



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 254

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, April 30, 2025 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2025 Spring Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Lane Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 30, 2025 — 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 made to the Notice Paper. Motion No. 1288, notice of which was given by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, was not placed on the Notice Paper, as it is out of order.

In addition, Motion No. 1289, notice of which was given by the Member for Whitehorse West, was not placed on the Notice Paper, as it is out of order.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.
Visitors introduced

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Victory in Europe Day

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Victory in Europe Day, otherwise known as VE Day. VE Day 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe.

In the spring of 1945, Canadians were fighting on numerous fronts, from the North Atlantic convoys to the skies over Britain and Europe, the raid in Dieppe, the Italian campaign, the liberation of the Netherlands, the Battle of Normandy, and into the German heartland.

On May 8, 1945 at 10:43 p.m. Berlin time, the German high command signed the act of military surrender, ending the war on the European continent. As news of the surrender spread, celebrations broke out in European capitals that had endured air raids and artillery for six years. The excitement of this surrender quickly spread across the Atlantic, where Canadians from coast to coast to coast felt joy and relief that the end of the war was near.

Canada sent more than a million soldiers into battle, 42,000 of whom would never return home, and tens of thousands were wounded or prisoners of war.

On May 8, Prime Minister Mackenzie King addressed the nation by radio telling Canadians, “You have helped to rid of the world of a great scourge.” Crowds filled the streets across Canada. Some offices, stores, and factories closed for the day to join in, while others kept working tirelessly to support the ongoing war efforts in the Pacific.

Although their long struggle was nearly over, there was still work to be done in Europe. Many Canadians were deployed to provide security in occupied Germany and aid to the liberated Dutch, creating a lasting bond between the two nations.

As the day ended and celebrations faded, the war still continued in the Pacific, and Canada might have been called back into action. Ultimately, the war would end with VJ Day coming months later, with Japan officially surrendering on August 15, 1945.

Today, I want us to take the time to commemorate VE Day and reflect on the fragility of peace and the sacrifices made by so many people during the six-year period of the Second World War. While we are 80 years removed from the ending of the war, I want to thank the brave men and women who served in the war. Their courage and sacrifice shaped the world we live in today. The impact of their service remains profound and deeply appreciated. Those countless acts of selfless sacrifice for a greater good for all people of the world must never be forgotten.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Victory in Europe Day — 80 years of peace since the end of World War II.

On May 8, Canada will unite to celebrate the end of World War II in Europe that so many millions paid the ultimate sacrifice to achieve. This is a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that has defined our country by those who fought for the freedoms that we all enjoy today.

From the fall of 1944 into the spring of 1945, Canadian soldiers persevered to liberate the Netherlands, leading to the eventual surrender of the remaining German forces. Following the war, the Dutch family began a tradition, a symbol of friendship and gratitude for Canada’s assistance during the war. They gifted 100,000 tulip bulbs to Ottawa as a token of appreciation for sheltering Princess Juliana and her family during the war. This tradition continues today with bulbs being planted in various locations in Ottawa, a staple of the Canadian Tulip Festival.

The liberation of Holland by Allied Forces, particularly Canadian troops, was a deeply emotional experience for the Dutch people.

This is from a young Dutch boy’s perspective — and I’ll quote: “As darkness fell, the night sky was alive with the sight and sound of rifles being fired in victory ... As I look back 60 years to that memorable day — 5 May 1945 — when the sounds of victory replaced the sounds of death and destruction, I realize that, as a lad, I had little understanding of the true importance of the celebrations that were taking place in our farm yard.” Another citizen reported: “There was a very important bond that was formed there, and each year, lots and lots of Dutch people open their doors to Canadians who come back to the Netherlands to see where their family was, or to visit the graves...”

During my early years in the military, I visited Holland often. When they noticed the Canadian flag that I had sewn on

my gear and my backpack, I was always amazed at how appreciative they were to me as a Canadian and thanked me for my service and that of my forefathers. It is so important to recognize and celebrate events like Victory in Europe Day to remember those brave souls who sacrificed everything to help liberate a country and fight against tyranny.

Nearly six years of that war had lost the lives of millions and destroyed homes, families, and cities and had brought huge suffering and needless destruction to entire countries. I would be remiss today if I didn't recognize that the Royal Canadian Legion has a long-standing history of commemorating VE Day. I want to thank Branch 254. Some of the members are here today. Their tireless work does not go unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, tributes like this in this Legislature are very important. Canadians need to learn and remember these events and our history or we will be doomed to repeat it.

Thank you, and lest we forget.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the 80th anniversary of the victory in Europe.

World War II was the most destructive conflict in human history and claimed the lives of millions of people all over the world. It was a difficult war that included entire countries being occupied, shifting alliances and the redrawing of national borders.

On May 8, we celebrate Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces 80 years ago. This day brought a symbolic end to organized violence across the entire continent of Europe. It meant the return of hundreds of thousands of military personnel to their loved ones. It also marked the liberation of several countries from former occupation and, in western Europe, it marked the end of totalitarianism and the beginning of a new era of democracy.

In Germany, VE Day is not a day of celebration as it is in many other countries. Rather, it is a day of sombre commemoration when those who fought against Nazism in the German resistance and died in World War II are remembered and the promise is renewed to never allow such terrible events to repeat themselves.

Marking this day feels more important than ever. What we commemorate of VE Day is the sacrifice made by so many in the face of repressive, autocratic regimes that used hate and fear to launch a worldwide war. Millions died because of that ideology, and millions fought and died to end that oppression.

I want to believe that the lessons of the most destructive war in human history are still clear to us, but we are facing the rise of regimes across the world that are autocratic and aggressive. They are regimes that attack their own people as well as their neighbours. They are regimes that sow hate and intolerance and fear.

As we consider the cost in human lives that was World War II, as we consider what the generations before us had to do to stem that tide, we must renew the promise that we will not allow anything like this to happen again. We must remember the steep cost of democracy and freedom and tolerance. We cannot say

that we honour those who died unless we are willing to fight with everything we have against letting history repeat itself.

Lest we forget.

Applause

In recognition of 75th anniversary of Whitehorse

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Yukon's capital on the occasion of its 75th birthday.

First Nation people have been occupying this welcoming space along the Yukon River for thousands of years, but today, we are celebrating a community that has developed here over the past 75 years.

Stamperders established a quasi-permanent settlement on this spot — on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council — several decades earlier. Those early residents dabbled with the idea of naming the community "Closeleigh" after the Close brothers who were major backers of the White Pass railway. We should all appreciate that cooler heads prevailed and the burgeoning town ended up with a far more appealing moniker to me when, on May 22, 1950, Commissioner J.E. Gibbon proclaimed to the citizens of the territory that Whitehorse would become an incorporated municipality 10 days later on June 1. It was appropriate recognition for the expanding influence of the town that had grown, thanks in part to the construction of the Alaska Highway, to a community of roughly 2,500 people when the town was officially recognized under a municipal ordinance.

Over the subsequent years, that small town grew into the largest city in northern Canada with more than 30,000 residents, but it has grown into something far more significant than that. It has matured into one of Canada's most attractive cities to live, work, and play, with more than 850 kilometres of wilderness trails for people to enjoy and strong employment opportunities for everyone. It has expanded beyond its industrial roots into a hub of history, the arts, and sport. It has become a place where people can start their lives as new Canadians and we can all gather and contribute to the unique culture that has developed here over time.

So, congratulations to Whitehorse on its 75th birthday, but also, thank you to everyone who has ever called this city home. You've all made your mark on this town.

Applause

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the City of Whitehorse on the occasion of a significant milestone, their 75th anniversary since incorporation. I'll begin by stating the obvious: Whitehorse is a special place and a special city. I was born here, raised here, and have lived here pretty much my whole life. In that time, I think one of the best descriptions I've seen of this town came from historian Helene Dobrowolsky and archivist Linda Johnson in their wonderful illustrated history of Whitehorse. They said that — and I quote: "Two things in particular make Whitehorse special. The place: a beautiful valley where a convergence of geology, a mythic and powerful river, and an abundance of resources have attracted everyone from ancient peoples to recent immigrants. The people: a

parade over the centuries of hunters and fishers, traders, miners, entrepreneurs, community-builders, sports icons, artists, families, and that special breed of northerner, best known as, “the Colourful Five Per Cent.”

I couldn’t agree more.

The area around modern-day Whitehorse has a long and rich history. “Kwanlin” is the Southern Tutchone name for the Miles Canyon area; it means “water through the canyon”. And, of course, we all know the history of the name “Whitehorse” from its early gold rush settlement and its link to the old Whitehorse rapids that resemble the white manes of galloping horses. Of course, that settlement was pre-dated by the old Canyon City, and this was also an area used by First Nations that pre-dated the gold rush by thousands of years.

It wasn’t until 1950 that the city incorporated and held its first election for Mayor Gordon Armstrong and four aldermen. There were no plans for many years to build a city hall, and the council operated first out of an office in the Northern commercial building at 2nd and Main. Whitehorse was officially designated the capital of the Yukon Territory on April 1, 1953, and government was moved with it from Dawson City to Whitehorse.

It was 1967 when city councillors and staff finally moved into the current city hall, which included, as part of construction, a museum and fire hall. Of course, that early council had their work cut out for them. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was much work: infrastructure, schools, businesses, and other developments sprung up over the years, and Whitehorse became a desirable location for many families with the promise of work.

While much has changed since those early days, in some ways, the challenges this city faces today are similar to those faced by the first council back in the 1950s — rapid growth, housing, and, of course, pot holes — but also, there was — when this community first incorporated, there lay ahead nothing but opportunity. I’m sure that the current mayor and council will exercise that same work of problem-solving, creativity, and determination that has made this town so special.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to wish the mayor, council, and staff of the City of Whitehorse a very happy 75th anniversary. We know that the brightest days of this community lie ahead, and thank you all for your leadership and helping us get there.

Applause

MLA Tredger: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the City of Whitehorse.

The City of Whitehorse is a proud reflection of the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and stories that make up its history. This history stretches back much further than 75 years. Thousands of years prior to the gold rush, the construction of the Alaska Highway, or incorporation in 1950, First Nation people have been living on and caring for the land we now call Whitehorse.

The 75th anniversary of incorporation is a moment to reflect on the journey that has shaped this place into the

colourful, vibrant, and welcoming community that it is today. Whitehorse is more than just a place; it is a community where neighbours support each other, where creativity thrives, and where the beauty of nature coexists with a busy and active human population.

Our city has faced challenges and celebrated triumphs, each contributing to the unique character of our home. Together, we will work together to ensure that Whitehorse remains a place where the spirit of togetherness and resilience endures. Let’s look forward to the future with hope and optimism, because the future of Whitehorse is bright.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today the 2024 annual report from the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board.

I also have for tabling three legislative returns in my role as the Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation based on questions and requests that came through the appearance of witnesses during the Spring Sitting.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling this afternoon two legislative returns, one for the Member for Copperbelt North and the other for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today a petition that was submitted to YESAB during the public comment period for the land treatment facility at the Mackintosh gravel pit. It has 446 signatures.

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

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 30 — response

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a correction to the record arising from my response to Petition No. 30 from yesterday.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House congratulates Gavin McKenna on his record-setting Canadian Hockey League point streak.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Crime in Yukon

Mr. Cathers: Earlier this Sitting, we asked the Minister of Justice to respond to the trend of increasing and worsening severity of crime in the Yukon. In the few short weeks since we asked that question, the number and type of reports from the RCMP have been jaw-dropping: a shooting in Riverdale; a person pulling a gun on Main Street in broad daylight; charges for pointing firearms; assault and kidnapping using a firearm in Porter Creek; and another armed person in a restaurant on Main Street yesterday. That's all just in the past few weeks.

In response, what we have heard from the minister and the Premier is that they are working on another downtown safety plan and that it will take another 18 months. Does the Liberal government really think that yet another downtown safety planning exercise is a substitute for taking real action on the rise in criminal activity in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I think that the member opposite misunderstands the concept of the downtown Whitehorse safety action plan. It has been put in place. It is being used as a road map to respond and to make our downtown safety core safer. The report that the member opposite is making reference to is a report — a collaborative approach — between the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon government, some Indigenous organizations, and support organizations from Ottawa that focus on this kind of downtown safety planning and opportunities for those partners to work together. It is part of the downtown Whitehorse safety plan. It is not a replacement or an additional report. It is one aspect of the work that we are doing in downtown Whitehorse to create and foster a safer community.

I will take this opportunity to note that, despite the spin or the approach taken by the member opposite with respect to the important work of the RCMP here in Whitehorse, they are doing a tremendous job of making sure that our community is safe.

Mr. Cathers: The one thing that I agree with the minister on is that the RCMP are responding to a lot of crime. The recent waves of violent crime and property crime in the Yukon has Yukoners deeply concerned, but unfortunately, this trend has been building for the past few years. Quality of life and people's sense of safety in the downtown core continues to decline. In response to this, we have also seen a trend from this Liberal government to make commitments to clean things up but fail to take action needed.

In 2023, the Premier held a press conference to announce a new downtown safety plan. In 2024, the Premier held another press conference and said that he was really serious this time and they needed to update the safety plan. Then earlier this year, the Premier announced yet another planning exercise that is supposed to take 18 months.

When will this Liberal government realize that their press conferences, photo ops, and planning exercises aren't working and that crime in Whitehorse is getting worse?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, despite the approach taken by the members opposite to dismiss the hard work of those working on our downtown safety plan, the work that is being done is a priority for our government. We are taking action. We are working with Yukoners and our partners to deal with crime and the challenges that businesses are facing. We have heard from many families, friends, and loved ones, and many of us have personally witnessed situations, and the challenges and difficult situations unfolding in downtown Whitehorse are not only those for our city.

