because it would not be within the rules, and this act will enable that — or this bill — sorry — would enable it and the amendments to the act.

Second of all, I want to acknowledge that there were instances — and we could see them with emissions and what was happening with mines — where a mine made the effort to connect to the grid. When that mine did that, what they were doing was investing in bringing in what is dominantly renewable energy — electrical energy — and offsetting their typically diesel generators on-site. So, that is the sort of thing that I think that we need to acknowledge that the mines have done in reducing their emissions. You don't want to set the baseline up after they had done that; you want to set the baseline up and acknowledge that — if they had not had done that or what it was before — in order to then say that is work that the mine did in order to reduce its emissions over time. Those are significant choices; they are significant investments, and they definitely resulted in reduced emissions. So, that is some of the work that is going into the baseline calculation.

Mr. Kent: Just to be clear then: The baselines have not been set for placer or quartz as of yet? If not, can the minister give us a time on when he expects that work to be done?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The work on the baseline is concurrent with the work on the production and intensity measures. So, they actually work hand-in-hand. So, they're still coming. Again, we've done a bunch of research. We've shared that information with the industry. We still are trying to get a little bit more data. The amendments today, if/when they pass, will get us access to that additional information that will help refine that.

There is a lot of work that has been done. I think the numbers come out sometime in 2025 — is the schedule.

Mr. Kent: So, can the minister just point to the section in the act that will authorize him to collect, use, and disclose information for the purpose of formulating or analyzing climate change policy and to administer enactments related to climate change?

That's from the explanatory note. If the minister can point us to the section of the act that allows him to do that, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, in the bill before us, it's section 8 and it's amending section 9 of the act. It's adding 9.01, "Collection, use and disclosure of information". So, it's 9.01(1): "The Minister may collect, either directly or indirectly, and use information, including personal information within the meaning of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as the Minister considers necessary for the following purposes..."

So, that's the section that the department is telling me would allow for the ability to collect the financial information that is already collected by the Department of Finance but would provide the access to it for use in this act.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

In a previous answer, the minister talked about the ability for a hard rock mine to connect to the grid when determining the baseline strategy. I'm just curious, then: What will be the opportunities for mines that are too far off the grid or it doesn't make economic sense for them? I think of the Kudz Ze Kayah mine, for instance. They are a substantial distance away from being able to connect to the grid. I think Faro would be the

closest that they would be able to connect to — the line carries on to Ross River — but to connect to a line that has the amount of energy that could pass to the company.

So, what is the minister recommending for a company like that — or how will the baseline be set? Because Kudz Ze Kayah is not yet developed. All indications are that any new mine coming on board will, from an economic and an environmental standpoint, seek to set the absolute gold standard when it comes to emissions and fuel use and that type of thing. What would a mine like that be expected to do to reduce their emissions below this 2023 baseline target that's referenced in the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, this is a target for mining as a whole of a sector. We will end up at times where we have mines that are farther away or closer to the grid, so those things will always make a difference. That is true right now.

For some of those mines that at one point seemed far away from the grid and then, because things changed — we grew or a transmission line went in — then suddenly those opportunities might arise. We will certainly work with every mine, first of all, to help them to reduce emissions. I think that I have said — and will continue to say — that those mines are keen to do that. They would love to not have to rely so heavily on, for example, diesel. It's a cost that continues to go up for them.

Here in the Yukon, we have this experience. We have communities that are off-grid — Old Crow, Watson Lake, Beaver Creek — and we have communities that are on our islanded grid, so we have different solutions that exist in those places, particularly because of that dependency on diesel. That makes a big difference.

The other thing that is important to understand is that some of the solutions that we are talking about will be universal in nature, so we will continue to work on those.

This is not about each and every mine having to hit the target. This is about the sector as a whole and it's about working with the sector to get to that target and being serious and committed to it. We will use the reality on the ground — whatever that is — with those mines. For example, if you have a mine that is in the planning stages, it is different from a mine that already exists. If you have a mine that is close to the grid, it's different from being farther away from the grid. So, these are all factors that will be taken into account.

Mr. Kent: On page 4 of the document that the minister sent to opposition members yesterday — I had asked a question, or perhaps it was my colleague who asked, about support for placer miners, because we know that they are off-grid, and the minister said that he sees their ongoing work with renewable fuels as a key opportunity to reduce emissions in the placer space and would also see other opportunities for off-grid camps such as solar and battery systems.

I'm just curious if the minister can tell us if he knows what the price difference is — we'll use diesel as the fuel, because that's what I believe is used in the majority of the placer operations — between regular diesel and renewable or biodiesel in the Yukon right now.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Yes, renewable diesel is exactly one of those things. It will make a significant difference to the emissions for the Yukon in our overall target and in the mining sector target — period. But you have to make sure that those renewable fuels are going to work.

Even though placer operations tend to be summer only, they are on the margins as well, and so you have to know that the fuel is going to work when they need to work. If we think of quartz mines, they are year-round and so you need a winter diesel or an Arctic diesel. Even if it is renewable — that's I guess my point. The reason that renewable fuels are better than traditional fossil fuels is because they produce less greenhouse gas emissions. They are chemically the same thing, but their origin is different. They use, for example, waste crops, waste wood, or waste oils. That supply chain is still in development, so it is difficult for me to talk about the prices yet, but it will matter on many things. For example, how big is the demand generally? How big is the supply generally? Those are the sorts of questions. That is still evolving.

The other thing that I will say is that diesel costs are expensive for mines — period — so this is one of the ways in which they are going to care about what those costs looks like. Also, if we are doing other things other than renewable fuels — for example, solar — typically, with renewables, you have to pay money up front to install things and then the energy costs over time are very low, so it is a different model completely than pay-as-you-go with fossil fuels. The types of solutions that we are talking about aren't always comparable, but when it comes to diesel to renewable diesel, the challenge right now is that we don't have the supply chain for the types of diesels that we think are going to be used here in the north. There is a renewable diesel being supplied right now, but most of it goes down to the Lower Mainland and it is what you would think of as a summer diesel.

