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HANSARD

Thursday, November 4, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 Fall Sitting

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

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

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Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 4, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper.
 Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Clarke: I have the pleasure of introducing Dr. Patrick Rouble in the gallery today for National Skilled Trade and Technology Week. Dr. Rouble is here joining us today in his capacity as president of the board for SkillsCompétences Canada.

Dr. Rouble is a former MLA for the beautiful Southern Lakes and Cabinet minister. Thank you for coming today, and let us give Dr. Rouble a round of applause.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: I would also like to welcome, for the tribute that we are doing for National Skilled Trade and Technology Week: Sarah Tomlin, executive director for Skills Canada Yukon; Gerry Quarton, president of Skills Canada Yukon; and, yes, I want to also welcome Dr. Patrick Rouble — thank you very much for coming; Dominic Devigne, Skills Canada Yukon national alumni, director, and volunteer — thank you for coming; Lorraine McRae, director and volunteer; and Riley Olsen, Skills Canada Yukon program coordinator. Thank you so much for coming today.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise today during Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week to talk about the dangers of this poisonous gas and what Yukoners can do to protect themselves and their families. Carbon monoxide is known as a silent killer because it's a gas that you can't see, smell, or taste. It is produced when we burn fuels such as gas, kerosene, oil, propane, and wood. As temperatures drop and we head into the winter, and we're turning on our heaters and starting to use our woodstoves regularly, it's more important than ever that we know how to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Installation and maintenance of fuel-burning appliances should only be done by a qualified technician who is trained to spot potential issues that could be causing carbon monoxide buildup. A qualified technician will ensure that there is enough fresh air coming into the room containing your fuel-burning appliance and that your system is effectively venting the gas outside. Every fuel-burning heating appliance has the potential

to generate dangerous levels of carbon monoxide without any obvious signs of failure. You may have no idea that something is wrong until it's too late. That's why annual maintenance is critical. Add this to your fall to-do list; it could save your life.

The next defence is to make sure that you have working carbon monoxide detectors. In 2013, the Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to mandate that all residences with fuel-burning appliances or attached garages have carbon monoxide alarms. A carbon monoxide detector looks like a smoke alarm and is easy to install and maintain. Just follow the manufacturer's instructions. Carbon monoxide alarms or combination smoke alarms must be installed outside all sleeping areas on every level of your home, including the basement. If you are a tenant, it is your landlord's responsibility to install them. Make sure that you test your detectors once a month, change the batteries annually, and replace your detector when required.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important to know the warning signs and recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure. These symptoms include: headaches, nausea, dizziness, breathlessness, confusion, hallucinations, and unconsciousness. If you ever feel like this might be happening to you, get outside and call 911.

Carbon monoxide safety and prevention is a priority, not only during this week, but all year-round. During this week, we encourage you to test your alarms and to do so once a month, change the batteries every year, and practise your escape plan with your family. Just a few minutes of time and attention could save lives. You can find more information about carbon monoxide safety online at yukon.ca and on Protective Services' Facebook page.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party and the NDP caucuses to recognize November 1 to 7 as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week. Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas. It is odourless, tasteless, and can poison the body quickly or over long periods of time, depending on concentration, ventilation, and other factors. The gas can be produced by appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters, generators, and many other sources.

Carbon monoxide alarms will sound when the gas is detected. This is the only warning that you will have if there is a leak in your home. Appliances should be inspected yearly to ensure that there is no buildup of gas or leaks.

It is cold and flu season and, coupled with COVID-19, people are monitoring closely for symptoms. What many don't know is that the symptoms of exposure to carbon monoxide are similar in nature to the flu. Headaches, nausea, breathlessness, and dizziness are all things to watch for. Loss of consciousness can happen quickly, whether you are asleep or awake, which is why alarms are so important to have in your home. Have peace of mind in knowing that your symptoms are not due to carbon monoxide. Ensure that there is an alarm at least on every level of your home, and test them regularly.

Our communities have experienced loss from carbon monoxide. We know how much it hurts to lose community

members, loved ones, friends, students, and peers. It is incredibly hard for such a tight-knit territory to lose people, knowing that their loss was preventable. I urge everyone to take the time to have your furnaces and other gas appliances checked by a certified technician. Check your chimneys and vents for ice buildup in the winter and make sure that you have working carbon monoxide detectors in your homes.

Applause

In recognition of National Skilled Trade and Technology Week

Hon. Ms. McLean: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute and recognition to National Skilled Trade and Technology Week.

National Skilled Trade and Technology Week runs from October 31 to November 6 this year. It is a time to promote and raise awareness of the many career opportunities in skilled trades and technologies in Canada. Skilled trades continue to be a crucial pillar in the continued success of the Canadian economy. We do not recognize these professions as often as we should, as Yukoners who are in these positions are the ones who maintain and enable our communities to move forward.

Very few young Canadians realize just how diverse the trades are, with a preconceived notion that trades are limited to carpentry, electrical and plumbing. National Skilled Trade and Technology Week and Skills Canada are working toward debunking that notion by raising awareness and promoting the many professions that fall under the trades.

This year, Skills Canada hosted a virtual career exploration event that took place this week on November 2. Industry leaders, such as HGTV's Sebastian Clovis and Siobhan Detkavich from *Top Chef Canada*, spoke to youth across the country, challenging misconceptions and speaking to best practices for youth who are interested in pursuing a career in the trades.

I want to take the time to thank the many people who support Yukon students to explore careers within skilled trades and technologies. To the organizations that share information and promote open conversations about trades and technology, thank you. Thank you to Yukon University, which is offering accessible opportunities and introductions to the trades. Thank you to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology for providing our youth with hands-on experience, mentorship, and strong encouragement every step of the way. I cannot forget about our Department of Education's apprenticeship and trades certification staff. Your efforts are recognized and very much appreciated.

Finally, I wish to congratulate the 44 Yukon apprenticeship graduates who received their certificates this year. I wish you all success in your new careers. Let's all remember to thank our local tradespeople within our communities for making our lives better through their hard work, creativity, innovation, and passion. From all of us on this side of the House, thank you very much.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 31 to November 6 as National Skilled Trade and Technology Week. The theme this year is "Creativity and Innovation".

We pay tribute to the contributions made by those working in the trades and technology sectors. This week showcases the many opportunities available to youth in these important career paths. To celebrate, Skills Canada Yukon is hosting a number of events to give youth access to explore the trades by offering hands-on learning opportunities and also by offering engaging workshops and clubs to pique the interest in trades and technology.

SkillsCompétences Canada reports that over 700,000 skilled workers will be retiring by the year 2029. This will create a shortage of skilled workers in jobs that may not be filled due to the lack of students gaining trades and technology experience. This year, the stress is on the incredible importance of building a strong workforce and highlighting the benefits of pursuing the path from training, apprenticeship, and working toward a red seal.

There are 56 red seal trades in Canada: automotive; aircraft mechanics; appliance service technicians; construction trades, such as electrical, plumbing, and carpentry; culinary skills; and the list goes on. Add in all the directions that a career could take in the technology sector, and I would say that our youth have a varied and wide selection and a lot of opportunity to find something that they would love to do as a career.

We would like to recognize and thank Skills Canada Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology for the work that each organization does to promote opportunities in the Yukon. They provide awareness, information, hands-on training, and support to many. Programming opportunities, workshops, and events are held throughout the year and offer many introductions and openings to explore career options.

Thank you to everyone who worked to support and highlight the trades and technology sectors, and thanks to those who have chosen to make the trades a career and who encourage and pass on their skills to the next generation of skilled tradespeople.

Applause

Ms. White: On behalf of the Yukon NDP and as a ticketed tradesperson, I stand in celebration of this year's National Skilled Trade and Technology Week. The world as we know it wouldn't exist without folks in the trades and technology fields. The pandemic has taught us all just how important a career in a skilled trade or the technology sector really is, and this year's theme brings that idea home while focusing on creativity and innovation. The Yukon has made leaps and bounds in the arena of skilled trades and technology since I was young. Organizations like SkillsCompétences Canada Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology have sprouted, grown, and expanded, and through their outreach and hands-on approach, they are opening doors for Yukon youth toward exciting careers.

Skills Canada Yukon provides youth with hands-on opportunities by offering fun and engaging workshops and

skills clubs in trades and technology areas. Some events that they are facilitating this week are taking place across the Yukon: a virtual animation contest, the construction of bird houses with students at Jack Hulland Elementary School, a cooking workshop in partnership with Iron Women, and travelling to Mayo to deliver an animation with a Skills Canada Yukon alumnus.

Mr. Speaker, in Canada's future economy, the skilled trades and technology sectors are going to matter more than ever, and it is a good thing that in Yukon, with the hands-on mentorship of SkillsCompétences Yukon and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, we are well on our way to that future.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling the 2020-21 annual report of the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office.

Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have for tabling a letter to the Member for Watson Lake. Yesterday, the Member for Watson Lake made reference to a letter that she had written on July 21 and had suggested that I had ignored it for 105 days. I did respond in August, and I am tabling that letter today.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: When tabling documents, the member can give dates and a brief description.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have for tabling the reply and further notice of re-sending this letter to the member today.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to explain why her government is providing Yukon Hospital Corporation with just \$85.76 million in funding this year, according to her own statement during Question Period on November 2, when the actual hospital expenses for last fiscal year were \$103.6 million, according to the Yukon Hospital Corporation annual report that the minister tabled in the Assembly.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to work with the Jack Hulland school community to host a public meeting before the end of November in order to discuss

solutions for the increased acts of violence, bullying, and vandalism that are happening at the school.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to expand the scope of children's disability services to include equal financial support for parents and/or guardians who are full-time caregivers to a child or children with a disability.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to listen to health care and addictions experts by urgently implementing a managed alcohol program in the Yukon.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide local, consistent, and long-term mental health services accessible and available to all residents of Faro.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to communicate the details of the COVID-19 vaccine mandate to Yukon non-governmental organizations by November 10, 2021.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to communicate the details of the COVID-19 vaccine mandate to Yukon businesses by November 10, 2021.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth centre

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Last week, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation held an opening ceremony for their new youth centre, or young people house. The 3,000-square-foot building was designed specifically to meet the needs of youth in Dawson City. It includes a movie room, a space for workshops and meetings, and a full kitchen to support the Jordan's Principle food program.

The new centre will give local youth and young adults in Dawson the tools, space, and programming that will help them pursue traditional activities, education, and opportunities for development. We are proud to support facilities and well-rounded programming like this that help Yukoners live healthy, culturally fulfilling lives.

As most members of this House will recall, this project was highlighted in the Premier's Budget Address earlier this year.

Mr. Speaker, facilities like this are so important to the growth, health, and well-being of our communities. Dawson City has many venues for adults to socialize, but options are limited for younger residents. The new Dawson youth centre is providing a safe and healthy space for the youth of the town.

Design and construction of the new youth centre was funded through a partnership between the Yukon government, the Government of Canada, and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

through the Investing in Canada infrastructure program. We have provided nearly \$500,000 for this project. While government funding was critical to ensure that the facility was built, the capital funding did not cover the cost of all the materials and supplies needed to bring the new youth centre to life. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation stepped up to fill the gaps by engaging the community and raising funds to help turn this building into a welcoming centre for the community's youth.

I would also like to acknowledge the work and commitment of the leaders and staff of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation government. Investing in our youth is one of the most important and smart decisions that leaders can make. This is just one of the many investments that the Yukon government is making in community infrastructure that helps to build a stronger foundation for our communities.

Again, I would like to congratulate the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation on the completion of the new youth centre and to thank them for working in partnership to support youth in their community.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to reply to this ministerial statement.

I think we can all agree that giving youth the proper tools for success will ensure a better future for everyone. That's why the Official Opposition is pleased to hear that the new Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth centre opened for Dawson youth.

I understand that the building itself was designed specifically for Dawson area youth and contains a full kitchen to house a Jordan's Principle food program. I am happy that the centre will have such a food program, as no child deserves to go hungry.

I would also like to thank the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and the Dawson community for stepping up and ensuring that the new centre was outfitted properly for youth. Our congratulations to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, the Dawson area community, and all who were involved in making this youth centre a reality.

I hope that with this successful project, the government will work with additional Yukoners about what they would like to see in their communities. Perhaps the minister could update us on other Yukon First Nations and communities that the government has approached about building youth centres.

Ms. Blake: The Yukon NDP are excited to hear about the new youth space for young people in Dawson. This space came to life because of the leadership and hard work of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Time and time again, it is Yukon First Nations that lead the way in prioritizing and uplifting youth. For generations, we have known that issues upstream affect our entire lives. It's why we are so focused on our youth. It is only very recently that political leaders have listened. I am so glad to see that this investment was made.

Young Yukoners today face many challenges that may have been foreign to us when we were in our youth. This space is a huge success for Dawson City; it is a space by and for

youth. They can be among peers and support workers whom they trust in a space that they feel ownership in.

I've always believed in ensuring the safety and well-being of our youth in the territory as they are our future leaders. For youth in rural communities, safe spaces like this create a sense of belonging and purpose. The Young People House is an example of the power of public space.

While the minister stated that Dawson has lots of social venues for adults, he forgot to mention that most of these social spaces also cost money. Bars, restaurants, the casino, and stores all require payment to spend time in. To access a social space, you usually need cash to enter and stay. Having a free community space with things to do and peers to spend time with is invaluable. I hope that more spaces like this continue to open up.

When we devote land and buildings to public space over private developers, it protects the community. It helps everyone. Efforts should be placed in other rural communities to develop youth spaces like this. The Young People House will benefit the entire community of Dawson.

Congratulations to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and their youth for their hard work and the opening of their well-deserved centre.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the members opposite who responded to this ministerial statement this afternoon in solidarity and agreement as to what a great space this is. I do agree with the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin that public spaces for the public that can be readily accessed without any cost are very important. I am glad that we are contributing to the public commons with this announcement today. I look forward to building more.

I will say to the Member for Watson Lake that the Investing in Canada infrastructure fund projects were determined by the communities themselves, so hats off to the community of Dawson City and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, who came forward with this proposal that we then submitted to the proper infrastructure funding and got the project built. This is the same process that any community in the territory can do. We welcome their suggestions.

Investing in community infrastructure that brings Yukoners together to learn, share, and grow creates stronger communities, better outcomes for families, and an opportunity to impact Yukoners for generations — to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin's point. The Young People House is a great example of how investments in shared community facilities do just that. Dawson youth now have a place where they can join their peers, create new lifelong friendships in their community, and have a positive environment that promotes learning and growth. This is the type of investment that changes the community now and impacts future generations of Dawsonites.

Our government is focused on continuing to invest in community infrastructure to build stronger communities and improve the life of Yukoners across the territory. Another example of an investment like this which is having a direct impact on a community is the upgrades to the Mayo aerodrome. In 2019, our government started working with community

partners to make extensive upgrades to the Mayo aerodrome, including rehabilitating the runway, building new maintenance equipment, and installing energy-efficient airfield lighting. This made a huge impact in the community of Mayo. With these additional upgrades, residents in Mayo and surrounding communities can now access commercial flights directly from their home. For a rural community such as Mayo, this allows residents to easily access reliable and fast travel to other parts of the Yukon, Canada, and the world. That makes a big difference in the lives of Mayo residents and those in the surrounding communities.

Our government continues to make strategic investments to build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. We have allocated more than \$10 million for the new health and wellness centre in Old Crow. The new centre will be the first of its kind in the Yukon, providing both health and social services with a collaborative care model.