We are listening to those concerns. We are committed to addressing those challenges. Our government has put \$5.2 million in our budget this year to increase the *Territorial Police Service Agreement*, \$1.8 million to fund eight new RCMP positions and one public service employee, and \$3.4 million to cover critical equipment and operational costs for the RCMP. It is unfortunate that this will be voted against by the Yukon Party.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, much of the surge in violent crime and property crime in Yukon communities is in direct connection to organized crime and the illegal drug trade. This Liberal government's policies are part of the problem. The government recently released a review of the Housing First programs run by Connective at 405 Alexander and Fifth Avenue. The report by MNP found — and I quote: "Service providers and program administrators and partners noted concerns with units being taken over for the suspected illegal supply of drugs." It then goes on to state — quote: "... drug dealers may be exploiting tenants by taking over their units to sell drugs..." The *Yukon News* reported today that 18 of 20 deaths at Housing First sites involved substance use.

Will the Premier now acknowledge that the way the shelter and Housing First programs have been run under his government is contributing to an increase in crime, including drug dealers actually operating inside buildings owned by the government and causing harm to people through their illegal actions?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I think that there is certainly some speculation in that statement by the member opposite. Unfortunately, he should know the facts and he should know the work that we are doing with our partners with respect to increasing services and RCMP resources. He should know the facts with respect to the work that we are doing with the operations at 405 Alexander. He should know the facts about the lives that are saved by the operations and the harm-reduction approach that is done here in the territory with respect to dealing with individuals who are at often the lowest point in their lives. They need safe opportunities, they need safe places where they can stay, and they need opportunities for them to be joined with other support services. They receive medical care at 405 Alexander. They receive food, they receive shelter, and they receive harm-reduction opportunities.

We have increased the RCMP investments in the 2025-26 budget. Those proposed increases are three times the investments from 2024-25. Year over year, we have increased RCMP funding and positions with the focus of strengthening their presence in Whitehorse and communities across the

Yukon. It is very concerning, and should be to Yukoners, that the Yukon Party will vote against that budget.

Question re: Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and downtown core concerns

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, earlier this Sitting, I noted that the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter has become a hub of criminal activity. This has been the experience of pretty much every business in the surrounding area. From drug dealing and violence to property crime and theft, surrounding businesses and residents have had to endure the Yukon government-owned facility as a difficult neighbour.

However, when I pointed this out on April 7, the Premier challenged my comments and said that he disagreed. I would like to ask him to clarify: Does the Premier not agree that the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter has become a hub of criminal activity?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is an opportunity for individuals who are vulnerable populations, often at the lowest point in their lives, to be provided 24/7 shelter, supportive living units, and a range of drop-in services that exist at 405 Alexander.

The Department of Health and Social Services supports 405 Alexander guests with mental wellness and substance use outreach services, including opportunities to be referred to the Referred Care Clinic's opioid treatment services, emergency medical services, and home care. Those are all very good programs that are delivered at 405 Alexander.

The Government of Yukon is addressing the complex challenges of homelessness, substance use, and public safety in Whitehorse through continued collaboration with Connective and the Council of Yukon First Nations. Earlier in April — April 11, I believe — we met with the chiefs and council members from across the territory at a leadership summit to discuss the sheltering strategy and the work going forward with respect to the location at 405 Alexander. We will be continuing those meetings. We will be continuing the opportunities for us to collaborate with Yukon First Nation governments to have guidance from them, from the elders, in how we can improve and continue to improve on the services provided to Yukon's most vulnerable people.

Ms. Van Bibber: Since the Premier made those statements challenging that there was, in fact, criminal activity going on in this area, it has come to light that the Yukon government bought out the property and building that used to be Duffy's Pets store. They bought this property without any plan for the building, any clear idea of what services will be offered there, or who would be offering those services.

Can the Premier tell us what message it sends to other businesses in the area that the government is willing to purchase the building and property of one neighbouring business but continues to ignore the concerns of all the others?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, frankly, I expected more from the members opposite. Nobody's concerns are being ignored.

I want to start by saying that every Yukoner deserves a safe place to be and the ability to feel safe, downtown business

owners included. A senior walking to the grocery store or someone struggling with housing or experiencing addiction — safety matters to all and each and every one.

We are listening and, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we are acting. This is isn't about an either/or; it's not either safety or compassion; it is both. It has to be.

These are complex challenges that jurisdictions across Canada are facing: housing, addiction, mental health, trauma, and, most importantly perhaps, poverty and toxic drugs.

Ten years ago, 15 years ago, 20 years ago when we were trying to provide services for Yukon's most vulnerable, we were not faced with a toxic drug situation. On every occasion when an individual decides to take drugs in this territory, and perhaps across Canada now in 2025, they are at risk of death. This is a factor that absolutely must be taken into account as we work to provide safety for such individuals.

Ms. Van Bibber: Whether it's the former owner of Duffy's or the current owners of Alpine Bakery, neighbouring businesses all agree that the problem with the shelter is the operating model that the government began using when they took it over in 2019.

Why has the Yukon government decided to start spending hundreds of thousands of dollars buying up neighbouring businesses instead of fixing the actual problem, which is the way that the shelter is being run by this government?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I certainly would like to have a conversation with individuals across this aisle on some occasion outside of Question Period about exactly what is happening at 405 Alexander, because it's clear that they don't know.

Our government is pulling directly from our downtown Whitehorse safety action plan. We are working with NGOs to continue finding new locations for food services in downtown. We funded modifications to 408 Alexander to support Safe at Home in launching a supportive housing program. We initially funded the CYFN's Moccasin mobile outreach initiative. The Yukon Housing Corporation has extended hours for security. We are working with community safety specialists. We have launched a program to fund crime prevention initiatives for businesses, NGOs, and organizations that are affected by crime.

We have partnered with Blood Ties Four Directions to extend and enhance their healthy meals program, providing lunch and dinner service seven days a week. We have established the presence of two outreach workers at the Whitehorse Public Library, and I am very pleased and proud of the warming centre that we have in this very building — the Jim Smith Building — which provides care and important services to all manner of Yukoners. We have worked with the RCMP to ensure their visibility downtown, and we continue to collaborate with their front-line responders.

Question re: Connective Support Society and Whitehorse Emergency Shelter

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, earlier this Sitting, the minister tabled two reviews of programs run by Connective. These were the SHARP program and the Housing First program. Those two

reports highlighted a significant number of concerns about the safety of both staff and clients at these programs.

One of the biggest concerns around the SHARP program was that the facility itself created unsafe conditions both for staff and for residents. The review stated that the facility was inadequate to support residents' psychological safety and reintegration. The review also found that the use of a refurbished wing of the jail created a psychologically unsafe and institutional space that can re-traumatize residents.

Will this program be relocated to a facility that supports residents' psychological safety and reintegration efforts?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can indicate that we are pleased with the changes that have been made to the program known as SHARP for the opportunity to provide integrating services for individuals, in this case, men who are involved with the criminal justice system.

We have made a difficult decision as to where that location could be. Several years ago now, amendments and renovations were done to that particular part of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre to the fencing around it. It is on an important thoroughfare, and there is good bus service there. There is an opportunity for individuals to come and go during the day and to be involved in work programs as well.

There is always room for improvement. We look forward to the work that is being done to review those — the independent reviewer of that particular program so that those services can be improved for individuals who are involved with the justice system and trying to reintegrate back into their communities.

Ms. Blake: The review of the Housing First program stated that the services and facilities of Housing First are not meeting the complex needs of tenants. What this review described is not consistent with the Housing First model, which needs to include consistent wraparound programming and supports. Tenants frequently raise concerns about their personal mental, physical, and spiritual safety. Both tenants and staff noted feeling unsafe in the program. Significant concerns were raised that harm-reduction and overdose response training was inadequate and increased the risk of overdose among tenants.

Will this government commit to implementing a Housing First model that meets the appropriate standards of care and national best practices?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I certainly note that our work is constantly surrounding the idea of improvement. Our work with our partners and our relationships with our partners in the criminal justice system as well as the responsibilities of health and social services as well as the responsibilities of housing — our one-government approach is always to be improving the services, to be looking at best practices, to making sure that we are providing the service that is needed and that we are working with individuals who receive those services — people with lived experience, people who are experts in the field — people like Blood Ties Four Directions and the Anti-Poverty Coalition — to learn from them, to be guided by their expertise in this area, and to continue to improve programs for our most vulnerable Yukoners.

We will continue that work. There is abundant evidence that this has been done over the course of this term — the terms of this government — and we will continue to do that work, because we believe in it. We believe in the Yukoners whom we are servicing. It's not about politics; it is about who are we caring for at the centre of these responsibilities.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, these reports were deeply troubling to read and brought forward many concerns with the condition of programming and housing, which were incredibly valuable for Yukoners and this Assembly to understand what is happening within Connective programming and what needs to be done to address it.

What Yukoners are wondering now is why the same type of report has not been tabled for the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter. Today, Yukoners gathered outside the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter to raise concerns about the safety of those living in the shelter.

Was a report of the same level of depth and detail conducted regarding the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, and if so, when will it be made public? If not, why not?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, it is the case, and the document that was filed in this Legislative Assembly, tabled here for the purposes — and being made public on our websites for the purposes of allowing individuals to know the kinds of reviews that were done in relation to the Connective programming are not all the exact same carbon copies of one another. They are not the same types of reviews of the individual services.

The TPA for the services at 405 Alexander was reviewed line-by-line between the individual officials of the Department of Health and Social Services and the individuals responsible for that care and the services provided at 405 Alexander. There is not an opportunity for us to file a report as might be imagined by the member opposite. The program reviews were conducted to evaluate all programs that are currently operated by the Connective Support Society in the Yukon.

Meyers Norris Penny, independent reviewers, were asked to do certain programs. The transfer payment agreement with respect to 405 Alexander operations is something that is ongoing at all times.

Question re: Placer mining

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, placer mining is a major pillar of our private sector economy here in the Yukon. It directly employs hundreds of Yukoners, many of whom reside in Yukon communities. Hundreds more work in the business community that supports the industry.

In an e-mail received earlier this week, a frustrated placer miner told us he was informed that the decision document that he needs was signed and completed on April 11, yet he hasn't received it. This is just one of many concerns we hear on a regular basis.

So, what is being done to fix the backlog in the system that is causing the multigenerational placer mines to close down?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, there is a challenge with a backlog of placer miners who are coming through right now. When YESAA was created 20 years ago, a lot of the

permits that were put in place came in, and they went for 10 years, and we hit a wave a decade ago, and we're hitting that wave again. I have asked the department to bring on additional capacity — I have spoken about that here in the House — to continue to move through the backlog on the side of it that's within Energy, Mines and Resources.

We have coordinated with YESAB and the Water Board as well to continue to make sure that they have the capacity that they need to continue to move this through. I appreciate that there is this challenge in front of us. I want to thank the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. They have been super proactive on this issue and are working to assist us to make sure that we have the broadest information available so that, as we design to address this solution, it is coordinated.

I'll continue to respond as I get further questions.

Mr. Istchenko: So, the same placer miner told us that his licence has expired over 13 months since the project submission to YESAB. He is now at the point where he will have to mothball a multi-million-dollar operation, lay off six employees, and not spend \$700,000 in the Mayo economy.

Similar stories are shared with us by operators across the Yukon. They are faced with shutting down even though they submitted the necessary paperwork months ago if not even years in advance. What solutions is the minister working on so that this placer miner and others in the same boat can actually mine this summer, feed their families, and provide employment?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I've requested of the department is that they use all approaches that they can to address the situation.

I know, for example, that they have brought on additional folks who had retired previously to work on this, because we have people, then, who know the system well.

I have been on several calls with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, and I'm working toward having the solutions for this issue by the gold show — the May long weekend. That's the work that's happening in the background right now.

I agree with the member opposite; I think his question is very pertinent. This is a serious concern, and we will work hard to address the situation and to support the other decision bodies or the other quasi-judicial bodies — the Water Board and YESAB — to make sure that we can keep placer mine operations that are just renewing after a decade and there are no other issues around it — they're just coming back to keep doing what they've been doing — to keep those going for the summer.

Mr. Istchenko: On April 17, the Premier responded to the Klondike Placer Miners' Association regarding executive action required in response to the unreasonable delays in processing regulatory renewals for placer mining. In that, the Premier — and I quote: "... under the current legislation, there is no avenue for extending authorizations without a Decision Document. However, we are working with the other Parties to the Umbrella Final Agreement to advance an amendment to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act ... This amendment would allow certain projects to be exempt from a new assessment when specific criteria are met."

Of course, this could take a while as the new federal government just gets sworn in and sets the legislative agenda. The letter does go on to say — and I quote: "In the interim, the Government of Yukon is looking at all options to address the assessment and regulatory backlog of placer projects."

So, can the Premier tell us what the options are and what the timeline is to implement them?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reflection in the letter. That's true; there have been some different strategies put forward by the industry pertaining to decision documents, extension of decision documents, and re-evaluation of decision documents that were done about a decade ago. That's not something that is doable under the current circumstances and within the act and the law.

What we are looking at is other policy decisions that could be made. Members opposite who have spent time in government would know that there are processes to put those into place. The minister just spoke to the fact that he's working diligently to ensure that the tools that are appropriate and prudent and do have a level of creativity to them — haven't been used by any previous governments — can be put in place. I think the timeline that was spoken to was for the gold show.

I commend the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the folks at Justice, and the minister for taking on the challenge, something that the members opposite were challenged with as well. There was no solution at that time. There was a backlog 10 years ago. The difference is that we want to attack this current situation but make sure as well that it doesn't happen again.

Question re: Whistle Bend traffic and green streets development

Ms. Clarke: I have some questions that come from my constituents in Whistle Bend. First of all, many parents of children who attend the Whistle Bend school are concerned about the safety of children walking to school and the drop-off area of the school. With significant construction going on directly adjacent to the school, they are worried about the increased traffic caused by the construction in the short term and by sizable development in the long term.