Mr. Kent: So, if I understand it correctly, we don't even know if the renewable diesel will work in the Yukon. We don't have any baseline targets set yet, but the minister is working on them concurrently with the emission intensity targets that aren't set yet either.

I don't think I caught the answer to the question: What's the price difference between a litre of the traditional diesel versus a litre of renewable diesel here in the Yukon right now?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm asking the department to check in on the price difference of renewable diesel as it is sold down in the Lower Mainland against what the diesel is there. That will give us a sense of what that difference is for the renewable part of the diesel. I'm being told that, in Québec, the prices are very close between the renewable diesel and the diesel.

But, again, I want to be careful here that, for some of these operations, we definitely are not going to be using a summer diesel. I would have to talk to the placer operators to see whether they use a summer diesel or not and what those differences look like.

What we've intended to do is that, once the supply chains come online, we're going to do some testing. I suggested that we could work with the Yukon Energy Corporation to do some

testing in their diesel generation sets straight away to see what that difference looks like.

Anyway, I'll work to get the numbers for the members opposite.

Mr. Kent: I think earlier the minister referenced some reports. I think he called them "EDI". I just want to confirm that it's actually "ERM". Are those the reports that the minister was talking about? I have seen those documents.

The conclusion for the baseline study for the placer is that there has been an upward trend in emissions intensity from 0.51 — I'm going to say "units", because it's a longer acronym — units per ounce in 2009 to 0.81 units per ounce in 2019, largely driven by increases in diesel fuel used by placer miners. Just a couple of questions. The minister mentioned that renewable diesel would be much better than the diesel that is used right now. I just don't think I caught just what percentage of emissions would be gained from using renewable diesel. Also, if the minister could let us know when he would expect these tests to be done or research to be completed that would show that the renewable or biodiesel is something that we can use in a northern climate.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, first of all, I was wrong; I spoke wrong earlier when I said "EDI"; it is "ERM", and thank you to the member opposite for pointing that out.

Second of all, the emissions reduction — so, renewable diesel — we tend to do life-cycle cost accounting to try to look at emissions in how fossil fuel or, in this case, renewable diesel is produced. Roughly speaking, they are saying a 90-percent emissions reduction for that fuel. I still think that I would have to ground-truth that a little bit more, but that is the upfront. If you bring in renewable diesel and it's half, then you would get half of that 90-percent reduction, so that would be a 45-percent reduction. It matters what you are blending and how much you are using of one versus the other over time.

You know, the testing — I think that the other question was around timing of testing. I know that North 60 is hoping to be bringing some of this up. I think that they are thinking about next year, and I want to be careful, because I'm still trying to get information about supply chains and things like that. It has been a space that has been changing fairly quickly. There has been a lot of development in this space, so I'm uncertain about timelines, but I am confident that people are keen to get going with this.

Mr. Kent: I'm just hoping that the minister can clarify when this act will come into effect. Often, we will wait until regulations are done. The minister sort of compared the work being done on the emissions intensity to regulations. Then, of course, we don't have the baselines set yet, although the minister said that was being done concurrently with the work being done on developing the intensity targets. Obviously, there is still some work that I believe would be outside of that with respect to whether or not renewable diesel even works in the Yukon, so we have that as well.

Do these amendments come into force and effect, I guess — this act, does it come into full force and effect once it passes, or will we have time to wait for some of these outstanding issues to be dealt with?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My understanding is that the amendments to the *Clean Energy Act* would come in right away; they would be in force right away. That would get us the access to the data which we are looking for — the additional data — that we think would help to reinforce the work that has already begun and which has been published. We are not waiting for regulations to come in, in order for the amendments to the *Clean Energy Act* to come into force.

Mr. Kent: I want pivot a little bit now and just talk about the *Clean Energy Act* as a whole. Last year on December 20, 2023, which was only 11 days before the deadline that is in the legislation, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Environment tabled the 2022 annual report. I am just curious: When can we expect the 2023 annual report to be introduced or tabled in the House?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I believe that we are trying for next month.

Mr. Kent: Hopefully, it's before the House adjourns on November 21 so that we have a chance to potentially ask the minister some questions. I ask because the 2021 annual report was tabled in August of the year before, so waiting until December 20 didn't allow us to scrutinize the report during the Fall Sitting. Hopefully, the minister and his colleague can get that report to the floor of the House before we adjourn on November 21.

So, in that 2022 annual report, it said that, in 2021, I believe, greenhouse gas emissions, not including mining emissions, were one percent above 2010 levels and four percent above 2020 levels, which I think is an anomaly given the fact that it was at the start of the COVID pandemic.

So, does the minister have any idea what the numbers will be in the 2023 annual report? We have seen that uptick. We still have to reach 45-percent reduction below 2010 levels in essentially five years — by 2030 — not including mining. So, I'm just curious where we're at as we stand today.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member for the reminder about our desire to get that out before the end of this Sitting. I just had a quick conversation with my colleague the Minister of Environment, and we are working toward that end.

There are a couple of things that I will say about the emissions. First of all, let's talk about the plan that we have and all of the actions within the plan. A big shout-out to the folks in Environment and at the Energy branch — and many other departments, because I know, like, if it's HPW or whoever it is, there has been a lot of work. They really have been working hard on *Our Clean Future* and most of the actions are where we intend them to be. There is slippage here and there, but overall, it is an impressive amount of work, so just a shout-out to the public service around that.

Also, a reminder that the plan — when it was originally adopted, we went and got the buy-in from all municipalities and all First Nations. It was impressive.

In terms of emissions, where are we? We always anticipated that the types of actions we have, you initiate them and they have an impact over time. At the front end of that, you don't always see the starting edge of the emissions reductions, and there are other complications, such as coming out of

COVID, having such population growth, and having such an active economy — those things add to emissions at the same time that we're working to reduce them.