These are just some of the examples of community projects that we are investing in that have strengthened Yukon communities and, in turn, have strengthened opportunities for Yukoners. I could name a dozen others in communities across the territory.

Every Yukoner deserves to have an opportunity to succeed, and it is through our communities that those opportunities are created. We will continue to work to make strategic investments in Yukon communities across the territory that make real impacts in the lives of Yukoners. Thank you very much for your time this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whitehorse Emergency Shelter

Ms. Van Bibber: In December 2018, the Yukon government made the decision to take over the Centre of Hope shelter facility. The former Liberal minister told the *Yukon News* that she hoped the centre would become more than just a shelter and that it should become a place where people can gather. Since then, government has made a number of policy and physical changes to the operation. The result of all those changes have been an uptick in security and safety challenges for surrounding businesses in the area. Businesses in the area have experienced property damage and inappropriate behaviour in, or directly in front of, their businesses.

Does the current Minister of Health and Social Services recognize that changes that the former minister made to the operation of the emergency shelter have had negative impacts on businesses in the area?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I am pleased to share that we have implemented most of the recommendations from the 2020-21 community safety plan, including those related to ensuring the safety of shelter clients, drop-in guests, and staff and enhancing the shelter's strategic operational governance.

Developing this community safety plan included bringing together government and community partners identified as key service providers or groups directly impacted by the shelter's

operations. That includes local businesses, residents who live downtown, and all who are impacted by — or consider being impacted by — the shelter's operations.

We continue to explore options that support creating a safe and harmonious community for shelter clients, for the neighbouring residents, and for businesses. Our goal is to increase access to culturally appropriate and trauma-informed supports and services to increase wellness for our community members who use the shelter.

Ms. Van Bibber: We have seen the implications of the changes that the Liberal government made to the operations of the shelter start to spill over.

Just last week, a long-time Yukon coffee shop announced that it is closing. When asked about the impact of the proximity to the shelter on the decision to close, the owner told CBC this — and I quote: “The difficulty is that there are behaviours that spill out of the shelter that are completely uncontrolled and they're a block and a half away” — not even a block away — “And YG refuses to do anything about security. So, it's left to individual business owners, and it's ramped up pretty hard since the shelter went no barriers.”

Will the minister agree to review the operations of the emergency shelter and consult with businesses that have been affected by the changes in policy that have occurred since the Liberals took control of this facility?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government has established an agreement with the Council of Yukon First Nations to develop a program to enhance safety in the shelter's vicinity and to strengthen cultural programming within the shelter. That is a key operational plan, absolutely forward-looking, working with our partners. We continue to collaborate with community agencies and NGO partners to support a low-barrier, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and housing-focused shelter, assisting shelter users with their wellness and their personal goals.

Ms. Van Bibber: The Salvation Army operated the shelter in the same area for decades. While there were some issues, there was nothing like what has happened since the Liberals took over this facility in 2019. The changes that have been made by the Liberal government have directly resulted in negative impacts on surrounding businesses. Some businesses have put up security bars on their windows; others have had to construct other security measures. The shelter has been cited as a contributing factor by at least one long-time business that has decided to close its doors.

Will the minister acknowledge the impact that the decisions of a former minister have had on the surrounding businesses and agree to meet with affected businesses to consider changes in the way that the emergency shelter is operated?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it's worth reminding Yukoners of a couple of things that I might correct in that preamble to this question. One is that the location for the current shelter was chosen by the former government — the Yukon Party government. It was identified as an appropriate location, and it was built without any plan whatsoever to operate it.

The reference to the former Salvation Army is a shift — absolutely — by our government because, as I've said, we're looking for low-barrier, trauma-informed care and opportunities for Yukoners.

With respect to the local business that has been referenced, I too heard that interview, and it was certainly not the driving decision — or indicated as the driving decision — for that businessowner.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to collaborate with the community within the shelter and community agencies and NGO partners to support a low-barrier, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and housing-focused shelter, which was absolutely not the case for the previous government. We have shifted, and I am pleased that we have.

Question re: Carbon tax exemptions for home heating

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, the Yukon is on the brink of an energy crisis. As the territory grows, demands on our energy are increasing. Due to poor planning by the Liberal government, there is no solution on the horizon.

The growing population of the territory is putting a huge strain on our electrical grid. There is a real potential — if one of our generation stations were to malfunction, we would be in a scenario where we do not have enough electricity to meet demand. The proposed Atlin hydro expansion is only projected to be completed in 2024, according to the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, what is the government's plan to meet our energy demands in the short term?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: If you have driven down Robert Service Way or the south access lately, you will have seen some clearing happening. Kwanlin Dün has been doing some clearing. I found out, after questions that were raised here previously, that Kwanlin Dün is getting the wood that is cleared there for elders, so that is good news.

What they are going to put there is a battery project — a grid-scale battery project. That battery project is going to allow us to shave our peaks in the mornings and in the evenings, especially in the wintertime. It will effectively replace several of our extra diesels. There's an example of work we are doing.

The member opposite noted the 10-year renewable electricity plan by Yukon Energy, which is a terrific plan. I am really happy to get up and talk about that further. So, there is work that is happening, and we are looking forward to it. It's exciting work.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, last month, the Yukon Energy Corporation told us that they plan to rent these dirty diesel generators until at least 2030. The Liberals also confirmed on November 2 that they are investing an additional \$45 million in permanent diesel generators.

My understanding is that the battery bank will only reduce those diesel generators by four. With the push to convert more homes to electric heat and with the push to convert more vehicles to electric, this means that much of the electricity for these supposedly green energy options will actually come from rented diesels.

How does the minister square this circle?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The Yukon Energy Corporation was here. The members opposite asked the direct question: What is the cost of renting diesels versus building a new diesel plant? The president of the corporation said that it's the same cost. What the difference is, Mr. Speaker, is that, if you build a new diesel plant like the opposition party would have us do, you are locked in so that we can't transition the energy economy. We on this side want to transition the energy economy to a renewable, green, sustainable future. That's what we're doing. I think it's great that the battery program is going to replace four rented diesels. That is terrific news.

Mr. Hassard: Another project that the government is claiming will solve our energy crisis is the Moon Lake pump station project. The problem is that so little is known about this project right now, Yukoners don't even know if it's realistic. In fact, on November 2 of this week, the minister admitted that he had so little detail that he doesn't even know what the general capital cost of the project is. In fact, while the Energy Corporation documents currently claim that the project will be completed in seven years, the minister started to hedge on that timeline and suggested that 10 years might be more realistic. Unfortunately, a project that may or may not come to fruition in 10 years does nothing to solve our energy needs now.

Can the minister tell us what major energy projects that are coming online in the short term will address the growing demand for electricity in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I lived through next generation hydro with the members opposite. That was something that didn't go anywhere.

What are we doing? We are building wind up on Haeckel Hill right now. We have solar going up across the territory. Old Crow has solar coming in, displacing diesel. It was energized recently. We have solar going into Dawson City. We have a project happening in Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, and Burwash. We are about to build a grid-scale battery here, which is replacing four diesel generators.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to say to Yukoners right now is that we need a future that is going to address the climate crisis and is going to shift us to renewable energy, and the members opposite want us to build a fossil-fuel diesel generation plant — no thanks.

Question re: Social assistance rates

Ms. Blake: A week ago, this House debated a motion that I tabled calling for a review of the social assistance rates. The Minister for Economic Development said — and I quote: "... I think it is timely and I think it's important ... I think we will have an opportunity to touch on all those aspects — and how key it is to be reviewing."

The minister seemed to agree that a review is needed and for good reason: 2007 was the last time that the base rates for social assistance were reviewed.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm that this government is actually committed to reviewing the social assistance rates?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you to the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I did appreciate the opportunity to speak to this last week, and I do believe that it is time for us, working through the *Putting People First* document, to review this. There are discrepancies in how people are supported, based on which agency is providing them funds. That has been clearly defined in *Putting People First* — I think 5.4 is the area within the document that speaks to this.

Also, I spoke to the fact that we are in a labour shortage as well, and we also need to go and meet people who are receiving assistance to see if there is any way that we can have the proper wraparound services for them — to see if there are good opportunities within our workforce. In some cases, I know that individuals have gone through, or are going through, many challenging situations and maybe are not in a position to become part of the current workforce, and they need the appropriate services to not just make sure that they have proper housing, but that they have the amenities needed to lead a proper quality of life.

Again, yes, those are the statements that I made. I think it is important work, and that is why it was identified in *Putting People First*. An independent panel identified that there is a lack of equity within that structure, and I think that everybody in this House believes that this needs to be worked on and a balanced approach needs to be taken.

Ms. Blake: Taken as a whole, income is one of the most important — if not the most important — determinant of our health. Our income affects access to housing, extended health benefits, and even food. That is directly from the *Putting People First* report.

Folks on social assistance haven't seen a review of these rates in 14 years. The gaps keep increasing as everything around us costs more. Yukoners are falling farther behind.

We only have to look at how many people are on housing wait-lists, temporarily housed in long-stay hotels, or homeless to see how far-reaching poverty is here.

Will the minister commit to a review of these rates so that Yukoners on social assistance, including seniors and families, don't have to live below the poverty line?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak about the social assistance rates here in the territory. I absolutely agree that it's a critical service provided to Yukoners.

As of May 2021, the monthly benefit rate for a one-person household in Whitehorse can be up to approximately almost \$1,500. A person with a disability who receives Yukon's supplementary allowance and is eligible for additional benefits could receive up to a little over \$1,800 monthly. The monthly benefit rate for a family of four with two children under the age of 14 living in Whitehorse can be up to a little over \$3,100. It's important to note that Yukon has higher benefit rates in communities outside of Whitehorse to account for the higher cost of living.

We have talked about a review, and we have, as the member opposite noted in the motion that was here, exactly committed to such a thing.

Ms. Blake: It's not just the rates that are a concern. Social assistance regulations also make little sense. Produce from someone's garden or an animal from a hunt should not be considered income. This does not respect traditional hunting and gathering practices. Removing utilities from a fixed rent in the summer months also doesn't make sense. People have to make up for the missing rent somewhere else like their food budget.

The *Putting People First* report recommends that this government — and I quote: "Conduct a program evaluation of social supports, to determine if current practices and policies are achieving program objectives..."

Does this government have a concrete plan for closing the gaps of lower income Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There was a lot in that question, first and foremost talking about some of the discretionary decisions that are made by one agency to another. I think, from my experience in working with other programs where supports are put in place for individuals, even simple things like providing a stipend while folks are going through professional development sometimes becomes something that is clawed back.

We did not finalize a vote during the debate, but I will, for the record, say multiple times that we stated that we support that work. We think that is work that needs to be done.

When it comes to the entire set of opportunities for folks, yes, I think that when we look at how people can improve their quality of life, we do have to take a look and review. That is some of the work of *Putting People First* that we support and agree with you on.

On the second side, I think that we also have to take a look at what has happened within the territory. We are tracking, in many ways, where we have seen wage increases. I think that we are in the number two or number three over the last year in where wages have increased. We have seen a commitment here.

We are working with the Third Party around things on minimum wage and the decisions that we made on minimum wage. We have also seen that there are a tremendous number of jobs open now. The last information that I have looked at shows \$25 to \$26 per hour as an average wage with over 1,000 jobs available. We have to take all of that into consideration.

Question re: Energy supply and demand

Mr. Istchenko: As the coldest months of the year approach, many Yukoners are becoming increasingly worried about the cost of energy and heating this winter. Due to the Liberal government's inaction on forestry, there is a shortage of commercial firewood, which is driving prices up.

Propane prices are surging. According to one report, prices in Edmonton are up 296 percent, which means similar price shocks are likely to come to the Yukon. There is a similar story when it comes to home heating fuel. Natural Resources Canada shows that the price of furnace oil in Canada is around 40 percent higher than it was this time last year.

What all this means is that Yukoners are going to be paying a whole lot more to keep warm this winter, Mr. Speaker, so what is this government doing to increase affordability and reduce the cost of staying warm in the winter for Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This question shows all of us that we need to shift the energy economy as much as possible. It's important to move there.

In terms of firewood, I want to thank the wood producers for reaching out to us this summer. They expressed a concern around access to firewood-cutting areas, so the department got a couple of smaller lots — two in Haines Junction, a couple around Fox Lake — available for woodcutters. We are now working on getting the larger block of Quill Creek, which has now made it through YESA.

I talked earlier when I rose about the battery project. The battery project is a great example of where we are investing in the ability to shave peaks, which then reduces our dependence on diesels. We all know that the price of diesel has been going up, so those are all steps we are taking to try to support Yukoners with heating in the territory.

Mr. Istchenko: As the minister alluded to, the Yukon Wood Products Association flagged this issue for the minister months ago, yet we are still seeing that a majority of our commercial firewood is coming from out of the territory — from down south. Of course, this means that prices are going up. People are even seeing the price of cordwood skyrocket to \$500 per cord. For a senior, that is troubling. We know that one factor driving up the cost of commercial firewood is the carbon tax. Some sectors, like mining, have been exempted from the carbon tax.

Will the minister commit to negotiating an exemption from the carbon tax for the commercial firewood operators to help address the rising cost of firewood here in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When I met with the Wood Products Association and the department — the forest resources branch met with them — what we committed to do was to work diligently to try to address the shortage.

I have heard comments about firewood coming from British Columbia. Some of it is just coming from just across the border. I have asked the department to check into that for me and make sure that my information is correct. I will get back to the House.

But overall, what we are doing is working with those woodcutters to try to get them access to firewood so that we get more supply into the whole system. We hope that the increase in prices is short-lived.

I know that we have Quill Creek coming shortly. I can answer more, but the direction that I gave to the department was to do all they could to support the woodcutting industry in the short, medium, and long term.

Mr. Istchenko: What would work is if they would negotiate an exemption from the carbon tax for those operators; that is what would work. Here in the Yukon, some industries are exempt from the carbon tax; I said that earlier. The logic of these exemptions is that there is no alternative for these industries other than to use fossil fuels. There absolutely isn't. Well, we think this applies to firewood and home heating as well.

The Northwest Territories had vision. That government was able to negotiate an exemption from the carbon tax for

home heating fuel. Unfortunately, here, the Yukon was not able to negotiate as good a deal as the Northwest Territories.

Will the minister agree to work with the federal government to negotiate exemptions from the carbon tax for important sectors like the commercial firewood sector? As well, will he seek an exemption for home heating fuel, similar to what the Northwest Territories has, to help address the high cost that Yukoners are facing just to try to stay warm this winter?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: For five years, I listened to the Yukon Party as they said that carbon pricing was the wrong thing to do. They ran against it nationally and here in the territory. I think that Canadians and Yukoners now understand that carbon pricing is a good tool to try to address the climate crisis. In fact, carbon pricing is one of those things that will help to drive our markets toward things like biomass.

I would love to hear — because I understand that the members opposite —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order, please. The member has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that the members opposite said in the last election that they do support carbon pricing, so I'm interested to hear what it is that they support if today they are asking me to speak against it.

What I will say is that we will work diligently to support our woodcutters and those people who rely on firewood to make sure that we have as much access to firewood. I have had calls with chiefs to work on providing more access. I have already explained that I have directed the department to work with our producers. We worked to get some additional blocks available over the fall, and we have more coming. We will do our best to try to get access to wood for Yukoners.

Question re: Student behavioural issues at Jack Hulland Elementary School

Mr. Kent: We continue to hear concerns from the Jack Hulland school community about aggressive behaviour by some students in the school. Staff and students are increasingly anxious about what is happening on a day-to-day basis.