Can the minister tell us what steps the government is taking to make sure that the school zone — and in particular the school drop-off area — continues to be safe for the children and families dropping off children?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, first, I will just start by saying that we were very pleased, of course, to open this new school at Whistle Bend for that neighbourhood. The Department of Education is excited to have the first new Whitehorse-based elementary school opened in more than 20 years. We certainly have been working closely with the school administration and others.

In November 2024, the Department of Highways and Public Works, in collaboration with the City of Whitehorse, installed new traffic lights at the intersection near Whistle Bend Elementary School. I actually had a meeting with the administrator myself on matters just this week. I had not heard

any concerns raised by the administrator. I certainly will follow up on the concerns that have been raised.

I note that, during the time when the school first opened, we did have crossing guards in place until this new infrastructure was put into place. I am certainly working with other school communities. I will perhaps get a chance to talk about that.

Ms. Clarke: In addition to safety concerns around traffic near the school, there are general concerns around the issue of traffic in the neighbourhood. I constantly hear from constituents who are alarmed about people speeding on Casca Boulevard and from residents who need to drive in and out of Whistle Bend every day.

They continue to be worried about the ongoing development of the neighbourhood putting even more traffic on the already congested roads. I know that the minister has said that he is in negotiations with the city about the development agreement for the next phases of the community and that would include traffic measures like widening Mountainview Drive, adding another entrance to the community, and adding a bike lane to downtown.

Can the minister please update my constituents about this work and provide timelines for when they can expect to see improvements?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I do know that, once fully complete, Whistle Bend will provide a full-service, sustainable neighbourhood of about 2,000 lots, providing homes for approximately 10,000 people to accommodate our growing population. It's growing, Mr. Speaker, because our territory is absolutely doing amazingly well these days. The economy is roaring; we have employment for all sorts of people. As I said in my tribute just moments ago, it has 850 kilometres' worth of trails, it is a vibrant, growing community, and people are moving here because of that.

The entire city is seeing traffic congestion because of the growth in the city. I have heard the concerns from the member opposite from Whistle Bend many times. I have said many times that I'm working with the City of Whitehorse to resolve these issues as best we can with the City of Whitehorse. We will continue to do that work with the mayor and council. They too are aware of this, and we have a good working relationship. It was good to see all of the councillors and the mayor here today.

We're going to continue working on these problems for the benefit of Whistle Bend constituents.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, many constituents who live on green streets continue to wonder about issues of drainage and landscaping. Can the minister please update me on whether phases 4 and 5 green streets have been transferred to the City of Whitehorse for ongoing maintenance, or do they still belong to the Yukon government? For phase 6 green streets, what is the status of construction and landscaping, and when can my constituents expect to see that work completed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I know that the member opposite has been on the file for green streets for a very long time, and we have certainly worked very closely with the residents on those streets. I just recently did a tour of Whistle Bend, and the staff

of Community Services took me to the green streets and showed me the work that had been done. There was a lot of snow on the ground at the time, but they assured me that the work was progressing and that the green streets issue was resolving.

If the member opposite has very specific concerns from individual residents, I encourage her to get them and to get in touch with me and I will certainly address their concerns individually.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Streicker: 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 the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 217: *First Appropriation Act 2025-26* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*.

Department of Health and Social Services

Deputy Chair: Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am here to speak about the 2025-26 main estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. I would like to first take the opportunity to welcome our officials who are here with me today. I am joined by Deputy Minister Matt King and also by the director of finance, Melanie Wallace, at the far end, and also, in the middle, by Jared Wong, senior advisor with the department. I want to thank them and their teams for developing a budget that

is designed to support the health and well-being of Yukoners now and in the years to come.

I am pleased to share this update regarding the Department of Health and Social Services' budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year and to discuss the important steps that we are taking to support Yukoners.

I want to thank and recognize everyone at the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation. Our dedicated staff go above and beyond to support the health and well-being of Yukoners. We owe our gratitude to all of our front-line health and social care providers and service-oriented staff. This is just but one small opportunity that we have to thank them. From the community nursing to vaccination teams to home care, mental wellness and substance use services to our nurses, our care providers, our support services staff, custodial teams, and administrative staff, to name just a few, we thank you.

As we rise to meet the challenges and the opportunities of this time, I would also like to express thanks to all of our health and social care system partners for all that they do to support Yukoners.

The 2025-26 operation and maintenance budget for the Department of Health and Social Services is \$682.9 million. This represents a 14.9-percent increase over the 2024-25 main estimates. We are presenting a capital estimate of \$9.2 million for the department, which is a decrease of 2.5 percent compared to the previous fiscal year.

This budget reflects our commitment to responsible management while maintaining and expanding the core services that Yukoners deserve and expect. Some of this work includes addressing health human resources challenges, improving access to health care services, investing in health infrastructure, and enhancing social services.

In 2025-26, there are 1,664 full-time equivalents in the department, and this represents an overall increase of 47.6 full-time equivalents compared to 2024-25. This year's staffing increases reflect enhanced support for Yukoners in multiple areas. It reflects our commitment to increasing quality of care and the success of our *Health Human Resources Strategy*. Some examples include: increasing staff for 24-hour ground and air ambulances; increasing the capacity and quality of care at our long-term care homes and our home care program; caring for children and youth in care at group homes; and staffing for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, a First Nation navigation project.

The 2025-26 Health and Social Services budget is about investing in the future. We are spending on our long-term capacity to ensure that we can deliver high-quality health care to Yukoners for years to come. This means that we are investing in both our physical and human resources. In the past few years, we have opened and staffed new clinics in Whitehorse and Old Crow, expanded the Whitehorse emergency department, and grown our long-term care capacity. This year, we are including funding to support planning for an expansion of Whitehorse General Hospital and advancing plans to expand capacity for continuing care.

We are also investing in the people who deliver our health care. We all know that the Yukon is the best place in the world to live and work, and we are hiring and training new physicians, nurses, social workers, medical office assistants, nursing home attendants, and more. I appreciate all the health care workers who are choosing to make the Yukon their new home. By living and working here, you are also working with us to keep Yukoners healthy and well.

This year's increase of \$88.7 million in operation and maintenance funding enables the department to develop and deliver on key initiatives that meet the needs of Yukoners. I am very pleased to speak about some of the highlights. Insured Health Services has been provided an increase of \$47.1 million to continue to respond to growth and the delivery of our legislated programming. This includes funding to deliver medical travel for fertility and surrogacy treatments along with our government's \$10,000 tax credit. This will make it affordable for Yukoners to grow their families when and how they wish.

This year, an additional \$300,000 is allocated for the rollout of our new secure and inclusive health care cards. In addition, we have budgeted an additional \$793,000 to reflect the annual operating costs of the new managed alcohol program, which opened in November of 2024. This program is designed to reduce harms related to alcohol use among people living with severe treatment-resistant alcohol use disorder. I am also pleased to share that there is an increase of \$1.5 million to fund our ongoing and expanding vaccine program. This includes new costs for COVID vaccines, RSV immunizations, and other new and expanded preventive measures to keep Yukoners healthy.

The Government of Yukon is committed to ending and preventing homelessness through community collaboration initiatives that help all Yukoners access safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. We are working collaboratively with other levels of government, partners, and stakeholders from across the sector to address these challenges in the short, medium, and long term. This year, we have allocated \$1.5 million to operate 17 new supportive housing units at 408 Alexander. This initiative is a partnership with Yukon Housing Corporation and the Safe at Home Society.

I am happy to share that there has been an allocation of \$1.3 million to operate the new supportive housing development in Watson Lake. The 10-unit housing services residence addresses a supportive housing gap identified in the 2020 housing needs assessment of Watson Lake and meets a recommendation made in the Auditor General of Canada's performance audit on the state of housing for vulnerable Yukoners. The complex was designed with input from the Liard First Nation Chief and Council, the Town of Watson Lake mayor and council, and local community members.

The 2025-26 main estimates include \$650,000 to support women's transitions homes in the Yukon. This includes \$250,000 for the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society in Whitehorse, \$250,000 for the Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake, and \$150,000 for the Dawson Shelter Society in Dawson City. This funding provided is recoverable

under the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* funding.

We provide operation and maintenance funding to support shelters in Whitehorse, including 405 Alexander, Kaushee's Place, and the emergency youth shelter in Whitehorse. We provide funding to support shelters in Yukon communities as well, including: Help and Hope for Families Society in Watson Lake, Tr'ondëk Hwëch' Jëjë Zho in Dawson City, and the Dawson City Women's Shelter. We're also providing \$750,000 in new funding for the Whistle Bend women's and family preservation wellness centres operated by the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Since 2018-19, the Yukon hospital services operation and maintenance budget has increased by roughly 98 percent. We are pleased to continue building our partnership with the hospital and working with them to meet core funding needs, grow infrastructure, and to introduce new programs and services. This fiscal year, we have provided an additional \$24.5 million for the Yukon hospital services operation and maintenance budget, a 22-percent increase over last year.

I'm also pleased to announce that we are providing \$5.4 million in capital funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation this year, an increase of \$279,000, or 5.5 percent, over last year. This capital budget includes \$1.2 million to plan for the development of expanded infrastructure at Whitehorse General Hospital, and this represents the next phase of the strategic master plan following the completion of the new emergency department in 2018 and the mental wellness unit this year.

We work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation on an ongoing basis to identify present and future funding needs and to ensure that we are providing the services that Yukoners need to access safe and excellent hospital care.

The Government of Yukon provides further support to the Yukon Hospital Corporation, such as physician fee-for-service payments, health human resources recruitment, surge support, and partnership through the health care system.

We recognize that the Yukon Hospital Corporation has been facing pressures related to staffing constraints and increased growth and demand for care, such as medical imaging, high demand for beds, and surgical services. We will continue to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to identify funding needs and ensure that we are providing the services and the supports that Yukoners need to access safe and excellent hospital care.

I want to reiterate our gratitude to all members of the department and all of our health and social care partners for their ongoing commitment to serving Yukoners. We will continue to experience challenges; we are also meeting those challenges head-on and have a budget that enables us not only to expand on existing services but to set the groundwork for an innovative, person-centred health and wellness system with the introduction of the legislation last year to support Health and Wellness Yukon.

Our government is guided by the priorities and the voices of Yukoners. Whether it's improving access to care, making

life more affordable, or supporting the staff who make services possible, we are putting people first.

Deputy Chair, I look forward to answering budget-related questions about this budget for the Department of Health and Social Services, and thank you for the opportunity to provide some highlights with respect to this year's budget.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank the officials as well for appearing here today. I would just note as I begin with questions that I did ask a number of questions during debate on the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services, since we weren't sure when or if we would have the opportunity to ask questions on the mains.

I'm going to move on to follow up on an area that I asked about previously — that being addictions treatment. On March 31, the minister told me that in withdrawal management services, in the two-year period from 2022 to 2024, bed night usage increased by 42 percent. She also indicated that there are 14 beds available for adults and four for youth.

Can the minister tell us how many days during the last year this facility was at capacity and how many people have been turned away in the last year due to capacity issues? Finally, is there a wait-list for the facility, or do they simply turn someone away if they are not able to serve them?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, just to be clear, there are two programs that run at what is known as the Sarah Steele Building. I believe the member opposite is asking about withdrawal management services, which I'm happy to mention some details about, but there are also intensive treatment services that operate there. They offer bed-based treatment programs to clients who live at the program between two and 12 weeks. We had, in the calendar year of 2024, approximately 127 admissions to that program.

But I'll concentrate, in the interest of time, on the withdrawal management services. It is a 24/7 medically and psychosocially supported program that provides a safe place for people in withdrawal from substance use. It operates on a first-come, first-served basis. In 2023, we committed to hiring additional staff to increase the number of bed nights in withdrawal management services. Although bed night capacity data can vary, a percentage of increase in bed nights is considered to be an accurate reflection of the increase in bed usage at withdrawal management services.

Between 2022 and 2024, bed night usage increased by 42 percent. In 2024, the program had approximately 3,830 bed nights; in 2023, approximately 3,130 bed nights where it was used; and in 2022, approximately 2,700 bed nights. There were 1,123 total admissions in 2024, and that is up from previous years.

Youth are never turned away. There is always capacity for individual youths who want to avail themselves of withdrawal management services. We can also support communities by having individuals call ahead, and a bed will be held for them if it is available at the time of their call for them to be able to come from the communities so they wouldn't travel here without knowing if they could have a bed and have the services of withdrawal management.

I can also note that it's on a first-come, first-served basis, but we're always working to support an individual if there is not a space for them to enter treatment in that way or have support through withdrawal management services. In the event that they have to return the next day or perhaps a day later, they are supported through that process by being connected with other services and/or supported at other locations so that they can then return and have those services.

I don't have a percentage or an exact number of how many beds or nights that they might have been at full capacity. I have the general numbers, but we can look into that number.

Mr. Cathers: I would appreciate it if the minister could get back to me with that information so that we have a better understanding of that.

Since the declaration of a substance use health emergency, other than the managed alcohol program, how many new addictions treatment spaces have been added by the Yukon government? Additionally, we have heard concerns about the suitability of the addictions treatment services. I have heard from someone about a family member who did not want to return to the facility and felt that another addictions treatment option, such as treatment Outside, would be more appropriate.