The thing that we have tracked, which is impressive to see, is that, when we look at emissions per person, they have been dropping. When we look at emissions per unit of our economy or GDP, they have been dropping. That is what we anticipated we would start to see, so that is the upside to all of this. We still anticipate that emissions will rise or not yet drop for another year or couple of years.

We have been talking about some of the actions that will make even bigger differences as we go forward, but the work on the actions early will have an impact over time. We will still see emissions — the overall absolute emissions not yet dropping but the strategy at work toward bending that curve.

Mr. Kent: I just want the minister to clarify, though: The legislation speaks to the overall emissions dropping; it's not per capita emissions or per economic unit emissions. The legislation speaks to parking mining off to the side to a 45-percent reduction by 2030. I just want to make sure that I'm correct.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, that is correct.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much. I'm glad that we clarified that. The minister has mentioned that for the next couple of years, we are going to see emissions continue to tick up — hopefully not dramatically, but we will continue to see non-mining emissions tick up.

There were a number of initiatives that both the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Environment released with that annual report last year. There were some new climate actions that they shared progress on. I'll use some of my remaining time here then to ask about some of those that are the responsibility of EMR.

The first one is: "By 2025 review the electric vehicle regulatory regime and create a regulatory roadmap for Yukon zero emissions vehicle legislation." Do we expect that legislation to be tabled in the spring, presuming that next year there is an abbreviated Fall Sitting with the potential for an election? I'm just wondering if the minister plans on having that Yukon zero-emissions vehicle legislation before the House in the spring.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, when it comes to electric vehicle sales, the shift is happening. Last year, I think electric vehicle sales in 2023 were six percent of the sales. This year, I think we're on track to over 10 percent. The numbers are still coming in, so it's close. In the last quarter, it was 12 percent, so it's increasing.

The Yukon still is the third-highest in the country after BC and Québec. I just have to say that's a super impressive thing.

So, we're meeting the targets that we had anticipated to meet. I'm not sure — I think the Energy branch is just reviewing to understand whether we need to use a legislative or regulatory approach, given that our incentives have been so successful to date.

I don't know, as of today, whether to anticipate things for 2025 on that action, but I just want to note that Yukoners have been significant early adopters.

Mr. Kent: So, I guess when the next annual report is tabled, perhaps this specific action will be updated with respect to the regulatory road map for vehicle legislation.

So, the minister mentioned, I believe, that six percent of new sales last year were EVs, 10 percent this year, and 12 percent in the last quarter. So, I'm just curious if he could give us what the overall number is. I know they set a very aggressive target of 4,500 EVs on the road by 2030. I'm just kind of curious where we are at with respect to that target set by the officials.

As we approach the 4:00 hour, this will be my final question prior to turning the floor over to my colleague from the New Democratic Party, but I just wanted to thank the officials for being here today to support the minister.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think that the question was: What are the number of zero-emission vehicles that we have registered in the Yukon? Currently, that number is 467, and that puts us where we want to be, on track for hitting our target for 2030.

I thank the member opposite for his questions.

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 before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 40, entitled *Act to amend the Clean Energy Act (2024)*.

Is there any further general debate?

MLA Tredger: I am very excited to be debating this legislation today. I want to start by thanking all the public servants who have worked to get it to this stage. I know that it is in some ways a very technical piece of legislation — or there are a lot of technical questions addressed in this legislation — and I know it has been a lot of work and questions to get to here, so I just want to say that I really appreciate that.

I am going to dive in with some specific questions about the legislation. The first question I have is — the minister has talked a lot about how one of the ways that mines might reduce their emissions is by connecting to the grid to use electricity. If a mine were to connect to the grid and use electricity, would the emissions involved in generating that electricity — for example, if it was winter and diesel was being used — would those emissions be associated with the mining target or with the more general Yukon target?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I want to apologize to the member, because I know that when I look at them, I'm going to have my back to the camera. I don't mean to do that, but I am appreciative of being able to see their face and to hear them speaking to me, and, of course, I'm speaking to you, Madam Chair — so anyway, apologies.

The answer is that the emissions will belong to the Yukon-wide target for the electricity, so it won't count as a mining sector target. The main rule that I've put out there for the team

is that you can't have any loopholes. Everything has to fall on one side or the other.

In this case, for simplicity's sake, it gets complicated if we put in the emissions accounting for the portion of the electricity that used fossil fuels over to the mine, because you need to know when those electrons are flowing and what was being used at the time. It is much easier, from an accounting perspective, to leave it with a Yukon-wide target.

MLA Tredger: Yes, I can appreciate that it would be quite difficult to account for electricity emissions in that way, but I am concerned that if a mine were to connect to the grid, it could have a pretty big impact on our ability to meet the territory-wide emissions target if there is suddenly such a high demand in electricity and if it was a situation where it was needing to be met with sources of electricity that do have a lot of emissions.

Can the minister comment on that?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will try to answer this a few ways. First of all, we need more new renewables on the grid — period. We have been growing, as I mentioned earlier — just population growth — but we have also been load-shifting. What that means is that people used to, when they built a home, put in an oil furnace or something like that. Now they put in electric baseboards for heat and we are seeing people buy more and more electric vehicles. So, you have two parts to this problem. The first one is that you move people and mines to electricity, and the next one is that you have to get more renewable generation online.

Overall, we anticipate that we need to double the grid over the coming decades. I don't have an exact number, and it matters how quickly we grow or don't, how quickly we adopt electric vehicles or not — those sorts of things. But that's what needs to happen.

It's also true that one of our best places for getting to renewables is our electricity grid. I know that Yukoners will often hear about the challenges that we have around this question, but it still has more possible solutions than other approaches do. That's why we still believe that it's still pretty important to electrify as much as possible.

