



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 21

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 26, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 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 — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

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

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
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 26, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes that have been made to the Order Paper. The following motion has been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member: Motion No. 153, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Are there any introductions of visitors?

Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

Hon. Ms. McLean: Today, I rise on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Learning Disabilities Awareness Month.

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month is an opportunity to increase awareness and reduce stigma about the diverse learning needs or differing abilities of children and adults.

Some children and adults face challenges when it comes to lifelong learning. According to a survey by Statistics Canada, 3.2 percent of Canadian children have a learning disability, and more than half a million Canadian adults live with a learning disability, making it more challenging for them to learn in universities, colleges, and on the job.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada notes that learning diversity ranges in severity, but often interferes with organizational, oral language, reading, writing, and mathematical skills. Social perception and social interaction can also be difficult. Learning disabilities are lifelong. The challenges faced can be impacted by an individual's environment and the demands that they experience in their life, whether at school or in their personal life or in their career.

You might not be aware that a friend, family member, or colleague has learning challenges or the extra challenges that they are facing when it comes to keeping up at school or at work. It is all too common that for many — to view those with diverse learning needs — this is how they look at them: that they just aren't trying hard enough, that they aren't naturally intellectual, that they aren't supported in their learning by their parents or guardians, and that there are cultural and language barriers that are challenging their understanding. This is simply not true. Often, individuals with diverse learning needs have to work harder than most to interact in their everyday lives.

We all have a responsibility to recognize and acknowledge that valuing learning and providing specialized supports can be a lifelong challenge for some. In our education system, we have acknowledged that we can do better to support individuals with diverse learning needs and challenges. In the final report of the *Review of Inclusive and Special Education in the Yukon*, released this past June, we see that there are many stories from students, families, Yukon First Nations, and partners in our communities of challenges when it comes to accessing the proper supports. We hear their voices and acknowledge that there is more work to do to make sure that children in our society with diverse learning needs are supported.

We are fortunate in Yukon that we already have dedicated individuals and organizations that are committed to compassionately supporting children and adults facing learning challenges, including amazing teachers, learning assistant teachers, educational assistants, and other school support staff, health care workers, and early learning educators who support children from a young age: the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Inclusion Yukon, Autism Yukon, the Child Development Centre, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, and, of course, Yukon Learn.

Yukon First Nation governments and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate are also doing excellent work to support First Nation citizen and youth. It takes family, friends, and community to support each other, to succeed, and to lift up those who are vulnerable in our society.

Today I ask that we all reflect on the challenges that those living with diverse learning needs face and acknowledge their strength and resiliency. Thank you to those who dedicate their lives to supporting children and adults with diverse learning needs. This month is about you and making sure that you feel a part of a community that values the diversity of all learners.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October as Learning Disabilities Awareness Month in Canada.

This month is raising the awareness but, all year, it is important to be mindful and understanding of the way that others learn. In Canada, a learning disability is the fastest growing type of disability that is not related to aging. To learn or understand reverts to an individual's ability to store, to process, or to produce information. So many learning disabilities relate to specific challenges in the school system — reading, writing, or math skills. Studies show that persons with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence but have a disability that affects their way of thinking and/or reasoning.

Learning challenges usually present themselves in grade school, and if identified, the issues can be addressed. When the disability is missed, at times, one may be labeled as "lazy" or "incompetent". This, in turn, may cause the person to hide their disability and struggle in silence. This can lead to lifelong struggles, dropping out of school, unemployment, and poverty, to name a few. This is true in any setting and not just limited to school or work. From children to adults, if we are aware of a

learning difference, show compassion and don't be so quick to judge.

There are other types of learning disabilities, such as: visual perception deficits or trouble with hand-eye coordination; non-verbal learning disabilities, which refer to disabilities in understanding body language, tone of voice, or social cues; language or auditory processing disorder; or trouble processing spoken language or sounds.

The current pandemic has heightened and highlighted the challenge facing those with learning disabilities. Lack of support staff, missed school days, and remote learning all contribute to a more anxious and unsettling time for those struggling to cope.

We would like to give a special shout-out to the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, or LDAY, as they are dedicated to increasing the awareness of learning differences and support for all ages — children, youth, and adults. The work that they do within our territory is critical for all Yukoners. We would like to recognize LDAY's continued dedication to supportive learning opportunities.

I leave you with a quote from George Evans: "Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way."

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. There are many Yukoners with learning disabilities, working every day to advocate for change and to support their peers. They are supported by many more Yukoners who are working to make sure that children and adults with learning disabilities have the supports they need. They are working to make the Yukon more accessible for everyone. Thank you for doing this hard and important work.

I would like to highlight two initiatives taking place here in the Yukon. Yukon Learn has recognized that, as we moved to an online world during the pandemic, there are people being left behind. If reading is hard, something as important as ordering your medication refills online or booking your COVID vaccine becomes impossible. Through their workshops and one-on-one tutoring, they've stepped up to support Yukoners with navigating an online world.

I would also like to talk about the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon's employer workshops. These workshops teach employers how they can adapt their workplaces to support all of their employees. I love this shift from putting the burden on individuals to adapt and instead thinking about how we can make our world more accessible.

Actually, I often think about this here in the Legislature, which is not a particularly accessible place. We talk in language that is dense and formal. We communicate entirely in speeches, which are often pretty long. What are we doing to make sure that all Yukoners can be part of our democracy? I would like to challenge all of us, as we advocate and make decisions, to consider how those decisions will affect Yukoners with learning disabilities. I hope that we can all work together to make the Yukon a more supportive and accessible place.

Applause

In recognition of Canadian Patient Safety Week

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to acknowledge this week as Canadian Patient Safety Week. Safe patient care is a priority for all Yukon health providers and all who help them to deliver safe and quality health services across the territory. Canadian Patient Safety Week is about acknowledging and thanking everyone involved in the delivery of all patient care. This includes: health care professionals, support staff, decision-makers, patients, clients, and friends and family.

The term "patient" includes anyone who receives care or services in a variety of settings. Every patient experience should be safe. Canadian Patient Safety Week encourages everyone to advocate for themselves by listening, asking questions, and talking with their health care providers and also to think about patient safety issues and solutions.

The Yukon is fortunate to have a strong network of compassionate health care providers dedicated to delivering a safe experience for everyone who needs care. From acute and emergency care to our community clinics, pharmacies, long-term care, home care, and community nursing teams, thousands of people work together every day to keep Yukoners safe and cared for.

This year's theme poses a question: "Who knows? Essential care partners do." It is designed to raise awareness of those individuals who may not be traditional health care providers but who play a critical role in patient recovery and experience. Equally important for safe patient care are essential care partners or support persons. Much more than a visitor, essential care partners play a critical role in patients' mental and physical health and well-being. They are vital team members, and they provide consistent support to a loved one throughout their experience.

As part of our response to COVID-19 over the last 20 months, our hospitals and all of Yukon's health facilities have had to restrict some visitors while making sure that essential care partners or support persons could safely remain physically present to support their loved ones as partners in care. The role taken on by these folks is extremely beneficial for all patients, clients, and care providers in sustaining a safe and excellent care experience. Essential care partners advocate for patients and work with providers to help navigate health care journeys, which can come with many challenges.

Today, we must all recognize and deeply appreciate the invaluable role that essential care partners and support persons play in helping family members and friends. Raising awareness and recognizing the importance of Canadian Patient Safety Week means that we must acknowledge the work that essential care partners do to ensure that we have the best and safest care possible. They are a critical element of our successful patient care.

Thank you for your dedication to supporting patients' health and well-being.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Canadian Patient Safety Week. This important campaign began as an initiative by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute to focus attention on improving patient safety and quality of care. It is important not only for those involved in health care delivery to be aware of patient safety; people should also be aware and understand the importance of talking to their health care providers, asking questions, and ensuring that they have a full understanding of benefits, risks, and health care options. Patient safety has always been important, but it has come into the public spotlight even more during the pandemic.

While we were fortunate to avoid large outbreaks in long-term care facilities here in the Yukon, the tragic loss of life in long-term care homes in other parts of Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic was a very sobering reminder of the critical importance of ensuring patient safety in our health care facilities, especially in continuing care facilities and our hospitals. We recognize that additional measures have been necessary and will be necessary to ensure patient safety during the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, our health care professionals have been bearing a heavy load at times, and we appreciate the additional efforts that they are taking to keep people, especially patients, safe during the pandemic, including extra handwashing, use of personal protective equipment in more situations, operating vaccine clinics and COVID testing facilities, and getting vaccinated themselves.

Thank you to all those health care professionals who go above and beyond to ensure that patient safety is at the core of what they do each and every day.

Applause

Ms. Blake: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to tribute Canadian Patient Safety Week.

As the momentum for promoting best practices in patient safety has grown, so has the participation in Canadian Patient Safety Week. Canadian Patient Safety Week is relevant to anyone who engages with our health care system — providers, patients, and citizens. I am reminded of when I worked in the hospital as a First Nation liaison and in my role as the non-insured health benefits navigator. In both of these positions, I saw how patients were protected by a community of people, from nurses to support workers, doctors, and social workers. It was truly a collaborative approach to care. This community of supports worked together to ensure that patients remain at the centre of all conversations and planning for their care — a community of people who know and understand the importance of asking, listening, and talking.

To say that, it sounds simple, but to put these values into practice is not that easy, especially in complicated or difficult situations. For us as legislators and the partners in the provision of health care, we too need to ask, listen, and talk when hearing from constituents about their health concerns and from health care professionals and providers when they come to us with their concerns.

Thank you to the Canadian Patient Safety Institute for their continued work of bringing patient safety to the forefront of best health practices. I hope this day reminds all of us that patients must be at the centre of our health care system and that their safety is paramount.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

PETITIONS

Petition No. 4

Ms. McLeod: It is my honour to table the following petition today.

To the Yukon Legislative Assembly, this petition of the undersigned shows that the citizens of Watson Lake and the nearby area want a continuing care facility in Watson Lake so that citizens do not have to move away to Whitehorse when they require additional care. Therefore, the undersigned ask that the Yukon Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Yukon to commence planning for the construction of a continuing care facility in Watson Lake and to begin this process with the Minister of Health and Social Services, holding a public meeting in the fall of 2021 to discuss it with local residents.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by 527 residents.

Speaker: Are there any further petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Deputy Premier should resign from Cabinet due to the mishandling of sexual abuse at Hidden Valley Elementary School.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate and address the issues with the phone and e-mail communication system that the Old Crow Health Centre is experiencing.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Copper Ridge Place renovation

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As many Yukoners know, Copper Ridge Place is a long-term care facility in Whitehorse with 96 beds. It was opened back in 2002 by the then-Liberal government, so it was time for some upgrades to continue to ensure the comfort and safety of residents today.

Renovations were resident-focused. We made upgrades in the interior courtyards to ensure the safety of the surfaces. This will prevent serious injuries for residents who have balance

issues. A real-time location system was installed for those with way-finding difficulty. These Yukoners may benefit from an option to move more freely around the building without having to stay in a smaller secure area.

We also made upgrades to the infection prevention and control protocols. This is always important, but even more so with the COVID-19 in our territory. These updates included adding hand hygiene sinks and very specific cleaning of the HVAC system.

We also made improvements to the fire alarm system as well as the nurse call system. Additionally, we replaced the hot water tanks, which have a shelf life of eight to 10 years, and made repairs to the main kitchen. Unlike a home kitchen, this kitchen serves three meals a day to 96 residents, 365 days a year. There is no day off, no take-out Fridays. It has to be in pristine working order.

All of these renovations make the living experience safer and more enjoyable for those in our care. Seniors and elders are our most valuable community members, and we must support and protect them. The importance of caring for and protecting seniors has never been more clear than it has been over the last 19 months. We have watched other jurisdictions struggle to protect their seniors in long-term care. Hundreds of cases of COVID-19 invaded one care home after another, resulting in too many deaths. We were extremely fortunate that we have not been in a similar situation, having worked very hard to manage this pandemic. We take great pride in our long-term care homes. We work hard to ensure that they continuously meet the standards that we and the residents who live there can enjoy and find comfort in.

That is why the recent renovation work at Copper Ridge Place is something to be acknowledged. I have to thank the residents and their family members for being so accommodating while we made these upgrades and to thank staff who worked through the renovations. This building makeover means that the well-loved facility can remain in good shape to serve residents for many years to come.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government has become infamous for using ministerial statements to reduce the amount of time available for debate on the budget and legislation, often making reannouncements of press releases. While we, of course, support investing in the Yukon's continuing care facilities, this is another ministerial statement that should have just been a press release. Using a ministerial statement to talk about cleaning and HVAC systems is a bit laughable, Mr. Speaker. Does talking about that kind of maintenance belong in either a ministerial statement or a press release?

There are a number of other important issues that the Deputy Premier could have been focusing on, such as the fact that over 2,000 Yukoners don't have a family doctor and she has done nothing to address it. She could reinstate the physician recruitment position in her department and work with the Yukon Medical Association on increasing recruitment and retention initiatives to convince more family doctors to move to the Yukon; she could be working on filling rural vacancies

for mental health, as we know that the mental wellness and substance use hubs in the communities are short-staffed; or she could follow through on the commitment to help develop a new secure medical unit at Whitehorse General Hospital. Psychiatrists, patients, and other health professionals would like to know what is going on and why the Liberal government has delayed work on that project for years. The former Liberal Health and Social Services minister said that the new secure medical unit will be completed next year, but we've heard nothing from the government since then.

In addition, parents who have kids attending Hidden Valley Elementary School would like to hear from the Deputy Premier about why she failed to notify parents of the sexual misconduct in late 2019 when she learned about it, what actions, if any, she took after learning of the situation, why she didn't inform her colleague, the new Minister of Education, about the serious situation, and why she continues to refuse to answer reasonable questions about it and her role in it. Yukoners are petitioning and pleading with this minister to address her involvement in it. The Deputy Premier publicly claims to be willing to meet with parents, but as she knows very well, parents who are trying to book a meeting with her are getting the runaround from her staff. One parent who e-mailed her didn't even get a reply from the minister's office until the Child and Youth Advocate got involved, requesting a reply to that parent's e-mail.

Parents tell me that they asked for a meeting in November with the Deputy Premier and the current Minister of Education. They were promised a reply. Has the Deputy Premier confirmed that meeting, or is this another broken promise of this government and this minister? Maybe she can finally address these important questions the next time she is on her feet.