Can the minister indicate how many people have asked for addictions treatment either in the Yukon in the past year or Outside within the past year that the government either hasn't been able to help with or has had to have those people wait for more than two weeks for those addictions treatment services?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. The Yukon government currently provides, as I have mentioned, withdrawal management services and live-in intensive treatment here in the Yukon in Whitehorse. This means that people either go without risking a relapse or are sent out-of-territory, perhaps, for later phases of treatment and recovery at quite a high cost. For example, the cost of people being sent out-of-territory for treatment during the pandemic was between \$80,000 and \$90,000 per person. At that time, about 50 or 60 people were sent for treatment. I can indicate that we have issued an out-of-territory travel directive to remove barriers for individuals who need to travel outside of the territory for intensive treatment — usually a live-in treatment program. We have partnerships with four locations outside of the territory in various provinces where individuals can go.

As a result of that, here at home, we have opioid treatment services that are managed at the Referred Care Clinic. Between January 1 and December 31, 2024, there were 242 clients registered, with an average of 270 appointments per month, but then in 2024, there were 659 clients supported through the Referred Care Clinic, with an average of 855 appointments per month. In 2023, there were 698 clients supported through the Referred Care Clinic, with an average of 848 appointments per month.

Clients do not need a referral and can book an appointment if they feel that they have an issue with opioids or are living with an opioid use disorder. Clients can also access safer supply on a case-by-case basis, prescribed through their medical care. Prior to prescribing safer supply, it is common practice first to use first-line medical interventions to treat opioid use disorder.

Those programs at the Referred Care Clinic here are run by doctors and nurses.

I note that part of the question is, I think: How many individuals would go outside of the territory for live-in treatment that is different from the other kinds of treatment that are available here in the territory? Although they often dovetail between the kinds of care that they receive here — either as pre-treatment care, or maybe then somebody doesn't have to necessarily go to treatment, or as after-care — and those are what we are focused on for providing here in the territory. As I have said, during COVID, there were about 60 — 50 to 60 people were sent out for treatment. Because that information tends to be personal and managed through out-of-territory travel and the directives that we have put in place to make that easier for individuals, I don't have specific numbers on how many people would travel for that kind of care each year.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the information. In the interest of time, I'm just going to group a few questions together, recognizing that we have witnesses appearing this afternoon.

In the area of continuing care, we know that facilities are now full and dealing with a wait-list. My question is: What are the estimates for the projected growth in the number of Yukoners who need continuing care over the next five years? For example, according to the government's population estimates tabled with the fiscal and economic update, the population of the Yukon is expected to grow by almost 5,000 people to 51,300 in 2029. That raises the question: How much growth is expected in the population of Yukoners who are in need of continuing care?

Moving on to other areas that I wanted to touch on, on behalf of colleagues who have heard from concerned constituents, I want to again return to the issue of EMS gaps in communities. In particular, as the minister will recall, my colleague — the Member for Kluane — heard concerns from constituents about gaps in EMS coverage at a time when there were a lot of people in the community for an event. There is another significant busy weekend coming up on Mother's Day when they are expecting an increase in people travelling to the community for a popular event. Can the minister indicate whether there is EMS coverage in Haines Junction for that weekend? If she doesn't have that information, could she commit to getting back to me about it?

My next question with EMS is if the minister could provide us with an update of what training is scheduled for rural communities this year, which communities they are currently planning to visit and when. Again, if she doesn't have that information, if she could get back to me with it, it would be appreciated.

Finally, on behalf of my colleague the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin who had raised this issue earlier, he had heard a concern from a Yukon patient who, according to the documents that he has received, this person is a Yukon patient who would be eligible for tolvaptan based on BC criteria for funding and is in need of it according to medical professionals due to a 50-percent chance of being on dialysis in the next 10 years, with

tolvaptan being the only modifying therapy that can prolong time to that point.

Again, as I noted, this patient would be eligible for support for that if they lived in BC. Could the minister indicate whether the government will provide coverage for that, recognizing that it's important to this person's quality of life and indeed to their life itself?

With that, although I do have many other — one final one I will just squeeze in is asking about the ongoing issue of concerns about the adequacy of Whitehorse General Hospital's physician coverage and gaps in the coverage of the hospitalist program. We know there were problems in April. When I asked about coverage previously, the minister had indicated the number of doctors per day, although my understanding is that typically they believe they need multiple doctors on at the same time to meet the capacity.

Could the minister indicate how many shifts in the month of May they have physician coverage for at Whitehorse General Hospital and how many do not have that coverage and what steps they are currently taking to address the immediate need and provide long-term stability in terms of physician coverage at Whitehorse General Hospital?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The projected population growth for Yukoners aged 65 and over is expected to nearly double over the next 20 years. Seniors are projected to account for 49 percent of the Yukon's population growth by 2040. By 2045, the population aged 65 and older is anticipated to represent 21.2 percent. Generally, older adults do require more frequent and complex medical services, resulting in higher health care costs per capita.

I can also note that, lastly, the current average wait time for long-term care, after assessment and confirmation of eligibility, is between 19 and 25 days across all levels of care. I note that there are a number of other specific numerical questions or answers that I could provide in future to the member opposite through a written response, because I note that we are short of time today, Deputy Chair, and as a result, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

Deputy Chair: Pursuant to Motion 1261 adopted earlier this Sitting, Committee of the Whole will receive witnesses from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

In order to allow the Clerks to prepare the video system in the Chamber, the Committee will now recess and reconvene at 3:00 p.m.

Recess

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

Appearance of witnesses

Chair: Pursuant to Motion No. 1261 adopted earlier this Sitting, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

I would ask all members to remember to refer their remarks through the Chair when addressing the witnesses. I would also ask the witnesses to refer their answers through the Chair when they are responding to the members of the Committee. The time allotted for opening remarks is five minutes. I will warn you when you have 30 seconds remaining in your time.

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

Witnesses introduced

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The witnesses appearing before Committee of the Whole today are Michelle Grant, senior vice-president of PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Graham Page, senior vice-president of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

I welcome them to the Assembly today.

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

Ms. Grant: Good afternoon.

My name is Michelle Grant, and I am a senior vice-president with PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc.

On August 14, 2024, PwC was appointed as receiver and manager of Victoria Gold Corp. by order of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. I have primary oversight of the receivership proceedings on behalf of PwC.

I want to begin by acknowledging the gravity of the incident that brought us here today. The failure of the heap leach facility at the Eagle Gold mine on June 24, 2024 was a catastrophic event that had significant environmental impacts and has resulted in the loss of jobs and income for communities and businesses in the Yukon.

As a court-appointed receiver, our role is to perform the duties assigned to us as an officer of the court. This receivership is unique. Unlike many receiverships that focus on liquidating assets to maximize value for creditors, the primary purpose here is to oversee the environmental remediation.

Since our appointment, significant progress on this challenging and complex remediation work has been made. The work undertaken has been a collaborative effort overseen by the receiver with the involvement of technical advisors, contractors, Victoria Gold employees, and the Yukon government as well as the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and their advisors.

Significant remediation milestones include: the construction of a massive safety berm; the addition of 400,000 cubic metres of temporary water storage capacity to mitigate the discharge of contaminated water; the completion of a significant upgrade to the mine's water treatment plant with new reverse osmosis trailers that have the capability to remove cyanide and other harmful contaminants, a capability that did not previously exist at the mine; the commencement of the discharge of treated water; the installation of multiple groundwater collection and monitoring systems; the development of a groundwater interception plan to capture

contaminated water; and finally, advancing heap leach stabilization with the completion of a preliminary failure modes assessment and field investigations that will help inform a comprehensive remediation plan.

While substantial progress has been made to date, much remains to be done.

I also want to address the matter of transparency and engagement that has been a cornerstone of our approach in this receivership. Recognizing the extraordinary circumstances and heightened public interest, we have taken steps to enhance transparency well beyond what is typical in a receivership. This has included continuous communication with the Yukon government regulators and First Nation leaders, participation in a media briefing with the Yukon government, holding a briefing that included opposition members, and the filing of regular court reports and supplemental site progress updates, which are posted on the Victoria Gold receivership webpage for the public.

I would like to clarify the process that led to my appearance here today. As a receiver, PwC is appointed by and reports to the court. The order that governs our appointment did not authorize a representative of the receiver to appear before the Legislative Assembly as a witness. Respecting the judicial process is a key pillar of any court-appointed receivership.

When I received the initial invitation to appear, I advised that I had no mandate from the court to do so. When I received the request to appear, I reiterated that I would need the court to authorize my appearance. Recognizing the importance of transparency in this complex receivership, I worked with our legal counsel and with legal counsel for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to come up with a form of order that would enable my appearance here today. We presented that form of order to the judge overseeing this case at the earliest possible time, which was on Monday.

I am pleased to report that the judge authorized my attendance here as a representative of the receiver. I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions and provide further clarity on the work being done.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that we take very seriously the trust placed in the receiver with respect to managing the public funds loaned to support this vital remediation work. We understand the responsibility that comes with stewarding these funds, and we are committed to ensuring that they are used effectively, efficiently, and transparently to address the specific challenges posed by the heap leach failure.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to everyone at the mine site who has contributed to the stabilization and remediation efforts. Your dedication and hard work are essential to addressing the challenges we face.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, I appreciate the witnesses appearing here today. I just wanted to also thank them for the briefing that they provided to me and the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King as well as the minister. That was helpful. Some of the questions we asked there, of course, will be repeated here just so that we can get them on as part of the public record.

Then, of course, I do have some other questions that I have for the witnesses as well.

Where I can, I will make reference to the documents that I am referring to not only to assist the witnesses but to assist those in Hansard who are recording today's events.

I am just going to start by asking some questions about where we are at now and where we will be proceeding toward the end of September. I am just wondering if the witnesses can tell us: With respect to water treatment, where are we now? As of the briefing, it was my understanding that, while water treatment was underway, the water that had been treated was not compliant with the water licence for discharge into the environment. I am just wondering if the witnesses can tell us if that is still the case.

Ms. Grant: The question was with respect to water treatment and the discharge of water. The answer to that question is that we are currently discharging treated water from the mine site through a compliant final discharge point that has been approved. That water is treated and is compliant with MDMER standards but is not fully compliant with the water use licence for the mine site.

Mr. Kent: Do the witnesses have any idea on when we can expect the treatment processes that are in place to treat water that is compliant with the discharge standards spelled out in the water licence?

Ms. Grant: I would need to consult with the water treatment specialist on-site to confirm a response to that question.

Mr. Kent: For those questions that the witnesses are unable to answer at this time, hopefully they're able to respond to us in writing at a future date when they are able to get those answers.

With respect to the water treatment contractor who is on-site, I believe that company replaced the company that was there when the receivership order was granted back in August. So, I'm just wondering: How long have they been on-site trying to come up with the proper process to adequately treat the water?

Ms. Grant: Just with respect to the comment about providing written responses, we will take that under advisement.

With respect to the question about the current water treatment specialist who is working on-site, they have been on-site since sometime in September — I don't have the exact date — and have been working on modifying the water treatment plant as well as coming up with a recipe to treat the cyanide-contaminated water.

Mr. Kent: I apologize; I didn't quite catch that. Did the witness say that they have been on-site since September?

Ms. Grant: Yes, I said that they had been on-site since sometime in September.

Mr. Kent: Just moving over then to the water storage, I know that there have been a number of ponds constructed on the site. I am just wondering if we could get an update on the capacity of the ponds that exist there today, including any that are currently under construction. We also know that some of those ponds are leaking, so I just wanted to confirm with the

witnesses that this is still the case — that a number of the constructed ponds are still leaking as we stand here today.

Ms. Grant: With respect to the storage capacity, the temporary storage capacity on-site, I referred to it in my opening remarks. We have 400,000 cubic metres of temporary storage that has been built during the receivership, and there is another storage pond that is being constructed right now and is expected to be completed in mid-May. It will hold another 110,000 cubic metres of capacity.

Mr. Kent: How many of the existing ponds are leaking at this moment?

Ms. Grant: As we reported in our court reports, which are available on our website, the one pond — we refer to it as IROSA Pond 2 — is leaking, and we have described the investigation that is underway with respect to that pond in our reports to the court.

Mr. Kent: Is there any timeline for when the leaking ponds will be repaired?

Ms. Grant: As we stated in our third court report, which is the last report that we filed with the court at the end of March, the pond is currently being used to store treated water. As a result, until that pond is no longer storing treated water, the investigation into the leak is on hold.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to ask a few questions with respect to the phase 3 budget that was part of the third report. It covers the time frame of April to September. The total estimated cost for that time period is \$132,265,000 over that six-month period. I'm just curious if that \$132.265 million represents the additional request of the Government of Yukon to contribute, or is the amount less than that based on cash that was on hand at the beginning of April?

Ms. Grant: We lost audio partway through that question.

Mr. Kent: I'm just asking a question about the total estimated cost in the phase 3 budget, which is from April 1 to September 30 of this year. It shows an estimated cost of \$132.265 million. Is that total amount being requested of the government, or was there cash on hand at the beginning of April to bring that amount down?

Ms. Grant: I am just going to review some information and I will respond in a moment.

Mr. Kent: I will just wait for that review and response, but I will just move on to my next question, given the limited time here.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Kent: For some reason, the minister is upset right now, but we only have a limited amount of time. I understand that the review will be underway, but I am just going to move on to another question.

The April amount estimated cost is \$32.964 million, so I'm just wondering: Since today is the last day of April, was that full amount expended in the month of April?

Ms. Grant: Back to the previous question, I was just looking at the budget that is appended to our third court report at Appendix J. I just want to orient myself to what was being asked. As outlined in our third court report, the credit agreement with the Yukon government as the receivership

lender was amended to increase funding not by \$132.265 million but by \$115 million, so that is the amount that we are authorized to borrow under the amended credit agreement.

With respect to the next question — I apologize — can you repeat the question?

Mr. Kent: Absolutely. In that same phase 3 budget, it says that the total estimated cost for April was \$32.964 million, and I'm just wondering if that full amount was expended, since we have reached the last day of the month.

Ms. Grant: We don't do real-time receipt and disbursement reporting, so I don't have that information available at this time.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that.