The last thing I will say is that, depending on the mine or the type of mining, there can be a big difference. Normally, here in the Yukon, our energy demand goes way up in the winter and is low in the summer. With mining, it tends to be more consistent across the year — or certainly with quartz mining, it's pretty even over the year typically, but I guess each mine might be quite different. Then with placer mining, there is definitely much more energy use in the summer, and they tend to shut down for the winter just because you can't dig that ground; it's just not feasible in the winter.

Their energy demand profile is very good against what we have here in the Yukon. The basic answer is: Yes, we think that it's important to electrify and we think that it's important to produce more renewables.

MLA Tredger: I completely agree that it is important to electrify.

One more question on this before I leave this topic — I do appreciate that it would be a difficult exercise to account for

how many emissions were created in the electricity that was used by mines based on time of year, time of day, and all of those things. Was there any thought given to, I guess, an accounting solution for this that might simplify it but still allow those emissions to, I guess, belong to the target to which they would be most correctly associated?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The accounting for emissions has technical challenges, but the main way in which we account for emissions for different fuels is not when they are combusted but rather when they are purchased. So, we know this fuel was purchased and we know what type of fuel it is. We understand what the typical emissions are for that type of fuel, whether that is Jet B or whether that is diesel or whether that is propane; they all have sort of an emissions profile.

The place where we've had the best ability to account for and measure those emissions has been through financial tracking. That turns out to be the way that it is done across the country and it's true here as well.

So, it would be very complicated to try to attribute that back into the mining sector targets. Our grid goes up and down over the years. The biggest factor that is changing it is, for example, how much rain happens in the Aishihik region, because that is when you get that electrical recharge or the stored energy for your electricity.

But overall, our electricity is roughly 90-percent renewables and roughly 10-percent fossil fuels. We're working to get that number up to consistently be, I think, at 93 percent. That is our goal.

But generally speaking, it's pretty good at being low emission compared to all the other forms of energy that we have around the territory.

So, from an accounting perspective, it's really done on fuel purchase and very complicated to try to start to attribute it in different directions to where those electrons flow. The most important point is that we have a target on both sides, so we're going to work to make sure that we're reducing those emissions on both sides.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. Yes, I don't have a good solution for the accounting and I suspect that he is right that this is the only really practical way to do it. I guess what I'm just asking is that, if this legislation passes and we move forward, we give some thought to what that could look like as the energy demand changes due to mining in a way that is captured under general territory emissions and how that could be thought about in a way that would make sense as we move toward our goals.

I want to change topics now. My colleague and the minister had quite a bit of back-and-forth about some of the complexity of the regulations that are needed to enact this legislation. I can see that there are lots of really thorny questions to answer and I know it will be a lot of work. I missed in the back-and-forth if there is a date that the minister is expecting that this legislation would be enacted and come into force.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, when the team was looking at this and trying to make sure which side the accounting should happen — for example, if a mine connects to the grid and brings on electricity, should the emissions

associated with that electricity go to them? As we looked at the problem, the practicality of it — it was a good word — just made the solution pretty straightforward.

The other thing I will mention is that, when we talk about mining, because it can be at times episodic in the territory — meaning that there can be times when a lot of mining can occur and times when mining might not occur — that is exactly why we chose to go with an intensity-based target, but it is also one of the reasons why we think that looking again at grid connect is important, and I will just make a few comments about grid connect. When I think about the Yukon and who we are as a territory, I would say that transportation has been pretty fundamental at shaping who we are, with the rivers, the rail, the airports, and eventually the roads. Those all had a very, very big impact on us. Lately, I have been thinking about telecommunications and how we are connected and how that makes a difference. I think that, in time, connecting our electricity grids will have a similar meaningful impact in shaping who we are as a territory. If you have a grid connect, then you can scale up or down pretty quickly, and it just makes that possible.

I still think that we are going to need lots of local renewable energy, regardless. I mean, grid connect isn't happening right away anyway, and eventually, if we have lots of renewable energy, I am sure that there is going to be an opportunity to sell that electricity.

On to the questions about regulations and when this comes into force. We are not anticipating the need for regulations for this bill and the *Clean Energy Act*. The act will have within it the ability to create regulations — for example, to improve things, to ratchet things up in the future — but we don't anticipate that they are needed. If the bill receives assent, then it will come into force right away; the amendments to the *Clean Energy Act* would come into force right away.

MLA Tredger: Where would things like the definitions of how the intensity targets are calculated and what the baselines are — where would those live if not in regulation?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The reporting requirements within the act would require us to begin to put that information out there following the assent of the bill and the amendment to the act. That would have to happen, because it's dictated to happen by the act. The work is underway, as I was describing earlier when I was answering questions from the Official Opposition.

So, these are — we're looking for the act to help us get access to some last pieces of information, but the responsibility to start providing that information is laid out in the act. It would require the government of the day to make sure to report back on all of this information, including the baselines and how we're heading toward or achieving the targets over time.

MLA Tredger: I believe the first mandatory report as laid out by the act would be for 2025. Is that when we would expect to see the details of how the targets would be calculated and what the baseline would be? It would be in that 2025 report?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There might be a bit of a difference in the first year where the reporting comes in.

Let's say that the reporting comes in — let's say that this bill passes here and we get assent, so it comes into force in 2024. The department would be required to report in 2025. Certainly, the baselines and targets would be part of that reporting that you would typically be reporting for the emissions of the previous year. So, in 2025, the report would come in. It would report on the 2024 emissions.

Just a reminder that we're still working to get at that last data — that this act would enable us to get at the last data.

I just have to check with the department about that reporting on the 2024 emissions from the industry — whether we would be able to get it all in place — but going forward, it would all be there. In 2025 for sure, we would have the baselines — all of that information — and possibly the 2024 emissions. By 2026, we certainly would have — well, the baselines don't change because they are set — and then you would have the previous year's emissions.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. I was actually just re-reading that section of the act while he was looking for information. I'm reading section 7 of the act to amend, which concerns section 9 of the original act. So, section 7(1)(b) would say that the minister has to report at least once in each year, beginning in 2025, the emissions intensity for the mining sector for the baseline year 2023 — which is what he just said — and subject to subsection (3) for the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is made and the benchmark units used to determine the emissions intensities.