Yesterday we heard from a member of the school community that some students are so anxious or afraid to go to school that they have to be torn away from their parents as they arrive in the morning. There are tears in the classroom and anxiety is running high. Everyone is looking to the minister to provide leadership on this.

What options are being considered by the minister to alleviate the fears and concerns of students, staff, and parents at Jack Hulland school?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I want to first start by saying that the Department of Education supports a healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environment in our schools. This is a commitment outlined in the Safe and Caring Schools policy that we all follow, which applies to students, parents, teachers, and other school staff.

Yesterday we had quite a long discussion about Jack Hulland. I had expressed, yes, how concerned I am for the school and their well-being as the Minister of Education.

Jack Hulland school council — I am not sure if the folks across the way know that they decided to delay their regular council meeting in order to meet with school administration and senior officials of the Schools and Student Services branch to gather more information on recent incidents that have occurred in the school this week. Senior officials from the Schools and Student Services branch will continue to work with the school council and the school administration in responding to parental concerns and to seek solutions to help reduce these behaviours within the school. The school council has indicated that they will be providing another opportunity for parents to express concerns and seek responses later this month.

Mr. Kent: We know that the minister met personally with the staff in late October to discuss their concerns. Stories are coming to us of serious physical altercations between staff and students, particularly with some students who are in the Grove Street program. These included a teacher last year receiving a serious brain injury and another teacher being assaulted. Both of these educators never returned to the school.

Can the minister tell us what specific actions that will actually address safety concerns she is taking, based on feedback received from staff at the meeting she attended?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I did speak about this yesterday, extensively — about the meeting that I attended. All staff were invited to meet with me on October 21. About half of the staff did. I was able to listen, learn, acknowledge, and hear them directly regarding their concerns. There has been a confidential report from that meeting — I want to remind members opposite of that — that was provided this week to the staff at the Jack Hulland Elementary School.

I spoke yesterday about the Department of Education having a very experienced administrator, Jeff Cressman, who is principal of Elijah Smith, at the school until November 12 to provide additional support for the school administration team while the principal is on leave. There are a number of steps that are being taken by the department to work on opportunities for one-on-one conversations with staff members. Information collected in individual interviews with a private contractor — anonymously — will be analyzed to identify themes. I will continue on with my answer as we proceed.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, as the minister mentioned earlier, yesterday afternoon, the Jack Hulland school council postponed their scheduled meeting when a number of parents were quite interested in discussing these concerns. However, in response, we understand that a number of parents held a Zoom call in light of the postponement. From that, they are looking for a town hall of the school community to come up with tangible actions and solutions to present to the department. This is because, after months and months of pleading to the Liberal government to show leadership and make this school safe for children and staff, there has been nothing but inaction from this minister.

Will the minister support this work and respond to any requests for information or resources to facilitate this town hall, and will she attend the town hall if invited to do so?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I started out with today on the commitment of our government to have healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in our Yukon schools, I am going to go somewhere a little bit different. The Yukon Party and the leader particularly — and I point out “the leader” — continues to spread misinformation about our education system and I want to speak to Yukoners about this. It is irresponsible and absolutely disappointing. Leadership is needed to fix the school system —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: The Minister of Education just clearly contravened Standing Order 19(h) in reference to the statement she made about the Leader of the Official Opposition. I would ask you to remind her of that point and have her retract those comments.

Speaker: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, the point of order that the member opposite is referring to is “charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood”, and clearly, the Minister of Education did not do that.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. This is a dispute between members.

The Minister of Education has the floor.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, leadership is needed to fix our school system. Politicizing the challenges in our schools and stoking anger and division does a disservice to all of our students and the many dedicated staff who are working every day to support our students. We are doing the hard work to improve our schools after a decade and a half of neglect from the Yukon Party.

I have met with the Jack Hulland school council. I have met with the staff at Jack Hulland. We have made adjustments to the learning spaces to improve safety. We have reviewed all the learning plans for the students in the Grove Street program. We have updated the Grove Street handbook, and as I have stated, we will be supporting a family-parent meeting later this month.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Before the House proceeds to Orders of the Day, the Chair will rule on the question of privilege raised by the Member for Lake Laberge on Monday, November 1, 2021. The Member raised the question of privilege in response to the Minister of Community Services' Facebook posts dated

October 21, 2021. The question for the Chair to decide is whether there appears to be a prima facie, or apparent, breach of privilege.

Standing Order 7(4) states: “When the Speaker has ruled that

“(a) there appears to be a prima facie case of breach of privilege, and

“(b) the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity

“any member may either immediately propose a motion or, not later than at the conclusion of the next sitting day, give notice of a motion calling upon the Assembly to take action thereon or referring the same to a Committee of the Assembly.”

Once such a motion is called for debate, all other business before the House, with the exception of the Daily Routine, will be set aside until debate on the motion is concluded.

As the Chair has noted, members are required to raise questions of privilege at the earliest possible moment after an alleged breach has occurred. The Member for Lake Laberge did not raise this question of privilege on the first available sitting day. However, in this case, the member has asserted that he first became aware of the Facebook posts on Friday, October 29, 2021. The Member brought the matter to the attention of the House on Monday, November 1, 2021.

The Chair will take the Member at his word that he brought it to the attention of the House at the earliest possible moment once he was made aware of it.

The first issue that the Chair considered is whether the language used in the Facebook posts from October 21, 2021 in fact constitutes either a prima facie breach of privilege or a prima facie contempt of the House. To assist in the Chair’s deliberations on this, it was necessary to understand the context in which the post was made. On October 14, 2021, the Government of Yukon issued a news release, No. 21-401, on the Yukon.ca website. In this release, as is common in government news releases following the first reading of government bills, there is an explanation of what the legislation would do if the bill is passed.

The Chair considered the language of the actual Facebook posts in question. In these posts, the Minister of Community Services makes various statements, all using the future tense. The Facebook post released on October 21 at 11:04 a.m. includes that the better building program “... will allow Yukoners to renovate their homes to make them more energy efficient” and “Yukoners will be able to access up to \$50,000 to make green retrofits”. The text on the image that accompanies the post says, “The Better Building Program would provide Yukoners with up to \$50,000 for home energy efficient retrofits...”

Later, on October 21, 2021, at 4:23 p.m., the Minister of Community Services released another Facebook post. In this post, the minister states the benefits of what the better building program will do for Yukon businesses: “The Better Building Program supports the goals in the Our Clean Future Strategy and will help Yukon businesses retrofit their buildings to make them more energy efficient”. It also says, “Yukon businesses will be able to access up to \$100,000 to make energy retrofits to their buildings”. The image included with the post says, “The

Better Building Program would provide Yukon businesses with up to \$100,000”.

The Chair believes that this language is consistent with what governments and individual Members of the Legislative Assembly have previously released discussing future programs being contemplated in one form or another by the Legislative Assembly.

The second issue is whether the posts are contrary to previous rulings by previous Speakers of this House. As noted by the Member for Lake Laberge, there are limits to how a government may present what programs will do or would do.

In a ruling regarding pre-budget announcements, Speaker Staffen stated on April 7, 2005: “... not all government news releases acknowledged that such spending was subject to the approval of the Legislature. The Chair believes this statement should be included in all such statements to ensure that the Assembly’s authority is respected, its dignity is protected and the public is properly informed.”

The Minister of Community Services’ Facebook posts on October 21, 2021 did not indicate that the better building program was contingent on bills being passed by the Assembly, as would be the best practice for such messaging. The minister did, however, use the future tense rather than the present tense so as not to confuse the public that the program is already operational.

Unlike the case of the 2018 ruling by House of Commons Speaker Geoff Regan cited by the Member for Lake Laberge, the reader of the October 21 Facebook posts is not left with the idea that the legislation is already in effect but instead is left questioning the timing of when the program will be in place.

Finally, the Member for Lake Laberge referenced a March 7, 2019 ruling by the previous Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The Chair does not believe this ruling is wholly applicable. In that case, a government press release presupposed that the Legislative Assembly would pass certain bills prior to the bills actually having received third reading. Those assertions were presumptuous and also confusing. In his ruling, the previous Speaker noted that what had occurred was an error based on a misunderstanding of the legislative process.

There are no assertions that a bill will pass the House in the Facebook posts made by the Minister of Community Services. There is a description of what a program will do in the future, and while it does not indicate what needs to happen before the program can begin, the description is definitely in the future tense.

The Chair will take this opportunity to urge members to use precise language in all their communications with the public. In the age of many different kinds of media where space is limited, it may be convenient to leave out that programs are not yet in place and require legislative approval. It is, however, the best practice and the clearest for the public for members to ensure in these communications that there is no confusion and that the authority of the Assembly is neither called into question nor is the impression given that the Legislative Assembly plays a perfunctory role.

The Chair finds that there is neither a prima facie contempt nor a prima facie breach of privilege in respect of the question

of privilege raised by the Member for Lake Laberge. I thank the Member for Laberge for his submission on this matter.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

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

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

Yukon Housing Corporation

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, as Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to outline the spending requested as part of the first supplementary estimates for 2021-22.

I would like to take this opportunity to show my appreciation and thank the staff and the board of directors of the Yukon Housing Corporation for their hard work and dedication to making more affordable housing options available to Yukoners and continuing to deliver innovative housing solutions.

Before I begin my address, I would like to acknowledge the officials who will assist me today: Mary Cameron is with us, the president of the Yukon Housing Corporation; and Marcel Holder-Robinson, director of finance and risk management at the Yukon Housing Corporation. Madam Chair, I can't stress enough how appreciative I am about working with

the senior leadership team that I get to work with daily and weekly at the Yukon Housing Corporation. We have put a tremendous amount of work on their plates. At every turn, they have stood up to take that on, understanding the situation that we are in here in the Yukon, and their passion toward delivering on what we need here, based on some very tough markets. I want to thank them. Over the last number of months, I've been getting to know folks and they are helping me as we take a really aggressive approach to dealing with housing.

Our supplementary estimates provide the Yukon Housing Corporation with an opportunity to update the main estimates that we provided in the spring. There is no other way to say it: This year has been, again, a tough year for the Yukon and the housing sector is no exception. We saw lumber prices soar to unprecedented levels. We saw the construction sector busier than ever with the competition for the labour force. We saw individuals and families struggle with unprecedented housing instability, as both the workforce and their employment shifted.

As well, we saw landlords struggling with market instability and the movement of selling off their rental stock, resulting in rentals turning into home-ownership sales and an increase to rental rates as new owners took on new debt and risk.

On all fronts, we know that we have more to do as we work with our housing partners on stabilizing the affordable housing market. Although the housing landscape continues to change, we remain committed to fiscal responsibility and we continue to adapt, mobilize, and find solutions to these fluctuations.

Thus, Madam Chair, the supplementary estimates that I'm presenting today for the Yukon Housing Corporation are focused on the core needs of Yukoners.

Like many jurisdictions across Canada, the Yukon is experiencing a high demand for housing. We face significant challenges in terms of availability, quality, and affordability of housing. In addition, we are seeing increased demand for Yukon Housing Corporation's community housing stock which continues to exceed the supply of our units; our wait-list continues to grow.

There are a number of reasons for the growth in wait-list numbers: one, our shortage of robust housing options, along with the high cost of rental housing and home ownership; in some communities, limited private rental housing; growing population in the Yukon, including within our seniors demographic; increased economic uncertainty for some individuals and families due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and barriers to housing such as affordability and discrimination as reported in the point-in-time count conducted in April 2021.

To respond to these challenges, over the past three years, the corporation has been successfully working toward its five-year strategic plan vision to deliver housing solutions that contribute to healthy, sustainable, and inclusive communities. We remain committed to supporting housing options for Yukoners. Our housing programs have now supported the construction of over 600 homes in the territory. Our funding program successfully leveraged partnerships in support of the development of new affordable housing projects and programs. If we are going to be successful in resolving these housing

issues, it will take all partners in the housing field to work together.

We are guided by three goals of the Yukon Housing Corporation strategic plan: We are a trusted housing partner, we are renewing and rebalancing community housing, and we are strengthening our corporate stewardship.

In addition to the corporation's strategic plan, we are working on the goals and objectives of the housing action plan for Yukon, the Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness, and the aging-in-place action plan and the recommendations from the *Putting People First* report.

As part of this work, we recently organized a housing summit to bring together key housing stakeholders to discuss the next big ideas in housing, to facilitate conversations, and to together take action to ensure that more housing options are available in the future. The summit saw participation across all orders of government, First Nation development corporations, municipalities, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. Participants provided housing options to address and meet those critical needs.

Our collaborative approach resulted in innovative partnerships and solutions to grow housing stock, address the affordability gap, and support the development of a full housing continuum across the Yukon. While we look forward to achieving housing affordability solutions that were established during the housing summit and celebrating those milestones together, we are conscious of the challenges that we still face today.

The real estate market in the Yukon has been highly active through the past year. We saw increasing real estate values with the average sale price of a single detached house in Whitehorse reported at a record high of \$650,700 — an increase of more than \$100,000 over a year. At the same time, the City of Whitehorse is still grappling with low vacancy rates of 1.7 percent.

Combine these with the increasing population, and we have a lot of ground to cover to increase the supply of housing in the Yukon which has further intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic started. We now face the reality of living long term with COVID-19 in our midst. The Yukon Housing Corporation is adapting to the new normal while continuing to ensure a high level of customer service. We adjusted our Housing Corporation's operations during the COVID-19 pandemic to help keep Yukoners safely housed and we remain committed to this goal.

As such, Madam Chair, the corporation balanced the needs to address emerging priorities, while also supporting existing and ongoing projects. We continue with our housing programs to better address Yukoners' needs across the housing continuum and improve housing outcomes for Yukoners. You will see that this work is reflected in the supplementary estimates.

In partnership with CMHC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, our government launched the Canada-Yukon housing benefit in November 2020. The corporation had an approved budget of \$584,000 in 2020-21, of which \$400,000 supported over 200 Yukon households with rental subsidies and

helped Yukoners recover from the economic effects of COVID-19. Due to the mid-year start of the program, the corporation requested authority to move the remaining \$184,000 to this fiscal year, 2021-22, under the Canada-Yukon housing benefit so that more applicants can benefit over the long term from this rental subsidy.

We were successful in our federal funding application for \$3 million from CMHC under the rapid housing initiative in March 2021 and have completed the design, with construction underway of three community housing triplexes in the communities of Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse.

As you are all aware, lumber and construction costs increased dramatically, not just here but across Canada. During our tendering process, the costs for construction came in higher than initially anticipated at in excess of \$2.4 million. Yukon Housing Corporation reprioritized funding from its existing budget to cover the unanticipated increase. This increase has been offset against decreases in our unit conversions project of \$1.3 million and our northern housing fund of \$1.1 million respectively.

The initial allocation of \$3 million under the rapid housing initiative and the northern housing fund allocation of \$1.1 million are fully recoverable from the federal government.

This project aligns with key community needs, the corporation's capital asset management plan housing needs assessment, and our work to modernize our community housing program.

Last but not least, work on our 47-unit community housing building at 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street in Whitehorse is well underway, and we are very excited to be moving closer to its completion and providing much needed homes for Yukoners.

The corporation received implementation fees approval for the 47-unit facility at a projected cost of \$20 million, of which \$19.2 million was allocated for construction. Of this amount, \$18 million was approved under the 2020-21 and 2021-22 main estimates for the construction phase.