While we acknowledge that renovations at Copper Ridge Place are a good thing, the minister should address some of these serious issues that I have outlined with respect to her department and her own actions.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for the chance to respond to this statement. As my colleague has noted, it is surprising that we have a ministerial statement on renovations of one facility, but the statement does give us the chance to talk about long-term care in the Yukon.

I am very proud that, under an NDP government, Copper Ridge Place was built, despite the objections of the Liberals at the time, who then cut the ribbon to open the facility. We have heard today that the government is keeping it in usable condition. I should certainly hope that our long-term care facilities have up-to-date hot water tanks and fire alarms, but I guess that it is good to have it clarified.

When we talk about the bigger picture of long-term care facilities in the Yukon, though, Macaulay Lodge comes to mind. It has been sitting empty for years. In the Spring Sitting, we were told that it will be demolished so that the land can be put to good use, perhaps for housing, but that there is no timeline because of — and I quote: "... competing priorities". We suggest that making land available for housing should

always be a priority, especially land that is owned by Yukon government, with a building that continues to sit unoccupied.

But both of these examples only address facilities in Whitehorse. Long-term care is an issue outside of the capital. Folks across the territory want to age in place, in the communities they live in, and not need to relocate to Whitehorse as they get older. So, that brings us to Yukoners who are trying to age in place. The government's aging-in-place plan says that Yukoners will be supported, but despite the best efforts of the people who work in home care, seniors are still struggling to get the supports that they need to stay in their homes. This is a territory-wide struggle. Every community in the Yukon needs access to home care supports, so we remain optimistic that the Yukon government will partner with Yukon University to see programs developed that support rural Yukoners to build on their skills and continue to support their communities.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Yukoners deserve to know about their long-term care facilities. Our seniors and elders are such an important part of our society. They are the ones who created the foundation of this community, and it is on their shoulders that we stand. We must ensure that they are comfortable and receive compassionate and modern care. That is why the renovations at Copper Ridge Place matter. It is not just about modernizing systems and appliances; it is about ensuring meaningful and safer ways of living for Yukoners in their golden years.

This government cares deeply about improvements to home care services for our seniors, and we have taken action to demonstrate this. We have introduced the home first program, which assists seniors to obtain enhanced home care that can support their return to home. We have opened the reablement unit at the Thomson Centre for the same purpose. This unit provides people-specific programming to increase and maintain Yukoners' independent ability to return home and is seeing great success.

Also, in recent years, we undertook a massive engagement with seniors throughout the Yukon. We heard about their needs, their hopes, and their concerns. This helped us to create an aging-in-place action plan, which complements *Putting People First — the final report of the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services*. Hon. Speaker, we hope to be able to report soon on the results of the first year of that plan. We look forward to sharing how our government is supporting seniors and elders in living full, active, and meaningful lives.

The recent renovation work at the Copper Ridge Place is all part of the actions outlined in aging in place. These proactive upgrades will serve Yukoners long into the future and promote positive aging and the overall well-being of our seniors and elders.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Dixon: Yesterday the Yukon Ombudsman became the latest office to launch an investigation into the conduct of the Department of Education under the leadership of the now-Deputy Premier. According to the release, this new investigation is looking at the failure to inform parents of children attending Hidden Valley about sexual abuse of a student that occurred in the school.

To quote from the release: "... this failure meant that other alleged child victims who have since been identified did not receive the necessary parental and professional supports in a timely manner."

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely the point that we have been making. The former Education minister was aware of this abuse; she did nothing. Children went without justice as a result, and then the Premier promoted her.

Does the Deputy Premier recognize that this failure happened under her watch and that ultimately she is accountable for it?

Hon. Ms. McLean: There is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care. We are focused on moving forward in a way that supports the children and families of Hidden Valley school. We absolutely acknowledge — and have acknowledged along the way — that mistakes were made and we have apologized for those mistakes.

I want to also point out that the RCMP have also acknowledged that they failed to properly investigate this matter, and they have also apologized. There is an investigation going on around that — a comprehensive investigation.

I am aware that the Ombudsman has launched an investigation. We will be cooperating with the investigation.

We all have a shared interest in understanding what happened in 2019 and how we can improve going forward. The RCMP has acknowledged that they failed, as I have said, to properly investigate this matter and have apologized. This was a major error that occurred. We have acknowledged that the communications could have been handled differently in a way that supports students and parents. As I have said, we will be cooperating, of course, with this investigation.

Mr. Dixon: I think that Yukoners are getting tired of hearing the current minister read the same prepared notes over and over again. What they want to hear are answers. There are now no less than four investigations into this scandal. The current minister, as before and as she just did today, has admitted that, under the former minister's leadership, a grave mistake was made — that was to not inform parents — but no one from the Liberals has accepted any responsibility or accountability for this. This is a failure of leadership. Under the principle of ministerial accountability, the former minister is ultimately accountable for what happened in her department. She is accountable for the decision not to share this information with parents and is therefore accountable for the 21-month delay in justice and support for victims. The Deputy Premier knew and she did nothing. She could have told parents, but she

chose not to. So, will the Deputy Premier accept that accountability and resign from Cabinet?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As I have stated many times in this House, I have launched an independent review of the Government of Yukon's response to the situation at Hidden Valley school. The member opposite has pointed out that there are a number of reviews underway: one with the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, one with the RCMP, and now the Ombudsman has launched a review as well. I am satisfied, of course, that we will get the answers that Yukoners deserve, particularly the families and the children that are at the heart of this. I always go back to remind folks that at the heart of this are our children and the impacts on them and, of course, the school community that has had a very difficult time navigating the start of this year and continuing to provide good education for children at the Hidden Valley school. I acknowledge their dedication and hard work to ensure that proper supports are put in place and that children are moving forward in a positive way at the school to the best of their ability.

Mr. Dixon: The facts in this matter are stark. The Deputy Premier learned about the sexual abuse in 2019. A letter was drafted by school administration but then never sent. We know that the minister was aware of that letter because it was appended to briefing notes that were sent to her.

She has admitted openly to the media that she absolutely knew what happened, and a decision was still made to keep this from parents. When we asked questions on behalf of families, she even insulted the parents and put words in their mouths. The Liberals have admitted that this was a mistake, and they have broken trust with families. The former minister is accountable for that decision, that mistake, and that failure — not the current minister — the former minister. For that, she must resign.

So, will the Deputy Premier resign from Cabinet?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, there is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care. As soon as Education officials learned of the allegations in 2019, the individual was removed from the school and has not worked with students since that time.

The Hidden Valley school administration changed their protocols to increase the safety of students and reinforce accountability. We informed the RCMP, Hon. Speaker, and we expected them to undertake a complete and thorough investigation. The Yukon RCMP have initiated a complete review of its investigation. There are also ongoing, as I have stated a couple of times already today, investigations into this matter.

I have to remind folks, as well, that there are active cases within the courts, as we speak, and it is incredibly sensitive at this time. I have launched an independent review. The government's response to this incident — I tabled those terms of reference. There will be a complete fact-finding, as pointed out in item 4 of the terms of reference, and complete recommendations that will be delivered by January 31, 2022.

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the decision to not inform parents about sexual abuse at Hidden Valley Elementary School is a very serious matter. The only thing more concerning than the lack of answers from the Liberal government is their lack of accountability. As a direct result of this decision, other children who were victims of sexual abuse went without justice or proper supports for 21 months — 21 months without justice or support all because the Deputy Premier did not ensure that parents were informed. That was her responsibility as Minister of Education, and she failed to do her duty.

Then the Premier rewarded her by making her Deputy Premier. Well, a failure that serious and significant is not worthy of a promotion, and her repeated refusal to answer questions in the House has added to it. It requires a resignation from the minister who is in charge of the Department of Education and is responsible for this failure and the stonewalling in this Legislative Assembly.

Will the Deputy Premier now do the right thing and resign?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As I have stated many times, we are taking active steps to investigate the matter that happened in 2019. As we moved forward to today — I have stated today again that I tabled terms of reference for an independent review that is underway now. As I have stated as well, there will be a complete fact-finding related to the response of the departments of Health and Social Services, Education, and Justice to the incident in 2019 at the Hidden Valley Elementary School — and bringing forward to today.

The recommendations for improving government-wide policies and procedures to better support Yukon school communities are absolutely going to be part of this report that will be delivered to me by January 31, 2022. As I've stated, there are a number of other reviews that are underway. This is where our attention is right now — and also, of course, on providing the necessary supports to families and the children at Hidden Valley.

Mr. Cathers: The government's continued stonewalling is insulting to parents. We know that the Deputy Premier knew about the sexual abuse at Hidden Valley in 2019. She also was briefed in 2020 and failed to notify parents. As a direct result of her failure, children went without justice and supports for nearly two years. Then, when a new Minister of Education came into the portfolio, the Deputy Premier kept her in the dark and didn't notify her of the biggest scandal to happen under this Liberal government.

The rest of the Liberal caucus really needs to think about whether or not they are comfortable with the fact that the Deputy Premier failed to notify parents of the sexual abuse at Hidden Valley, that she failed to brief the new Minister of Education about the issue, leaving her in the dark, and that the Deputy Premier failed families. Is this the type of behaviour and actions that are acceptable in the Liberal Cabinet?

Will the Deputy Premier finally do the right thing and resign from Cabinet?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, there is nothing more important to us than the well-being, safety, and protection of

students when they are in our care. I think that, at this point, I would like to just point out some of the supports and work that is being done at the school level within their community.

I have talked about this a number of times, but I would like to talk about it again because I really want to thank the school administration and the staff for all of the hard work that they are doing under incredibly difficult circumstances. Work has been underway, of course, to improve safety and openness in the school setting, including access to school areas where doors can be removed and where one-way glass can be effectively used to create calming learning spaces where staff can also see into those rooms. These are safety things that were put in place.

The most effective way to ensure students' safety is to educate children about consent and right- and wrong-touch boundaries. These are all things that have been underway for a number of years. There are many, many supports that have been put in place, and I will be wanting to speak about those and hold up the school community.

Mr. Cathers: Again, the government continues to insult families with their non-answers. It is clear that the Deputy Premier failed in her duties and responsibilities and, as a result, children went without justice for almost two years. There are now no less than four investigations into what happened under the Deputy Premier's watch. Every single MLA in this House needs to ask themselves: whether or not they believe in ministerial accountability; whether they are comfortable with the Deputy Premier having both hidden information from parents and insulted parents and remaining in the second most powerful position in the Yukon government; whether they are comfortable with the fact that she has refused even the most basic questions; and whether parents and children deserve to have the Deputy Premier held accountable. We will be calling a motion tomorrow asking for the Deputy Premier to resign, and at that time, every MLA will vote to show whether or not they are comfortable with her actions.

Will the Premier allow Liberal MLAs to vote with their conscience on this motion?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Hon. Speaker, again, to address the questions on the Legislative Assembly floor — the members opposite don't like the answers, but we have been staying steadfast with the reasons why we are answering the way we are — the independent reviews and the nature of court cases that are currently in the courts. The member opposite knows this and, again, is still using that as an excuse to cast aspersions and to also turn highly politically motivated assumptions into fact over the course of the last few weeks.

I believe that both of my ministers have done an exceptional job of trying to get to the bottom of what has happened and to ensure that we move forward better for our community and for our students. Our government is extremely committed to exactly that and to rebuilding the strength and the trust in our education system.

We are very glad to see the independence of both the Ombudsman and the Child and Youth Advocate, the independent review, as well as the RCMP review as well.

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Justice are both extremely strong, dedicated leaders. They have dedicated

their lives to advancing justice in our territory and to promoting equity in our society. These are two of the strongest leaders I know in the territory, and I have absolute confidence in them.

Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

Ms. Blake: Last week my colleague stood in this House and shared the concerns of so many Yukoners who do not have a family doctor. This week, we heard from an aging Yukoner who told us that he is giving up on waiting for a doctor in this town and just accepted that he will probably die a few years younger and a nurse who told us that the number of people coming to the ER with non-emergencies is getting dangerous because they are mixing with very sick people during a pandemic.

Yukoners agree that something has to change. Knowing all of this, why won't the minister fix this crisis and open a public walk-in clinic?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm happy to rise again to speak to this issue. Again, I'm happy to repeat the answer and to continue with our progress in helping the medical professionals come here to the territory and add to our growing list of very competent medical professionals who serve Yukoners.

Hon. Speaker, much of *Putting People First* and the implementation of polyclinics is all about making sure that every Yukoner has a medical team in place to provide primary health care services that they need. Admittedly, that is future-looking.

What we learned from *Putting People First* is that 21 percent of Yukoners do not, at this time, have a family doctor. This is a national and global shortage. To recruit medical professionals, we work through national and online forums and supplement support staff with agency nurses and out-of-territory resources when we can.

Hon. Speaker, the "find a family doctor" program began in 2019 and, since that time, has not resolved every issue, admittedly. However, we have connected 1,058 people to a physician — or more than 1,050 — expanded access to virtual care —

Speaker: Order.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, there are vacancies in nearly every Yukon community. There are vacancies for nurses in Mayo, Teslin, and Haines Junction. There are also vacancies for mental health workers in Dawson and vacancies for youth and family mental health workers in Haines Junction and Dawson City. It is fine to talk about all the great programming and supports in communities, but when there is a revolving door of workers and continuous vacancies, everyone is affected.

What is this government doing to recruit and actually retain health care workers?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As I have said, this is a national and global problem. The Yukon is feeling the pinch of having issues around being able to recruit and retain nurses and doctors, as is every jurisdiction in the country.

As we implement the *Putting People First* report, we are working to hire additional nurse practitioners and we are

meeting with the Yukon Medical Association to address physician recruitment and retention.

Our government is also moving forward with the creation of a bilingual health centre, which will open in early 2022, and this primary health care setting in Whitehorse is expected to reduce some of the pressures of the current situation.

The department has been exploring options to work with a professional recruiter or recruitment firm to support physician recruitment, as well as exploring opportunities to contract nurse practitioners to service some existing clinics.

Additionally, work is underway to expand access to virtual physician services.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, it is not just doctors who keep our health care system afloat. Nurse practitioners can do a lot, and they can take on some of the workload that leaves the doctors feeling burned out. They could be an essential pillar to our health care system but are massively overlooked by the government. The *Putting People First* report even pointed it out. I quote: “We were disappointed to learn that nurse practitioners are not able to practise to full scope in Yukon...” So, people who are desperately looking for primary health care are left wondering: Why won’t the minister expand the scope of practice for Yukon nurse practitioners?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think I just said that. I am happy to say it again. I think that Yukoners deserve to know that the expansion of nurse practitioners to provide service throughout the territory is something that is absolutely priority for us. I think that nurse practitioners are an amazing resource. I can indicate that we recently hired a nurse practitioner to work in the communities of Carmacks and Old Crow. That is being very well-received and is providing service to those residents.