In my reading of that, I know that subsection (3) says that if the information for the preceding year is not available, then I think that you have to do it the next year, but it would mean that the 2025 report would have to include the benchmark units used to determine the emissions intensities. Am I correct in understanding that the benchmark units used to determine the emissions intensities is the formula for how we calculate the intensity target or the intensity?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, the member opposite has it correct. I think that reading is correct. I will add a couple of things and hope to not confuse it, but we will be reporting on the baseline and how it was calculated. That will come next year. Our intent is to try to get the 2024 emissions data, but I just note that there may be some complications with that, because the department does not yet have all of that data. The passing of this act will help us to get the last of that data — so, just a little bit of uncertainty there.

The other thing worth noting is that, if I go to 7(1)(a)(i), it says, "... for the baseline year 2010..." I remember having this whole conversation with the drafting team about that language. What they explained to me — I said: We're not using a single year; we're using a decade of data. They agreed and understood and just explained to me that the way that gets written into the bill before us and how it will amend the act is that a baseline year of 2010 is meant to assume a range of years — or can be meant to assume a range of years.

Anyway, I agree with the member opposite. We will be reporting on all the information about how the baseline is calculated and what the baseline is, including the range of years

that were used to calculate it. We will do our best to report on the emissions of 202, barring unforeseen circumstances with the data we don't yet have in hand.

MLA Tredger: I think I feel clear on that section now, so thank you.

I have some other questions I want to ask that are specifically about individual lines, and we have already started to dive into that a little bit. If the minister would prefer that I wait and ask those questions in line-by-line, I can, but for now, I will ask them, and he can tell me if that would be easier.

I want to ask about section 5(2). In the original act — I'm just going to pull that up, because it's a little bit easier to not try to go from memory. One second, please. I'm cross-referencing three documents, and it's a little slower than I wish it was. In the original act, in section 5(2), it says that "The Commissioner in Executive Council may set a reduction target for total greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon, which may include mining sector emissions, for a year after 2030 that applies to that year and subsequent years."

My understanding is that section 5 of the *Act to amend the Clean Energy Act (2024)* replaces that in 5(2) with "... other than the mining sector". So, the mining sector could no longer be considered as part of the total greenhouse gas emissions of the Yukon.

I understand why the Liberals have made the choice to have separate mining targets from the rest of the targets for the Yukon currently. We have talked a lot about how I very much disagree with that choice, but I understand why they have made that choice right now.

I don't understand why they are taking away the ability of a future government or a future Commissioner to make that choice in the future. I am wondering if the minister can talk about that change.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My understanding of what is being done here — and I will just talk about it at a high level, and then we can always work at the specifics to make sure that they are achieving what the intent is — under the *Clean Energy Act* right now, we don't have the mining intensity targets in there at all. It is not in yet. We knew that we were working toward it. Once we go to amend the current *Clean Energy Act*, what we're doing is now adding in this whole section on mining intensity targets. Can a future government — so, that is what is happening under section 5 of the bill, amending section 6 of the act. It adds in the pieces talking about the mining intensity targets.

Can a future government come to this Assembly and amend the bill again to put — maybe we are down the road and we still have issues where we need to address them over time and it is the choice of the legislative assembly of the day to alter that legislation — absolutely. That is the whole point of the *Clean Energy Act*: It forces the government to come to the Assembly and to report on this information. If they wish to change the *Clean Energy Act*, they would need to come to this floor to do that work.

MLA Tredger: I have to apologize, because I did not actually give the correct numbers of what I was looking at the last time. So, let me clarify my question a little bit now that I have the right numbers beside each other.

So, I'm looking at section 3 of the bill before us, which amends section 5 of the original act. I apologize again for the confusion. So, section 3(2) replaces "which may include mining sector emissions" with "excluding mining sector emissions".

Then if you go look at section 5(2) in the original act, it says: "The Commissioner in Executive Council may set a reduction target for total greenhouse gas emissions in Yukon, which may include mining sector emissions, for a year after 2030..."

So, this is really contemplating that, once we get to 2030 and hopefully have met the targets that we have set out in the *Clean Energy Act* and any future targets we set out, the Commissioner — my understanding is — without coming back to the Legislature, could set additional targets. This amendment will change it so they could set additional targets but only for the rest of the Yukon — not for mining — and I believe it would have to come back to the Legislature to set mining targets.

So, I'm wondering why that change is made so that the Commissioner would only have the ability to set targets for the rest of the Yukon but would have to come back to the Legislature to set new targets for mining.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm just asking that we confirm with the drafters to be sure, because I just want to get that legal perspective on this.

But I will draw the member's attention ahead to section 4 of the bill and read down there, because we're adding in this new section 5.01 in the act called "Mining sector interim reduction targets". If I read under 5.01, get down to 5.01(3), and then go to (3)(a), there is the allowance for the government to establish emission intensity targets that improve beyond the current target.

The way I have always understood it is that you can't weaken it, but you can strengthen it. Anyway, I will just check in with the drafters about how that strengthening can happen, but I want to say that it is removed from where it is right now, but it is put right back in in that new section which talks all about the mining intensity targets and still allows for that ability to ratchet it up more.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. I am looking now at section 4 of the bill before us. What it says is that the minister may recommend to the Commissioner in Executive Council a number of things, which the minister has just outlined. The original act — the part that is being taken out — says that the Commissioner in Executive Council may set a reduction target. So, this is a legal question that I am hoping he can help me with. When it says that the minister may recommend to the Commissioner, does that automatically give them the power to set those targets? I guess I am wondering why, in the first one, it says specifically that the Commissioner can set those targets and in the second one, it just says that the minister can recommend that the Commissioner set those targets.