The corporation moved forward with tendering the project during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to realize the long-term benefits of the construction of 47 new homes; however, the consequences of the pandemic became more evident as the project progressed. As I have highlighted today, the corporation also saw increases in material costs and experienced delays during 2021 that have contributed to an increase in project costs. We therefore requested an increase to the budget of \$3.6 million in the 2021-22 estimates to complete the project. This consisted of \$2.4 million in unused funds from the 2020-21 fiscal year and \$1.2 million due to increased costs of materials and worker isolation costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic prevention measures.

Between all Yukon government departments, good work is underway to better understand the COVID-19-related market variables to inform future planning; however, over the short term, the Yukon Housing Corporation identified funding that will allow these projects to move forward in a timely manner to help Yukoners in housing need.

The federal budget released in April 2021 includes opportunities to improve housing in the Yukon, and we look

forward to the support that these funds will have across the housing continuum. We will be working closely with our federal counterparts to learn more about these funding options. Of note, future opportunities may exist for funding areas under our current bilateral agreement. As well, there are additional funds for the rapid housing initiative and the Reaching Home strategy.

The federal budget has also reallocated funding for the national housing co-investment fund. We look forward to forthcoming details on these new and reallocated funding streams. We will continue to engage and advocate for Yukoners with our federal government partners.

We are also excited to share with you some of our significant achievements over this past year. Through our innovative housing partnership with Da Daghay Development Corporation, we have added 28 affordable new homes in Whistle Bend through phase 1 and phase 2 of the River Bend development. Yukon Housing Corporation has helped to find housing solutions and housing stability for 50 individuals and households from our wait-list. At a time of acute housing pressure, we are proud to see a place to call home realized for those who have moved into the housing development.

We also recently announced our support for the Boreal Commons — an 87-unit affordable and rental housing project in Whistle Bend — along with the Government of Canada and the City of Whitehorse. This project is an example of the housing partnerships that Yukon Housing Corporation has been focused on to support increases in affordable rental market housing development. That's not all.

As well as providing homes, we are also delivering on Yukon's climate change strategy. I'm happy to see the outcomes today as Yukoners move into these safe, energy-efficient homes.

As we look forward, we will also be guided by the aging-in-place action plan to address continued growth in aging-in-place housing needs. With this in mind, we are happy to move forward with our mixed-use project in Old Crow, which has been in the planning phase for several years. Construction work began on the tenplex housing complex, which will enable us to respond to the changing housing needs in the community while boosting the Yukon's economy in generating construction jobs.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, the changes to our supplementary estimates have enabled the Yukon Housing Corporation to be innovative and resilient to the changing housing needs in the territory. Our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive.

We are committed to nurturing new initiatives that will help Yukoners find the housing support they need. As we now move into the winter season, it is crucial for everyone to have a safe and affordable place to call home — a home that meets their needs. We will continue to provide essential housing options by building on our partnerships, exploring innovative approaches to help address housing supply solutions, and by making strategic investments for healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities.

Today, the Yukon Housing Corporation presents responsible first supplementary estimates. I invite members to

treat Committee of the Whole as an opportunity to request further detail on any of the areas included in the supplementary estimates.

Ms. Clarke: I would like to welcome officials from the Yukon Housing Corporation and to thank them for being here today. While I have a moment, I would like to thank the corporation for the work that they did during the housing summit held in October. I can appreciate that many great ideas were identified. I just wanted to say that the Official Opposition would certainly be eager and willing to attend future public discussions on housing.

I had asked during the briefing if I could receive a copy of the report from the summit. I would just like to mention once more here with the minister that, when that becomes available, I would appreciate a copy.

I have some questions for the minister in a number of areas, so I will get started. I will try to keep my questions fairly short in the hope that we are able to move quickly through them today.

I will start on the topic of housing loan programs and initiatives. In May of this year, the minister stated that the Yukon Housing Corporation was rebalancing their role in communities to provide affordable rental housing and home ownership options through private market incentives, or loans directly to Yukoners, as well as subsidy programs. I understand that the rent subsidy program is out of money.

Can the minister please confirm when the program ran out, why it ran out, and what the government is doing about it?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As a quick response — no, that is not correct. We have not run out of money for our housing benefit. We actually also are happy to say today that we no longer have a wait-list. Therefore, we are, I think, providing either \$200, \$400, \$600, or \$800, depending on people's circumstances. Again, we are still funded. Our agreement is, I believe, an eight-year agreement, as well, that is place in a bilateral relationship with CMHC.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answer.

The former down payment assistance program was implemented in 2013 to help Yukoners pay the down payment on their first house. As the minister can imagine, saving for a down payment is increasingly difficult, especially for young Yukoners. The former first mortgage loan program allowed Yukoners to obtain a mortgage to assist them in buying a home when they were unable to obtain a mortgage through conventional methods.

Can the minister explain why the down payment assistance program and the first mortgage loan program were cut under the Liberal government?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First of all, what we are seeing within Whitehorse is that our traditional lenders are providing debt instruments, mortgages, to individuals and that CMHC has to occupy that space where folks can work toward getting the down payment mechanism.

It is important to say that we have tried to really focus on our communities. What we have heard, sitting with Yukoners — whether it be in Teslin, Watson Lake, or Dawson City — is that it has become very difficult in some circumstances to be

able to acquire mortgages in some of those communities, partly because institutions try to cross-reference other assets in those communities before they will provide that funding, and sometimes it is difficult to have something that is equal to what an individual is looking to build.

So, we are working, as well, to increase the amounts that can be funded through our mortgage support programs out into communities. But again, we are seeing other folks occupy the space to provide individuals in Whitehorse with the right mechanisms to build new homes.

Ms. Clarke: Thanks to the minister for his answer.

There is a mortgage program for rural Yukoners. Can the minister confirm if this program is fully subscribed to each year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What we try to do is cash-manage within the budget. Right now, what we would say is that everything has been identified or called for, but we have not allocated all of that. We have been working with individuals who have identified our rural supports as something they need, but they are still going through the process of getting ready to actually use that or to build.

I am going to be working with the corporation very closely on that item. If we see some really large growth of interest in our communities to use that program, I am comfortable with our president and others — of sitting with the board and letting them know that. In the case that we have to look at providing more funds to that program, I think that it is a prudent decision, but certainly right now, it seems that the cash that we have allotted for that is meeting the demand.

Again, it is a good question and something that we have to watch very closely. It has been flagged by municipal leaders across the Yukon as a program that is extremely important. We have taken the advice from municipal leaders, which I brought back to the corporation and to the board, about increasing the amount that can be allocated. I had requested an opportunity to speak to newly elected municipal officials at their earliest convenience. That, of course, will be the Association of Yukon Communities. During that conference, I will have an opportunity on early Friday morning just to really talk about one thing, which is how we can work together around housing needs.

Ms. Clarke: Has the minister considered any expansion of the program for Yukoners looking to build their own homes either in the Whitehorse area or in rural Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have had discussions internally at Yukon Housing Corporation about new ideas of innovation. To be very open, I think that one thing we have always said is that we have seen good ideas from all political parties. There are some things that caught my eye from the Official Opposition — their platform. We have discussed some things inside the Housing Corporation. We are really just looking at what the market looks like and where we can help.

I think it is best to further define those and to build them out before we roll anything out. I think we are keeping a very close eye on what the market looks like and want to ensure that Yukoners have those opportunities. We look at individuals who have come through our school systems. They have grown up

here. In many cases, they receive the Yukon grant and use the Yukon grant to go off to improve their education situation, to get degrees and trades, and then are having difficulty in being able to come home. We are investing in our youth through a lot of the process. I think it's important for us to understand that, when those investments are made and we want those individuals to be back in the Yukon contributing to our economy, to our society, and to their families, we might have to look at innovative ways.

Yes, the quick answer is that we are looking at some concepts, but they are still yet to be rolled out as we define the best possible tools to meet those needs.

Ms. Clarke: I appreciate the answer from the minister. I will now move on to another topic — the social and seniors wait-list. Can the minister please provide the current wait-list for social housing and seniors housing broken down by community, if he has that information?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First of all, our total wait-list number is 453. That is as of August, so I want to be very open with the Assembly. We can have a delta of 10 or 15, where we can see that number increase, and, of course, in some cases, we address that. The 453 is where we were in August. We have been within 10 or 15 of that number.

Breaking it down by community, right now, we have: one Yukon government employee on our wait-list in Beaver Creek; in Carcross, we have four seniors and three non-seniors on our wait-list; Dawson City, where we see our biggest demand, we have 10 seniors and 20 non-seniors on our wait-list; in Carmacks, we have one Yukon government employee on our wait-list.

So, for the House, Madam Chair, if I don't touch on it, there is not an individual in that category.

In Faro, we have one non-senior and one Yukon government employee; in Haines Junction, we have two seniors and six non-seniors; in Mayo, we have two government employees; in Pelly Crossing, one government employee; in Ross River, we have two seniors, seven non-seniors, and one government employee; in Teslin, we have just one non-senior; and in Watson Lake, where our second biggest demand is, we have three seniors, 14 non-seniors, and four Yukon government employees on our wait-list. In Whitehorse, we have 155 seniors, 225 non-seniors, and no government employees on wait-lists. So, the total number of all of Yukon is 176 seniors — all our communities — and 277 non-seniors, for a total of 453. Then, in the category for government employees, we have 11 government employees who are still on our wait-list seeking housing.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answer. So, we continue to receive reports that there are Yukon Housing Corporation units that remain empty for long periods of time. Many are reportedly vacant and not being worked on. Can the minister please provide how many Yukon Housing units are currently vacant, and when will they be filled?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I hope I'm not off by one or two here, but what we have been looking at — there are about 20 units right now that we are working on. Those are 20 units that, by Yukon Housing Corporation standards, would be not up to the

standard we would normally have for somebody who is looking for a housing option to move into.

I want to say for the House that we have been speaking with many individuals in our community, whether those are alarms that have been identified by the Anti-Poverty Coalition — we have worked with folks from Safe at Home, and there are individuals in the private sector who are really concerned. What we are trying to do at this point is — we are looking at those 20 units. To be open with the Assembly, we are looking at everything in our continuum that potentially can be used as emergency housing.

So, we have 20 units. Right now, we are trying to make sure that each one of those, if they are not filled, is appropriate to have somebody live in, and we are looking at either working with other organizations to try to find housing options for folks — but we may have to use those. They may not be exactly of the quality that we would normally use to rent out, but based on the situation we're in, they could be part of our emergency housing solution.

Ms. Clarke: Is the minister aware of any families with children who are currently on the Yukon Housing Corporation list who are being housed in hotels at this time? If yes, what is being done to ensure that these families are provided adequate housing in a reasonable time?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: That is a very good question. We are very open about the situation of housing right now. We think that there are about 63 children who are in housing that is not, what we believe, appropriate for them. In some cases, we are working with other departments like Health and Social Services, and we may have children who are, with their families, living in something that is substandard. That is the number that has been provided to us in our meetings with the Anti-Poverty Coalition. Our latest meeting was just the other day. Again, that is the sense we have.

What are we doing? Really, I think that this supplementary budget speaks to many initiatives. Truly, I think that the Housing Corporation and the board have made decisions for the most investment that we have seen in affordable housing. We want our projects that we are leading to come online, which are, of course, our units at Jeckell as well as Cornerstone — with partners as well as Boreal and Riverbend. We have a lot of new stock that is coming online.

We know that we have the highest proportion of social housing in the country but, at the same time, we know that our demand still means that we need to do more. We are looking at those projects coming online.

The other thing that we are doing is going out to a number of development corporations and having the same discussion as I'm going to have with municipalities. What we are really trying to do is to completely de-risk the ability to build affordable housing. What I mean by that is that, in some cases, we are using the programs that we provide with — essentially, it's a municipal matching grant. Many municipalities have taken this on, and then we match that. It can go up to, I believe, \$1 million — \$500,000 from each organization. That really takes down some of the overhead costs that organizations have through the tax regime or other things when they build.

What we are really trying to do is look to see what we are spending in many of these cases on housing units, specifically where individuals or families are, we will say, “underhoused”. Then we are moving out to the stakeholders or partners — our First Nation governments — that may have traditional territory there. It might be in one of our communities — and how can we make a commitment to you to look at leasing long term some of the units that you may build? What we are seeing when we do that, in many cases, is that we're building a bankable project where corporations, as one example, can go back to the bank or their financial institution and show that a government with a double-A bond rating, I believe — I will leave that to the Finance minister, but I believe that is a very good rating — which really makes it a simple decision for financial institutions to provide them with funds. Then what we are doing is just reallocating the funds that we have been putting into those other parts of the housing continuum and moving it to a better solution.

That's not the same across the board. We have offered it up to all development corporations. Some folks are in a different place than others, depending on what they want to build, but that is going to be part of our solution. That has been the success story with Riverbend and Da Daghay. That is why, at this point, not only are they very happy about the units that they are building now, they are back at the table with us and want to continue to build as quickly as possible. They are very eager to do that and have built relationships with their financial institutions where those institutions are ready to continue to fund.

That gives you a snapshot. I don't know if it does justice to go through an hour of things that we are doing. I am going to leave it to questions, but we certainly have a number of things that are underway to meet those demands and to solve some of the problems that are in front of us.

Ms. Clarke: I thank the minister for his answers. I will now move on to questions on Jeckell Street housing.

I noted that the minister mentioned the Jeckell Street housing project and some of the details. I have some questions on this new housing development. When is the Jeckell Street facility supposed to be completed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Late spring 2022.

Ms. Clarke: How many units will be available? How many of each type — for example, bedroom, family units, et cetera? How many people are going to be housed from the current wait-list upon completion? How are people being chosen from the wait-list?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm just going to give a quick overview of our project on Jeckell, and it will touch on some of the answers that the member opposite is looking for. This building has 47 units that include bachelor suites and one-, two-, and three-bedroom units; 10 units will be barrier-free. This project is current scheduled to be completed in late spring of 2022.

The project increases the number of units on the site from six units in the former building to 47 units in the new building. Through consultation and design, we determined that, based on the shape and size of our lot size and the community outdoor space, the maximum building size would allow for 47 units.

We have a standard process that we use when it comes to dealing with the wait-list. Really, we are going to use the same criteria to make the allocations to this unit. This will be done over a couple of months.

From my understanding, women fleeing violence tend to be at the top of the list. Sometimes it's difficult — I am sure that all MLAs here in this Legislative Assembly have individuals who reach out to them who have been on the wait-list and are wondering why they have not moved or, in some cases, why they have moved down the list. That is, again, because that is the criteria we use. It has not changed. It has been very stable over the last number of years — and, I believe, through successive governments — but it is really about people who are in the most vulnerable positions being able to move to that housing first.

A little bit about the breakdown and the style of housing that it is — it's a mixed-income model, and it is a new approach to allocating housing that will provide homes for clients with a range of incomes, all within the existing housing income limits. We will support clients with deeper shallow subsidies according to their need. This is a community housing approach that enables social diversity and supports better social outcomes and fiscal responsibility. All tenants will pay an affordable rent, according to their income.

In mixed-use housing, different client groups from our community, including seniors, families, and individuals, are housed together in multi-unit buildings. This means that we can better respond to the dynamic housing needs of a community and focus on creating healthy and vibrant communities within multi-unit buildings.