Nurse practitioners are the core part of health care professionals. The opportunities for them to provide Yukoners with service across the territory is truly an exciting one. We are working to increase our level of nurse practitioners who can serve communities in the existing clinics or in the mental wellness hubs as part of that service as well. It is incredibly opportune to thank the nurse practitioners that we do have. They work tirelessly to serve their patients and their clients. I know that there is much excitement in the nurse practitioner community about expanding those services.

Question re: COVID-19 vaccination requirement rollout

Mr. Hassard: When the Premier made the politically motivated announcement about a vaccine mandate for Yukon government staff on October 15, he told media that they had a breakdown of how many staff are unvaccinated. When the media followed up on this, the Premier’s office had to backtrack. They said that, despite what the Premier claimed, they only have a sense of vaccination levels and that the Yukon government had not undertaken any efforts to confirm the vaccination status of any public servants.

Can the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission confirm that the Premier was incorrect when he told media that they know how many staff are unvaccinated?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I can say that the Premier did announce two Fridays ago that — alongside the acting chief medical officer of health — the recommendation was that we introduce vaccine requirements for public service staff. We have announced that, and I think that this is about having strong leadership throughout the pandemic to make sure that we protect the health and safety of Yukoners, the public service, and the people they serve. This is all about the role to combat COVID-19, and we have seen in jurisdictions around us that there is an increase in COVID and the wave of the Delta variant. Our focus, as a government, remains on protecting the health and safety of Yukoners. We need to do everything that we can to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As the Yukon’s largest employer, Yukon government has a duty to lead by example and do our part to keep Yukoners safe.

I will be happy to get up and answer further questions about vaccination rates across the public service. I’m happy to talk about that and to share that information with Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: Actually, the question was about the Premier providing accurate information, but again, we don’t get an answer.

In its e-mail to members, the Yukon Employees’ Union said — and I’ll quote: “Nothing has been decided — not how to protect workers with legitimate vaccine exemptions, not how the government will run the territory with up to 20 per cent of its workforce on leave without pay.”

Can the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission tell us if this is true? Does the government not have any plans in place to address staff shortages as a result of this policy announcement?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don’t necessarily agree with the way that the members opposite are phrasing the questions. Again, when we did speak in the press conference, we talked about anecdotal information about certain things, but that was about it. I will have to go back and take a look at the transcripts. If I did say something at that time that was off from the Public Service Commission, then I will definitely apologize for that. But again, I believe that we were talking about anecdotal information at that time.

It is interesting that we’re getting questions here about what needs to be cleared up. We know that the Leader of the Yukon Party came out against vaccine requirements for employees at first and then told the media that he’s not against those mandatory vaccinations. So, maybe we need to get the Yukon Party to clear up that — whether or not they’re in favour or not.

But again, as the question is being phrased, Hon. Speaker, we’ve made this point a few times now in the last two years. Recommendations come from the chief medical officer of health. They come out as soon as possible, and then we work on the logistical challenges from there on. So, the answers to the member opposite’s question, specific to Public Service Commission — I will get my minister responsible to his feet to answer any other specific questions.

But again, the Yukon Party needs to put things in the correct context. Recommendations come from the chief

medical officer of health. They come out immediately, and then we work on logistics.

Mr. Hassard: We certainly look forward to that apology from the Premier. We would certainly enjoy a few answers from them while he is at it.

In his interview with CHON-FM last week, the Premier was definitive that this was coming into force on November 30. Yesterday we heard the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission start to waffle on this date and suggest that it may be delayed.

Can the government confirm that they are considering a delay to the implementation of this policy?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What Yukoners need to know is that the vaccine requirements are based on the recommendations of the chief medical officer of health to protect Yukoners. They also need to know that the Yukon Party, depending on who they are talking to, is either in favour or not in favour of these recommendations, and they pick and choose as they go along.

These measures align with the steps that are being taken in jurisdictions across the country to increase vaccination rates and combat the Delta variant. Again, these recommendations, as they stand — the chief medical officer of health comes out with those recommendations, and we work on that implementation.

We are in conversations with unions about how we can support our employees while ensuring that we maintain safe work places. We are following the recommendations, as I said, of the chief medical officer of health, and we have an obligation to provide a safe workplace to our dedicated employees and to the Yukoners who serve every single day. That's leadership, and that's how we are on the path to recovery.

Question re: Rural solid-waste transfer stations

Mr. Istchenko: Several weeks ago, the Minister of Community Services was invited to a meeting in Destruction Bay about the government's decision to close the Silver City solid-waste transfer station. At the meeting, the minister told residents that the government had no timeline for the closure of the site and had no clear sense of how much it would cost to both close the site and make improvements elsewhere to accommodate the change. Despite this, the minister made it clear to all who came out that his mind was made up and that he wasn't interested in hearing the views of those residents who were most affected. This has become a bit of a trend of this Liberal government; they make decisions first and ask for feedback afterwards.

Why did the Minister of Community Services make the decision to close the rural transfer station without first consulting the residents who are most affected?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Hon. Speaker, and I appreciate the question from the member opposite this afternoon. I did indeed make a trip out to Destruction Bay, as part of my community tour, to speak and listen to residents. I have been doing that across the territory. I made the trip because I am interested in hearing what Yukoners have to say on matters of concern in their community. Of course, that day I did hear for a few hours about the closure of

the transfer station, which is part of a renovation of our transfer station and the way that we handle waste throughout the territory. We are modernizing and improving the territory's solid-waste management system to ensure that our practices follow sustainable and nationally recognized standards in solid-waste management. We are committed to raising the standards at transfer stations and landfills across the Yukon. This means that all sites must have gates, facility open hours, and attendants monitoring what comes in and directing customers to where things go and charging similar tipping fees across the entire waste-management spectrum.

Currently, managing garbage and recycling costs Yukoners more than \$12 million every year — \$12 million — and I will continue this answer in the subsequent questions.

Mr. Istchenko: I do want to thank the good residents of Kluane for organizing that meeting. I know that it took six months for the minister to finally accept to come, but in the case of the Silver City solid-waste transfer station, the government has indicated that they won't be able to close the site until they have a regional solid-waste agreement with the Village of Haines Junction, yet we know that the government is not even close to reaching such an agreement. So, why would the minister tell the residents in my riding that they were going to lose an important option for solid waste and that they need to look for alternatives when the government hasn't even reached an agreement with the Village of Haines Junction yet?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are committed to raising standards at transfer stations in landfills across the Yukon. Currently, managing garbage and recycling costs Yukoners more than \$12 million a year. We are working to manage these escalating costs and reduce environmental risks. Every single one of us in this House and every single one of us across society, with very few exceptions, is creating more garbage, and we have to get on top of that. That is what this plan is all about.

I don't know — the member opposite — I disagree with his opening remarks. He says that we are nowhere near a negotiated settlement with municipalities, and I take issue with that. We are working very hard with municipalities. I have been in touch with municipal leaders across the territory. We are going to continue to work to make sure that all municipalities that actually asked for this plan are managing their waste transfer stations and their municipal landfills better. They asked us for that. They asked my colleague for that plan early on. We are following through with that request.

We will work with rural Yukoners to help them manage the transition to environmentally safe handling of waste in rural Yukon, and I look forward to opportunities to discuss how we can support them through this period of change.

Mr. Istchenko: We know that the minister is planning to close several rural solid-waste transfer stations around the territory, and it is clear that this decision was made without any consultation with the residents most affected by this change. It is also clear that the government doesn't seem to have a plan in place to support those residents once the sites are closed.

We know that there are better ways to address government's concerns and we know that the rural Yukoners

will be happy to do their part, but by ignoring residents and cutting their services, the government is signalling to those Yukoners that their views don't matter.

Will the minister agree to stop his plans to close rural transfer stations, stop cutting these important government services to rural Yukon, and agree to actually consult with the residents in all of those communities and find alternative ways to address the garbage?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once again, Hon. Speaker, I am going to take issue with the preamble. We have consulted and we have spoken. As a matter of fact, at the meeting that we're talking about, I was actually there to hear from residents.

I will say that I recognize that this initiative will mean changes to how some rural Yukoners manage their garbage and recycling. The member opposite is correct; we are going to close four rural transfer stations. I understand how frustrating it must be for some people to have government make these changes, but we will work with rural Yukoners to help them manage the transition to environmentally safe handling of waste in rural Yukon. I do look forward to opportunities to discuss how we can support them through this transition.

Change is hard, but municipalities have reached out to this government and said that it is not sustainable — the way we handle our municipal waste is not sustainable. We are all producing more garbage every single day. This government was approached. We are making the changes that are necessary to make sure that our municipalities can continue to take the garbage and manage it in a responsible fashion.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 27, 2021. It is Motion No. 169, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge.

Ms. Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 27, 2021. They are Motion No. 168, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 165, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 202: *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate of Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Premier, you have 12 minutes and 24 seconds remaining.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to welcome back to the Legislative Assembly Scott Thompson, my Deputy Minister of Finance, and I will cede the floor to the opposition.

Mr. Istchenko: First of all, while we were on break — I don't know how to say this right — but there has been an incident in Faro. Our thoughts and prayers are with the community of Faro right now.

We do have to continue in the Legislature. I do want to thank the staff who are here today, and I thank the Premier for the time, and I want to thank my constituents in Kluane for their renewed support in my third term. I am honoured to be the critic for Environment, and seeing as Environment does not have a line item, I will have a few questions for the Premier. Hopefully, he can answer me, or I will get his minister to provide an answer. I do believe they are important questions for Yukoners.

I want the Premier to explain a little more about the Yukon Climate Leadership Council. I want to know what the terms of reference are.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we are in general debate for the supplementary budget. I will have some information for the members opposite, but maybe not the specifics that they're looking for. As committed by the leader of their party, if they could follow up with some specific questions to the ministers responsible, that would be great as well. But we could also, if there are questions on the floor here, endeavour to get those answers for him as well.

Speaking about the incident in Faro, we are aware that there is an active incident in Faro right now. The RCMP has requested that all persons in Faro shelter in place immediately until further notice. Our officials are working to support emergency responders and keep people safe. As we await additional information, we hope for the safety of all who are involved.

When it comes to the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, this was outlined in the 2021 confidence and supply agreement. The Government of Yukon is working with the NDP caucus to establish a Yukon Climate Leadership Council. The council will provide evidence-based recommendations to the government on plans to reach the 45-percent reduction in Yukon greenhouse gas emissions, including mining emissions, by 2030 compared to the 2010 levels.

The council will provide its advice through a written report to be released by the summer of 2022. The report will be available publicly online. We are very pleased to report that 12 people have been selected for the council through a mutual agreement between us and the NDP caucus. The Yukon Climate Leadership Council members were selected using a merit-based pre-screening process. The selected members represent a balance of experience and expertise and reflect the diversity of our territory.

The terms of reference for the Yukon Climate Leadership Council will be finalized by the members and will be released following that. Members have been selected, as I mentioned, and they'll be able to meet very shortly, from what I'm being told as well. The council will be announced very soon.

Mr. Istchenko: Does the Premier have a list of those members who were picked?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do not.

Mr. Istchenko: Will the minister commit to getting a copy to me, please? And thank you.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will talk to the secretariat about that. It is not public yet. It will be made public very, very soon and we will get the member opposite that information as soon as it is made public.

Mr. Istchenko: I was really impressed with "Our Recommendations, Our Future" from the Youth Panel on Climate Change. The Youth Panel on Climate Change prioritizes reconnection, sustainable relationships with the land, and people to ensure the social and economic systems are based on reciprocity and supported by ecological integrity. Overall, this resulted in a changed mindset and way of living to sustain a healthy planet. There were some great panelists on there; one of them was from my community. I'm good friends with her and her dad. It was really great to see.

I am just wondering for the future — they recommend quite a few things in here, and a lot of that stuff we have set out already in the Yukon with our many organizations — whether it be the local renewable resources council, the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the Fish and Game Association, the Agricultural Association, the Outfitters Association, the Trappers Association — there are many organizations out there. My question for the Premier is — I think that when we have the youth engaged, it is great to work with these organizations — I am just wondering if, in future, this is something that the youth panel would do — sit down with them — because these people are keepers of the land too. Some of these organizations have been around and came into force because of how important it is or how important our land is.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes, when it comes to, in general, the Youth Panel on Climate Change, our premise has always been

that Yukon youth deserve to have their voices heard on climate change as well as with their government. It is important that they know that we are listening. This is why we created the Youth Panel on Climate Change as part of *Our Clean Future — A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and a green economy*. Over the past year, the youth panelists have been exploring key themes related to climate change and engaging experts, elders, and other Yukon youth to develop recommendations on how the government can accelerate work on climate change.

They did present to us — the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Minister of Environment, and me — some of the recommendations. We will be focusing in on the recommendations that make the biggest impact to climate change, that's for sure.

As far as us prescribing to the panel as to who they should and shouldn't meet with, I am not going to be very prescriptive, but it is a great suggestion from the member opposite as far as NGOs and different organizations that have passion, knowledge, and expertise in the field of climate change. Again, it is a great suggestion. We are inspired by each of the panelists and the diversity of experiences that they represent and the fact that it is rural and urban — people representing different communities, different backgrounds, and different walks of life. We are looking forward to incorporating the insights and perspectives of that youth panel's work into the government decision-making moving forward.

We mentioned *Our Clean Future* — our strategic approach for climate change, energy, and a green economy. We had a great conversation with the youth on their recommendations and also on our review of that policy. For the members opposite, it was three years in the making, working with First Nation governments, municipal governments, and climate change experts to come to a comprehensive strategy for climate change, energy, and a green economy. I want to thank the Yukon Party for supporting that during the election, saying that they would continue to implement our plan on a clean future. We believe that it is good work. It is an interesting read, as well, as the targets change, recognizing that all of the technology and supply chain management — all of the incentives now — will not get us to where we need to be, but these things will change.

We are looking at an international gathering of COP. Hopefully, we will see some initiatives from international governments, as well, but the importance of having grassroots, youth-based, Yukon-led recommendations for the government are just as important as us paying attention to the national and international situations and recommendations.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that answer. I know that with the previous Minister of Environment — there were challenges with some of the renewable resources councils and some of the associations and also with the Premier, but there's a new government and a new minister.