Chair: Can you hear us now, MLA Tredger?

MLA Tredger: No, I can't, not since the last time he stood up.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just go back to when I last stood, and if the member has missed anything, please just flag it for my attention.

Whenever the act refers to the Commissioner in Executive Council, I think we shouldn't say "Commissioner"; we should say "Commissioner in Executive Council", because that is Cabinet. So, the minister may recommend to Cabinet to bring forward, for example, an order-in-council or a regulation that would allow for further adding intensity targets. That is the clause that enables it, and it would be Cabinet that considers it on the recommendation of the minister.

MLA Tredger: Thank you, everyone.

I guess the part I'm still confused about is why, in the original act, it says that Cabinet can set this target and then in the second act, it just says that the minister can recommend to the Cabinet, but doesn't explicitly say that Cabinet can set the targets. Maybe that's not needed, and maybe it is somewhere else in the act that I haven't seen. I wonder if the minister can expand on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Our understanding was that this gives the authority to Cabinet to do so. We are just going to double-check with the drafter. When I'm back on my feet, if I have that answer, I will make sure to provide it here for the record, but that is the understanding that we were given: that this gives the authority to Cabinet to go further.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for that. I suspect that the drafter will have the best answer on that, so thank you for double-checking it. I am glad that's the intention.

I want to ask about the baselines that are set. A notable difference between the baselines for the rest of the Yukon and for the mining intensity target are the baseline years. So, for the rest of the Yukon, it's 2010, and as the minister has said, that actually represents a period of time, not a single year, leading up to 2010. Then for mining, it's the time from 2014 to 2023. I understand that is because there is just not specific enough data available about the 2010 time frame and what was happening in mining to use as an accurate baseline, and that makes sense.

I guess I'm wondering: In general, does the minister know about how emissions intensity has changed for the mining sector in the time frame from 2010 to 2023? Is it generally less efficient, more efficient, or has it stayed relatively constant?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm going to try to make several points, Madam Chair.

The first one is that the drafter did reach back to us to say yes, this still gives Cabinet authority, but the change in language around "the Minister makes a recommendation" is that there is an implication that the minister should engage with industry to check in with them about things — or engage with the public, I guess; it's not just industry. So, I think that there is a subtlety there, but the principle is still in place that Cabinet can put additional targets in place.

Second of all, when I was talking earlier about the clause about the baseline year, I referenced the wrong one. I was talking about 7(1)(a)(i) where it says: "... the baseline year 2010..." The director of the Energy branch pointed out to me that it was actually a clause a little further down under section (b), where it says: "... for the baseline year 2023..." That is the

one that the drafters explained to me is for the group of years — sorry that I got that wrong — but the principle is still the same: It is not a single year we are using, but it's a series of years.

The next thing that I will say is that, when we talked with the researchers who were looking at the emissions over time and then analyzing it toward a baseline, the further back you go with your data, the less relevant it is to what is happening on the ground today. Even though we might still get data that goes back beyond 2010, it starts to be less meaningful for what is happening with technologies, with practices — those sorts of things. So, the more recent data tends to be more relevant.

Another question was around whether emissions are going up or down.

Well, in some senses — for example, on the placer data that was published in that ERM report, it shows that the placer emissions have gone up. They have been trending upward, but in their analysis, they thought that had more to do with the price of gold. So, as the price of gold goes up, then operators would be willing to mine more on the margins where they don't get as much gold from the amount of rock that they move, so they need more energy to get to it, but because the price of gold is high, then they're willing to do it.

But the other thing that was super interesting across the data from placer mining is that there is a huge range on the energy efficiency of each of those mines, and it's not just related to how close they are to grid or not; it is much more related to their practices around moving dirt.

I remember several deputy ministers ago making this comment to me that, if we work with the industry to make their systems more efficient — for example, a placer miner whose surname is Hollis — and there is this invention that he had called the "Hollis hauler", and he has a better way to move dirt around that is just more efficient. That tends to end up costing him much less — or the use of much less fuel.

Finally, the trend that was there with quartz mining was downward. Its efficiency was improving, so that was good.

Then when you average out placer and quartz, because quartz has tended — but maybe not now with the closure of Victoria Gold — to dominate, the overall emissions were improving.

MLA Tredger: That was really interesting. Thank you to the minister for that. There was a lot of really interesting information in there.

I want to ask about section — let me just make sure I get my section numbers right this time — section 8 of the act before us, which is about sectoral agreements. Could the minister talk a little bit about what the intention of this is and how he imagines it might play out?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Madam Chair, I am just going to clarify to be sure. I am looking at section 6 of the bill, which is adding section 8.02 — is that — yes, okay — which is the sectoral agreements. The idea here is that, say that we want to work with industry and come up with arrangements on the side that are going to help improve everybody in meeting these targets — let's say, for example, zero-emission vehicle sales. Say that we want to have an additional agreement with industry

to help us achieve that. This is an enabling clause that would allow us to do more things that might be seen as beneficial to both parties — industry and the government — in achieving these goals. It is about keeping us onside should we see some opportunities to advance toward improving emissions reductions which weren't anticipated at first but may be realized later on through some collaborative work with the industry.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for clarifying which section I meant. Some of the items in this section that could be part of the agreement would be things like schedules for meeting targets and the baseline years. Would this only apply to sectors other than the mining industry, since those are already set out in this legislation? Or would it be possible for the minister to renegotiate those pieces with the mining industry? I guess the question is: Does this section have the ability to override the targets set out in other sections of the act?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The overall mining intensity targets can't be reduced through this. What can happen is that we could have cooperative agreements with industry where they may want to set their own targets and we work with them to achieve those. There might be cooperative work that we could help them get to those things, but they will not diminish the overall target that we have. They need to be working to help us to achieve that target or go beyond it.