We worked with local housing stakeholders through several events and meetings in 2019 to develop our mixed-use and mixed-income housing model. Initially, we looked at including a market rental component to our mixed-income housing, but after consultation, we will continue to prioritize Yukon households within our existing household income limits currently used for community housing. Mixed-use and mixed-income housing is a complementary model aimed at addressing emerging community housing needs in the context of a growing, diverse, and aging population.

I will likely have to get back to the House only because, depending on where the priority is on the list for individuals, as we look at our breakdown of 47 units — some are two, some are three, some are one. We could be housing up to 75 people or more, pending the makeup of individuals, units, and families that are on the wait-list, but as we get close in the spring and in spring budget debate, I certainly can come back and identify those numbers more clearly for you.

Ms. Clarke: I appreciate the answer.

I am going now to move on to 5th and Rogers. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources indicated that the Yukon Housing Corporation is the lead on 5th and Rogers. I would like to follow up on those questions to the housing minister. Could the minister provide a timeline on when he expects that land parcel to be released to the private sector for future housing development?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have seen 5th and Rogers as a block of land that has had really, over successive years, different concepts, and different organizations were looking to use that land. I don't have the full history; it predates my time in government, but certainly it has been talked about a lot. Our approach has been to scour every part of the City of Whitehorse, if not the Yukon, to look for available land and look for partnerships to build out — projects that we need to meet the demand that we are seeing.

With 5th and Rogers, one of the things that played out was that we really want to see rental housing. Part of the challenge that has happened within the housing continuum is that the private sector has continued to make investments — except for some of the bigger projects that I mentioned earlier — and made decisions, in many cases, to build strata title. Strata title is a form of title, but really, it is where you find condominium developments. That is done because you can realize your return on that investment very quickly. The challenge is that it doesn't make a dramatic impact to our rental market.

What we have seen in other jurisdictions across Canada is larger organizations, usually called “real estate investment trusts”, that are either building rental housing or purchasing other rental housing and putting it into an investment pool. Large investment entities tend to look at that as a good investment — a good long-term investment. Of course, when you see the demand across this country from city to city, that makes sense.

With 5th and Rogers, part of what we have been doing between the Yukon Housing Corporation and Energy, Mines and Resources is to try to make sure that we define what gets built on that piece of land. We want to see rental housing. We want to see it affordable, but we need rental stock. In 2019, there was an expression of interest that was put out. That expression of interest had a number of local organizations and corporations respond to it. After that expression of interest was finished, some of the organizations decided to continue to work with us but felt that maybe what was being looked at for 5th and Rogers was not within the scope of the work or their mandate. We have gone back into discussions to see, with the remaining parties, if there is an opportunity to develop that.

We have had discussions and we are going to continue to have some discussions, but inevitably, if we can't get to a place where we have a project that is really looking at rental housing, then we would go back to an RFP, open it up, and see if there are other interested parties.

I would like to see — I guess I can put this with my responsibilities — whoever is going to develop it doing preparation to that site by the summer of 2022. We do not want to see us miss time to do site prep. There is some work that has to be done there. There are two concerns with 5th and Rogers, really: one is geotechnical stability, which is the need for a berm and something that is fairly standard along what we would call the clay cliffs in the downtown Whitehorse area; and the second part is looking at legacy environmental concerns. There has been a lot of work done by Community Services, as well as Energy, Mines and Resources — but primarily, I believe, Community Services — to look at remedies for that.

We think we have defined the efforts that would have to be in place to mitigate any of those environmental concerns, and we are getting to a place where we can define what that berm looks like. Those are two critical things that anybody needs to know before they develop it, and I think that our early conversations with the parties that have been part of the expression of interest seem to be leading in the appropriate way to do some significant building on that site.

Ms. Clarke: I heard that the minister is going to put an expression of interest, but could you confirm: Would it be some sort of a public tendering or offering, or would it be a request for qualifications? We are just curious about what is being considered at this time.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, not that we are going to — the expression of interest was completed in September 2020, and it was run through the Department of Community Services. That was concluded.

My comments were that we have gone through a process to have discussions with individuals who had been part of that process. If we can seek a solution that meets what we want to see on that site, then we can begin negotiations on allocation of the land, and if we do not get to a place that meets our needs on that site, we will go back out to a request for proposals, just a public process at that point.

Ms. Clarke: I appreciate the minister's answer.

I am going to move on. I am looking for an update on the Normandy project. In the spring, the minister noted that the 84-unit residence for seniors was anticipated for completion in the fall of 2022, and the Yukon Housing Corporation is providing \$3.5 million to support 10 units in the building for Yukon government to use for 20 years, with \$500,000 from the housing initiative fund and \$500,000 from the municipal matching rental construction program. Could the minister confirm that those costs and timelines remain the same — Yukon Housing Corporation will be provided 10 units to use for 20 years — and what will happen to the units after 20 years?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: In keeping with — I touched on it in some of the opening comments — our aging-in-place philosophy and the direction of the *Putting People First* recommendations and the housing action plan for Yukon, Yukon Housing Corporation is working with other relevant Government of Yukon departments and external partners to support seniors where they want to live.

Currently under construction, the Normandy Manor will be a privately owned, 84-unit residence for seniors. Anticipated completion is the fall of 2022. The information that we're getting from the ownership group is that this is still in place.

The president of the Yukon Housing Corporation just made me aware that, on November 15, there will be an open house. We can send that to all MLAs. It's not on-site, but it's actually at the Gold Rush.

One of the things that happened — and the ownership group made us aware — is that, as soon as it was announced, folks were reaching out to them to try to figure out how they could lock down a spot. I know that now, as they are getting closer to getting completed a very significant project, they are

having these information sessions. We will share that information.

In support of this project, you are absolutely correct. Yukon Housing Corporation is providing \$3.5 million for the 10 units in the building. At the end of 20 years, or as we get close to get that, the Yukon Housing Corporation has the ability to renegotiate a lease for a longer period of time, or those units could go back into the portfolio that the organization has to lease out or to rent out to others. Again, \$500,000 was from our housing initiative fund and \$500,000 was from the municipal matching rental construction program.

Normandy is being built and will be operated through KBC Developments, a partnership of local businesses that includes Ketz Construction, Borud Enterprises, and Northern Vision Development. Once completed, this residence will meet the needs of seniors who want housing with support services, such as meals and hospitality services, thereby filling a gap in existing accommodations.

Normandy Manor provides an essential housing option in Whitehorse between individuals living in their own homes and those living in long-term care homes. Our government's support for Normandy Manor is very cost effective compared to the cost of long-term care.

While we have this opportunity, I want to, just for the Assembly, commend Dave Borud for his work on this. He and his family have been known to be very strong entrepreneurs in our community.

Their work — whether it be in manufacturing, telecommunications, fibre, or this project — they have been leaders. I don't think that this project would be where it is without his leadership, and he has a very strong partnership group. I know that they see this, from our discussions with them, as just one step in what they believe can be developed in Whitehorse to help these needs.

I hope that this gives the member opposite a good understanding of what we are hoping to see here. It is not just the 84 units, but those individuals may have been living in the homes that they have had for many, many years, and it could be that they have already moved into an apartment or a condominium, whatever it is. What we are seeing is that we are going to have that opportunity to have 84 new units, but we are also going to see those individuals either sell or rent out the units that they are currently in. It's really a two-for-one on all of these, and that is why we continue to have very supportive conversations with Vimy, which may be asked about later.

We see that as an opportunity to fill a gap between where individuals are now and before they have to make a choice around long-term care. It still provides a sense of independence as well as community, which we think is very important when we look at aging in place.

I look forward to more questions on Normandy or even Vimy.

Ms. Clarke: Thank you for the answer. I am going to move on now to the topic of community land trusts.

The minister has mentioned a community land trust project. Could the minister indicate what responsibilities

Yukon Housing Corporation may have in development of the community land trust?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Yukon has been experiencing an acute housing shortage, and homes are increasing in price. That's why our government's mandate includes support for the establishment of a community land trust here in the territory. The innovative housing model supports a key goal of the housing action plan for Yukon to provide alternative land tenure and alternative home ownership options for Yukoners. A community land trust keeps housing affordable by having a non-profit organization hold the land in trust.

Residents can live in and own the housing long term while keeping the resale cost — which is key here — keeping the resale cost of the home significantly lower for the next buyer. We are lucky to have a non-profit organization working to achieve this goal in Whitehorse. Really what it has been is a group of extremely talented individuals who work in a number of different areas of architecture and engineering and have essentially put their time into this project because of their passion for the community.

The Northern Community Land Trust has a plan to develop a community land trust in Whitehorse over the next three years. The Yukon Housing Corporation has provided support for this project through the fourth intake of the housing initiatives fund project concept stream. Again, the Northern Community Land Trust has also applied for funding from a federal fund targeted to support land trust development projects. The Yukon Housing Corporation is providing support throughout this process.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is primarily the contact at this time because they are trying to find a piece of land that is appropriate for their activities. Then we will continue to support them as they identify that land and begin to get into the structure. At this time, I can't break down the style or type of housing. Right now, we are just really focused on finding an appropriate piece of land and making sure that the governance mechanisms that are in place are supporting them to leverage bilaterally from the federal government. Once those building blocks are in place, I think that we will have more information about what they are looking to build.

Again, these folks are really focused on sustainable, cost-effective buildings.

Ms. Clarke: I have a follow-up question. How much land does the minister anticipate will be needed for the community land trust and how would the government choose the area to develop a community land trust?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I apologize, but I don't have an estimate of how many acres they are looking at. My sense is that they are not starting with a significantly big request for land. My understanding of the process — maybe the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources can speak to this a bit more when he's back, but I think they are looking at what the zoning is on existing commissioner's land, first and foremost, and then seeing if that fits.

My sense from discussions with some of the individuals on this team is looking at a very affordable and sustainable approach. Is there adequate public transit that is close to this?

Are there amenities close to these lands? These are all going to be things that they are going to be taking into consideration, but I would think that we can get a more fulsome answer when Energy, Mines and Resources is up as well.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I appreciate the answer, and I thank the minister for that. I am now going to move on to a topic on housing in rural Yukon. In May of this year, the minister committed to \$3 million to support the construction of three new community triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. Further, YG allocated \$200,000 to explore deployable mobile home options to ease immediate housing pressures. Can the minister confirm the status of these buildings and whether the mobile homes have been secured?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our government acknowledges the immediate benefit to the Yukon from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rapid housing initiative, which is the program that we are using for this work. This initiative is providing opportunities to build affordable, efficient houses for Yukoners in urgent housing need. Through the rapid housing initiative round one, Yukon Housing Corporation was approved, as the member opposite noted, to build three triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. The addresses for these buildings are: 306 Third Avenue in Mayo; 100 Morley Crescent in Watson Lake; and 33 Wann Road in Whitehorse.

Again, the federal rapid housing initiative provides \$3 million for the construction of Yukon Housing Corporation's three triplex projects while the Yukon Housing Corporation will provide an additional investment. As I touched on in the preamble, we saw very significant costs to build these based on the increased price of materials and construction costs. So, it's \$2.4 million more than where we were — almost to the point of a doubling the cost within this.

I sat with the leadership team and discussed the decisions on this. We knew that we had limited-time funding with our money from the rapid housing, as I understood it. We thought it was prudent to move forward. Even with the increased costs, we thought that the most appropriate thing to do was to move forward on those units. We're looking at an increased cost from where we thought we were going to be. We talked a little bit in our opening statement about where we moved dollars from to do that, but again, I think it's the right thing to do.

For the other part of the question which was around mobile homes, we are still in a scoping and design phase of that work, so that work continues. But, again, I think what we're trying to not just signal but to illustrate is that we are looking at every potential option here, not just for short-term critical needs, but for medium and long term for our housing continuum.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I have two follow-up questions on this topic. Can the minister provide further details around the \$40-million funding pot under the national housing co-investment? What are the plans for this money? What housing initiatives are being planned for each Yukon community? \$20 million was negotiated with CMHC to support community housing projects directly managed by the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: In 2018, the federal government launched the \$13.2-billion national housing co-investment fund under the national housing strategy to support new construction and revitalization of affordable housing within provinces and territories. In recognition of the additional needs in northern communities, \$40 million of this funding was allocated to the Yukon. This funding is called the “northern carve-out”.

Under the terms negotiated with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the northern carve-out, \$20 million will support community housing projects in the Yukon. It will be prioritized by community needs and will be directly managed by the Yukon Housing Corporation. The additional \$20 million will be managed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support indigenous governments, organizations, community housing providers, and/or private sector projects.

We will ensure that the federal funding we receive supports Yukoners’ housing needs and aligns with the implementation of the housing action plan, the Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness, and the aging-in-place plan. Again, what we are really trying to illustrate today is that those are our guiding documents in our decision-making and so we continue to refer back to that set of values, as we start to look to roll out these funds.

Again, our senior team and specifically our president have built a very strong relationship with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. As stated by the member opposite, there is \$40 million in total, but \$20 million over there. We try, if possible, to look at projects, in some cases together, at least to figure out where we can find synergies within this housing.

The Housing Corporation intends to have our funds fully committed by 2025-26. Some are at different places with some of these projects. I will give a sense of some of the projects.

The Watson Lake Housing First — we haven’t said exactly how many units; we are continuing to have discussions. We worked with a third party to meet with the community and to have discussions. Certainly, when I was in Watson Lake in September, this topic came up and we are really trying to ensure that we are working closely with all of the community. I had an opportunity when I was there to meet with our housing folks, but also had an opportunity to meet with the mayor who has just been re-elected about what his thoughts were on housing. As well, there is a very well-represented chamber of commerce in Watson Lake and there were discussions as well just trying to understand what is going to be best to meet the needs. This discussion started with the Liard First Nation early on, and we are continuing to have those discussions. That is where we are looking — between 2021 and 2023; that is our goal.

We are looking at another duplex project in Dawson City and Korbo, phase 2. There is land available. There is a significant interest in Dawson City. If you wonder why I am touching on these, when we went down that list of needs, we know that Dawson City and Watson Lake are number one and two when we think about our communities. Again, that’s why we are focusing our funds in these particular communities first.

We are still working with communities. I think that the member opposite will understand that there is always a lot of dialogue in this House about — when decisions are being made,

have we had those thorough and respectful conversations with communities and partners? That is really what we are trying to make sure we do here — to emphasize the need to do that so we know what the needs are in those communities through consultation and conversations. Watson Lake and Dawson City are our first target areas to allocate our \$20 million.

Ms. Clarke: I will now move on to another question — Haines Junction seniors. In the summer of 2020, the St. Elias Seniors Society was kicked out of their meeting area in the seniors facility during the pandemic. The previous minister promised that they would be back in by November 30, 2020. The current minister said in the spring that he would get them back in their space. I understand that they are now being asked to provide \$2 million in liability insurance. They are also now being told that they need to find funding to upgrade a glass door.

Could the minister indicate why they require insurance to access the meeting space and upgrade a door? Could the minister also indicate when they will be able to return?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the question. In listening to the question, you would think that some very dramatic action happened at the seniors facility when people were kicked out. We have to look at factually what has played out. There is a difference of opinion, first and foremost, among the residents of that space, as I understand it. Not everybody is on the same page about this common-use area, so we need to be respectful to everybody who is living there. They have a great volunteer and leader in that community. I have had communication from her. She was a long-time colleague of mine before being in the Assembly.

We have tried to make sure that we meet the needs of the clients who are there, that we get to use that space appropriately, and that we support folks. Our understanding was that the request under the liability was not a showstopper but, as the president just said to me, what we are going to continue to do is see where we can help folks out. If there is a need for us to try to come up with a solution around insurance needs, we will do that.