I'm just wondering if the minister and/or Premier had met with — and I will just list some of these organizations: the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, the local renewable resources councils, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, the Yukon Agricultural Association, the Outfitters Association, the Wild

Sheep Foundation, the Yukon Trappers Association, and the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers association. The reason I am wondering if the minister or the Premier had met with them is because I want to know how much consultation was done with these organizations to determine the resources for the fly-in data capture. When it comes to that fly-in data capture — the budget for it — I was wondering what the total budget is for that.

The basic question would be: Did the minister meet with these organizations to discuss what the priority was for where to fly in this data capture, and how much is the data-capture budget this year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do know that the minister has been in meetings. I know that the department has been in meetings. I don't have a detailed list of what those meetings are, but I will endeavour to get that information back from the department for the member opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

A few years ago, Pine Lake — and I'm not sure if the Premier knows where Pine Lake is. It's in my riding. It's very close to Haines Junction. It has a nice beach that we are hoping to get more sand on for next summer for the kids, but it wound up being closed for fishing. Residents at community meetings set up through the local renewable resources council had grave concerns with closing it, because they seemed to think — and no one could answer the question if they would ever open it again. It has been a few years now. I just want to know what work has been done, how much money is budgeted, and what the local employees are doing. It's a community issue, and they would like to see the lake opened back up for fishing. It's close to the community. It's great for seniors and families. It's a safe lake; it doesn't get too windy.

I am just wondering if the Premier has any information on that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have anything new to report to the member opposite as far as some of those conversations. This could be something that we can get back to him with from the Department of Environment. I know that they have some information on RRCs — some meetings there — but I don't have anything new to share with the member opposite, but I can talk to the department to see what they have.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

So, can the Premier provide a bit of an update around salmon numbers and what actions have been undertaken by the Yukon government in response to those numbers?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the member opposite knows, DFO — the federal government — has the most responsibility for salmon. I do know that this is a conversation that is being brought up among First Nation governments and leadership, and it's something that we're considering speaking about at Yukon Days when it comes to our concerns with the federal direction — the new minister is in today — and serious concerns about our salmon populations.

They are extremely important conversations that we seem to have all the time with a lot of different First Nations. We could be going in and talking about anything from education to infrastructure, and salmon is always going to be a concern.

I know that there have been ongoing meetings with the Department of Environment and counterparts in British Columbia, as well, to coordinate and to see statistical analysis and to make sure that we can coordinate with jurisdictions that are around us. But, again, DFO being the federal department responsible — whether or not we have that conversation at Yukon Days, that would be a joint approach from both us and the First Nation governments.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier. Just to follow up a little bit more on that, a few years ago, I wrote a letter to the federal minister because they had cut the budget for Dalton Post. This year we had an almost record run of sockeye. They opened the fishery up at Dalton Post, which was a surprise. The First Nation supported that.

For the Premier at Yukon Days when he is down there — we have to stand up when budgets get cut for our fish, especially our salmon in the Yukon. I brought it to the minister's attention — and if the Premier could also bring it to the minister — because I know that, with the cuts to that budget, the staffing wasn't down there, and when we had record numbers, it was quite the challenge to get those numbers and keep track of them. That's just something for the Premier.

I want to switch gears a little bit here to what the previous Liberal government made — and some strong commitments around campgrounds during the election. I'm just wondering, in the budget, can the Premier confirm what work will be done to increase capacity at these existing campgrounds? They talked about a new campground; I'm wondering if they have picked a location for it yet.

I think that one of the hugest concerns we hear about — whether it's from the Member for Watson Lake, me, or rural members — is the roads. I'm just wondering if there is any increase to the budget to ensure that the roads to popular campgrounds across the Yukon can be better maintained.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm going to start my response with the parks strategy implementation, and we'll go from there into the specifics about new campground planning as well. I think that it is pertinent information at this point.

The strategy itself was released in the fall of 2020. The Department of Environment has been working to implement the many actions that are outlined in this 10-year strategy.

Short-term actions that have already been completed, or are currently underway, would be things like: engagement with First Nations on development of a new campground within two hours of Whitehorse, so I will talk more about that specifically; introduction of a longer serviced campground season, from May 1 to September 30; establishing regulations to update park fees; developing an online payment system to pay nightly camping fees at a discounted rate; providing opportunities for public input to modernize park regulations, including ensuring public safety and environmental and heritage protections as well; and also initiating the development of a system plan to guide the establishment of new parks.

Other initiatives that will be rolled out in the next five years would include: create more year-round recreational opportunities in territorial parks; provide more accessible wilderness experiences through enhanced frontcountry and also

backcountry trails, which is something that is near and dear to a lot of Yukoners, that is for sure; work closely with First Nations and Inuvialuit, as well, to co-develop a collaborative park management framework and develop partnerships with indigenous guardians therein; pilot a new campsite reservation system; and also add more campsites at some existing campgrounds.

The strategy itself sets a long-term direction for the Yukon government through the parks system that goes on through until 2030 — the vision of the park system incorporated with four building blocks: (1) protection of ecological and cultural values; (2) reconciliation through collaborative management; (3) public service that is sustainable, efficient, and also accountable; and (4) the public benefits, including healthy people, healthy land, and healthy economy.

Implementation of the strategy will continue to involve collaboration, as I said, with First Nations, with the Inuvialuit, and other partners to provide opportunities for public participation, which is extremely important. When it comes to the specific new campground planning, I am pleased that this work is underway, as I mentioned, to develop that new campground — so six Yukon First Nations whose traditional territories lie within two hours' drive of Whitehorse have been invited to discuss possible campground locations and partnership opportunities with the Yukon Parks branch. Pending these initial conversations, we will consult with First Nations to establish a new campground at a chosen location. Yukoners will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the new campground after a final location has been selected.

To get to the construction phase, we would also need to complete the necessary planning and design work, and that's where conversations about roads would be coming in. We are aiming to have a new campground ready for use by 2025. The new campground will provide economic opportunities for all — for First Nations, for the private sector. There will be opportunities to bid on tenders for the campground design, the construction, and the ongoing operation as well. The new First Nation procurement policy will be followed to enhance the economic outcomes to Yukon First Nation people and for businesses. Also, the outlined strategy has a number of desirable features for a new recreation park and campground. In addition to being located within a two-hour drive of Whitehorse, it will be a larger campground with up to 150 sites, it will have a rustic atmosphere with well-spaced campsites and quiet zones available as well, and it will also provide active recreation opportunities, hiking trails, and access to water bodies.

You mentioned the consultation with the First Nations specific to roads. We don't have a complete list, but \$80,000 is for Aishihik, Kusawa, and Ethel Lake roads. They are working with Highways and Public Works to have these conversations — and again maybe some more thorough updates from the ministers responsible, but in general that is kind of the plan right now for the parks strategy — but also specifically to new campground planning within that radius from the Whitehorse area.

Mr. Istchenko: When it does come to the road maintenance, that \$80,000 that the Premier spoke about are existing funds — leftover funds toward the end of the season. It is unfortunate that they are going to try to get out there and spend it now in the fall. It would be easier to spend it in the summer when it is easier to do the work.

When I was mentioning roads, we have other roads like Simpson Lake, Watson Lake, and Frances Lake. I am just wondering if the Premier — this is an ongoing issue that we've sent to the minister. I think that every year the Member from Watson Lake — this is a conversation — did you increase the funds so that the roads can be better maintained? The bigger vehicles, the larger motorhomes, the increase in usage, and, of course, the pandemic will probably wind down at some point in time and tourists will come back, so there will be a lot more traffic on there. I am just wondering if the Premier is looking at increasing that budget so there can be more dollars to do this more regularly through the summer.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I know for a fact that the Minister of Highways and Public Works has a great working relationship with the Minister of Environment. It should be easy to consult with each other, and that is where this information would be flowing as far as if there are new requests when it comes to specifics in the Department of Environment. I think that there is \$2.2 million set aside for campground planning, which is an important part of access to these campgrounds, making sure that we have the infrastructure there to get folks to where they need to be. I will do a shameless plug about the amazing work that the Department of Highways and Public Works has done to access close to half-a-billion dollars of extra money for the north Klondike Highway project, let alone some of the other work that they've been doing to secure very specific federal funding through applications.

Whether it is through our regular budgeting process or our regular five-year capital plan, but also our ability to apply for and get some of these augmented funding windows — Gateway, for example, or, in this case, more money for the north Klondike to upgrade the levels of those highways — it's great to see the department being so active and engaged with its federal counterparts.

We will make sure that, as we move forward on campgrounds, the accessibility is extremely important. I know that the conversations will be flowing from the Department of Environment into the Department of Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to talk a little bit about docks. The cottage lots at Kluane — there was a dock that was put in at Dutch Harbour. It was contracted, tendered, and to be put in, and then an employee from Environment was to learn how to do it and they were supposed to do it every year. Well, the contractor has been putting it in every year and taking it out every year, and it didn't go in until mid-summer this year. It is under the Department of Community Services for some reason, not Environment.

I understand that docks and marinas are under Community Services. That dock is large, and I think there have only ever been two boats at that dock. The conversation now is that

maybe that dock could be better used somewhere else. I am just wondering if the Premier has any information on budgets, proposed new docks, Kusawa — Laberge could really use a nice dock like was in Dutch Harbour, so I'm just wondering if he has any more information on that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Respectfully to the member opposite, that would be under Energy, Mines and Resources, not necessarily Community Services right now. They are going to be available here past general debate, so they can answer the specific questions that the member has.

It is not only if there is money in this current budget, but also forecasts from where the department may see pressures moving forward when it comes to docks or, again, with recommendations from the member opposite about the nature and use of specific docks.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I know from talking to the contractor that it was Community Services that called them to go and put the dock in and out, so that is something that, I guess, when we get into Energy, Mines and Resources, we can get a little bit more information.

So, the next thing that I would like to talk about is firewood. We know, due to the inaction in addressing some of these permit issues, when it comes to getting firewood, there has been a serious increase in firewood costs, so how much more of the government's budget does the Premier think will have to go toward firewood for campgrounds?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would just indulge the member opposite — if he could clarify. Was his question specific to campground firewood supply or firewood supply in general?

Mr. Istchenko: It's for campgrounds. The Government of Yukon purchases so many cords of wood a year for campgrounds. I guess the question would be: How much more is this going to cost them because there is a lack of firewood? Will there be enough firewood for our campgrounds next year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We know that, currently budgeted this year, it would be over \$400,000 specifically to firewood in this budget. As the member opposite rightly points out, with an increase in campgrounds, there will be an increase in need, so those details would be worked out in future Management Board submissions from the department.

I did mention, as well, that short-term, medium-term, and long-term planning for campgrounds — \$2.2 million, I believe, was the number set aside for all of that planning. Again, how that manifests into specifics of when we do get to a point to discuss a brand new campsite — that would be a pending submission from the department.

We also, to answer the member opposite's question, don't think that there's going to be a problem securing firewood. There hasn't been to date. It is already contracted out to a number of suppliers.

Mr. Istchenko: I was interested to read — in the Order-in-Council 2021/141 — the regulations to amend the Yukon campground regulations. Section 5 is amended, and it says in the subsection that the expression “‘subject to subsections (4) to (8)’ is replaced with the expression ‘Unless otherwise authorized to use campground facilities by a park permit and subject to the subsections...’”

So, moving forward to 4, it says: “The following sections are added immediately after section 5.01:

“5.02(1) The minister may designate a camping site as a group camping site or a tenting-only campsite.”

It goes on to say: “5.03(1) Subject to the terms of a park permit and to subsections (2) and (3), the maximum number of occupants of a camping site is eight.”

Then (2) says: “Subject to the terms of a park permit, the maximum number of occupants of a group camping site is 12.” So, there are “8” and “12” in here. If my neighbour's daughter is having a birthday party and there are 13 people at that campsite in the afternoon, who will enforce this?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess my confusion would be — whether we are going to change the structure of the parks or not, there are park officers who are tasked with enforcement currently, and they would still have those enforcement capabilities and responsibilities if we are changing certain subsections of the plan. But, again, to answer the member opposite's question again, it would be those officers.

Mr. Istchenko: I can see that becoming quite the contentious issue.

Also, section 8 is amended and is replaced with the following: “Except as otherwise ordered by an officer, a person must not

“(a) stop or park a vehicle on the travelled portion of a road in a campground;

“(b) stop or park a vehicle in such a manner as to

“(i) impede the proper use of a road in a campground, or

“(ii) damage vegetation in a campground...”

So, the roads in the campground — I am sure that the Premier, along with everyone else, has travelled in many of our campgrounds. The sites in most of these campgrounds were built back in the day when we didn't have 30-foot motorhomes and large fifth wheels, so sometimes you are lucky to get a truck and trailer in there with one. I spoke earlier about the birthday party in the afternoon, and if someone parks on that road, the road is actually impeded. You can get around that vehicle, but it could be deemed to be impeding traffic. On my way driving to work early on Monday morning, there was a blue vehicle rolled over in the ditch — it has been there for a month and a half. There was a vehicle at Stony Creek on the shoulder of the road in the dark, with no markings on it, and there was another one just by where you used to turn into the bakery at the Takhini Crossing.

My point for the Premier is that there are regulations, and they seem to sit on the highway for a long period of time and they are a public nuisance to safety. But, with the neighbour's third birthday party for her daughter, when everybody pulls out there and pulls off to the shoulder of the road as best as they can to go to the birthday party, we are going to make sure that they don't park there — but we leave vehicles unsafe on the highway.

Hon. Mr. Silver: A lot of the concerns that the member opposite is putting on the floor today came from the parks consultation. All of this starts with education and making sure that we are aware of what the situations are and what the concerns are of people. Again, the pushing of groups to larger

group sites — I understand the member opposite's concerns. Guests being on the sides of the road — these are safety issues. As I said before, we have the officers who have the enforcement obligations there.

I think he went into something a little bit different when it comes to derelict vehicles and when it comes to travelling on our highways. I will agree with the member opposite. On the way to Dawson, there are a couple of vehicles that have been sitting on the side of the road for quite some time. I will endeavour to get back to the member opposite as far as if any policy has changed since he was previously Minister of Highways and Public Works as far as our duty to make sure that our highways are safe.

It is one thing to have a vehicle that has been pushed off onto the side of the road — we see those a lot — but to have a vehicle that is still on the road, in a derelict situation, is a huge safety concern. I completely agree with the member opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I am just bringing concerns forward that the Premier will probably hear as they move forward with the new changes to campgrounds. I am not even going to talk about the fees. I will just leave it there. I made motions in the House and asked questions about this before.