Just in the previous response, the witness mentioned that the request of the Yukon government as the funder for this first six-month period is \$115 million. The budget that is before the Legislature right now is seeking an increase of \$118 million in the anticipated loan to Victoria Gold via the receiver to undertake the mitigation work. So, obviously, this \$115 million is to get us through half of this fiscal year. So, I'm just curious if discussions have started yet with the Yukon government as to how much in additional funds will be sought for the last two quarters of the fiscal year and if the witnesses are able to provide us with that number at this point.

Ms. Grant: No, no discussions have taken place with respect to funding beyond September 30, 2025, as the credit agreement currently extends to that period of time. Typically, those discussions wouldn't be had until we were preparing a budget for the next phase of work.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. Another question that I have then is with respect to the independent review board. I note that the report from them is due June 15 and will be made public on June 30. Is that still the timeline that the witnesses believe will be adhered to?

Ms. Grant: Yes, our understanding at this juncture is that the timeline will be adhered to.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. Then, when I return to the phase 3 budget for the period of April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2025, in there, there is \$100,000 for the independent review board for the month of July. I'm just curious why there is a budgeted amount that is for the month following the completion of the report — if the witnesses can just comment on why that amount is in there.

Ms. Grant: So, this is not a cash budget; these are accruals. So, when people issue their invoices, they don't get paid immediately; there is a lag. This is showing when we expect to actually make the payments versus when the services were actually provided.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. Can the witnesses tell us what the entire budget is since the independent review board was formed and began their work right through to the anticipated payment in July of the invoices? With actuals and the estimates, what are we looking at for the budget for the review board?

Ms. Grant: So, we provide budget information in our second report and in our third report. So, in our second report,

you will find a statement of receipts and disbursements; that will show actuals for the period of time. Then you will also see the budget that was approved for the second phase of work. If you look at our first court report, it has a statement of receipts and disbursements for the initial period as well. So, if you refer to the court reports that we filed, you will be able to find that information.

Mr. Kent: So, I have that document in front of me as well, which is page 34 of the third report, and it says — this is from November 3 to March 14, so that's — the independent review board is \$923,000 for that period, and then we're looking at a further \$1.33-million estimate. Was there any money spent prior to November 23 with respect to the IRB, or can the witnesses direct me to where I can find that information?

Ms. Grant: No, I can confirm — so, the R&D for the period prior to that is in our second report at page 24, and I can confirm that, if you look at the line item "Independent Review Board", it has zero dollars against it, so there was no money disbursed during that period. The disbursements were started in the period identified on page 34 of our third report.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. I guess we'll look to what would be I believe probably the fifth report for the actuals spent during this April-to-July period for the IRB.

It's my understanding that the Independent Review Board recommendation will help to inform whether or not to carry on with a ban on heap leach mining in the territory. So, I just sort of wanted to pivot over to the sale and investment solicitation process, or the SISP.

I'm looking at the third report, page 53, the launching of the SISP, and it looks like it's obviously going to overlap almost to the day with the Independent Review Board report. I'm just curious how — at 114 — sorry; at 115 on that page, it says: "The results of the IRB's report will further support the SISP process, and views on next steps regarding the Eagle Gold Mine site." Obviously, the ability to conduct heap leach mining will factor in quite substantially with the sale process, so just curious how these two processes will overlap and what information the receiver will provide to potential purchasers with respect to the existing heap leach ban if that indeed is still in place at the time.

Ms. Grant: I think that I should start by clarifying something, which is that the credit agreement that the receiver has with the receivership lender has a condition in it that the receiver will bring an application for approval of the sale and investment solicitation process on or before June 30, so when we discussed it in our third report, we are referring to that.

We are referring to the fact that we will be bringing an application before the court to approve a sale and investment solicitation process on or before June 30, 2025. That does not mean that we will be launching a sale and investment solicitation process on that date or prior to that date; it means that we will be getting approval for the process that we plan to undertake.

With respect to how that process intersects with the IRB report, as is outlined in our third report, one of the reasons why the application for approval of the sale and investment

solicitation process is taking place on or before June 30 is because there is a recognition that proponents would be interested in the findings of that report. As such, it would be important to have that report available for proponents to review. Because of the timing of when that report will be available, which is the end of June, in our view, it was prudent to bring forward an application for approval of the sale process not prior to that timeline. That's how those two items intersect.

Mr. Kent: I am just curious — obviously, the IRB report is due at the end of June, and as the witness mentioned, they will also seek approval of a SISP through the court at that time. Moving on then to actually soliciting bids or starting the sale process, would it be correct for me to assume that wouldn't be undertaken until the Yukon government makes a decision on whether the heap leach ban will be extended or not? Is that something that the receiver would consider before launching that process?

Ms. Grant: As I have already stated, part of the agreement with the receivership lender has a condition in it that the receiver is required, on or before June 30, to bring an application for approval of sale and investment solicitation process. Unless that condition is varied, the receiver is required to do that, and the receiver intends to do that.

Mr. Kent: I have just one final question with respect to the launching of the SISP, and that is with respect to point 114 on page 53 of the third report.

It says: "Prior to commencing the SISP, the Receiver will also discuss the development of the SISP and other relevant matters relating to same with other interested parties, including FNNND and the Lending Syndicate." I appreciate spelling out those two specific parties, but I am just wondering: What other interested parties would the receiver discuss the development of the SISP with?

Ms. Grant: The receiver intends to discuss the development of the SISP with the parties that it has identified in its third report.

Mr. Kent: Point 114 says: "... the Receiver will also discuss the development of the SISP and other relevant matters relating to same with other interested parties, including FNNND and the Lending Syndicate." Are those the only two interested parties, or are there additional parties that will be consulted as part of this? I am just trying to get a sense for who else can expect to be consulted by the receiver on this, or is it just those two that are referenced here?

Ms. Grant: That is a decision that will be made in the lead-up to the process.

Mr. Kent: I will look forward to learning about who else will be consulted when we get closer to that, then.

Obviously, there were a number of inspectors' directions issued prior to receivership, and I have some questions on some of those that went unfulfilled, but we will get to those a little bit later.

I did want to focus on inspectors' directions that were issued on December 2, obviously while the receiver was in charge of the site.

I am looking at December 2, 2024. This first one is issued pursuant to section 35.1 of the *Waters Act*. There are a couple

of measures to be taken and those are on page 3 of 4 and page 4 of 4. They have some timelines in there. I am just curious if the witnesses can let us know if those two measures specific to the *Waters Act* inspector's direction have been fulfilled.

Ms. Grant: Unfortunately, I don't have the document that you are referring to in front of me, so I am going to need the information described to me.

Mr. Kent: Sure, I can read the measures into the record. As I mentioned, there were two. The first is: "On or before December 15, 2024, submit and implement a groundwater interception plan that includes the following: a) Identification of all interception infrastructure on site including all infrastructure required to route intercepted water to storage or treatment facilities, b) Information on the volumes and qualities of water that will be produced from each interception location, c) Interception of groundwater from existing infrastructure..." It also goes on to ask for monitoring results, site observations, or other information that will be used to inform the need for additional interception infrastructure and, finally, triggers adaptive management measures that take into consideration the overall site water management requirements identified in measure 2.

I will leave that with the witnesses, and then I can follow up on that second measure in a moment.

Ms. Grant: Is it possible to go through those again more slowly? I apologize, because I don't have the document in front of me. It's really hard for me to write down what you're saying so that I can respond.

Mr. Kent: It's probably easier for me to just follow up with the minister. I am sure that the government has the information. Just to get it on the record, there were two measures in the December 2 inspector's direction related to the *Waters Act*, and then on that same date, there was an inspector's direction related to the *Quartz Mining Act* that had five measures.

Again, it's probably easier for me to follow up with the minister on that rather than take time here this afternoon while the witnesses are here. I will do that. I will follow up with the minister with a letter or some sort of written question on that. I will move on.

I did have a question with respect to processing gold on-site. Is there any processing underway at this moment, or are there any plans to process some of the heap leach to produce gold? We have heard some reports from some in the community, and I just wanted to track that down — whether there are any plans at this time to process the heap leach to produce gold.

Ms. Grant: With respect to the question regarding processing currently being done on-site, I can confirm that no processing is currently being done on-site, but with respect to the prospect of processing, I will refer to our third report and specifically under the "Asset Monetization" section, starting at paragraph 109.b., the item is called "Gold". What we wrote in our report is that: "... pursuant to discussions with the site team and various third parties, as discussed above..." — so that's above in the court report — "... the Receiver continues to assess opportunities to monetize gold and other precious metals

held within the waste and/or water materials at the Eagle Gold Mine in the course of remediation..."

Mr. Kent: Do the witnesses have any rough estimates or value estimates on the amount of gold or the value of gold that is contained in the heap leach, both the area that obviously failed and slid down and then what is left in the portion that is still in place?

Ms. Grant: In our first report, which is dated October 1, 2024, at paragraph 29, we have a chart in that report that details the assets on June 30, 2024 of Victoria Gold, and one of the line items is the inventory, which had a book value of \$224.7 million. Then in the next paragraph, paragraph 30.b. explains what the \$224.7 million of inventory consists of, and at 30.b.i. in that paragraph, it says: "\$168.7 million of stockpiled ore and in-process inventory, net of an impairment provision of the \$16.8 million related to the Failure Event."

So, that is from the company's books and records with respect to the inventory on-site as of June 30, 2024.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate the date — I was going to ask about it, but I believe the witness said June 30, 2024, so we'll look back and do some price comparisons for gold to see what, perhaps, that value is today.

I want to now move back to when the receivership process began and just the immediate time frame prior to that. I asked about this at the briefing and I wanted to follow up with the witnesses. When was PwC first contacted by the Yukon government about plans to put Victoria Gold into receivership? I asked this and it was answered, but I'm just asking for the record: Can the witness confirm that Victoria Gold was given approximately 24 hours of notice of the application for receivership, so would have been notified on August 13 that they were required to appear in court on August 14?

Ms. Grant: With respect to the first question, the receiver — as we're referred to now, but prior to our appointment, we would have been contacted in our capacity as PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. — so, prior to the receivership proceedings in late July, PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. was approached by legal counsel for the Yukon government with respect to this potential receivership mandate. It would be helpful — that was the first question; I think there were three or four questions. It would be helpful, Madam Chair, if the member could just repeat the follow-up questions.

Mr. Kent: Just one more question. Actually, in that response, the witness said "late July". I know that there was an invoice submitted that suggested that they billed back for work July 26. Is that the exact date?

Then the second question was — or the one remaining question outstanding is: Just want a confirmation that Victoria Gold was notified on August 13 approximately 24 hours prior to the application of receivership.

Ms. Grant: Our invoice that was referred to indicates that there are time entries starting July 26. It is possible that we were approached just prior to that date, but it would be on or around that date of July 26.

With respect to the application for the receivership proceedings, it wasn't PricewaterhouseCoopers in its capacity as a prospective receiver that would have approached the

company, but I believe the date that they were actually notified was August 12 and not August 13, but I think it's important for transparency purposes for people to understand that it is typical in these types of situations for parties to be given limited notice. That's generally as a result of the fact that there is some sort of emergency that is requiring an appointment of a receiver. In this case, it was an environmental emergency, but in many instances, it is a case of a liquidity crisis that is causing the requirement for a receiver, and as a result, the matter is often done in an emergent fashion on limited notice to various parties.

In some cases, it can be done on no notice. As is typical for a receivership proceeding, this application advanced by the Yukon government was done on limited notice to affected parties.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. I was going to ask if it was typical, and the witness answered that question, so that's great.

So, I'm assuming that there is only a handful of companies in Canada that are capable of being the receiver on a project of this nature, so just wondering if the witnesses or if PwC is aware of any other companies that are capable of acting as a receiver that were approached by YG, or as far as they know, was it exclusively an approach to them on or around July 26?

Ms. Grant: I don't know if other parties were approached. I can say that, in order to be a court-appointed receiver, a firm has to be a licensed insolvency trustee, which is a designation that is provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy, and so they're a limited pool of firms that have the capability to be a court-appointed receiver, but I am not aware of whether or not other parties were contacted.

Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, that's another issue I can follow up with the minister on.

I asked this at the briefing, and the witness, Ms. Grant, wasn't aware of any at the time, but I'm just wondering: Since that time, are there any other examples in Canada where a company was put into receivership while still actively working on the site?

As I mentioned, during the briefing, the witness said that she wasn't aware of any, but I'm just curious if, since that time, she has been able to ascertain whether there have been other companies put into receivership while still actively working and trying to remediate the problem.

Ms. Grant: I think it's important — and I said it today in my opening remarks — to recognize the unique situation that is this receivership, but to the specific question, it is common for there to be competing applications in contentious insolvency matters. It is common for a company to want to choose a specific path to restructure its affairs and for its creditors to have a different outcome and path in mind. So, that is not uncommon.

What is perhaps uncommon — and I explained in this situation that it's unique — is that the purpose of this receivership was to remediate the environmental aspect, and it is not focused on maximizing creditor values. The primary purpose of this is the environmental remediation. That's what makes this situation unique, but it is not uncommon for there to

be competing paths that a company wants to follow and that its other stakeholders would prefer an alternative path.

Mr. Kent: So, just to follow up on that, then — I just want the witness to confirm that there are perhaps no other examples in Canada. I have talked to a number of individuals in and around the mining industry, and they can't think of an example that is like this.

So, have there been any other examples where the environmental remediation portion was part of the receivership application?

I know the receiver in question here has a substantial amount of experience on the financial side of things and the disposal and sale of the assets, but is there any other example that the witness is aware of where a company that was actively trying to remediate their site was put into receivership for environmental remediation reasons?