In the interim, we did host a flu clinic in that space within the last couple of weeks, so the space has been used for the benefit of individuals who are there. It’s a very important space. The space is critical. There are individuals who come and spend time there from outside of the tenant group, as I understand it, and that is really where there has been some concern. Again, we made that commitment. We reached out to the group. I had an opportunity to speak with the folks who were waiting on some documentation from us. After I spoke with them, I also reached out to the Member for Kluane, who has been a great advocate for this particular situation. I let him know that we were working through the last of it. Again, any time there have been any bumps on that one, he has let me know.

I think that we are getting to a place we need to get to. I’m sorry for the disruption for the folks who have wanted to use the space. Hopefully, for the folks who had concerns about people using the space, we have been respectful in our approach to meeting the needs of all seniors in Haines Junction.

Ms. Clarke: I just have a follow-up question for the minister. When can they go back and use the space?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that answer lies in — if the criteria that has been laid out — if the organization that has been looking to use it can fulfill that or if there be a need for us to come up with solution for them. Depending on which one of those happens, that will define exactly the time. What the Assembly needs to know is that we are fully committed to getting people back in there. Sometimes the way in which some of this regulation and work is laid out is cumbersome. We understand that, but what I'm trying to do is find a solution so that the folks who were critical in building that beautiful community have the opportunity to use the space.

Ms. Clarke: I just have another follow-up question. Where is the decision going to be? Would it lie on the minister or in the community? That's my follow-up question. I just really need to know when the seniors would be able to return and where the decision would lie.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I wanted to be very polite today and respectful to the organization. I see that the member opposite is getting some extra questions passed on. Here is our challenge. The organization is currently not in good corporate standing, so that is what has to be done first. We need the organization to be in good corporate standing so we can support them. Once that's done, then we can get there. I didn't really want to get into that discussion today, but that's the scenario after a series of questions on this.

Ms. Clarke: I am now going to move on. I'm going to be asking questions on the rapid housing initiative.

So, on the rapid housing initiative that is leading to the purchase and conversion of the High Country Inn into social housing, reports have indicated that the cost will be covered by the Government of Yukon using money from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The ownership of the hotel will then be transferred to the Safe at Home Society.

Can the minister confirm that this is accurate? What are the timelines for this project?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, I would have to state that it is not exactly accurate. There are two funding sources. I will give a bit of an overview and see if I can reflect that around the state of the project.

The Yukon Housing Corporation supports the Safe at Home Society in their application to the rapid housing initiative funding round two — it's called the "cities stream" — for a Whitehorse-based project to meet the needs of vulnerable Yukoners. What has triggered this is that a decision was made by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to provide funding to cities, which is a bit unique for Whitehorse. The city hasn't occupied that space in this form before, but it was something that was provided to at least two, if not three, of the northern capitals.

Again, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rapid housing initiative funding has the potential to help house vulnerable Yukoners, especially as the pandemic has exacerbated existing housing and homelessness challenges in the territory. We expect a federal announcement in late fall on

this project, so we are waiting to see if this project, first of all, is going to be fully funded.

The Safe at Home Society has proposed buying and renovating the High Country Inn at 4051 4th Avenue to provide 55 units of permanent supportive housing for vulnerable Yukoners, including units for women, youth, and indigenous Yukoners. Support for this project showcases the collaborative efforts of all orders of government with NGO partners and the private sector to increase housing options for Yukoners. If the Safe at Home Society is approved for the rapid housing initiative round two funding, they may also be eligible for funding through existing programs, such as the housing initiatives fund and the municipal matching rental construction grant. The project could potentially support clients on Yukon Housing Corporation's wait-list who may need housing supports.

I want to make sure that I get the appropriate information for the member concerning construction. Their timeline, if approved for funding, would be to begin construction in the start of the new year, in January. The way that the rapid housing program works is that they are looking for proponents to complete their work within a year.

Ms. Clarke: So, the minister confirmed that the project will provide 55 units, as reported, and the reported estimates of a purchase price are \$10 million and renovations are \$5 million. Can he confirm that number? Can the minister provide more background on how this \$15-million project came together since May?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: This project was something that first came to light in December 2020. There was an application submitted to rapid housing. There were a number of entities that provided letters of support to Safe at Home. My understanding is that, at that time, the application was not approved through rapid housing. The federal government came back and allocated money to a number of capital cities in northern Canada. Only applications that had been in round one and had not been approved were applicable to round two. This was the only project application, I think, that was not funded but was from round one; therefore, it was really the only potential applicant.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation contacted the City of Whitehorse — to their surprise, I think, because this is not something normal that they would be funded — and talked about this potential project. We are looking at two funding sources. We are looking at \$10 million that would be coming from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and \$5 million from the Yukon Housing Corporation to complete this project.

Ms. Clarke: I just have two follow-up questions. The centre's website indicates that the project application included two hotels, totalling 117 units.

Could the minister indicate if a second hotel has been identified or not, and what process might be underway to secure that second hotel and additional 62 units?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are not aware of any other hotel or another hotel being part of this project. I think that the only dialogue that our team has had has been on that one particular

piece of infrastructure that we are aware of. It has been clarified to us that it is just what's known as the main High Country Inn hotel and not the adjacent space, which is the old Lions pool, but is known as the convention centre.

Ms. Clarke: I am now going to move on to another question on rent control. There has been a lot of concern from Yukoners around the rent control policy that was implemented as part of the CAS agreement with the NDP. There has been a lot of talk about people being evicted. Many people are struggling to find alternative housing.

Can the minister indicate whether the Yukon Housing Corporation has seen an increase in applications for social and seniors housing since rent control was implemented?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, over the last year, we have seen our wait-list continue to increase. We have seen that happen before the rent cap and we have seen that continue to rise after the rent cap was put in place.

When we look at our point-in-time count for homelessness, we actually have gone down from the April count versus our previous count. I don't want to paint a picture that is inaccurate. It's fair to say that we are closely watching what the rent cap treatments are doing to the market. We are looking to see where there is significant disruption.

My colleague, the Minister of Community Services, is working with the landlord and tenant office. We are watching to see what has played out. To be open to the Assembly, I spoke some thoughts about it in December 2020. I think that we saw some real increases happening; therefore, because of those increases in rent, and through the CASA, we have looked at this as an option, but we are still monitoring what the fallout of that is and how many people are actually in a good position and how many people it has protected and, again, what it has done to disrupt. We are watching that and we are having discussions with stakeholders, whether it is the Anti-Poverty Coalition or others.

It goes without saying that there are lots of individuals who are in our community who believe that there needs to be approaches to how we legislate and regulate these things. At this point, I will leave it at that.

Ms. Clarke: I'm just looking at the website of the Community Housing Transformation Centre. On the website, it says: "Housing First means 2 hotels converted into 117 units of affordable housing in Whitehorse, Yukon — Safe at Home Society RHI Application Seed Funding."

Can the minister update on the status of this online — that's where I got that information. Could he clarify, please?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I can. What we've stated is that we're not aware. We can look at some website that's there. We'll look it up and take a look at it, but there's no big smoking gun here. We're aware of one hotel. We're working with folks on that. I appreciate the fact that there's something in an application on a particular website. We'll look it up, but to be very open with the House, we're not aware of any other structure other than the High Country Inn that's part of this Safe at Home project. If there is, I will make a commitment to come back to the House. But, again, I'm not aware of any other hotel that's part of this particular project.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I am now going to move on to another question. I'm wondering if the Yukon Housing Corporation has ever put out a survey to clients to get a sense of their satisfaction with services, how the corporation is doing, and perhaps areas that could be addressed. Will the minister consider the creation of such a survey that is targeted to clients and staff about seniors and social housing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will start by saying that the last surveys that we did were in 2019 and 2020. Part of our strategic planning is to ensure that we do go out with a series of surveys to look at our client satisfaction. I have also tried, in the short time of being in this role, to spend a bit of time speaking with our clients, whether they are seniors here in Whitehorse or individuals who are in some of our affordable housing.

We agree with the opposition. We think this is very important for us to understand how to best provide the appropriate housing to our clients and, again, probably the best way to define how we can improve in particular areas.

When we complete the next survey process, I'll make sure that we have an opportunity to make the House aware.

Ms. Clarke: I am now going to move on and ask another question on security. Several concerns have been raised with us regarding security in seniors housing complexes over the past few years. Can the minister provide an update on what policies or actions have been taken by the corporation to address security concerns?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, the Yukon Housing Corporation has been in contact with tenants in our downtown Whitehorse multi-unit residential buildings to better understand safety concerns and to ensure that tenants are aware of safety practices. We are currently working toward the installation of security cameras in all of our multi-unit buildings in Whitehorse, and we are completing a privacy impact assessment prior to commissioning the system to ensure that we protect our clients' privacy. The majority of tenants have requested security cameras, both individually and at tenant meetings, over several years. Some tenants have expressed concerns about their privacy as well. Cameras will not be operational until two key pieces are in place: a video surveillance policy and a privacy impact assessment. Both are under development. These two pieces will ensure that we have processes in place to respect our tenants' privacy. Tenants have been provided advance notice of the installation of the cameras and they have been given contact information to further discuss any concerns.

Yukon Housing Corporation maintains a good working relationship with the safer communities and neighbourhoods unit. SCAN can intervene when there are suspected illegal activities. I hope that gives a bit of a sense about how we are approaching some of the security issues and concerns. I have heard this from a number of seniors, primarily, and it is something that we are taking very seriously. We are just making sure that we are following the rules that are in place around privacy but hopefully giving a sense of comfort to our seniors who are living in these units.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Clarke: Madam Chair, I am going back to Watson Lake housing with just one follow-up question. In June of this year, the minister provided some information around the development of the planned Housing First facility in Watson Lake. There were no concrete plans for the facility but, according to the minister, much work was underway.

Can the minister please provide an update on this project and next steps?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: As we stated early on today, we know that Watson Lake had some of the biggest needs in rural Yukon. It would help again to inform us of our housing needs development decisions. We completed a housing needs assessment in Watson Lake. We had spoken about that earlier in the House.

The Yukon Housing Corporation board recently met with community leaders in Watson Lake. That is one of those important discussions that just happened either just at the end of August or early September, just before I was in Watson Lake. The Yukon Housing Corporation has recently purchased land in Watson Lake in order to build a supportive housing project. We look forward to hosting future engagements with the community on this project. Planning and design for construction will continue into the 2021-22 fiscal year and construction on the project will begin in the next fiscal year.

As well, through a federal funding program with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, we are currently constructing the triplex that we discussed earlier. Since June, we have had another opportunity for our board to go and meet with community leaders and we have now acquired a piece of land in Watson Lake that we believe will meet the needs for what we are looking to build. Again, on some of the finer points of design and exactly the amount of units, we still haven't made a decision because there are still some future conversations to have with stakeholders in Watson Lake.

Ms. Clarke: Which communities is the Yukon Housing Corporation currently or planning to build in and what kind of housing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that, first, it is important to touch on the fact that there are really unique circumstances from community to community. I haven't had an opportunity to get to every Yukon community to talk about housing specifically since the spring of this year, but I had an opportunity to get to most of our communities. I can maybe give an indication of some of the discussions, thoughts, and ideas that we have. There are also the communities that I didn't have chance to get to, such as Old Crow, where we do have some significant building that's underway right now.

First of all, when I think of the Kluane region, in most situations, I'm sitting down with the First Nation government, especially if there is not a municipality there, trying to figure out ways to partner together — for us again to go back to those early points where we try to de-risk projects and to seek and meet needs in communities. I think, whether we have an opportunity in the future to work with the development corporation that's owned by the First Nation in White River, I think that's a potential and, of course, we're going to continue to monitor the needs in that community. Right now, we really just have an individual who is a Yukon government employee who is on our wait-list.

We've had significant conversations with Kluane First Nation and that's really about potential development in Burwash. Chief Dickson has indicated that they're having some staffing needs and housing can be a challenge to that. Again, we put it out to the First Nation that we're open to those discussions, whether they use their community corporation — either one of their corporations that they have — their community investment corporation or their more external investment arm — that's up to them. Certainly, we've said that we would like to be building in some sort of a partnership or making a commitment to them so they can build in Burwash.

In Haines Junction, we have these discussions and we put them out to their community corporation. Dakwakada really kind of stays out of that space. I did have a meeting with the CEO of Dakwakada and offered that up. We think that having the corporations build the space out is going to be key, especially in Haines Junction — this makes sense. There is both settlement land and fee simple land that's owned by the nation and their corporation. We have offered to do some work there.

We specifically talked about Yukon Housing Corporation-led projects in Dawson City and in Watson Lake and we've had an opportunity to speak with those; the same with Old Crow.

When you look at Pelly as a community, it's a bit more difficult. I had the opportunity to tour with the MLA who is our Speaker and met with Selkirk First Nation. But when you're looking at that, part of that challenge is we have always had sort of a unique relationship with Selkirk First Nation where they provided housing and we lease that housing. The community is built on settlement lands. We are seeing this moving which, of course, was led by Kwanlin Dün, and now we are seeing a number of other self-governing Nations looking to — of course, they have their lands act in place and now they are seeking an order-in-council from the federal government. Once we have that, we work with the Justice department here at the Yukon government in order to use the Land Titles office to register a lease. Once we can register a lease, individuals can make their projects bankable. They can go out to traditional financial institutions to fund their projects.

At this time in Pelly, we have offered — if the Nation wants to lead, we will be there with them. I think, over time, we will have other opportunities when there is a chance to lease lands in the future.

In Mayo — we talked a little bit about our triplex, which is underway right now. Just to clarify, the project in Old Crow is a tenplex, which is in motion now.

In Carcross, we are still identifying a land parcel to have a Yukon Housing Corporation-led project. Later this week — the Yukon Development Corporation has reached out to us and wants to meet to look at some potential projects in that area.

In Teslin, we work with the First Nation on some joint efforts around land development. There still seems to be a housing need there. We are meeting with both the First Nation and Mayor Curran. That has been identified to us. We haven't looked at a project yet. We are trying to support the community. The community itself went down the road of looking at more of a sustainable, tiny house project. I apologize if I don't have all the details for the Assembly, but that has been held back at this point. I think there were some concerns around location. We have offered to work the municipality or the First Nation if there is a potential need for housing.

Just a few years ago, the Housing Corporation worked hard in Ross River to complete a number of units there. I haven't had an opportunity this summer to get out and have a renewed conversation around housing in the community.

In Faro — I have kind of gone through the statistics. Faro was in a very unique situation compared to other communities, where there was more housing than need. It seems to me that a lot of that housing has been now either purchased and folks are living there or, because of the Faro reclamation project that is underway, that has led to more individuals in the community.

It is also important that, within Whitehorse, we still have two First Nations and some of their traditional lands move outside of our municipal boundaries, so we continue to be in constant dialogue with Kwanlin Dün, but through our rapid housing initiative, we did work with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council on helping them to purchase 11 mobile home units as well.

Before I sit down, I just want to do a quick run-through in my mind of the map of the Yukon and think if I missed any communities along the way. I think that gives a pretty decent snapshot from memory of what we are looking at. Every opportunity that we have had to reach out to development corporations or others that make sensible partners, we have used. Some folks are making this a priority for them; other folks have a number of other things that they want to work on ahead of partnering with us on new housing solutions.

Ms. Clarke: I appreciate the answers from the minister.