I want to talk about gravel pits a little bit and the access by hunters. The hunters go in there for sighting rifles. Some gravel pits have homes within a kilometre. A lot of communities have very active gun clubs — which we do — with a range, and lots of people go there, but some of the communities don't have that and so they will go to a gravel pit. I am just wondering if, for public safety, the government has considered adding signage to those gravel pits that would say, "Residents are close by. Do not sight in your rifle in this gravel pit" — for lack of better words.

I have heard this complaint from quite a few constituents — First Nation and non-First Nation — who choose to live kind of off grid in there but every now and then get woken up with gunfire. It's not that the people sighting in rifles are purposely doing this; they just don't know. I am just wondering if there is any thought to putting some signs up.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have definitely seen an increase in some activity in these pits, for sure, and one of the prime responsibilities of the department is to make sure that gravel pits are used safely. If that use has been augmented for rifles, maybe some target practice and some scoping, then we have an obligation for the health and safety of the public, and the associated liability is very significant. The concerns to date about some of that public use of those gravel pits — I don't necessarily have any more information for the member opposite as far as a new strategy or a new approach.

I will give him a little anecdotal information. I used to have a job at a range, and my job was to feed the clay pigeons on the arm as it went over the bank. It was quite a great job. For them to get me out of the hole, they would shoot the top of the tin roof. That was my bell to tell me that my shift was over. I had a lot of fun in that area, that's for sure. That is just a little anecdotal information for the member opposite.

I will see from the department if they have any other concerns or strategies when it comes to folks who are using the gravel pits for the sighting of rifles.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. One of the last things that I want to talk about here is the elk — the elk and agriculture conflict basically in the Ibex Valley. There is supposed to be something coming out in March 2022. As the previous Minister of Environment myself — and it is an issue. It's an issue that is a tough one for both sides. You have the Yukon Fish and Game Association, which looked at a hunting opportunity and brought elk into the area. I heard many a story from Alex Van Bibber on the reasons that they pushed for that. It was an opportunity to hunt in a burn area that wasn't much area. Well, since then, we've seen farming and things like that. Every time I talk to the Fish and Game Association or I talk to the Agricultural Association, it seems like they are sort of pitted against each other. I am just wondering if the Premier or the minister is willing to sit down with both organizations in a room — and probably the MLA from that area as it is near and dear to his heart too — and have a discussion to see if we can't actually look at some — and they may be some drastic changes, but it would be for the benefit of both organizations, for public safety, and also for the destruction of property within those farms in the Ibex Valley.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do know that there have been meetings already recently. Also, when it comes to the agriculture and elk conflict, this is a joint department approach between Environment and Energy, Mines and Resources. Energy, Mines and Resources will be here after general debate. As far as strategy for sit-downs, I would really want the minister responsible to answer that.

Suffice it to say, we absolutely recognize the concerns that have been raised by a segment of the agriculture community regarding specifically the Takhini valley elk population and its impacts on crops and infrastructure on farms. We continue to research fencing options and herd reduction to mitigate these concerns.

There is not going to be one approach. I think that we need to take a look at different approaches here. We are engaged in a two-year plan to manage elk conflict through increased funding for fencing, as I mentioned, but also the reduction of that herd size is an extremely important piece of this as well, through increased harvesting — and also the development of elk-specific mitigation for new agricultural land releases.

The agriculture-conflict elk hunt aims to reduce that elk population in the eastern Takhini area and condition elk to stay away from the conflict area. We need to continue down that path. We have also established an elk-agricultural working group, and we continue to have discussions with affected farmers and landowners. There are also interest groups that are extremely interested, and First Nations as well, in addressing the elk-agricultural conflicts.

The member opposite would be aware of the 2016 elk management plan prioritizing the conflicts in this area. The Department of Environment is currently reviewing that plan, and they are going to update with information from an

upcoming survey in addition to what has been gathered over the past five years.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. I look forward to my fellow colleague from Copperbelt South asking a few more questions when the department is in.

I have one more before I finalize today. Earlier today, for the Premier, I asked the question in Question Period about the closing of landfills. There was a public meeting held in my riding, and a lot of work had been put into gathering data and information by the local residents. This is probably almost a two-year, ongoing issue. A friend of mine who works at the Arctic Institute, Harry Penn, wrote a letter to the previous minister quite a few years ago, and he actually highlighted climate change, GHG emissions, and really the science-based approach to this issue.

I read it earlier today, but I think it begs reading again — from the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change.

The recommendation that came for our future is the Youth Panel on Climate Change, which prioritizes reconnecting sustainable relationships with the land and the people to ensure that social and economic systems are based on reciprocity and supported by ecological integrity. Overall, this results in a changed mindset and a way of living to sustain a healthy planet.

So, at the Silver City landfill site — once a week, when General Waste drives out from Whitehorse, they drive on the Alaska Highway to Destruction Bay. They go to the landfill just north of Destruction Bay, and they dump the bins. On their way back, on the Alaska Highway, they stop at the Silver City landfill. The Silver City landfill from the Alaska Highway is probably the distance from here to Main Street.

It is a big truck; it burns diesel. He pulls in there, and if the containers are full, he dumps. Then he goes back out that distance — I don't think he even puts a kilometre on — and then he continues on to Whitehorse, and maybe someday to Haines Junction, to go and dump this garbage. It is bear-proofed, so the bears aren't in there.

So, two things: If they close that site, human-wildlife conflict from household garbage from all the residents will become an issue. In the summertime, it's hot, and it's hard to deal with that.

The other issue is, and if you want to talk about changing the mindset of living to sustain a healthy planet, having 10 or 20 — there are more than 10 residents who use that landfill — having all those people drive three times a week to Haines Junction in their vehicles — this is what Harry put to me a year and a half ago, and it was brought to the previous minister, and this minister might have seen that letter too — really? Is that good for the planet? Or would it be better to leave that site there, managed the way it is?

At the meeting, there was a little bit of misinformation on the minister's part. He talked about the liabilities that this dump has. Well, there are environmental contaminant site liabilities in the Department of Environment. There are 23 Yukon government landfills on it, there are grader stations, and there are all kinds of liabilities. We are not running out there closing grader stations and closing a bunch of other places, because there is an environmental liability. The environmental liability

is there from previous generations of all political stripes — that's how they did it. We don't do it that way anymore, but we still have to monitor those sites, and that's something that we have to accept. There are schools that have this — we aren't closing the schools.

So, many letters have been written to the Premier and to the minister. The Kluane First Nation wrote a letter, and I want to quote from the letter: "Our government strongly objects to the lack of consultation and to the proposed implementation. Our citizens and local residents vehemently oppose these changes. We know this shortsighted action will lead to: illegal dumping..." — also not good for the environment — "... illegal burning of waste..." — toxins not good for the environment — "... illegal burial of waste..." — not good for the environment and, of course, the "... human-wildlife conflicts."

They go on to say that: "Further, the Implementation Working Group identified in the report has no Yukon First Nation representation. The decision to exclude the Yukon First Nations, despite them being listed as 'partners' throughout the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste report, damages our trust in a shared path of reconciliation."

On this file, I would be remiss if I didn't bring up some of the hard work of the local residents — the residents in Keno. The residents in Keno wrote the Speaker, the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun, a letter with the same issues.

I'm just wondering, if the Premier gets on his feet, if he can explain to me how this is better for climate change and for the environment — closing these sites — by making more bears be destroyed, more garbage strung out all over the planet, people starting to burn their waste or bury it. I just kind of wonder if the Premier would comment on that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Let's go back to 2017. That's when the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste was struck — in October of that year — with a mandate to provide recommendations for actions related to solid-waste management in the Yukon. The committee worked to produce a report. Their recommendations were then provided to the Minister of Community Services the following year.

We also know that we're in a situation now where, moving forward — we've been slowed down a bit by COVID, but bottom line — and I think the minister did a good job early this afternoon talking about modernizing and improving the territory's waste system, the solid-waste management system, to make sure that our practices follow sustainable and nationally recognized standards in solid-waste management. We're very, very committed to raising those standards at transfer stations and also at landfills right across the Yukon.

This means that all sites, as the minister spoke to today, must have gates, they must have facility open hours and attendants monitoring what's coming in and directing customers where to go with things — similarly, the tipping fees as well.

The minister spoke about the \$12 million — that currently managing garbage and recycling in Yukon costs more than

\$12 million a year. We are working to manage these escalating costs and to reduce the environmental risk. I do recognize that this initiative will mean changes to how some rural Yukoners manage their garbage and recycling, and I understand the frustrations that people have when government makes change. I recognize some of the comments and questions from the member opposite as far as, as we get through the hurdles and get to a new management system, there will be questions and concerns about the modus operandi, but again, we are making good on the solid-waste committee struck back in 2017.

The committee had very specific recommendations: developing a user-fee pilot at Yukon government and municipal waste management sites; exploring improved household hazardous waste and waste-oil collection programs and service levels; exploring organic diversion and compost programs in the communities; exploring waste transportation and collection efficiencies; and also advising the Minister of Community Services on solid waste, specifically focused on solid-waste governance models, stewardship, funding models, and service objectives.

When it comes to landfills and transfer stations, they require electrical power to improve the reliability of electric fences, to provide lighting and heat for attendant buildings, and to improve our ability to manage waste with the use of compactors. In using the compactors, we will reduce hauling costs by 30 percent to 50 percent. Facilities have been supplied with power recently. That includes Champagne and Deep Creek, so the costs there — Champagne is \$100,000, and Deep Creek is \$175,000. Grid power connections were also made in the Dawson and Mayo landfills.

I understand the concerns from folks. I know that the minister was out and had a consultation with the community on this. We have talked about phase 1 of the implementation in Whitehorse peripherals and those tipping fees. That was originally in place for April 2020, but of course, with COVID, it was delayed until August 1, 2020.

Again, implementing the recommendations of the committee is extremely important. There are going to be bumps along the way — absolutely — and we recognize that folks who are going to lose the way that they are normally used to getting rid of household items has changed, but we are moving forward on these recommendations. It is extremely important to municipalities, and it is something that the minister has taken on in earnest.

Mr. Istchenko: The Premier talks about the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and I know that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee — and the Premier campaigned his first time around to be Premier on “Be Heard”. That was a campaign commitment, but the residents of Keno and the residents of my riding in Silver City — they weren’t consulted when it came to these recommendations that the committee put forward. They weren’t part of that conversation. Maybe if they had been part of that conversation, things would be different.

I don’t believe that conservation officer services got a fair shake at commenting on human-bear conflicts, and the EMR people who manage gravel pits, and Community Services

people who manage other things — on where this waste is going to go.

The Premier speaks often about — when he is going to do something, he says that this government will put a climate lens on this and look at it. So, by implementing these recommendations, I have mentioned to the Premier that the GHG emissions are going to go up. It is going to be worse for the environment, so the Premier is basically — I guess my question for him is: Sometimes, I guess, it is okay for the Premier to implement the policy that is worse for the environment than better for the environment?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think we are just going to have to agree to disagree that this new approach isn’t going to be helpful to the environment. Will there be challenges along the way? Yes, there will be. Are departments adamant that they will work through these and make sure that we continue to engage? Absolutely. We talked about the reduction of size and therefore more efficiencies in the plan, so the plan does identify the environment. I hope the member opposite is not necessarily mocking an environmental lens — I hope that he supports it — because it is extremely important.

Again, I think we will agree to disagree that this new approach, in the long run when it comes to how we pay for garbage, how we think about garbage, how we recycle — all of these things play into this bigger conversation. We have mentioned the money that the general taxpayers pay right now, and we have mentioned before the disparities between the Yukon Party and the Liberal approach with polluter-pay initiatives like carbon pricing, for example. The members opposite, in time, came on board with that. Hopefully, they will start to see the importance of modernizing the system and moving forward on the recommendations, not only just for the municipalities and for the territorial government, but also for the environment.

Mr. Istchenko: The Premier, obviously — agree to disagree. I guess I get that. I don’t understand the hesitation in listening to residents. Sometimes you just have to change things on the fly. Maybe you didn’t consult. Maybe admit that your information is wrong.

I think that probably one of the biggest things for my constituents is that when they take the time to address an issue and write to the Premier, the Minister of Environment, and the Community Services minister and don’t even get recognized — “Thank you for your correspondence, and we will get you an answer back” — that’s disappointing. I would hope that maybe some of the good people in Kluane and some of the people around the Yukon, up in Keno, would actually just maybe get a response back that says, “We agree to disagree and we’re closing your dump.” But not even getting a response back — that’s not cool. That’s all I have for today.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am not really sure specifically what correspondence the member opposite is speaking about in terms of no response. I agree that if somebody asks a question of the government or the ministers, regardless of the topic, they need this to be worked on.

If the member opposite would like to let me know specifically who has not been answered — as far as my office

— I would be very interested in that. I know that we have come a long way since the Yukon Party supported the burning of garbage across the territory in rural Yukon. We are moving forward on a modernization plan. If the member opposite has specific communities or constituents who have not received a response from our casework system or from our departments, I would really like for him to share that information with me.

Ms. Tredger: I would like to go to the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change, which my colleague brought up. I'm hoping that the Premier can clarify some of his comments about that. I believe what I heard him say was that the government is going to prioritize the recommendations that have the biggest impact on climate change. Honestly, when I heard that, it felt a bit worrying because I have no doubt that every single recommendation in here was there for a reason. I'm sure they had many, many more that they could have thought of and have already prioritized as best that they could.

I'm wondering if the Premier can clarify: Do they intend to implement all the recommendations in this plan?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm not really sure why the member opposite is surprised that we would be focusing in on those recommendations that have the most adverse effects on climate change.

We heard the Leader of the Third Party talk about how we need action now, so that's what we're talking about. The prioritization will be based upon a climate lens. Again, we will have time to go through those recommendations and we will respond in kind.

I do want to thank the youth panel for their recommendations and their passion. Again, I think that it's important to focus in on climate change when it comes to the Youth Panel on Climate Change. Our priorities will be making sure that we make recommendations and policy, moving forward, that have the best effect on achieving our goals through our climate change plan.

Ms. Tredger: One of those recommendations, in particular, is to — this is number 4 of recommendation 4 — and I quote: “Respect and adhere to the inherent right of First Nations to determine when hunting and other subsistence activities may occur within their respective traditional territories.”