Ms. Grant: That is a multi-faceted question. I would say that I am not aware of any other matters, but I also haven't done a complete survey of all matters to make a definitive statement on that point.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. The next question — and I asked this again at the briefing — I am wondering if the witness can tell us what experience PwC has with respect to the environmental work that they are overseeing on this site. During the briefing, the witness mentioned that there was a mill on Vancouver Island that they were doing environmental work on. I am just wondering if there are any additional examples that the witness can reference since I initially raised that question at the briefing.

Ms. Grant: As I stated previously, this receivership is unique. That said, PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. has a lot of experience acting as a court-appointed receiver. In addition, we have specific experience working on environmental remediation projects, including specific projects in the mining sector, oil and gas sector, and pulp and paper sector. There has already been a reference to the pulp mill project on Vancouver Island that we were working on. We have also done a number of mandates with respect to disaster relief and assisting governments with that. We have significant experience in the mining sector and with environmental projects.

Mr. Kent: I wanted just to close out my questions with respect to the receivership itself. I will just provide a bit of background for the witnesses. On August 16, a couple of days after the receivership, the Justice minister for the Yukon told local media — quote: "This is not the end of the company from our point of view ... We were very careful to make sure there was a process for a path forward." That same CBC article goes on to say that the minister said — quote: "... the government's goal won't be to close the Eagle gold mine or sell off Victoria Gold's assets, but rather to get the mine back to the state it was in before the failure."

I'm just hoping that the witness can help me to understand what was special in this receivership order or this receivership process that would allow the company to continue operating. In the aftermath of the receivership, we saw the board resign; trading was halted on their shares; the company was later de-listed from the stock exchange; and senior management was

terminated by the receiver. So, just trying to get a sense for what was in this specific receivership order that would have allowed the — or would have supported the government's goal to not close the mine or sell off the assets and to allow the company to continue on.

Ms. Grant: I don't have a view on that question. That question is best answered by the Yukon government.

Mr. Kent: Just to close the loop on that one, then: There is no — the witness — there is nothing special in this receivership order that would have allowed the company to continue operating or to not be put out of business? I just wanted to clarify that so that I can follow up with the government on this.

Ms. Grant: Nothing comes to mind. Again, I believe that is best answered by the Yukon government.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. As time ticks away on me here, I do want to just jump around to a couple of other questions.

The first is with respect to some of the procurement concerns that we've had. The first question I'll ask is a clarification from the in-person briefing that we had. During that briefing, we were told that \$2.9 million of an estimated \$21 million was paid to First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun businesses; however, that amount differed from what the minister provided us in a legislative return.

So, just wondering if the witness has been able to clarify which number is correct. I believe the number we got in the legislative return was around \$7 million, so just looking for some clarity around that if the witness has been able to track that down.

Ms. Grant: Yes, I can confirm that the information contained in the presentation provided at the briefing on April 16 was incorrect. That was a point-in-time reference and not a cumulative number. The updated figure through April 15, 2025 is \$9.9 million has been spent with FNNND citizen-owned businesses.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much; I appreciate that clarification and that updated information. So, again, moving back to the briefing, the witness told us that, to ensure that Yukon taxpayers and those who — you know, essentially Yukon taxpayers — are receiving value for money, some of the tenders were done as an invitational tender; however, some were directly awarded. So, just wondering if there is some sort of a breakdown that can be provided of how many contracts were put out to invitational tender, how many were direct-awarded, and what was the total value of those contracts by category?

Ms. Grant: It is very common in receiverships to continue to use vendors that the company was using to avoid disruption of supply and services. This circumstance was no different and, in fact, it was an emergency situation for — so even more warranted in this case. The receiver continues to use many of the suppliers that Victoria Gold had in place. Where new contracts are awarded in a receivership, we don't do this via public tender like a government body would. Depending on the contract, we may direct-award or we may request multiple

proposals from proponents. It is situation- and circumstance-specific.

Mr. Kent: So, just the follow-up to that is: Of the contracts awarded, how many of them were done seeking multiple parties to submit proposals or prices, and then, how many of them were direct-awarded and the value of them?

Ms. Grant: I will take that question under advisement. Thanks.

Mr. Kent: Victoria Gold had in place a comprehensive cooperation and benefits agreement, or a CBA, with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun that dated back to 2011. It had several aspects to it, including preferential employment and contracting for FNNND citizens and businesses. We have heard a number of concerns from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun contractors about this and the fact that they believe that the receiver is not abiding by that CBA that was signed.

Is the receiver bound to follow that agreement, and if so, have they been implementing it, and if not, why not?

Ms. Grant: I can't provide a legal opinion up front. The CBA agreement that's being referred to is an agreement between Victoria Gold and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun.

What I can say, though, is that, in the receivership credit agreement that the receiver has with the Yukon government as receivership lender, of which the latest version is appended to our third court report — it is Appendix A. On page 9 of that credit agreement, there is a specific affirmative covenant, and I will read it. It's affirmative covenant 8, and I will read the preamble so that it's helpful: "The Receiver hereby covenants and agrees, on behalf of the Respondent, and subject in all respects to the terms of the Second A&R Receivership Order and any further Order of the Court within the Receivership Proceeding, that it shall exercise commercially reasonable best efforts to do and perform each of the following, as and to the extent of funding made available to the Receiver under this Agreement, until the Obligations are permanently and indefeasibly repaid in full..."

Number 8 says: "ensure that: (i) contractors, agents, consultants and representatives and any other person or entity that the Receiver contracts with is made aware of the important role that FNNND plays in the Remediation; and (ii) to the extent possible, including based on considerations of cost competitiveness, FNNND citizens and Mayo and Yukon residents are provided with opportunities to participate in the Remediation work, which may include contracting opportunities..."

The receiver is complying — in fact, more than complying, is ensuring that clause is top of mind when it is considering procurement opportunities at the mine site.

Mr. Kent: We will share that information with those companies that have raised concerns about the CBA and whether or not it is being followed.

I have another question on procurement. Are the monthly procurement reports that are submitted to the Yukon government available publicly now? Would we be able to find those on the receiver's website under their Eagle Gold subpage?

Ms. Grant: The monthly reports that we provide to the receivership lender, in accordance with the receivership lending agreement, are not publicly available, but the request was made of the receiver by the Yukon government to include, in our regular site updates which are posted on our website, information on local procurement. The next site update that we do publish will include that information, and we will include that information going forward.

Mr. Kent: Do those reports only include local procurement and First Nation procurement, or do they also include the overall procurement — the contracts that are issued to companies from outside the Yukon?

Ms. Grant: Again, I'm going to refer to the lending agreement, which is at Appendix K in our third report. On page 7, it actually describes what is included in that monthly report that is prepared, and sub-bullet 7 is: "an update on the Receiver's procurement of local contractors..."

So, that is the information that is provided in our monthly report. It's a specific update on local procurement.

Mr. Kent: So, is it possible to get a full report that includes all procurement, or is that something that the funder — the Yukon government, in this place — can request? Or is it something that would have to be done through the court process?

Ms. Grant: I'll take that under advisement.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to move on to some questions about human resources.

How many employees from Victoria Gold were retained by the receiver? Of those, how many are Yukon residents, and further, how many are First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizens?

Ms. Grant: I was trying to find the information with respect to the number of employees who remained on the Victoria Gold payroll as of the date of the receivership. I couldn't find that information readily available. But what I can confirm is that currently there are 147 Victoria Gold employees who remain on the Victoria Gold payroll. With respect to those employees, four of those employees are from the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and 50 are Yukoners. I'm also aware that our water treatment specialist has employed two First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun employees on-site as well.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. I should have clarified that this is the number that I was looking for — how many are currently on-site — so I appreciate the response from the witness.

I just wanted to use some of my remaining time, and I'm just going to jump around a little bit. I wanted to ask a couple of questions about the deflector berm that was constructed. We know from the reports that it was completed on October 25. I asked at the briefing, but I wanted to ask here — I just want the witnesses to confirm that the structure was built without an engineer of record. I also want to ask a question: What actions were taken to protect the health and safety of the workers who constructed the berm?

Ms. Grant: I can confirm that there is no engineer of record specifically for the safety berm. The construction of the safety berm was overseen by the lead environmental consultant

to the receiver, which at the time was Parsons. They oversaw the construction of the safety berm.

With respect to the question regarding health and safety, what I can say about health and safety at the Eagle mine site is that the receiver takes that incredibly seriously.

PricewaterhouseCoopers, in its capacity as receiver of Victoria Gold, is the prime contractor for the mine site and we have overall responsibility for all aspects of health and safety at the mine site. To support the health and safety function, we have engaged a local health and safety consultant, SHE Consulting, to assist with health- and safety-related matters, and health and safety program and protocols that are in place at the site have been significantly upgraded as a result of SHE Consulting's involvement in this mandate.

Mr. Kent: So, I think what I was looking for is — we know the reason put forward for building the berm, but what specific actions were taken to protect the health and safety of the workers who were constructing the berm? I appreciate that obviously there have been some actions taken with respect to health and safety on the site.

I just wanted to close out my time here today with just a couple more questions with respect to the safety berm. I'm just wondering if the witnesses can tell us if they are aware: How many times was the project inspected during construction, and who was responsible for the inspection on the construction of the safety berm?

What was the final construction cost of the berm? If there is a breakdown of that number with the contractor that built them and then any other support contractors, that would be helpful.

I do have a number of other questions, and if my colleagues don't use their full amount of time, perhaps I can get back up at the end. But with that, I will thank the witnesses for appearing here virtually today and thank them for answering the questions. Hopefully, those concerns that I raised that the witness took under advisement — the witnesses will consider forwarding that information to the Legislature so that we can have those questions answered.

Ms. White: I thank the witnesses for appearing today.

I want to start by clearly stating that the receiver had nothing to do with the heap leach failure at the Eagle mine. I understand that the responsibility of the receiver is actually for the cleanup, so that will be my first question.

Can the witnesses please walk me through the roles and responsibility of the receiver?

Ms. Grant: I appreciate the question. What I thought would be most helpful is to actually take you through the order that appoints us, because our powers are clearly outlined in the receivership order. Realizing that the report that I am looking at has the order from December 9 which was amended on April 1, I don't have the April 1 order in front of me, but I don't believe that our powers were updated in that order; I believe that there were different aspects of the order that were updated.

I will just refer the readers to paragraph 6 of our court order. I will just read a few. It authorizes us to take possession and exercise control over the secure property, to take control of the business, engage advisors, purchase or lease machinery and

equipment, receive and collect monies, settle and extend uncompromised debt, execute agreements, market property, sell property, and the list goes on.

In this particular mandate, as I have said, our role is to oversee the remediation of the environmental disaster and that has been our primary focus. So, we oversee all of the emergency works on-site.

Ms. White: I thank the witnesses for that answer.

My understanding, of course, is that the receiver does not work directly for the Yukon government but alongside the Yukon government. Can the witnesses let me know to whom they are accountable? Who do they report to? Who have they been hired by to do the work at the Eagle mine?

Ms. Grant: As I said in my opening remarks, the receiver is an officer of the court and we report to the court. So, ultimately, we are accountable to the court as its officer. We are not engaged — or we don't have an engagement specifically with the Yukon government. Our relationship with the Yukon government, if I can call it that, is in its capacity as regulator with respect to overseeing remediation efforts from that perspective. As I've mentioned in response to other questions, the Yukon government is acting as a lender, so they are the receivership lender in these proceedings, and so there is an agreement between the receiver and the Yukon government in its capacity as receivership lender which governs certain aspects of our funding.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that answer. I want to get a sense of the early days. So, we know that the slide happened on June 24. What was the first day the receiver arrived at the Eagle mine site — so physically arrived on-site?

Ms. Grant: So, on the day the receivership order was granted, which was August 14, 2024, we sent representatives of the receiver to the Eagle mine site on that first day.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that answer. Can the witnesses please describe the Eagle mine site that first day that the receiver attended? For example, what things had been done or what actions had been taken, visible or documented, by Victoria Gold between the heap leach failure on June 24 and August 14 upon first day of arrival?

Ms. Grant: Just due to the passage of time, I can't answer that question comprehensively, but I can say a couple of things that I think will be helpful. First, as Appendix B to our first court report, we provided a summary of all of the regulatory orders that had been issued to Victoria Gold with respect to the failure, and in that appendix, we outlined the status of those orders so that the reader can understand the status of the particular orders in that appendix.

In addition, in our first report, which I referred to a few times — and I think it's probably important to note that we issued that first report purely for informational purposes as part of the transparency in this receivership. We didn't issue it because we were seeking any relief from the court but simply to provide an update on matters with respect to the receivership given the importance from a public transparency perspective.

With respect to the site, on page 26 of our first report, we start describing all of the site matters that we dealt with as part of those first six weeks of the receivership proceedings. It goes

into detail on stabilization activities and the work that we did with respect to the access road, which is a 43-kilometre road to get to the site and needed some significant repair work. We talk about the camp at the site — winterization activities and care and maintenance activities — and then the work that we did to assess what work had been done by Victoria Gold with respect to the orders that had been issued and then the work that needed to be completed during this initial emergency works phase. That assessment was done by the receiver in consultation with: Parsons as the lead environmental consultant at the time; representatives of the Yukon government in their capacity as regulator; and other technical advisors.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for the answer.

Looking at Appendix B of that first report, are there any items of concern to the receiver when they went on-site that hadn't been completed? There are multiple pages, of course, but was there anything specific that the receiver noticed or remarked on or was of grave concern in those regulatory orders that had not been completed?

Ms. Grant: What I would say is that, given the catastrophic failure that occurred at the mine site — what we are talking about is the early days of this receivership. We were concerned about a number of things. In particular, we were concerned about adding water storage capacity to the site. We were concerned about where water treatment was at and how we were going to enable the mine water treatment plant which, as we indicated numerous times, did not have the capacity to treat cyanide-contaminated water and how it would need to be augmented to enable that. We were concerned about a number of other aspects of the remediation and work that needed to be completed. That concern obviously was alleviated over time as we had boots on the ground and support from our technical advisors to assess the situation and to start actioning some of the items to move the works forward.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that answer.