MLA Tredger: Thank you to the minister for clarifying that.

The last topic I want to discuss is what I signalled in my second reading speech, which is the choice of the year of 2035 as the date by which the mining sector needs to meet the target of a 45-percent reduction. What is particularly notable about this is that it's a departure from the goal of the rest of the territory, which is 45 percent by 2030, so five years later. As I said in my second reading speech, the 45 percent by 2030 reduction isn't arbitrary. I will quote again from the UN's climate change website. It says — and I quote: "The science shows clearly that in order to avert the worst impacts of climate change and preserve a liveable planet, global temperature increase needs to be limited to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels." Then a little lower down, it says, "To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C ... emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050."

I want to talk about this decision to depart from that recommendation. What we've been told is that if we want a livable planet, we need to reduce emissions by 45 percent by 2030. I understand that is a very difficult thing to do. I understand that is not a lot of time, but that is what needs to happen if we want a livable planet. I am struggling to understand this decision to push that timeline back for mining, and I am — is the hope that we won't meet those targets, but other parts of the world will, so it won't matter? Or has the idea of having a livable planet been abandoned?

I am hoping that the minister can try to explain that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question. I have thought about this all my life, to be honest.

First of all, I want to share with the member and with Yukoners that this is not a light target. It is itself an ambitious

target. When we went and talked with industry and when we talked with our own experts around the modelling of the solutions that we saw in front of us and where we could estimate our achievable — we recognized that, in order for any group — let's say the Yukon — or any other province or jurisdiction to get there, you have to have a runway. You could say “reduce your emissions tomorrow”, and it happened, for example, with COVID. When COVID hit, your economy shuts down. This is exactly what we don't want. We need to have — and Yukoners expect us to find — solutions that continue to have a functioning, robust economy while also moving away from fossil fuels — transitioning away.

I'll make some quick estimates here, but the numbers are pretty variable. Mining emissions might be 10 to 15 percent of the overall Yukon's emissions, but they can really shift up and down. If we achieve our 45 percent by 2030 target and we achieve our 45 percent by 2035 in the mining sector, how far off will we be from what the member is talking about? Actually, I will say that we are very, very close at that point, and the reason is because mining isn't dominant — and less so now that Victoria Gold is in this environmental remediation phase.

But it swings back and forth, so I would say that if we push so hard as to end up with an industry that is not working to move off of fossil fuels, we actually push the outcome further back for Yukoners. So, it is really important.

I say as a person who has worked on this issue for decades that when we get willing involvement and active support, we always get better outcomes than when we just force things on people. It rarely ends in a positive space. So, in my experience, I think that it is valuable that we had industry support.

Basically, what they asked us — I think that *Our Clean Future* came out in 2020 or somewhere there. I'm trying to remember exactly when we announced it; maybe it was 2019. But whenever it was, it has been roughly five years since we have had that and we have been working toward our targets, and we have worked with industry to get a target in place, and they asked us for the same runway.

While I appreciate what the member opposite is talking about — I know very intimately the global science that we're talking about — I also think that I'm looking for an ambitious target with the mining industry, one where they are working toward it with us. I think that's worth something that's important that we achieve here.

MLA Tredger: A couple of thoughts — one is that when *Our Clean Future* came out, it actually set a target of having greenhouse gas emissions for mining by the end of 2022. Had that been achieved, we would have actually been talking about a lot more runway without having to extend the date.

What I understood from what the minister is saying — he is saying that it's worth missing the target for a livable planet in order to have buy-in from the mining industry, because otherwise, we would have even worse outcomes. Is that what he said?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: No, that's not what I said.

Let me start by talking about the blurriness of what the member is discussing. We don't know for sure. We don't know

if we're going to be able to hold it to 1.5 degrees. We don't know, for example, that if we get a 45-percent reduction by 2030, that will or will not — this is one of the challenges of this science. It has a lot of uncertainty around it.

Second of all, when I look at responsibility, I've always believed that we hold responsibility on a per capita basis. So, even though the Yukon is tiny — one one-thousandth the size of Canada. Even though Canada is small by population, I believe our responsibility lies on our level of contribution and our historic contribution over time to those emissions. So, I think we have significant responsibility.

I also think that the target that we are setting — in the light that the member opposite is holding it up to, it will say somehow that it's selling the planet short.

It is ambitious compared to almost all other jurisdictions in Canada — maybe not all. But recently, for example, British Columbia and the NDP government there backed away from some really important policies — really important. I think that the Yukon actually, with this proposed amendment to the *Clean Energy Act*, would not only put in place a strong target but has the ability to move forward. That is what we were just discussing earlier — about that ability to do more in time. I think that it is important to put this target in place and I think that it shows strong ambition by us here in the Yukon. I think that it will actually demonstrate to Canadians how serious we are about reducing emissions and transitioning away from fossil fuels. That is what I believe this is.

I don't wish for the member opposite to say that — if what we are talking about — if we are going to draw that relationship around the science in that way, I will start to point out other things that I think are important — where I feel that the member's party has not been as strong. I have never attempted to suggest that it is morally incorrect. I feel that there are always challenges in making these decisions. This, I feel, is the one that will get us the best outcome for the Yukon and for the industry.

MLA Tredger: The question really isn't: Is this ambitious? Or: Is this better than other jurisdictions? Or: Is this fair? The question is: Is it enough? Is it enough for a livable planet?

I wanted to get to that a little bit, because the minister kind of suggested that maybe the idea that we have to keep it to 45 percent by 2030 to have a livable planet isn't correct. I pulled that from the UN. I don't have the academic knowledge to debate that. I am relying on the UN for that information. It sounds like the minister doesn't necessarily agree with that, so maybe I can start there.