I wanted to ask about this government's approach to working with First Nations on hunting rights. In August 2021, Liard First Nation issued a hunting ban for parts of their traditional territory. In previous years, the Ross River Dena Council had done the same thing. I was very concerned to read the statement — the press release from the Yukon government — on this. It starts by saying that they are aware of these requests, and then the very next thing it says is that licensed hunters do not require permission to hunt on non-settlement lands in any traditional territory.

What that says to me is that they can ask, but you don't have to listen. That is not consistent with the spirit of reconciliation, and it is certainly not consistent with this recommendation that First Nations have the right to determine what hunting and other subsistence activities occur within their traditional territories.

My question is: Does the government intend to continue with their current approach of telling hunters to disregard what First Nations ask for, or are they planning to change that and follow the recommendation of the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will start by saying that our government and the Ross River Dena Council work together on identifying and advancing shared interests and priorities, including anything from mineral exploration and development to wildlife and fish, capacity development, and economic opportunities. We will continue to collaboratively work with the Ross River Dena Council to put forth positive outcomes for their members and benefits for all Yukoners as well.

We are aware that the Ross River Dena Council is concerned about hunting by individuals who do not reside in the Kaska traditional territory. Though the *Wildlife Act* applies throughout the Yukon and includes the right to access public lands, it is every hunter's responsibility to make sure that they know the rules about access and permissions that apply to hunting.

Ms. Tredger: I would like to ask about another one of the recommendations. This is under recommendation 1(5): “Make Yukon University tuition-free for all Northern youth, including Indigenous youth from transboundary northern nations and youth from northern British Columbia.”

Is this something that the Liberal government is considering doing?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, I don't have any update as far as the recommendations from the youth panel. I know that Education is up for debate as well, but I don't have anything new to share with the member opposite on that.

Ms. Tredger: I don't think that the NDP can let a budget cycle go by without asking about the protection of species at risk. It is the 25th anniversary of the Yukon government's commitment to develop species-at-risk legislation. That is a quarter of a century that we have been waiting for this legislation.

In 2019, the then-Minister of Environment said, “The Yukon Government is currently working to develop a Yukon Species at Risk Act.” I wonder if the Premier could give us an update on where that legislation is at.

Hon. Mr. Silver: As we know, most other jurisdictions have legislative tools to list and to conserve species at risk. Such legislative tools are also a priority for our government. With foresight and planning, the Yukon has an opportunity to benefit from hard lessons that have been learned in other jurisdictions — other parts of Canada and the world — to prevent the endangerment of species such as woodland caribou and grizzly bears as our territory further develops, whether that be through infrastructure or through the economy. A timeline to complete a new legislative framework for species at risk depends on several factors. These include determining how new legislation would interact with existing federal and territorial laws and requirements.

In the interim, we continue to actively manage and steward species at risk using various existing legislative tools. These include the boreal caribou section 11 conservation agreement

signed in 2019 with Canada, with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, and the Gwich'in Tribal Council to protect species and their critical habitat.

We'll continue to work collaboratively with our partners in the territory, including First Nation governments, the Inuvialuit, wildlife management boards and councils, and also interested groups and other government orders on species-at-risk conservation. Our efforts to ensure that species, such as wood bison, woodland caribou, and grizzly bears, continue to have viable populations — it is extremely important, and it needs to be guided by the management plans of the Yukon government, developed with First Nations, the Inuvialuit and also the wildlife management advisory councils, the North Slope, and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

The Yukon Conservation Data Centre also continues to track the locations and status of lesser known and globally rare species that are maybe Beringian in origin — to identify those that are unique to northwestern North America. This information is used in global reports on biodiversity change as well as environmental assessments.

Work is continuing on. I don't have any specific updates for the member opposite with her specific question, but our platform identified to prioritize the development of legislation to protect species at risk, and we will continue on that path.

Ms. Tredger: Madam Chair, I would also like to ask about an item in the Environment budget, which I believe will not be called, because there is not a net appropriation. Under parks and boat launch dock replacement, just over \$1.1 million has been cut from that budget. Could the Premier tell us what that cut is and what projects have been cut?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Second round of specific dock questions — I will have to get back to the member opposite.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you. I would appreciate that information and perhaps with it there could be a list of the boat launch and dock replacements that are planned for this year and if that has changed.

With that, I will conclude my questions for today.

Ms. White: Madam Chair, just a quick question for the Premier: I am just trying to decipher an OIC from 2016 — the Order to Establish an Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls — just asking if this was part of the national inquiry because it is under the *Public Inquiries Act*.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Madam Chair, I hope that the member opposite would give me a little time to get back to her on a very specific question on an order-in-council from 2016 here in general debate on the supplementary budget. I do know that the advisory committee on murdered and missing indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit-plus works very closely with Yukon First Nations, with Yukon indigenous women's groups and families represented, as well, to finalize *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice*. Again, our strategy — the Yukon — the first response to the national inquiry was released on December 10, 2020, in ceremony at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.

The advisory committee has created a technical working group to write the implementation plan for Yukon's strategy and also the technical working group, including representatives

from indigenous women's organizations, family members, and technical experts — all as required, obviously. All partners and signatories, including other levels of government, will have the opportunity to provide input to that implementation plan — lots of work that has already been underway and also what should be planned for the future.

I do know that, as far as finances go, the department has allocated \$200,000 in 2021-22 to support the accountability forum in early 2022 for partners, signatories, and family members. Preliminary discussions have been started with the Yukon advisory committee and that event is being planned. Regarding a specific order-in-council, I will have to get back to the member opposite.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*?

Seeing none, we will proceed to clause 1. Clause 1 includes the bill's schedules. Among the bill's schedules is Schedule A, containing the departmental votes.

The matter now before the Committee is Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Vote 53 begins at page 3-1 of the estimates booklet.

Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To begin with, I would like to welcome to the Legislature Deputy Minister John Bailey and Assistant Deputy Minister Shirley Abercrombie. Just for a moment, I would like to give a little bit of a shout-out to Ms. Abercrombie because she has just let us know that, later this year, she is retiring after several decades of service to Yukoners.

I first met Ms. Abercrombie back about 15 years ago, when she was part of the advisory board for the Northern Climate Exchange at Yukon University, then Yukon College. My experience with her has always been terrific. She has been such a great person to work with, and I just want to say thank you to her, as I first stand — and I'm sure colleagues will also send their thanks.

Madam Chair, I am rising to present the 2021-22 supplementary budget for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. I will give a few introductory remarks. I won't try to go for very long, but just enough to talk about those aspects of the budget.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has a very important role in regulating the responsible development of our natural resources, and it's a diverse department covering the mining, agriculture, oil and gas, land, forestry, and energy

sectors. There is a lot there. Over the past year, I know that the department has been working very hard on several fronts with forestry, as we have had questions here in the Legislature about firewood and about supply, and a lot of work on biomass, as well, with agriculture on our new strategy “Cultivating Our Future”.

With energy, we have heard questions today about *Our Clean Future* and about how we’re shifting our energy economy. It’s incredibly important work for the Yukon and for Canada and the world. With our Land Management branch, and our Land Planning branch, they have had a lot of work — whether it’s on resource roads or whether it’s on the Dawson land use planning that’s underway right now — by the way, comments are due by November 1, and I encourage everyone to get their comments in — or our minerals branch. Whether it’s active mines or past mines, they’re doing work to make sure that all of that work is safe, secure, and remediated as necessary, and then we’re working on successor legislation. So, it’s a lot of work. I just want to begin by saying thank you so much to the department for all of the tremendous work that they have been doing over the past year.

The past year has been one like no other and not just because of COVID — but as well because of COVID — but many land and resource sectors were significantly affected by the pandemic. At the same time, most resource activities still continued to some degree, meaning that the hard-working staff at Energy, Mines and Resources had to be innovative and adaptable to continue to carry out their duties. There is quite a range of initiatives and services happening across all the branches, as I just delineated. I’m pleased today to speak to a few of those that are in the supplementary budget.

Let me just talk. Our total operation and maintenance appropriations are estimated at just under \$71.5 million, which is an \$8.1-million increase from last year. The net increase is primarily a result of increased funding for water treatment and to conduct care and maintenance at Wolverine mine and funding to implement *Our Clean Future*.

Under capital, the total capital appropriations are estimated at \$1 million, which represents \$537,000 — or a significant increase from last year’s capital budget. This increase is primarily due to increased funding to enable the purchase of new electric vehicle charging stations, which I’m sure we’re all very excited about.

When it comes to revenues, taxes and general revenues for the department are estimated to be \$2.8 million, the bulk of which — \$2 million — are revenues from fees collected related to: leases, permits and royalties; placer mining fees; quartz mining fees and leases; and maps and publications. This revenue amount is similar to past years and indicates overall stability in activity levels anticipated from the Land Management and Mineral Resources branches.

Third-party operation and maintenance recoveries are estimated at \$13,000. This is a small number — comparatively, of course — and this is a decrease mainly due to changes in the balance of securities used to address the Wolverine mine activities.

Recoveries from the Government of Canada this year are at \$16.6 million. The recoveries overall are up by nearly half-a-million dollars from last year. This increase is associated with minor work plan adjustments for type 2 mine sites, which have slightly altered the amount of the agreement, and \$200,000 in capital to help with the purchase of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Just to highlight that a net of a \$6.8-million increase in the other category, under the budget, is associated with new funding for *Our Clean Future* and for Wolverine work plans. Government transfers are budgeted at \$11.8 million, an increase of \$1.9 million from last year’s \$9.8 million. This increase in transfers is primarily due to an additional \$1.7 million in *Our Clean Future* funding for residential and commercial energy.

Madam Chair, let me just leave it there for right now. I am happy to get into debate with colleagues and answer their questions. I will highlight more around the details as their questions lead.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for his opening comments. I welcome Mr. Bailey and Ms. Abercrombie. I have had the opportunity to work with Shirley for a number of years as a former minister, and her public service has been exemplary. I thank you for all your years of service and wish you well in retirement. I wish whoever succeeds you well in packing around that great big binder that I know is over there by your desk and that you use to provide assistance to the minister here this afternoon.

Again, I thank the minister for his opening remarks and I thank officials for the briefing that they provided us on the supplementary estimates. Of course, members will know that the last time we had a full Spring Sitting was in 2019. I am sure it won’t surprise that I do have a number of policy questions and will be catching up with the new minister on a number of different aspects when it comes to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Actually, the first issue that I wanted to start with is the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board. Obviously, this was a board that was set up in 1999 as an advisory board to the minister on mining issues. It was set up pursuant to section 9 of the *Economic Development Act* and then a ministerial order put it into effect. In that ministerial order, it says: “The Board shall submit to the Minister by May 1 of each year a report on the activities of the Board during the preceding calendar year, including if requested by the Minister a report on the Board’s recommendations during the preceding year.” That is section 2(3) of that ministerial order from 1999.

When I went on yukon.ca, the most recent Minerals Advisory Board report that I can find is from 2018. When you go by this ministerial order, we should have 2019 and 2020 also provided to the minister. There used to be a practice of tabling these reports in the Legislative Assembly that the minister’s predecessor went away from during his time. I am curious if the minister can tell me if there is a 2019 and 2020 report, and if so, where can I find those reports?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We just sat down with the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board quite recently. The deputy minister

and I had a great conversation with them. It was talking about the 2020 report. My recollection is that the 2019 report that they submitted was, I think, just referring to the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. I will have to check on that to be sure, but I will find where that is and make sure that I either point that to the member opposite or table it here in the Legislature so that everybody can have it.

The 2020 report is in development as we speak. The Minerals Advisory Board has been working with a draft and working with the department, so I think it will be out a little later this fall. I will advise as soon as I see that coming forward.

If there are further questions, I am happy to answer them.

Mr. Kent: Can the minister explain: Have there been any discussions with the Minerals Advisory Board about why that 2020 report didn't meet the May 1 deadline and if we are planning to go back to that May 1 deadline in 2022, which would be the tabling of the 2021 report?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think that it is predominantly one reason and a little bit of a second reason; the main reason is just COVID. Things stretched out and the Minerals Advisory Board talked to us about the challenges that the sector was facing and just trying to navigate. I think that was fair when I heard them talk about that explanation.

I think another smaller reason is that we have just transitioned chairs of the board, and I think there has been a little bit of change there. I want to say that, in sitting down with the board, I am very impressed with their perspectives, their interest, their focus, and their attention to providing advice as a board. I am pretty sure that things will be back on track shortly.

Mr. Kent: So, yes, we will hopefully look forward to getting that report prior to May 1 of next year — for this calendar year — and I will forward to the minister looking into where the 2019 report is. If that can be tabled or uploaded to the website, that would be very helpful.

I touched on this with the Premier during general debate, and I am curious if the minister is able to provide us with some information with respect to the issuance of the decision document for the Kudz Ze Kayah project. Obviously, the Premier mentioned that not much work had been done over the past number of months, as the federal government, which is one of the decision bodies, is in caretaker mode. But now that the Cabinet has been named, have there been additional meetings scheduled with respect to the issuance of that decision document, as far as the minister knows?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mining and mineral exploration remain of central importance to the Yukon's economy and contributing significantly to the territory's economic performance throughout the pandemic. I think that we were one of only two jurisdictions that saw GDP growth in 2020, and that was largely thanks to mining, and that was only because mining was done safely. If I can just give a shout-out to the mining sector — I know that they worked very hard to put in place safe plans around COVID, and I think that we are on a good footing because of that.

With respect to the specific question from the member opposite — have meetings been scheduled around Kudz Ze Kayah with the federal government? The answer is yes. We just

saw the announcement today of the new federal Cabinet, so I downloaded that information to see who had Fisheries and Oceans and who had Natural Resources, and I am looking forward to ongoing dialogue around Kudz Ze Kayah.

Mr. Kent: Sorry, perhaps the minister mentioned it, but he did mention there are meetings scheduled. When is the next meeting scheduled with respect to that specific decision document? One of the things that we would be hoping is that there could be some sort of signal given on when a decision document for this project will be issued.

As the minister no doubt knows, the draft screening report was put out by YESAB, and then it was consulted on again. I think it's coming up on two years ago this fall that this situation took place. There have been a number of other delays — obviously, the federal government referring the final screening report back to the executive committee. I know that the company has been very patient, but I'm curious if the minister has any indication on when a decision document will be issued for this project.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think we were also disappointed with the federal government's decision to refer the recommendations for the Kudz Ze Kayah project back to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board executive committee for reconsideration, so I share that concern.

I don't have the ability to stand today and say: "Here's the time when we can expect a decision." What I can say is that I ask for a briefing on this issue weekly from the department. I know that, as well, major projects within the Executive Council Office is also working on this. So, I think we are, at all times, trying to advance this and to work diligently.