I note that, in the first receiver's report to the courts, it does mention the access road numerous times. For example, in clause 59.b., it says: "facilitated the continuation of the necessary repair work on the access road into the Eagle Gold Mine..."

Were the needed repairs due to the slide, or were they due to the wildfires? Can the receiver just walk us through what necessary repairs were required on the access road?

Ms. Grant: I should have stated in my previous answer. Obviously, we were concerned about safety and the people on-site as well. I apologize for missing that in my previous remarks, because obviously, the health and safety of the employees on-site was of primary concern for us then and continues to be a primary concern for the receiver.

With respect to the access road, I don't believe that the issues were with respect to the slide. I believe that they were with respect to just ordinary wear and tear that happens on that road, such as potholes and other things that needed to be repaired to maintain the access road.

I believe that the main issue was that there was actually a significant number of potholes and there was a concern that — obviously, we were going to have to remove the cyanide from

the site. That was one of the orders that the regulator had put out, and so we were concerned about making sure that the access road was repaired to ensure the proper and safe carriage of chemicals.

Ms. White: Was there any indication of what Victoria Gold had planned on-site prior to the arrival of the receiver? We have talked about the list of, for example, directives that had or had not been completed. Was there any indication of the plan that Victoria Gold had going forward?

Ms. Grant: I don't know specifically, but what I can say is this: Obviously, a number of the employees who were on-site supporting whatever efforts Victoria Gold was undertaking remained on the site when we arrived. Discussions would have been held with those employees, but I don't have the particulars or the details of those discussions.

Ms. White: I thank the witness. I am moving to page 13 of the receiver's first report to the court and to the section entitled "Financial Difficulties". So, clause 36 reads: "The Receiver understands that the Company was facing cash flow constraints following the Failure Event, as demonstrated by the below actions..." For example, 36.a. says: "... in a press release issued on July 12, 2024 and on July 30, 2024, VGC stated that 'there can be no assurance that the Company [...] will have the financial resources necessary to repair damage to equipment and facilities or remediate impacts caused by the incident or restart production'..."

So, my question is: Can you help us understand what the following clauses 38 and 39 meant for the Eagle mine site and the heap leach failure?

So, 38 is: "The Receiver obtained a copy of a cash flow forecast...", and 39 is: "Based on the cash flow forecast," — it says — "... VGC was facing a near term liquidity crisis due to its inability to generate sufficient, regular future cash inflows in a timely manner to continue operations, repay its obligations accruing and address the mounting costs of the environmental remediation of the Failure Event."

So, can the witnesses help me understand how clauses 38 and 39 would have affected cleanup for Victoria Gold at the Eagle mine site?

Ms. Grant: So, what clauses 38 and 39 are meant to demonstrate is that the company was facing a liquidity crisis. In this case, the liquidity crisis — the concern with the liquidity crisis was whether or not they would have sufficient funds available to remediate the failure event. Because they were no longer operating, the comment about "regular future cash inflows in a timely manner" is specific to that. The company was no longer mining, and as a result, its future cash inflows were obviously impacted by that fact. That is what 39 is surfacing.

What 38 is saying is that, as a result of obtaining copies of the books and records of the company, which is standard as part of a receivership, we were provided with this cash-flow forecast that the company had prepared with respect to its burn rate, and we explain that in paragraph 38. Effectively, again, this was the company's assessment of what the emergency works would cost, and as a result, that cash-flow information that we were provided with effectively said that they would have run out of

cash by the end of November — so again, facing a liquidity crisis.

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, could the witnesses help me to understand what that would mean for site remediation, safety, or cleaning up going forward — understanding, of course, that the event happened on June 24? So, what does clause 38 and 39 mean on a go-forward basis from that date?

Ms. Grant: It means that the company would not have had sufficient funding to carry out remediation work after the end of November, effectively, based on the cash-flow information that we were provided. Unless the emergency works were completed by that date — and again, I don't know whether or not the company factored in all of the emergency works that were necessary — this implies that they wouldn't have been able to complete the remediation.

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, I thank the witness for the answer.

I am moving on to the heading of "Activities of the Receiver." It starts on page 17, clause 45. I am going to flip the page to page 18 and clause m., and m. reads — and I quote: "... engaged SHE Consulting Inc. ('SHE') to provide health and safety consulting services, including a review of the existing health and safety protocols on site, and to provide training to VGC employees in an effort to stabilize the workforce and activities at the Eagle Gold Mine site." It goes on to say: "A summary of the updated health and safety protocols is included at Appendix 'C.'"

What I want to start with is: Why was a health and safety consulting business hired?

Ms. Grant: As I have stated previously in a response to another question, PwC, in its capacity as court-appointed receiver of Victoria Gold, is the prime contractor for the Eagle mine site and, as a result, has primary carriage for health and safety at the site. Because we take that role very seriously, we hired SHE Consulting to oversee health and safety services at the mine site, and that is why SHE Consulting was retained.

Ms. White: Deputy Chair, were there any concerns about health and safety on the site prior to the arrival of the receiver?

Ms. Grant: I can't speak to any concerns there might have been with respect to the period prior to the receivership; I can only speak to what we know since our appointment.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that response.

I have moved on to Appendix C; so, it's the summary of health and safety improvements. I'm trying to get a sense of if some of these actions were not being taken ahead of time — for example, drug and alcohol testing prior to site arrival. Does the witness have any sense as to whether or not that was the practice prior to the receiver taking over the site?

Ms. Grant: Specifically with respect to drug and alcohol testing, the program that Victoria Gold had in place was ineffective. So, we implemented an entire new testing protocol with the support of SHE Consulting since our appointment.

Ms. White: Thank you, Deputy Chair, and I thank the witness for that. I myself have experienced working in mine sites, and so that is of concern to me to know that it was

ineffective prior to the receiver taking over, and I thank them for those changes.

I'm going to move on to — in the same clause, so still in clause 45, I'm flipping the page to page 19 and "s." It says: "commenced a comprehensive review of the assets held by VGC, including a plan to monetize these assets..." So, can the witnesses let us know what they found after having completed the comprehensive review?

Ms. Grant: So, the purpose of completing that comprehensive review is to be able to determine what assets are available to monetize to support the remediation efforts. So, those would be the assets that we commonly refer to as "non-core assets" — so, assets that could be sold in the interim period to help support the remediation efforts and then segregating those assets from assets that would be tied to the Eagle Gold mine site that should be dealt with at a later date.

So, the main purpose of the comprehensive review was to determine what was non-core versus what was core to the Eagle mine site. Then, we go on to discuss what we're doing with the non-core assets in our second court report in some detail.

Ms. White: I am a bit embarrassed to say that I read through the first report very extensively but not the second. Could the witnesses walk us through the steps taken with the non-core assets and then possibly the assets that are tied to the site? Can the witnesses explain to me — and I will catch up and open that second report right now, but if they could walk me through, I would appreciate that.

Ms. Grant: In our second report, starting at page 35, we have a section entitled, "Non-core Asset Realizations", and it starts at paragraph 107. It basically goes on to explain that Victoria Gold owns various other ancillary assets not related to the Eagle Gold mine that are non-core to the mine site, not being used as part of the remediation activities being performed, and would not be required in any restart of operations at the Eagle Gold mine. We refer to those as the "redundant assets". We go on to explain that, since the date of our appointment, we have continued to assess options with respect to monetizing those redundant assets to generate funds necessary to support the remediation work, and based on our analysis and following discussions with the Yukon government — and we have a defined term on our part called the "agent", which refers to the lending syndicate agent — the receiver was proposing two methods to efficiently realize on those assets while maximizing value.

The rest of the report goes on to explain why we asked for some modifications or relief in the receivership order to deal with monetizing those assets in a cost-effective manner. The report goes on to explain that. There are a number of paragraphs discussing that, and then we go on to talk about some of the non-core assets being that Victoria Gold owns securities in several listed companies, so we talk about how we intend to monetize those. We go on to talk about the exploration assets that the company owns, including quartz and placer claims and including a portfolio of royalties.

We also go on to talk about gold inventory. There were some gold and silver coins as well that we go on to discuss. There are several pages in that report that outline what relief we

were seeking with respect to the non-core assets and then what actually those specific assets are. They run from page 35 all the way to page 41 in our second report.

Ms. White: I thank the witnesses, especially for using the clause numbers. That was very helpful and I appreciate it.

Understanding that there was a fairly extensive list of redundant assets and there was discussion about them being monetized, have they been monetized to date, and have any assets been sold? If stuff has been sold, how much has been brought in by the receiver from selling off those redundant assets?

Ms. Grant: So, in our third report now, I will refer to page 34, which is where we discuss our interim statement of receipts and disbursements. This is for the period of November 23 to March 14, 2025. In there, there is a line item that is called "Asset Monetizations". If you flip over the page to paragraph 63.b., it describes what assets have actually been monetized and their value. That is where that information can be located.

Ms. White: Again, I thank the witness for the clear walk-through of the third report that I also didn't read as extensively as the first one.

The \$5.6 million mentioned in clause b. — has that money been used toward the remediation of the site?

Ms. Grant: All the money that we are receiving from asset monetizations is going to offset the costs of the receivership, including the remediation costs.

Ms. White: I thank the witnesses for that. That's excellent to know.

I am still in clause 45, but now I am on page 20, and I am looking at subclause w., which reads: "posted additional collateral with YG in response to the Yukon Water Board's ... security determination for reclamation and closure of the Property, unrelated to the Failure Event. This determination was based upon the Company's 2022 reclamation and closure plan and was not reflective of the current site conditions after the Failure Event."

My question here is: How much additional funding was posted, and now what is the full amount posted with Yukon government in response to the Yukon Water Board's security determination?

Ms. Grant: The additional amount that is referred to at 45.w. was approximately \$420,000. I believe that answers the question. Maybe I will just ask to clarify if the second part of the question is with respect to the surety bond.

Ms. White: That is an excellent question. I was asking if that was the full amount that was held in regard to the Water Board's security determination, so not specifically about the surety bond. But if the witness would like to tell us how much is now held for the surety bond, I would be happy to get that number.

Ms. Grant: With respect to the surety bond, I'll refer back to Appendix K in the third report just so you have the specific information. On the first page, in the preamble for that second amended and restated interim financing term sheet, about halfway down the page — it doesn't have paragraph numbers — it refers to the two surety bond amounts, one being

from Intact Insurance in the amount of \$48,320,759 and the second one from Trisura Guarantee Insurance Company in the amount of \$55,421,181. That was the total amount of the surety bonds that had been posted with respect to the Eagle Gold mine.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. I'm still on clause 45, except for now, I'm moving to 45.z., but I'm going to subclause ii on page 21.

This one says: "considered outstanding human rights complaints against VGC and communicated with the Yukon Human Rights Commission in respect of same..."

I wanted to know if the witnesses could tell us how many human rights complaints had been filed. Are the witnesses able to speak about them in generalities and about their current status? I understand if they can't, and they can just indicate that — but if they are able to say how many human rights complaints were filed against VGC.

Ms. Grant: So, with respect to the number of human rights complaints that were filed against Victoria Gold Corporation, we understand that two were filed prior to the receivership. In terms of the status of those complaints, I'm going to have to take that under advisement, as I'm not sure if that's confidential under the respective process.

Ms. White: Absolutely, I appreciate that, but thank you for letting me know about the two.

So, now I'm flipping to page 22 under the title "Employee Matters". I'm going to go to 47.c. This reads: "terminated the employment of six members of senior management in accordance with the Receivership Order..." So, what I would like to know is: Did any of those six seek to get a payout from cash on hand, or were there severance packages? Could the witnesses tell us, for example, how much was requested or how much was awarded in severance packages?

Ms. Grant: I can confirm that, in total, we did not pay any termination or severance to the six individuals in question, but I can't speak to any of the individuals personally, as that's confidential information.

Ms. White: I appreciate that. It is why I referred to them as the "six" as well.

I am moving to page 30 under the heading of "Water Treatment" in clause 75. Clause 75 speaks to the legacy of the water treatment plant. To the best of the witnesses' knowledge, did the legacy water treatment plant meet the requirements of the licensing?

Ms. Grant: Could you repeat the question?

Ms. White: On page 30 under the heading of "Water Treatment", it speaks to the legacy of the water treatment plant on-site. To the best of the witnesses' knowledge, did the legacy water treatment plant — the one that was there prior to arrival or prior to the changes — meet the requirements of the licensing?

Ms. Grant: I don't know the answer to that question, and I am wondering whether or not the regulator might be in a better position to respond to it.

Ms. White: Excellent advice.

I am moving on to clause 83 on page 32. It talks about — quote: "As of the Date of Appointment, the Receiver understands from VGC that approximately 299,100 m³ (about

85%) of the total capacity ... was utilized." I want to get a sense of how quickly that one storage facility would have run out of space and what plans it appeared that Victoria Gold had to address the storage shortage.

Ms. Grant: I don't know what plans Victoria Gold had in place, and I also don't know how long that remaining capacity would have been available just because it would be dependent on the amount of inflows per day, which fluctuates.

Ms. White: Can the witnesses just remind me now what the current storage capacity for water is on-site?

Deputy Chair's statement

Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger): We no longer have video feed for the witnesses. We will take a moment to reconnect.

We have video feed again.

Ms. Grant: As a result of a technical issue, I didn't actually hear that last question.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the witness missed that, because as soon as the feed disconnected, I forgot what I was saying, and it didn't go well.

Can the witnesses please remind me what the current storage capacity is for water on-site? So, understanding that, in clause 83, it spoke about 350,000 cubic metres, what is the current storage capacity at the Eagle mine site?