Does the minister agree with the statement that emissions need to be reduced by 45 percent by 2030 in order to preserve a livable planet?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Okay. I believe that we need to transition away from fossil fuels, that we need to do it aggressively, and I believe that we need to be smart about how we do it. In order to not hit disruptions and hurt people, because — and the example that I keep drawing for everyone is: COVID-19 had us reduce emissions. Well, that's not anything I'm shooting for — like that sort of abrupt disruption to our economy. What I mean by that is people not being able to go to

work, people not being able to shop at a grocery store. That is not the way that I think that we as a society need to achieve these targets, but do we need to hustle and work hard on them? Absolutely.

This notion of “the planet” should be — like, I have always believed in the phrase “Think global; act local.” I think my own colleagues worry — or not worry — see me hovering over them when they don’t put something in the compost, and I’m challenging them or, you know — will I work on a personal level to achieve that? Yes. Do I think that this is an important step toward addressing that transition? Yes, I do. Can it be more ambitious? We have built into it that ability for it to get there, but I think that you need to be careful. Say that today, with a stroke of a pen, we said: Oh, we’ll just make it 2030. That’s because we believe that is what we need to do. The outcome of that I think would be the opposite, and that is what I’m trying to say here.

The outcome of doing that would be to lose that work with industry, and we would end up in a combative role, and we would end up achieving less. So, I think that there is — there is a word that the member opposite used early in their submissions to the Assembly today, and it was about practicalities.

This is ambitious but also considers a good way to work with industry. I think it’s hard for industry to see someone like me come in, this engineer/climate scientist, to go and talk to them, who has had some experience in the mining industry but really, not enough to say that — I would never call myself a miner. I think that they have seen our sincerity at working toward reducing emissions and wanting them to be part of that path — and this is a good part of that path.

MLA Tredger: I didn’t actually get an answer to whether the minister agrees with that statement that to have a liveable planet, emissions need to be reduced by 45 percent by 2030. I heard about putting things in the compost, which I commend, but that is not going to get us a liveable planet on its own. I heard about how, if we were to attempt to do the thing that we have been told by the UN is required to have a liveable planet, we wouldn’t be able to achieve it, because the mining industry would not be on board and that would be even worse. We heard a lot about the consequences of climate action. We heard a lot about whether we could still buy things in the grocery store or go to work, but we didn’t actually hear anything about the consequences of climate inaction — the global-scale catastrophe that we are facing, which is the lack of a liveable planet.

I am going to ask again: Does the minister agree that, in order to have a liveable planet, emissions need to be reduced by 45 percent by 2030?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: All right, do I agree that we need to reduce our emissions? I think I said yes. Do I agree that we need to do it significantly in the coming five years? Yes. Ten years? Yes. The member wants me to hold on to the specific statement by the UN — or maybe it’s the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I would have to go back and check whether it’s the UN or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that made this specific statement, but it doesn’t matter, because I know the statement well.

The thing is that this statement is being perceived as this precise thing. It could be that we’re well past that already. This is a problem with tipping points when you look at them at a human scale — like when you get up to brush your teeth or take out the compost — whereas the scale of the climate has a huge amount of inertia to it. So, we’re arguing about dancing on a pinhead here.

So, I will turn now to other things that I note. I saw BC and the NDP government just back away from a price on carbon. That for me is the biggest concern that I have right now — where we are going as a country to place a price on carbon.

I’ve watched. I don’t know whether the member opposite, in following the science of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, also believes that their position with their federal counterparts is correct or appropriate.

I also understand, on things like all these other files that we argue about that are tough files about, for example, trying to make our waste system here in the territory more efficient, trying to deal with the greenhouse gases that are coming out of our waste system — where does the member opposite sit on that? Because if the absolute is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change position, then I don’t see them doing right by that.

So, when we get into this debate about this bill to amend the legislation, what I will continue to say is that it is a good path forward and is meaningful and is going to achieve something significant and even ambitious.

Is it enough? It’s possible that it’s not, but it’s also my contention that if we make the argument that it should be 2030, we actually do worse.

That is why I will continue to suggest that the right approach here is 2035 as the target year. That’s because, in looking at this and trying to achieve the best possible outcome for the Yukon, including working with an industry, I think that is worth something.

Is it enough? I will just continue to say that we need to do more on all fronts.

MLA Tredger: I think I did agree with the minister on the last statement, which is: Is it enough? We really need to do more. That is the point that I am exactly trying to make. The minister has said — I think that a fairer summary of what he has said is that the UN statement that I have been referring to is a simplification, and I think that is probably true. He has kind of said that he knows his research really well, better than I do, and that is fair too.

So, I am going to ask him if he can provide a reason why we should not go with a statement from the UN and instead assume that there is a different threshold for what is required to preserve a livable planet, because in my mind, if we don’t still have a livable planet, it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter how close we got; it doesn’t matter how hard we tried; it doesn’t matter whether our goals were ambitious or reasonable or whether we put a lot of effort in.

If we don’t have a livable planet, it just doesn’t matter. We can’t reason with the climate and say: But we tried really hard and we had a plan to get this done in another five years. We can’t reason with the climate and say: Can you hold off on the

climate change, because we have a really good plan to reduce our greenhouse gases that is going to come into effect soon? It just doesn't work that way. It's the laws of nature, and it doesn't matter how good your reasons and excuses are — they just don't work.

What I am going to ask — I will explain my plan. When it comes to line-by-line, my party will be moving an amendment to amend the target to 2030, which the minister has said he does not think is a good idea. I'm hoping — we are doing that because we are going by this guiding statement from the UN, from the inter — I believe that the minister used a more precise term — that this is what is required to have a livable planet. So, if the minister can table evidence showing that is not what is required to have a livable planet and that there is a different goal that we should be striving for that is based in evidence and that goal would justify not reaching a 45-percent target by 2030, I would really love to see that evidence. At that point, we can discuss not moving that amendment.

That is what I will be looking for, and if we don't see it, then my party will — when we get to line-by-line — be moving an amendment to change this to 2030.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 40, entitled *Act to amend the Clean Energy Act (2024)*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.