We work, as well, to stay engaged and in dialogue with the Kaska — both the Liard First Nation and specifically the Ross River Dena Council. I'm not able, here during the budget debate, to give an expectation for the timeline, but I can say that I continue to request that the department work diligently with other governments.

Mr. Kent: I just quickly want to pivot to another decision document that is pending. Obviously, these are executive committee screenings, so I know that it is not the minister who has the lead on them, but this is the Quill Creek forestry decision document. I know that YESAB put out their recommendation. I have a couple of questions for the minister, because I didn't get a chance to look it up: Is the Yukon government the only decision body, or is there a federal decision body with respect to that particular project? Given the tenuous circumstances around firewood supply this winter and some of the costs that we're seeing — and some of the other things that we are hearing about — I know that individuals in the Member for Kluane's riding are quite anxious to see this decision document come forward, so can the minister give us any sort of an update on the decision document for Quill Creek?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, after we met with the wood producers' association — with the Official Opposition House Leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and the Third Party House Leader — and we heard their original concerns, we had a lot of conversation about Quill Creek at that

time. One of the things that the department and I did was to sit down with the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board to try to make sure that these things were moving along. I thank the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board for issuing their recommendation.

I can advise you, Madam Chair, and the House, that it is just the Yukon government that is the decision body, so, there's no one else. I can also advise that we are not going to be sending this back to the executive committee — that we are working through the recommendations as they have been given. We are working closely with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, of course, on this, and I think that our hope is that we get to a decision in the next month or months, but this calendar year is what I think that we are working toward.

I can also advise that, when we were told that there was a shortage in the supply for firewood suppliers — wood suppliers, the cutters — the forest resource branch worked to get access to other cut blocks right away. So, Quill Creek, as you may know, Madam Chair, is in the Haines Junction area. It is a very large project, and that is why it went to the executive committee — it was the size of the project that got it there — but we got two other harvest blocks in through YESAB, and they have now been approved. So, I think those two blocks together are 4,400 cords. It was to get at the immediate supply, and I am happy to answer further questions.

Mr. Kent: I think that the minister said, by the end of the calendar year, they are anticipating getting that decision document on Quill Creek. Can the minister explain how long after that before permits are issued? I know that there are some roads that will need to be upgraded in that area, in talking with the harvesters there. Obviously, this is a significant concern for many Yukoners, including seniors and elders who live in our community and rely on the commercial cutters to deliver wood to their homes.

I guess the other question that I would have for the minister is with respect to these other cut blocks — the 4,400 cords, I believe, was the number he used. Has there been uptake? I apologize if he already said it, but if he could tell us where those cut blocks are, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I don't have an exact location, but they are in the Haines Junction area. I know that they are now permitted — I am referring first here to the two cut blocks that we worked to get available for the harvester immediately in Haines Junction — I guess it is harvesters, but there is generally one who has this work and does the work — for the 4,400 cords. So, my understanding is that they are permitted, and the only thing that needed to happen was frozen ground, and the operator is able to go in. I will ask the resource branch to make sure that the ground is frozen and the operator is good to go, but that's my understanding, that they are good to go now.

Operators choose — sometimes on their own accord — when they want to go and cut, so, sometimes that is not all within our control. With respect to Quill Creek — and I think that the decision document — I said that we hoped that it would come out this calendar year, and my understanding is that the permit for harvesters to go in would be available this calendar

year so that they could get in as quickly as possible. Again, the direction that I gave to the department after we met with the wood producers' association was to please work to support the wood producers' association, and there are other areas where the branch has been working to support personal firewood-cutting areas and access, et cetera. So, they have been working diligently to address the short-term shortage and then to talk longer term about how we can get more productive around wood supply, because we think that this is an important piece, for example, of *Our Clean Future*.

Mr. Kent: I will return to some forestry questions a little bit later on — or if we get time to come back to EMR on another date — but I do have a number of other questions that I wanted to ask the minister. Those previous two were focused mostly on the decision documents. That's why they were grouped together.

I did want to ask a series of questions regarding a news release that came out on August 30 of this year, the title of which was — I'll just paraphrase — that the Vangorda Plateau portion of the Faro mine site was acquired by Ross River Dena Council's development corporation and Broden Mining partnership. I know that, talking to the Premier in general debate and then earlier today about the BMC Kudz Ze Kayah decision document, a lot of that work was paused during the federal election and the subsequent time since the election date as the Cabinet is being formed because the government is in caretaker mode, but I'm curious why this joint news release with Ross River Dena Council and Broden Mining was put out during the actual writ period. If the minister could explain why the government made this joint announcement that involved the Government of Canada during the writ period, I would appreciate hearing his thoughts on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I will say about this announcement is that it was really about working in support of the Ross River Dena Council and the Tse Zul Development Corporation as they moved to acquire and assess the development potential of the Vangorda lands, which is on their traditional territory — their asserted traditional territory.

Our involvement was at their request — and to announce — I don't wish to comment about the federal government. We were approached by the Ross River Dena Council and we supported them in their announcement.

Mr. Kent: The first paragraph of this joint news release, which was put out with the Yukon government letterhead and the letterhead of RRDC, says: "The Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, Ross River Dena Council and private entity Broden Mining have agreed on the basic terms and framework for the sale of mining claims and leases on the Vangorda plateau portion of the Faro mine site and neighbouring lands to the east of the plateau."

So, my question for the minister was — I mentioned the August 30 date that this was announced. That was right during the federal election, during the campaign period. We have heard from the minister and the Premier with respect to the other decision document — for instance, on Kudz Ze Kayah — that the meetings and work were paused around that during the

election and because of the caretaker mode, essentially, that the federal government was in.

I will just ask the minister again: Why did the Government of Yukon put this announcement out that involved the Government of Canada during the actual election period? It's very rare that anything like this would happen, and I am curious why this announcement was made during the election by the Yukon government in a joint release involving the Government of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just provide a little bit of context. Vangorda is attached to the Faro mine site, so Faro is really a federal responsibility around remediation. I believe that this had been worked on for years. It is quite possible — I don't know the answer to this — that the work could have been supported by the federal government and that it was just waiting for Ross River Dena Council to arrive at an announcement.

Again, I will not speak here for the federal government. That is not my role, but I will say that this project is a good project. Just looking at the press release, it is about a brownfield site, the Vangorda Plateau, and it has two open pit mines that had already undergone significant environmental disturbance.

The announcement here is: "The Ross River Dena Council, through Dena Nezziddi LP and Broden Mining Ltd., have formed the Tse Zul Development Corporation to acquire and assess the development potential of the Vangorda Lands within the traditional Ross River Kaska Dena territory."

It's a brownfield project. I always am encouraged to see brownfield projects because it often means that we can turn an environmental challenge into an economic opportunity. It's great when we can get the environment and the economy working together. I think that this is one of those instances.

The member is concerned with the timing. I am expressing that, in terms of timing, all I looked at was the request from the Ross River Dena Council. From our perspective, supporting this process is an important step toward reconciliation with the Kaska Dena Council and it provided a significant opportunity for renewed socio-economic and cultural growth in the area. That was why we signed on to this press release. What I will say is that if the member is concerned and once a new minister in place, I will pose the question to ask what the federal government choices were around this. I will be happy if I get any sort of response to share back, but this is the federal government that I'm being asked about.

Mr. Kent: I will have to come back on this with the minister because I'm not getting a response to the questions that I am seeking answers to.

The minister mentioned that, of course, these claims are part of the Faro block of claims. It is a type 2 site. The Yukon government under the previous minister, I believe, turned over the management of that site. It has always been managed by the federal government, but they have primary responsibility rather than the Yukon Assessment and Abandoned Mines. This August 30 press release — again, I am sure we were about halfway through the federal election campaign when this news release came out — was a joint release from the Yukon government, Ross River Dena Council, and Broden Mining, but it involved the Government of Canada. I am curious why the

minister wouldn't have directed officials to check with the Government of Canada prior to putting out a release about something that is a federal responsibility halfway through a federal election campaign.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would just like to let everybody know that the PricewaterhouseCoopers report was tabled here in the Legislature as the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board's 2019 report and posted on the Yukon Assembly webpage. I will try to look back to find out when that happened, but it happened last year.

Again, the member is concerned with the federal government's choices. I thank him for expressing that concern. I have offered to share his concerns with the federal government. I am not sure what else he would like me to say. I am happy to see Ross River Dena Council moving forward on a brownfield project, and that is why I added my name to a press release — or it shouldn't be about me, but the Yukon government, including my role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I think that this is a good project. I am happy to answer questions about why I believe that to be a good project and why we signed on.

Mr. Kent: I agree that this project is a good project. The minister was correct in saying that discussions around this go back a number of years. It goes back to my time as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and I am sure that we are going to talk a little bit, as the afternoon goes on, about the specific terms of this agreement and how it was reached.

But again, the point that I am trying to make is that this announcement, this press release, was put out halfway through the federal election campaign. It involved the Government of Canada — it specifically references the Government of Canada in the news release — and I am curious if the minister felt like this would be any sort of election interference. I guess that is exactly what I'm trying to get to the bottom of.

Again, we have heard from the minister and the Premier about other projects involving the federal government that have been delayed, like the Kudz Ze Kayah decision document, because of the caretaker mode. This was right during the middle of the election campaign that a press release was put out that referenced the Government of Canada, and I'm curious if the minister felt like there would be any sort of concerns around election interference with a press release that references Government of Canada — essentially — assets, as they are the owners of those claim blocks, and the Government of Canada itself agreeing on these basic terms and framework. Why couldn't this announcement have waited until after today, which is the day the federal Cabinet was sworn in?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm happy to continue to stand and respond to our role in this press release. I will say to the member opposite that, when it was presented to me, I focused on our role. That's what I was focusing on.

The member is asking about the federal government. I would be happy to direct those questions to the federal government. I am saying that we put our name alongside a project that we knew had been worked on for years — and the member has just indicated that it had been worked on when he was in the role of Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

We were approached by the Ross River Dena Council to join them in a press release that they wanted to make. I think that we signed on to that press release to show our support for what we believe is a good project.

The member can continue to ask me about the federal government, and I will continue to say that I'm happy to direct those questions to the federal government.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify for the minister, it wasn't this specific deal that has been worked on for years. This specific deal, involving Broden Mining as the private entity, is something that has emerged since our time in government. So, that's something that either emerged during the previous term of the Liberal government or this current one, since the spring election.

One of the things that concerns me about the perception of election interference here is that we have seen it before, with an announcement just days ahead of the Liard First Nation election, where the previous Liberal government made some announcements that caused quite a bit of concern in that community, and there were some concerns that the announcement at the time could have been perceived as election interference. That is why we asked this question. The minister says he was focused primarily on the Government of Yukon's role, but the Government of Canada is a major player in this, and this was halfway through a campaign, so, there could be the perception of election interference in issuing this press release involving the sale of mining claims.

Back to the Liard First Nation — it was the newly elected Liard First Nation chief who was accusing the Yukon government of interfering with the election at that time. Again, there is a pattern here, and that is why we are extremely concerned with this news release going out during the actual writ period, or during the election campaign. Again, I am curious why the minister didn't think that perhaps it was inappropriate to put this announcement out during an election campaign, referencing the Government of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have just been informed by officials that Canada did review this, so whoever would have been in the caretaker role did approve it. Again, the point of the press release was to talk about a good project that has been in development for years, where we were indicating our support for the Ross River Dena Council and for the project.

Again, I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to stand up and talk about this good project, and again, I do not speak for the federal government. I will continue to say that I think that this is a good project, and I think that, when we signed on to the press release, I was happy to be part of that announcement and to show our support. As I have already stated, we think that this is a good partnership opportunity, and it provides an opportunity for responsible mining in a brownfield area. This project has the potential to bring real benefits to Ross River and nearby communities. So, that is why I signed on to this press release, and I am happy to say that here during Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Kent: The minister, in his previous response, did say that this was reviewed by Canada, so I am assuming that it was signed off by Canada. I am interested in that, just because

this seems like something more than what would be involved with a caretaker government, but that said, that is not the responsibility of the minister — it is the responsibility of Canada, and perhaps my questions would be better directed to Elections Canada or the Government of Canada, so, I will do so to get a sense of what their feelings are with respect to this news release issued during the election period.

I do want to talk a little bit about the deal itself, where the private entity, Broden Mining, is in partnership with the Ross River Development Corporation, forming this new development corporation to acquire these assets of the Vangorda lands. Obviously, I agree with the minister that this is a good project, and we look forward to the economic opportunities and the benefits it creates, but when we look at similar projects in the past, whether it's Keno Hill or Alexco, at that time, there was a competitive process between Alexco and another group — I believe maybe groups — to acquire those assets from the federal government. The more recent example that we have seen is Mount Nansen, where, again, we saw a competitive process to acquire the assets.

So, some individuals I have been talking to who are involved in the mining industry up here are curious as to why there was no competitive process with respect to this particular project. Essentially, it looks to them — and it looks to us — that Broden Mining was given a sole-sourced opportunity to acquire these assets and develop these assets that have the potential to be worth millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars.

I am curious as to why, in those other two processes, it was competitive, but when it came to this one, there appears to have been a sole-sourcing to Broden Mining.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I believe that I will have to pass this question on. My understanding is that the terms of the transfer of the property were developed through discussions between the Government of Canada and the Ross River Dena Council. I don't have an answer for the member opposite on how that worked, but I can say that, when Ross River reached out to us, they indicated that they were supportive of the project. I think that this is an important thing. I understand the member opposite's question, but I will have to redirect.

Mr. Kent: I will redirect the minister then back to the news release that he had said he was happy to add his quote to, and in the very first paragraph, it says, "The Government of Yukon, Government of Canada, Ross River Dena Council and private entity Broden Mining have agreed on the basic terms and framework for the sale of mining claims and leases on the Vangorda plateau ..." That portion of the press release would suggest that the Government of Yukon did have a role in these basic terms and framework for the sale, so, I am curious why the minister is not able to offer any comment on that and instead is referring to the Government of Canada. If, as the press release reads — again, it was a joint press release that the Yukon was a part of — it said that they did have a role in getting these assets — these claims and leases — with the basic terms and framework for the sale. Is the minister saying that the Yukon government doesn't have a role, as the press release suggests? Perhaps he could explain why the press release reads this way.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'll reach back to the department to ask about the terms and the framework and what aspects we're involved with, either in a direct role or supporting role.