My final question is in the context of future planning — not present but future planning. Can the minister provide an outline of the corporation's plans for addressing housing needs in each community? Are there building plans in the works for either social or seniors housing?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Carmacks — I spoke with the members of the council in Carcross this week who really wanted us to go back and look at some housing solutions with their development corporation. Those discussions were led by elected officials from Carmacks and discussions that took place at the Yukon Forum. The development corporation in Carmacks has built some very, very nice units along the Yukon River and I think that they are looking to continue to build that out.

We think about generally the question: Where do we see housing going in the future and what is our plan? Again, we're

going to stick to the strategic planning process. We're in the midst of some of that work already as we get to the end of it. We have some of those guiding documents that are still very relevant — whether it's *Putting People First* or aging in place or our homelessness action plan.

I would just say this in closing: We have the ability to change the state of housing in the Yukon. That's why I think that this is a challenging, challenging undertaking but extremely exciting, because so many complex problems that exist sometimes just don't have solutions. They call them by many terms, but a wicked problem. This is certainly a wicked problem. But, by bringing folks together — and that was really part of what we wanted to do with our housing summit. There have been meetings where the players and the housing continuum have come together. Mary was part of that — our president — in some of the early stages way back in, I think, 2013. As well, we needed to get corporations in the room, folks who are doing the financing, and pulling them all together.

It's not that there's going to be sort of another larger plan that's going to identify a whole bunch of things that nobody has thought about before. We're really going to go back and try to get the things happening that people have talked about for a long time, which is to embrace chapter 22 and make sure that development corporations have the best possible opportunities to be part of our economy. They can do that by building housing solutions and they can build their balance sheet.

I have the support of my colleagues at Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources, Health and Social Services, and the Premier's office to work with everybody we have within government to move ahead on private sector development. That is going to be extremely important. Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services will do that good work that they're doing, but we really need to have different elements of the private sector giving us solutions as well.

I think that, when we talk about seniors, Vimy is going to be a key piece. We're getting there. We've spent a lot of time. It has been touched on in the Assembly. We haven't really had a chance to discuss it fully. Health and Social Services is at the table with Yukon Housing Corporation. We're just trying to make sure that we work with that passionate group of people to get a project that can be built and that has the proper supports that are in it and a really good plan for it to go into the future.

That is going to be a series. If you look at what the Vimy group defines, inevitably — if it's six or seven units, depending on what they want to build — it will be their choice, but whatever they build, we are again hopefully going to see 60 or 70 homes, townhouses, and condominiums now open. These are really dramatic effects on the housing market.

One of the other things we have done that we didn't talk about today is that we are really tracking the amount of building that is happening within our community. In 2020, we had a record number for building permit values. It was the most ever. We have surpassed that in the first three quarters of 2021. In just two years, we are seeing — and it's continuing on. The numbers coming out even for September were far above the national average when you take a look at the increases and what

we have for residential permits and builds. Whether you are driving through the neighbourhoods that you represent — the member opposite — or in my area or the Member for Porter Creek North's area, when you go through those areas, what you are seeing is a tremendous amount of densification in building happening right now. The Yukon Housing Corporation teams are tracking all of that, and we are seeing some significant buildout. I think that this is going to make a really dramatic impact on some of the pressures that we have.

The projects that we have been leading or partnering on start to get to completion. We are going to get folks off of our wait-lists. We are going to have a number of solutions for seniors, starting with Normandy. We think that this is going to make a big impact. Those folks are going to be leaving the units in which they currently live. That is also going to have a very positive ancillary effect. We are hoping to see what can happen at 5th and Rogers. That will make a significant impact. Whatever we do there and whoever does it, we want to make sure that they do it appropriately and fast. Those are part of the terms that we are thinking about.

Again, there are the latter phases of Whistle Bend. We have talked a bit here with the opposition. The Third Party has touched on Macaulay Lodge. We have looked at that, and the current structure is not something that we can use for emergency housing or other types of housing because some of the inside of that structure has been removed. It's getting ready for demolition, but we have had very good conversations with Highways and Public Works — from the Yukon Housing Corporation — about trying to fast-track what can be there next. I can tell you that, if I get the support of my colleagues, what I want to see there is the private sector building something that is appropriate for there and something that will conform to the neighbourhood and be supported by the neighbourhood. So, that is another spot.

We continue to look at other big locations here for private development. I think that those are some of the things, at least, that we are thinking about. Our board has its own ideas as well, and we think that the key to the solution for our challenges in rural Yukon is working alongside the folks who know those communities best, which are First Nations, municipalities, and some of the private sector leaders and entrepreneurs who call those communities their home.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I would also like to thank the officials for being here and for the really helpful briefing that they gave before. I really enjoyed that briefing and learned a lot.

I want to start out by talking about the northern housing fund, which I understand has been decreased by \$1.1 million to be moved for the rapid housing initiative. I think that is great that there is going to be money available for the rapid housing initiative. It makes sense to me that the costs were higher than expected, given everything that has been going on, but I am wondering about what that cut means because I understand that the northern housing fund in the past has been used for rent subsidies. So, I am wondering what is going to happen for rent subsidies this year instead.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is not an impact to our program; we still have \$1.4 million in our budget that we can use to help us offset and still be able to provide our program on our rent supplement.

Ms. Tredger: Just to confirm, even though there is the cut, is there enough to provide as many rent subsidies as were provided last year? Are you anticipating any changes to the program from last year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have just checked with officials. Of course, when we are talking about the categories around capital — and the other one around O&M — we have the stable O&M funding, and we don't see any impacts to the program that is being questioned today.

Ms. Tredger: That is really great to hear. I also understand that money that was originally allocated for unit conversions was cut, and what I understand happened is that those units may be demolished instead.

I am wondering what the timeline is for rebuilding those units that are going to be demolished instead of being converted. I was also wondering which units that funding applied to.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We touched on this earlier, and if I didn't, I apologize. Based on the increased costs that we realized around COVID, we reallocated some of the monies that we had for conversion over to help meet our capital cost demands on our new projects — thinking that was a good, prudent decision. But, looking to the future, where possible, there will be transitions with some of those units. I'm not specifically aware of anything that we have decided to demolish versus transition. I can look into that with officials, but it was really just about meeting the capital call for the needs of our new buildings.

Ms. Tredger: I may have misunderstood about the demolitions.

Which units were planned to be transitioned that aren't going to be transitioned this year?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It will probably be best for us to reach to our team that deals with more of our construction and maintenance, and we can get back with a return.

To be fair to them, I don't know if they identified each individual unit that was going to be there. They probably have a priority list in their project management structure, but we will bring that back. That will be the one item for which we will have to come with a written return in answer to questions from the Third Party.

Ms. Tredger: I would appreciate that. I guess that it raises a bigger question for me, which is: At a time where we have all acknowledged that housing is an enormous need in the territory, why was funding cut in order to give funding to the rapid housing initiative, rather than just providing that funding from somewhere else? Why did we choose housing as the place to balance the budget?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: This is a decision that is made within our senior team. They are extremely professional. They understand housing. We were dealing with a number of things. We tend to go out and get individuals or different companies with the capacity to do the work. We have a number of

companies that we lean on. That is one thing that is really important to recognize.

Also, we had a project that is being built right now. I can tell you — I think most of us, with our own experiences — that it is extremely difficult to find a contractor, whether it's a contractor that is of significant size — one of the bigger companies that are here — or even one- or two-person operations. I'll dig into that.

I think that the decision was a good, prudent decision. Part of the challenge is that we needed money for our new project, and we also know that it is extremely hard to find capacity for the small projects. That's something that, from personal experience, I can tell the Assembly. I had a flood — a leak — in my home, and it was months and months just to try to find somebody — and finally now — who can just give me a quote. Some people are having claims on insurance because of different things that happened naturally this year. It is taking so long to find people.

So, the direction that I've given the corporation is to deploy money to where it is needed and to where we can get a quick return on it. That's what I'm aware of at this point. I certainly will go back and talk to our folks who lead some of that work.

But, again, we're not trying to leave any rock unturned when it comes to the work here. It's just important to share that with the Assembly.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer. So, what I understood is that there were two reasons: one was to provide the money for other projects, and the other was because of difficulty finding contractors, which certainly is a challenge. That said, I think I, and many other members of this House, would have been more than happy to vote for a budget that said we need additional money for housing so we don't have to cut it from other programs, and that decision does concern me.

I will move on from there. I want to follow up a little bit on the question about empty units at Yukon Housing Corporation that my colleague asked about. So, I didn't quite understand the answer. It wasn't clear whether those units are empty because they are waiting for renovations or if they are being held in reserve for emergency housing. I wonder if the member opposite can clarify.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just for clarification, that's my understanding. It's just within the current situation when it comes to capacity. We will go back and talk to our lead when it comes to this and make sure. I think it was really what the different metrics that were used to make that decision. I think that's fair.

When we speak about our 20 units, right now, they are units that have to be renovated. Those 20 units have to be renovated. Our plan was to fix them. In some cases, I think they are all at a different level of disrepair. What we have shared — and we certainly shared it in our meeting just this last week with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition — is that, if we have to, we may move folks in there in the interim. We may not have time to get the renovations done to the level that we want, but it might be a more appropriate location for folks this winter versus other options. Right now, we are looking to renovate, but in the interim, we are keeping a close eye on those 20 units,

which normally would not meet the standard of what we would provide a client, but we may have to use those, based on the pressures that we're seeing in the housing market at this point.

Ms. Tredger: How long have those units been offline? I'm wondering what the barrier is to getting them renovated so that they can be back at the typical standard.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Same scenario — it is challenging to find the capacity to do the renovations. In some cases, we have tenants who leave and they leave things behind, and we have to follow particular protocols when it comes to that. That sometimes hinders how fast we can get in and do our renovations.

We are moving right away to move folks into these units, and the individuals who are moving into the units might have some disruption because we may have to do some of the maintenance work while we have folks living in there. But, really, we think that, under the current circumstances, this is the right decision. We are trying to move those units as quickly as possible to get folks into more appropriate housing, compared to where they are, in some cases, now.

Ms. Tredger: I understand that finding contractors is part of the challenge, and I really do appreciate that it is a challenge. It is not one that I can imagine going away any time soon, and I am wondering what steps Yukon Housing is taking to make sure that they do have contractors available or whether they are considering having their own staff who can do those renovations.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that finding proper solutions to housing is key, but I also think that having a thriving private sector is key. Ensuring that we use private sector expertise when appropriate to do this work is something that we will have to look at.

Looking at labour challenges is not just a conversation that is going to happen at the Yukon Housing Corporation board. Yes, they have to think about that, but it's also part of what we think about all the time at Economic Development and it is something that is thought about at the Department of Education — things that we know include getting ahead in our planning and being able to have contractual relationships based on tendering processes. These are all things that can help us to have capacity in place when needed. I think it's a bit different. There always seems to be competitive interest in our bigger projects compared to some of the smaller things that we're doing. What I am seeing across the construction field is that so many folks are building new. That is where a lot of our talent has gone versus going into some of the other work.

I know that we have a great team at the Yukon Housing Corporation who have a lot of expertise. I think that you have identified a great point. How do we think about one, two, or three years out for capacity? I think that this is something that we will continue to grapple with. You are right that it's not something that is going away, but it is difficult. We are in a housing boom, and the more folks that we bring here continues to potentially exacerbate the challenge. It's a complex issue, but we are going to look to having organizations that we work with that can help us meet the needs and goals and help us with the

renovations and transitions that we want to see and the units that we currently have in our portfolio.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you for that answer, and I do want to provide a few follow-up comments on it. I certainly also want a thriving private sector. I do not think that the contractors are in danger of going out of business if we start having public people who can do the repairs. As we said, it is very difficult to find a contractor right now. I would encourage Yukon Housing Corporation to really consider options there so that we don't have 20 units sitting, waiting for repairs, when we also have a wait-list of over 400 people.

With that, I will move on. I want to talk about the mixed-use housing at 4th and Jeckell as well and follow up a little bit on what my colleague asked. I am really excited that these 47 units are coming online. That is fantastic.

What kind of extra capacity is Yukon Housing Corporation going to have to support those 47 extra units?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have a stability worker who will work with the clients. Part of what we need to do is — because it is mixed-use housing — find out the needs of the clients, so that will be partially what we do. We do have a capacity that's identified to support and to identify the needs and then help us coordinate the extra services from the many service providers we see here in Whitehorse.

So, that is our plan. Again, we have to wait to see who is on our wait-list, who has priority, and then who makes up the tenant mix within the new building.

Ms. Tredger: The stability worker who was mentioned for that unit — is that a new position that has been created to support the 4th and Jeckell project?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The current stability worker and support worker — we have a transfer payment agreement with Safe at Home, and that is where the individual works. As we move on, if we are seeing the need for greater capacity or more folks to do that type of work, then we will be making those decisions within our staffing model.

Ms. Tredger: I just want to express some concern about the “wait and see” approach to see if more support is needed. We have 47 units coming on. I think that, previously this afternoon, the member opposite said that it could be up to in the neighbourhood of 75 new people in housing.

Is there any scenario where the minister can imagine that there is not more support needed for this unit?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I find — it's kind of interesting. There's like a tone that's just sort of aggressive here today.

Again, we're looking to the needs. We don't know who is going to live there. We work with Safe at Home, which has been a great, great partner. We could take a lot of advice from the Safe at Home folks as well as from the Anti-Poverty Coalition. Like the member opposite, I spent a portion of my professional career working with folks who are vulnerable and at risk, whether that be youth or seniors. Again, people need very unique services sometimes. What we're saying is that, right now, we think that our relationship with Safe at Home is filling our need. As we get closer to filling those particular units, we will continue to work with the experts in the field, like Safe at Home, and at that time, if we need to increase our

capacity — or maybe Safe at Home wants to increase their capacity — I'm not sure. I'm just saying that, at this point, we don't have all the information.

The member opposite is stating that we should hire somebody right now. The building is still not completed. We have the important work of juggling how we use our resources. That's why we are here today — to talk about the supplementary budget. I don't think that it's prudent to hire somebody today to support the 47 units that are not finished being built yet.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate that the member opposite does not like my tone and finds it aggressive. That is not actually something that I've heard him say to any other member of this House, and I don't know if there is something particularly about me that he finds aggressive or if that's just something he finds when he gets asked questions.

But I will move on from that to the housing stability worker in general and leave the question about the future capacity aside.

I understand that there is funding for Safe at Home to provide a housing stability worker. Could the member opposite tell us what their caseload is like and if there is a wait-list to access that worker?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I was just made aware that the housing stability position was just hired by Safe at Home. In our next engagement with Safe at Home, I can find out what the caseload is, but that is somebody who has just been hired. I think it is important, as well, to note that we have another individual who works with our seniors who are looking for housing. I will just let the House know that there are different, of course, needs and supports that folks need, depending on where they are at within the housing continuum.

There are a lot of organizations doing really good work that have housing navigators, so that individual who is looking at housing stability is really about trying to make sure that folks, even if they are vulnerable or having challenges, continue to keep those homes and then work with the other navigators. Again, specific to this question, I don't have the caseload numbers from Safe at Home, but we do know that the position was newly filled.

Ms. Tredger: I thank the minister for that answer. It is exciting to hear that there is a new position coming online for that.