Ms. Grant: I was just looking at a water balance update as of April 30. That update is normally done as of noon, and so I was trying to find the most current information. I can confirm that the remaining capacity in the storage ponds that are currently on-site, without freeboard, is approximately 362,889 cubic metres. That includes the new pond — pit pond 3 — that just recently came online.

Ms. White: This is my final question for the receiver — or the witnesses, rather. Again, I appreciate them appearing here. I appreciated the briefing weeks ago. Again, I'll mention that I understand very clearly that the receiver is not responsible for the failure of the heap leach facility at the Eagle mine.

My final question. The third report of the receiver, dated March 24, 2025, talks about the monetization of precious metals held within waste materials on-site in five different spots. Of course, the receiver mentioned earlier where it talked about — on page 52 — point b., under subclause 109 — but there are five different points where it's mentioned. Yukoners have reached out with concerns that the receiver, while operating under a remediation mandate, is also incentivized to recover gold during the cleanup, and they are concerned that this could unintentionally shift the focus away from long-term environmental protection.

I have been asked: Has the receiver received clear boundaries from the Yukon government to ensure that environmental priorities take precedence over asset monetization during this process, or does the receiver themselves have a process in place so that it doesn't shift — understanding, of course, that, you know, the precious metals will obviously offset the cost, but making sure that it's not taking away from the focus of remediation?

Ms. Grant: I was just checking to make sure that I provided the accurate information for the previous response, but I believe that I have, so I will respond to the question at hand. I will reconfirm that the primary objective of this receivership is to remediate the environmental catastrophe caused by the heap leach failure, and that remains our primary objective and our primary focus.

Ms. White: I just want to thank the witnesses for that final assertion and, of course, I appreciate your time today.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, I want to begin by thanking the witnesses for appearing today. Many of the questions that I have been preparing have been asked. I thank the members opposite for all of their questions.

I want to acknowledge a couple of things. First of all, when we met in the briefing with the receiver a week or two ago, they offered to respond to written questions. I think that's still on the table. I have heard other questions that came today which I think are suited for us as a government. I will just say as well that if — I've asked Energy, Mines and Resources to be listening in, and if we identify questions that are posed today that are better suited for Energy, Mines and Resources, we will work to get answers.

My first question for the witnesses is that it looks to me that receiverships are about hiring accountancy firms, yet this work is really about a mine and remediating a mine site and dealing with sort of engineering and environmental engineering questions. Can I just ask: If the court appoints an accountancy firm, how is the technical side of this dealt with, and how is that accountability brought back to the court?

Ms. Grant: So, as I mentioned in one of my previous responses, in order to be a court-appointed receiver, a firm has to be a licensed insolvency trustee, which is a rigorous program overseen by the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy. So, there is a limited pool of organizations that are qualified to act as a court-appointed receiver.

In this particular matter, to address the issue at hand, which is the requirement to have significant technical expertise to oversee the remediation efforts, in the receivership order that was presented to the court back in August for our appointment — and I'm just flipping through it as I'm talking so I can get to the specific provisions — in that order, there was an inclusion of the lead environmental consultant, and that is unique — at least I haven't seen it in other receivership proceedings — to this proceeding. That concept was put into that order recognizing the technical expertise that would be necessary to support PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. in its capacity as receiver to oversee the remediation efforts on-site.

So, that was a construct that was put into the initial receivership order, and it actually evolved so that, when we were back in court on December 9 — and I'm just moving to get a copy of that court order, which I believe is appended to our third report at Appendix C.

In that order, we transition from the lead environmental consultant to the technical advisor group, which consisted of several technical advisors to the receiver. The reason for that was the requirement to have specific technical experts for various disciplines to support the environmental remediation

works on-site, such as a specific expert for the heap leach stabilization efforts and specific technical expertise for the environmental monitoring and regulatory aspects of this receivership.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the witnesses for that response. By the way, as I listened to the responses throughout today, I have heard a lot of references back to the reports that are online. I appreciate that they are there, because I think that helps us all be able to go and grab that information.

I am imagining that right now things are very busy on-site, that as we head to freshet, there's a lot of work to try to deal with the risk of the spring melt. I have heard some conversations or descriptions today of water and that situation, but can I ask if there are other risks as well that freshet poses? What are the things that the receiver is working to address as we move into freshet?

Ms. Grant: So, the key priorities on-site at this juncture are keeping cyanide-impacted water separate from mine contact water so as not to overwhelm storage and the water treatment plant on-site. That is directly related to freshet planning.

In addition, we are continuing to discharge treated water from the site as a priority, we are continuing to intercept and collect groundwater for treatment as a priority, and we're continuing work with respect to stabilizing the heap leach.

To continue to advance these priorities, we require funding, which is being provided by the receivership lender. We require capable technical expertise, which is supported by our technical advisors — and I spoke to that previously — and we require capable employees and contractors, so that includes the Victoria Gold employees who are currently working tirelessly on-site and all of the local and other contractors who are supporting the work. All of these are critical to the success of the remediation efforts on-site right now.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the witnesses for that response.

So, the witness just referenced the heap leach stability. Is there still a risk of a secondary slide, and is that risk at all related to freshet?

Ms. Grant: So, as a result of the work that the receiver, with the support of its technical advisors, has been able to do on-site, we've been able to do more assessment in analyzing the stability of the heap leach.

There is always a risk of a secondary slide. That has been prevalent since prior to the receivership and continues throughout the course of the receivership. But what we have done, as the receiver, is implement additional monitoring and safety protocols as a result of the prospect of a secondary failure. We have LiDAR and radar supporting the work that is being done on-site.

So, extra monitoring has been in place since the receiver was appointed to ensure the safety of the workers on-site and to enable the emergency works to be completed during this time.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the witness for that response.

Earlier, I heard one of our colleagues in the House talking about the deflection berm. My understanding is that the way

that the berm was built was that the work didn't proceed coming up the gulch to the bottom of the slide, but rather, there was a road that got put in to remain above the slide so that it was sort of above potential run-out zones. At least from how I was informed, I thought that this was to ensure that there was safety for the work as that berm was constructed. I was told that there had been some emergency procedures put in place to try to make sure that this work was done in a safe manner.

Can the witnesses talk about that sort of approach to see that the work could be done safely?

Ms. Grant: I can confirm that an access road was constructed. It took several weeks to construct. That work started on September 10 and was completed on October 5, and then work was started on the safety berm after that point in time.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Earlier, the witnesses talked about the court order directing that there be a prioritization of local procurement and hiring. Can I ask the witnesses — through you, Deputy Chair — how the receivership seeks to accomplish this? What is the process? Do they have a local vendor list, or are they using some sort of framework? Are they talking with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun? How is that accomplished?

Ms. Grant: The receiver is in regular discussion with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Development Corporation with respect to procurement opportunities. As well, the receiver has already engaged several local First Nation businesses and continues to provide them with prospective opportunities with respect to procurement on-site.

So, it is through those two mechanisms that the receiver is able to undertake determining what NND businesses are available to support the remediation efforts, which businesses have the capabilities and the capacity to support, and then the receiver is in touch with those businesses to determine if they actually are able to support those efforts.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the witnesses for that response. If I can just follow up on that response: Is it an iterative process? Is that work ongoing throughout the cycle of remediation or the time that the receiver has been there on-site?

Ms. Grant: I would say that procurement opportunities available to citizen-owned businesses have improved over the course of the remediation efforts, so the receiver is continuing to prioritize those efforts and is engaged in dialogue again with specific businesses that the receiver is aware have the capabilities to support and then supplements that with discussions with the development corporation to determine if there are other potential businesses that may also be able to support.

So, those conversations are ongoing and are a regular part of our cadence of communication.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Earlier, the witnesses talked about the liquidity crisis of Victoria Gold. That was referenced in the early reports. Of course, we can't know exactly where things head, but given that the witnesses have significant experience in dealing with receiverships over time, can they describe what happens if you don't put a receivership in place? For example, when a company is facing a liquidity crisis, what are typical things and what happens, for example, around issues like

remediation or how a company's assets are dealt with? What is typical?

Ms. Grant: What I can offer as a response to that question, just from a general perspective, is that when a company runs out of money or is facing a liquidity crisis, there are a number of options available to them under the various restructuring and insolvency statutes in Canada. One of those options is a receivership. Another option is that the company can file an assignment and bankruptcy, and there are several others. I believe that this answers the question.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As the witnesses were talking about that, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King raised a question about the realization of non-core assets, and the witnesses talked about — that this is used to go toward the remediation. Can the witnesses remind Yukoners: In terms of cash on hand and things like that when the receiver first came in, how much money was identified in that moment, and what went toward remediation as a result?

Ms. Grant: When PwC was appointed receiver, we froze the Victoria Gold Corporation bank accounts and the trading account that they had at Auramet, and we were able to secure approximately \$27.7 million of cash, and those funds have been used to offset the remediation costs to date.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, I thank the witnesses for that response.

Earlier, there was a question about something called the "ADR plant". I am trying to get the acronym — I think that it is "absorption desorption recovery plant". Before the slide happened, I think that what that plant is used for is to take the cyanide solution and to remove the gold from that cyanide solution.

Is the ADR plant and the potential use of it right now just being considered because of its ability to remove gold, or is it also there — at least in part of that conversation — because it also helps to remove cyanide?

Ms. Grant: The discussion around the ADR plant is with respect to potentially putting the brine solution that's currently a result of the mine water treatment system through the ADR plant to assist in the efforts with respect to removing cyanide from the contaminated water as well as with respect to potentially aiding in the monetization efforts.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I heard from the witnesses is that it is used for both — so, to assist with removing cyanide and then also possibly monetization. Can I ask a couple of follow-up questions? The first one — if that monetization happens, then that, of course, would help to go toward the cost of remediation. I am asking that, I guess. My second question is: As the receiver considers these steps, are these also shared with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and their technical teams and the Yukon government and their technical teams, et cetera, in those sorts of considerations?

Ms. Grant: So, broadly speaking, asset monetizations during this process are used to offset the cost of the receivership — full stop. It doesn't matter what monetization we're referring to; all of the asset monetizations are used to offset the costs.

With respect to consultation or discussions with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, the receiver has regular

discussions with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun with respect to many aspects of this receivership, including in particular the remediation efforts. Those discussions are held with chief and council as well as with the technical advisors who have been retained by the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. The receiver has also attended, in-person and virtually, two general assemblies that the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has put on since the receiver was appointed. So, there is a regular cadence of discussions with the First Nation on many aspects of the receivership proceeding.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, as we have been questioning the witnesses today, they have said several times that this receivership is different from typical receiverships in that it has really been about remediation, and they have described how some of those things are unique.

I want to ask a question. From their perspective, what are the benefits of having a receiver come in — not necessarily them specifically but just a receiver generally? And if they could take that context of this situation, where it's about the remediation of the site rather than a liquidity crisis, and if they could describe to us what their perspective is around the benefits of a receivership in this sort of unique situation.

Ms. Grant: In my experience, the advantage of a court-appointed receivership proceeding is the oversight of the court and the transparency that provides. If I liken that back to this specific receivership, what we have been able to accomplish in this receivership, which was one of the key concerns leading up to the appointment — which is clearly outlined in the submissions and the materials that were filed in support of the application — was that there was a lack of communication, a lack of transparency, and a lack of understanding about what the company was doing prior to the receivership proceeding.

In stark contrast to that, what we have done in our capacity as receiver is communicate, communicate, communicate. How we have done that is through regular reporting. So, again, I mentioned that we issued our first court report purely for informational purposes six weeks into the receivership, because we believed that it was important to be transparent. Off the back of that, we started doing monthly site updates to give the public an update on each of the emergency work streams as a matter of transparency. We then filed our second court report prior to our returning to court in December. That report wasn't limited just to the relief that we were seeking but also provided a very detailed update on monetization efforts, receipts, and disbursements to date as well as a comprehensive update on site matters.

We continue that cadence of providing regular site updates as well as, again, we filed our third court report on April 1. We have participated in a media briefing alongside the Yukon government. We post this information on our website to make it available to the public. We also meet regularly with a number of important stakeholders to this proceeding as well as the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and provide regular reporting on our efforts to complete the remediation work as well as address some of the non-core assets and other ancillary matters that are really important to this receivership, including matters such as maintaining insurance at the site and other things that we don't

talk about regularly in the public domain and haven't come up in the course of this attendance today. But there are a number of other matters that we, as the receiver, have to deal with that we spend time documenting and explaining to the public so that they understand what we, as the court-appointed receiver, are doing on this matter.

Deputy Chair: Are there any further questions for the witnesses?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, on behalf of the Committee of the Whole, I would like to thank Michelle Grant, senior vice-president of PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Graham Page, senior vice-president of PricewaterhouseCoopers, for appearing as witnesses today in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Deputy Chair: The witnesses are now excused.

Witnesses excused

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

MLA Tredger: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 217, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2025-26*, and directed me to report progress.

Also, pursuant to Motion No. 1261 adopted earlier in the Sitting, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions regarding the Eagle Gold mine.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 30, 2025:

35-1-202

Written response to Petition No. 30 (Clarke, N.)

The following legislative returns were tabled April 30, 2025:

35-1-172

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation before Committee of the Whole on April 9, 2025 (Streicker)

35-1-173

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation before Committee of the Whole on April 23, 2025 (Streicker)

35-1-174

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation before Committee of the Whole on April 23, 2025 (Streicker)

35-1-175

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board before Committee of the Whole on November 19, 2024 (Mostyn)

35-1-176

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board before Committee of the Whole on November 19, 2024 (Mostyn)

The following document was filed April 30, 2025:

35-1-338

2024 Annual Report Yukon Minerals Advisory Board
(Streicker)