What I understand is that Canada worked with the Ross River Dena Council and asked the Ross River Dena Council who they would like to partner with, and this was a focus on reconciliation and impacts of Faro over the years. What I'm being informed is that this is how Canada worked with the Ross River Dena Council. Ross River Dena Council, I think, identified where they wished to partner and that's how it came forward.

Again, I will ask the department to clarify for me about our involvement with terms, but broadly, the Faro site is the Government of Canada's responsibility to see remediation. Vangorda is part of that; it's a brownfield.

In the past, as we know, when Faro was first developed, there was really not much involvement with First Nations at all. Now, this is an opportunity, I think, for a new path, a new future, and I thank the member opposite for indicating that he, too, supports this project. I will seek to get further answers.

Mr. Kent: While we support the project itself, what we are having difficulty with is the process to arrive at the awarding of the project to Broden Mining. The minister said that it was part of reconciliation and the Ross River Dena Council brought Broden Mining to the table. I guess, then, my question for the minister is: Why was Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation or the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation not afforded the same opportunity to pick and choose the proponent for Mount Nansen — as in the case of Little Salmon Carmacks — and Keno Hill? Those both went through competitive processes. Then, of course, as part of those competitive processes, there would have been involvement of the First Nation. I am curious as to why there is such a departure in process here, with respect to Faro, as opposed to what we saw with Mount Nansen and Keno Hill.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The member is asking about Mount Nansen and Keno. I would have to look back in time to understand when those agreements were reached, but I think that we are talking about an evolution of how this work proceeds. I think that it is good that we are talking about ways of looking at reconciliation. I think that is very important when we talk about these types of projects.

Yes, I think that it is different. I think that it is notably different, and I actually think that the way we are doing it now is an improvement over the ways in which it was done in the past. It doesn't mean that there aren't ways to improve it still, but I think that this does mark a difference in how this work evolves and that it is more focused on affected communities, including the First Nations on whose traditional territory this work is happening.

Mr. Kent: So, just for the minister, the Mount Nansen deal was in 2019. That would have been done by his predecessor in the role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Again, it was a competitive process. It wasn't that long ago.

Keno Hill dates back further obviously, but the Mount Nansen near Carmacks was within the last couple of years, I believe — that the deal has closed with respect to the award.

Again, what we're hearing from industry is that — and again, the people whom I've been talking to in industry, like us, are supportive of this project but very concerned about the process that picked the private sector partner — the Broden Mining. So, again, my question to the minister is perhaps: What would he recommend that I tell all of those industry players who would have welcomed an opportunity to submit a bid on the eastern portion of the Faro project — the Vangorda Plateau portion — and found out instead, in a news release, that Broden Mining was essentially sole-sourced the opportunity to be the private sector partner?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Let me make a bit of a commitment here. The member has a lot of questions about the process around this. The process definitely involved the federal government. Let me reach out and get some sort of fuller response.

I will continue to answer questions, but I will just try to investigate it a bit further to not only answer his questions, but the questions from people within the industry who are posing the questions to him. That's great.

I will say a couple of things. First of all, I think that Mount Nansen was more of a focus on remediation. That was a different type of project. I understand that there were two phases within the Vangorda process. The first one was for the Ross River Dena Council to identify a partnership that they would like to work with. We were not involved with that. After that, once that had been identified, there was some work for us to work with Canada and the Ross River Dena Council on the terms of the transfer. This would include things within those terms that relate to mine leases, footprint, and ensuring that the Canadian commitment regarding liability was kept whole so that it wasn't going to end up being transferred — those sorts of things.

I am getting down into very technical pieces, and what I would just say is that I am happy to get a fuller response for the member opposite, including how processes were decided upon and what ways companies could be involved.

What I will say is that whenever I have met with mining companies to talk to them about their work, almost the first thing out of my mouth is to say, "Have you worked with the local community? Have you reached out to the First Nation? Are you engaging with them?" Because that is what I believe the right approach is. It doesn't have to be just mining when we talk about that. With any type of development project, our advice to all companies is to please work with the First Nation where that project is going to be. That's what we think is a critical first step. This is consistent with that.

It has been a consistent approach — not only in my term, but also in my predecessor's role — that this has been a significant focus.

Mr. Kent: I agree with the minister. Obviously, when you meet with companies to talk about — involving First Nations specifically in the area and that are the most affected, or communities in the area that are most affected, is an

important thing to communicate to those private sector companies, but again, in this situation, only one private sector company was given a chance. As I mentioned, some of the individuals whom I have spoken with in the industry found out about this opportunity with the release of this press release that, as I mentioned, was done halfway through an election campaign and was signed off by somebody in Canada who referenced that Yukon, Ross River Dena Council, and Broden Mining had agreed on the terms and framework for the sale of these claims.

I hope the minister understands the frustration that we're hearing from members of the mining community — that they weren't even presented with the opportunity to participate in this. As I mentioned, it is essentially a sole-sourcing to Broden Mining to be the mining partner on this. Obviously, we welcome the partnership with Ross River Dena Council.

When you look at Mount Nansen and Keno, the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and Keno, and Little Salmon Carmacks — they have specific spelled-out roles, but neither of them, from my understanding, were offered the opportunity to bring their preferred partner to the table, as was the case here. I will look forward to the minister providing us with additional information when it comes to the terms and the framework for the sale of these claims on the Vangorda Plateau and why this specific process was used — where only one company was afforded the opportunity to be the private sector partner, which, as I mentioned, is a departure from past practice with respect to how these deals have been dealt with in the past.

I have just one quick question before we move on to a different topic. The minister mentioned, I think, that Broden Mining met with Ross River to discuss this. Were there any meetings prior to this announcement between Broden Mining and the Government of Yukon — either ministers or officials?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, the member opposite keeps referring — that this was a sole-source and only one company was offered this opportunity. I don't know that. There is an assumption in there, and I think that we should talk with the federal government or Ross River Dena Council, or both, to ascertain what the process involved. I just don't want to jump to that conclusion. As I have already stated, I am happy to reach out to get that information on behalf of members of the House and to share it.

The member asked whether or not I had sat down with Broden — sorry, I have to even check on the name of the company — anyway, the proponent. I did have one meeting with them, and I will also say that we had scheduled a meeting to happen with Ross River Dena Council, but it was postponed, so I haven't had that opportunity as of yet.

Mr. Kent: So, I thank the minister for that response.

The second part of that question was: Did Broden Mining, or any representatives of Broden Mining, have meetings with department officials?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: At the meeting that I had with Broden Mining, the deputy minister was with me. That's what I know of, and we're just reaching into the department to ask whether there had been other meetings and will happily share that information as well.

I don't know what the Official Opposition has had in terms of conversations with Ross River Dena Council. I would be interested to hear that. I hear the member opposite say that they support this project, but I also am hearing lots of concerns raised. I think it would be important for everyone to understand whether or not they are supportive.

I've just heard from the department. What the department is indicating to me, Deputy Chair, is that there have been many meetings over several years with Broden Mining, but none that talked about or worked directly on the potential of the partnership between them and the Ross River Dena Council.

Mr. Kent: Deputy Chair, I understand that the minister is perhaps not happy with the line of questioning. I said that we support this project. Where we have challenges is with the process at which these claims were disposed of by the federal government. We had challenges with the fact that there was this joint news release put out during an election period. We'll be quite interested to know who from the Government of Canada signed off on this during an election period. But, again, those aren't questions for the minister specifically on this.

We do have some concerns with the process that was undertaken, which was a departure from previous processes where companies were given the opportunity to bid on something like this. The minister is correct; Mount Nansen is more a remediation-type project, but Keno, as we see and as we've heard from the Premier, is an active mine site with remediation opportunities and work being conducted there as well.

In neither of those cases was the First Nation responsible for bringing the private sector company to the table, so again, this is a departure and we will look forward to hearing the Government of Canada's reason for doing that. It's a concern to us, and our job, as the Official Opposition, is to provide scrutiny over actions of the government, and this is one that jumped off the page at me the moment I saw this news release on August 30. This is the opportunity that I have to address this on the floor of the House with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We will welcome the information that comes back from the Government of Canada, as well as any information the minister can provide with respect to the basic terms and framework for the sale that the Government of Yukon has signed on to here, according to the news release from August 30.

Obviously, we have been asking questions on this for a little bit of time now, but there are still some outstanding answers that we'll be looking for so that we can pass it on to the individuals who have raised this with us and have set off the alarm bells as far as not having any idea that this opportunity was there for them to take a look at.

I do want to turn to the confidence and supply agreement that the Liberals signed with the New Democrats to maintain their place in government here in the territory. When all three party leaders met with the board of directors of the Yukon Chamber of Mines in April/May — shortly after the election — the confidence and supply agreement was something that was on the agenda for us and I'm assuming for others as well. I do want to catch up with the minister on some of the topics from

that CAS agreement. The first is the successor resource legislation. The timeline suggested would have been for the tabling of that legislation next fall.

Can the minister tell us if the government is on track to table the successor resource legislation — the rewrites, essentially, of the quartz and placer mining acts for next fall?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, is the work around successor legislation on track? The basic answer is yes. We formed a steering committee, and that steering committee met in mid-September. I was invited along with Chief Joseph to give some opening remarks. It was super well-attended, because this is not just the Yukon First Nations; it was also transboundary First Nations. There was a lot of interest and energy in the room. I think that they are meeting again this week, and I know we have the other tables up and running. I have been in conversations with folks about that work.

I think that it's important to note, as I rose to my feet and spoke about this in the spring, that the confidence and supply agreement did talk about there being meaningful consultations with Yukon First Nations, so that was anticipated as the agreement was created. From that first steering committee meeting — I just heard some concerns expressed about the need for time to do that work. That's fine. As of right now, we are on track.

I think that we are committed to developing new legislation for both the *Placer Mining Act* and the Yukon *Quartz Mining Act* but also for lands. We have been working in partnership with Yukon First Nation governments to modernize our mining regime and our land regime in a way that provides clarity and consistency to industry, business, governments, and the public. I think that the successor resource legislation process is a government-to-government process that includes meaningful engagement with industry stakeholders and the public.

My impression of the work by the department, and our relationship with other governments as this work evolves, is that it has been fruitful and important work. Everyone sees it as important work. It doesn't mean that we won't hit challenging discussions. I think that those are coming — important, hard discussions. We are looking forward to it. I will answer further questions as the member asks them.

Mr. Kent: I do have to take a step back to the Vangorda questions for a second. The minister mentioned in one of his responses that there have been a number of meetings over the past number of years with Broden Mining not specific to the Faro project — I believe that is what he told us. However, when you look at the Broden Mining website, it says that it was a purpose-created company for the commitment of working with Ross River Dena Council to acquire the Vangorda Plateau lands. Were they individuals from Broden Mining that the minister is referring to in all these years of meetings? It looks to me, according to Broden Mining's website, that it was purpose-created to deal with the acquisition of these Vangorda Plateau lands.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will take a step back further to the PricewaterhouseCoopers report that the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board gave us as their 2019 report. They asked that to be their report. It was tabled on December 17, 2020.

What I think I said — and I will check the Blues — but the note that was passed to me by department officials was that there have been many meetings with Broden Mining Ltd. over the past several years, but what the department is indicating to me is that none of those were meetings to discuss any potential partnership with Ross River Dena Council. That is not what it was focused on. Broden Mining, as a mining company, has had meetings with the Mineral Resources branch — yes.

Mr. Kent: I am just trying to understand this, then. So, Broden Mining Ltd., which, according to their website, was purpose-created for the commitment of working with Ross River Dena Council to acquire the Vangorda Plateau lands — the minister is saying that department officials met with Broden Mining a number of times over the past number of years but didn't talk about how they were — they met with Broden Mining, who was purposely put together to acquire the Vangorda Plateau lands with Ross River Dena Council, but through all of these meetings with Broden Mining, they didn't discuss why the company was created — is that correct, Deputy Chair?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Some of this is going to get a little bit involved. I want to be careful that, again, I will make sure to, as I have already committed to, get the department to develop a full written response, and we will talk with Canada, et cetera. But, as I understand it, what the department is referring to is that they met with a company called Oxygen, which is a mining company.

Then that Oxygen formed Broden Mining Ltd., and that's where we get to the point where they are forming a partnership with Ross River Dena Council. The branch — just knowing the people involved. They were some of the same folks and, just wanting to be fully disclosing — that we've met with some of those folks. It was just indicated to me that they had met with them.

Mr. Kent: So, if I understand it correctly, it was, I guess, individuals, who are now Broden Mining — who officials and perhaps previous ministers, or others, had met with — the Oxygen — I'm not sure what the minister referred to it as. But there was a forerunning company to Broden Mining that the minister met with. So, I mean, obviously I recognize that many of these discussions are confidential in nature, but if it wasn't to talk about the Vangorda Plateau, what was the subject of those meetings with the forerunner to Broden Mining? — as much as the minister is able to let us know without breaking any confidentiality arrangements that the officials had with the company.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I did not say whether the conversation was about Vangorda. What I said was that it was not about a partnership with Ross River Dena Council. I am now working on texts that are being sent to me by the department. I just want to be careful. I think that it would be better to give all of this in a fulsome response. I've already offered to do it. I think that's the best way. That way, we make sure that it's as clear as can be for everyone involved.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. I understand. Obviously, you're getting information on the fly in real time. We would be curious as to the subject of those meetings, as well as the other

things that the minister committed to with respect to Canada and how this arrangement was arrived at.

As I said, the project itself is something that we support going forward, but it's the process by which the proponents were chosen that has raised flags in the mining community with individuals whom we have talked to.

I know that the minister did respond to my questions about successor resource legislation, so when we sat for that brief amount of time in late May, prior to the summer break, we did talk a little bit about these timelines for developing new pieces of legislation that are foundational to an industry that the minister has certainly admitted is extremely important. That was shown during the pandemic, but also for years and years prior to the pandemic — how important this is. My concern is that we are going to rush the development of this successor resource legislation to meet these timelines that are put forward in the confidence and supply agreement that the Liberals and the NDP have and we are not going to get that legislation right. We are going to make mistakes or corners are going to be cut, and we will end up with legislation that doesn't work for anyone, whether it is industry or First Nations or other stakeholders involved in the mining industry here in the territory.

Again, we felt that it was aggressive. The 14- or 15-month period that we talked about in May was aggressive to get it done, and we still feel that perhaps these timelines are not realistic to get the successor resource legislation done.

I thank the minister and his officials for the time here this afternoon.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Acting Government House Leader 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 Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.