Changing tack slightly, when calculating what users of Yukon Housing pay for their housing, is CERB income from last year being considered to calculate what users pay?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Canadian emergency response benefit provided financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly affected by COVID — as the member opposite said, of course, the acronym being “CERB”. Our goal is that the funding provided through this program should only benefit recipients and should never result in a net financial disadvantage. Yukon Housing Corporation will adjust rent calculations for clients who may be affected negatively to ensure that their rent does not increase as a result of having received the Canadian emergency response benefit. The quick answer is no, Madam Chair.

Ms. Tredger: That is great to hear. I have a bigger question. I have written a number of letters over the summer to the minister about clients of Yukon Housing who were struggling with communication, struggling with follow-up, struggling to understand what was being expected of them, and struggling to get support in their housing. I do want to say that those concerns were addressed very quickly after I wrote to the minister, and I really do appreciate that.

I do feel, however, that people shouldn't have to come to an opposition MLA to have their concerns addressed, and I wonder if there are systemic changes — or a systemic look at how Yukon Housing clients are being supported and how the communication is working. I will leave that there.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that it is a very relevant topic — how we interact with our clients — always remembering that no matter who is walking through the door, we have an obligation to serve those individuals. I think that the folks have really challenging jobs in that they understand the pressures. The conversations that happen with our team at Yukon Housing Corporation, especially those on the front line, are always, especially in the current circumstances, really, really difficult conversations. Individuals are constantly making difficult decisions based on where we are at.

I think that the member opposite did a great job on representing the needs of constituents. I think that we can always do better. It's not just political rhetoric. In this case, no matter what government department it is, we have to understand that no matter who is across the table from you, no matter what area of life they are coming from, and no matter what their challenges are, we have to be extremely respectful to folks. Those are discussions that I have had directly with the president. I have full confidence that, if there are changes in mindset or culture that need to occur, they will occur under her leadership. I think that there are always opportunities for us to do better — to make sure that folks feel respected when we are working with them — that they are getting the right supports. I also, to the Assembly, ask for the understanding that many of the folks who work on our team get put into very challenging discussions and are under a lot of pressure to deliver. It can be a pretty difficult job, but we always have to carry ourselves — right from my role and the senior team — with extreme professionalism, always understanding that our role is to serve our clients, who are Yukoners.

Ms. Tredger: I would like to briefly ask about how the SCAN legislation has affected Yukon Housing Corporation. I am wondering how many times in the past — I guess whatever number of years are available — have there been evictions from Yukon Housing Corporation through the SCAN process. I am also curious about how many times that process has been started and not led to an eviction.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, SCAN is a complaint-based process regarding the illegal use of property. SCAN must have a complaint before starting an investigation. The Yukon Housing Corporation is the landlord in all SCAN investigations involving the Yukon Housing Corporation properties. I would say that SCAN and Yukon Housing Corporation are partnering agencies at times, and when lawful and appropriate, the SCAN

unit and Yukon Housing Corporation share information and evidence to address the illegal use of a property. Action can be separated or coordinated and occur under the SCAN act and the RLTA.

We can go back to find — I'll take a look here at some of our information. From 2019 to 2020, there were 39 Housing Corporation properties related to SCAN complaints. Again, of the 39 investigations — Yukon Housing and SCAN have coordinated on the majority of the 39 complaints, but not all the complaints were from the Yukon Housing Corporation.

As a rule, the SCAN unit works to address the illegal use of property collaboratively with the landlord to avoid taking the landlord to court. So, concerning the 39 properties, 17 warnings were provided to tenants by SCAN to cease illegal activity. Then SCAN assisted in one landlord eviction — so one eviction that we had under the SCAN act for drug trafficking activity. In SCAN terminology, we had, I guess you would call it 18 operational closures of the 39 properties. We saw one tenant removed for drug trafficking through investigation.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you. That was very helpful. I wonder: Does Yukon Housing have any policies about when someone is evicted? What happens next? Do they go back on the wait-list? Are they not allowed to be on the wait-list again? Do they have to reapply? Do you try to find other housing for them? Or does Yukon Housing try to find other housing for them?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Individuals who are evicted through this type of process can go back on our wait-list. The only thing is that they need to pay arrears. Those have to be remedied before they move on.

In a case like this, if we have had someone who has been partaking in illegal activity — if they are in our housing, in one of our units — I will dig in to see if there is some sort of a transition piece, but at this point, if they have been evicted, normally they can come back on the list. At that point, does the Yukon Housing Corporation continue to provide some transition services? I don't think that has been our practice, but we can look at other organizations out there that we can refer folks to. They can maybe help them find another opportunity within the housing portfolio in that community.

Ms. Tredger: That was a very helpful answer.

I would like to follow up on my colleague's questions about the community land trust. I am dying to know more, but I do understand it is mostly with EMR right now. I do wonder if the minister knows: When suitable land is identified, what will the arrangement be? Will it be leased to the land trust? Will it be sold or donated?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Madam Chair, I think that when Energy, Mines and Resources is back, hopefully there will be an opportunity then to discuss it. My sense is that they are looking for a suitable piece of land and the transaction would be similar to Habitat for Humanity. That is my understanding.

They are working with a group to find a suitable piece of land. In the past, with Habitat for Humanity, we have transferred that land to them. I think it was done for a dollar. I think that is the concept being used here — get them an

appropriate piece of land at a very appropriate price, which could be potentially a dollar.

Ms. Tredger: I just want to say again that I am really excited about this project. I wonder if there are plans for any other public housing initiatives like land trusts, like housing co-ops, that this government is looking at beyond this one land trust.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We continue to monitor the housing initiatives fund. That seems to be the one place where we're seeing real innovation and some creative ideas, so we will continue to look at that. I think that we are seeing different First Nation governments or development corporations come up with models that are unique and we are supporting those. That could be anything from tiny home models that are being used across the Yukon and some of the things that we have seen that we have supported here in the downtown core as well.

There are conversations that are happening all the time — to be open to the member opposite — not so much focused on land, but really trying to figure out more cost-effective ways to build, whether that is more efficient manufacturing or the re-use of materials and units that are out there. We have seen, at least in one case, some entrepreneurship from one of the local First Nation companies that are now doing a lot of work in Whistle Bend as well as in Carcross, and I think that is really about more sort of mass manufacturing.

There are a lot of different things that we are looking at. It has been a discussion that has kind of had stops and starts with the university around continuing to do research in the field. I do think that there are a lot of different ideas coming, but this is the only one I am aware of when it comes to land. We are going to continue to have discussions with folks like Habitat for Humanity and we're having good dialogue and continuing to support them to build their projects. That is what I am aware of at this point.

Ms. Tredger: Madam Chair, I would like to switch gears now to the rural home ownership loan program.

On the website for the rural home ownership loan program, it says you are eligible if: "You're building or purchasing a new home for your primary residence in the Yukon but outside Whitehorse." Then there are other criteria that don't relate to where that house is. I have been hearing from people in the Hamlet of Mount Lorne who are being told that they are not eligible for this program.

Can the minister clarify who is eligible for this program based on where they live?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are aware of a situation where one or more individuals who live in the hamlet were told that this program did not apply to them. That is not the case. We have gone back and believe that the situation has been rectified. Please, if folks are reaching out, let them know that anywhere outside of Whitehorse, including that hamlet, they can apply. If anybody needs support or they are still having challenges with those discussions within our organization, please let us know how we can help to make sure that those folks can apply for the rural mortgage program.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate the member opposite sharing that he is working to fix this problem. For the people who have

contacted me — I have heard stories of following up multiple times with the people it says to contact on the website and not getting replies or getting conflicting information. The approach that I understand they should take is to suggest that they try one more time to follow up with the contact on the website, and if that doesn't work, I would support them in contacting the minister. Can he confirm that this is the approach that they should take?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes. Our understanding is not that we are working at it, but that it has actually been solved. We have some of our senior folks here. We will make sure that, if there is a problem with the contact number — absolutely, if the individual wants to contact me directly, it's ranj.pillai@yukon.ca. Please send me an e-mail and I will link folks up with the right people to make sure that we can get them in the process of accessing this mortgage, especially if folks have a spot and want to build. We want to be able to support them to build as quickly as possible.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you, I appreciate that. One suggestion that I have that I would like to provide is that this information be shared with people in Mount Lorne and other places that might be affected who may not have reached out to us but may have been turned away and assumed that it was the final answer. Some advertising or working through community associations might be really helpful.

There was some discussion earlier about whether that program would be expanded to include people in Whitehorse during a question and answer asked by my colleague. I just want to second my support for having a program like that available in Whitehorse. There are lots of partnerships happening with the government and industry. That is fantastic, but I also think that individuals who are trying to build homes are part of the solution and should be supported to do that.

With that, I would like to move on to some of the *Our Clean Future* commitments. One of the commitments that is under the purview of the Yukon Housing Corporation is to continue to work with Yukon First Nations to retrofit First Nations housing to be more energy efficient. Could the minister give us an update on that work?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just harkening back to the last question, we do have some marketing that's out right now or some advertising — that is not to say that we can't do more. So, we have social media advertising that's happening right now around that program as well as some newspaper ads. We also ensure that we look at getting it out to the hamlets and to some of the local representatives as well in whatever we figure is the best and most effective way to do that.

I appreciate the comments around looking at some strategic needs inside of Whitehorse. I think the member opposite is absolutely correct that we need to be able to support individuals who are here and they're a major part of this, especially individuals who can go and build out and even add suites or garden suites — any of those extras — when they build are all going to be very important.

Based on our work around climate change, right now, we have six First Nations that we're working with. The total amount approved since 2019-20 is \$2,065,500. Our amount

distributed to date is \$1,308,150. The six nations that are currently working with us and are using these programs are Kluane First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun.

Ms. Tredger: It's very exciting to hear that this work is underway.

Another commitment that's in *Our Clean Future* is to continue to retrofit Government of Yukon community housing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in each building by 30 percent. Could we have an update on that commitment?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Based on our project management plan and based on the timeline we have given, we are on track for our retrofit work, based on the current assets that we hold.

Ms. Tredger: We are about one of 10 years into the 2030 commitment. Does that mean about 10 percent of the buildings have had a 30-percent reduction in emissions?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Part of our carbon tax tracking for 2019-20 — we are forecasting, for next year of our carbon tax tracking, that we will be saving \$65,000. I can try to get a percentage number based on our stock. We have tried to trend out over those 10 years and the amount of work we have had that we see our numbers coming in. That would make sense, those 10 points, but let me go back to clarify exactly where we are based on our plan for the next 10 years.

Ms. Tredger: Thank you, I would appreciate that. I find that, in trying to get a number of how many buildings we are looking at or what percentage of those buildings have been reduced and by how much, it would be helpful to get a sense of where we are at in that process. I think it is really important in making sure we meet the targets and that we allocate enough resources to make sure we can meet those targets.

I would like to talk a little bit more about the rental market in the Yukon. I don't know if the minister has read the letter to the editor that was published in, I believe, the *Yukon News* today about a family who is leaving the Yukon because, as they put it, "Housing is the reason, landlords are the cause." They talked about the incredible imbalance of power there is between tenants and landlords and how that has led to them accepting decisions that should never have happened because they felt powerless to fight them. They talked about trying to work through the RTO to fight decisions and getting lost in the bureaucracy and getting lost in fees. It really just speaks to how helpless tenants can be when someone who controls their housing has the ability to make decisions unilaterally and in which they have very limited ability to fight.

Can the minister talk about what work is being done to balance that power so that tenants do have a voice and do have some power to fight for their housing — to fight for that really fundamental need, which is housing — so they are not subject to the whims of the market and the whims of someone who is running a business?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will provide a little bit of flexibility in the dialogue today. I don't think it pertains directly to anything in the supplementary budget, but I think it is probably a philosophical difference too, but I did take a look at the letter today. I don't want anybody who wants to make Yukon their

home and wants to build a future here and contribute to our community to have to leave. I think that we have been very open at the Yukon Housing Corporation that, yes, there is a challenge. Multiple things have led to the challenge. I am not sitting here playing political football. I am just saying that there are a lot of things and we all know that. Lots of different factors contributed to that. That is why, at our housing summit, we really put the obligation for the solution to this out to everybody. There are a number of people who work inside the Yukon government. Whatever their role is, in many cases, they have a very significant part in rectifying the challenges we have — whether they are working in lands or infrastructure or Land Titles in the Justice department — you name it. We have 11 self-governing First Nations that all have the ability to have lands acts in place. Work that has been done in previous mandates of government and have continued on has led to that opportunity for all of those nations, if they make it a priority, to be able to provide opportunities for their citizens to be on those lands. We have municipalities that are all coming together in different places around their official community plans, which is key. Those are just some of the factors that are coming into play.

When I read that letter, I don't think to myself that Yukon Housing Corporation let these folks down. I am not saying that this is what the member opposite is saying. Since I'm being asked that today in this debate, I believe that we never want to see that happen. I know that the member opposite knows very well that the legislation doesn't fall under the Yukon Housing Corporation. I think that there has been some lively debate about it and there will continue to be lively debate about it. We hear that there are lots of conversations that are going to be in front of the House in the very near future on that topic.

Again, am I concerned? I'm always concerned. I don't want to see people leaving. I think that it's difficult in this country right now. No matter what city you go to, you are going to find challenges finding housing and you are going to see housing prices rise.

I don't think the House needs to hear my opinion on that piece of legislation. I think that the Minister of Community Services will probably respond to that, but our goal is to not see letters like that in the newspaper. The mandate of the Housing Corporation has always been around affordable housing as well as staff housing. But again, we have a larger scope right now, and we are just looking at trying to make sure that we push housing solutions in every area that we possibly can.

I am sorry if I didn't explicitly answer your question, but I'm just giving you a view from the other side of the aisle.

Ms. Tredger: I do know that the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* does fall under Community Services and not Yukon Housing Corporation, but I cannot imagine that what is happening in rental housing in the market versus what is happening to affordable housing versus what is happening at the residential tenancies office and what's happening at Yukon Housing Corporation do not all — they are connected. They are absolutely connected and they absolutely affect each other.

So, I am interested in knowing the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation's opinion on this because it affects

our affordable housing and it affects who ends up on the wait-list at Yukon Housing Corporation. To try to pretend that it is a piece of legislation that doesn't affect his portfolio is — it's all connected and we can't deal with one piece of this problem, which is housing, without also looking at the context in which housing happens.

But with that, I don't have any further questions. I will end there for the day.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to comment and a thank you — and then we'll wrap up.

I appreciate that. I'm not saying that this is not something that affects Yukon Housing Corporation. I will leave it with this: I think that all of the decisions being made around housing directly affect the challenges that we have in housing — the decisions that will be made over the short run, the decisions that we are making today. I think that they all have consequences. When I come to the Assembly, that is something that I always try to share. All of our decisions can have consequences. Sometimes when we try to make one decision on policy, sometimes there are other effects that you can't anticipate.

I think I'll leave it at that.

I want to thank President Mary Cameron for coming in today. She has been working extremely, extremely hard on behalf of Yukoners. Everything that we have been asking, Mary has taken on. Our financial picture has been tight and it has been good and we have been running our numbers well, and that is because Marcel Holder Robinson has been doing a phenomenal job as well. Thank you both for being here today, and I thank the Assembly for letting us talk about what is probably one of the most important issues that we see.

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

Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek South that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

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

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned to 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled November 4, 2021:

35-1-28

Zoom in On Children's Rights: 2020/2021 Annual Report — Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office (Speaker Harper)

The following document was filed November 4, 2021:

35-1-14

School staffing in Watson Lake, letter re (dated August 30, 2021) from Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education, to Patti McLeod, Member for Watson Lake (McLean)