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HANSARD

Tuesday, November 23, 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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| NAME | CONSTITUENCY | PORTFOLIO |
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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 | Government House Leader* Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate |
| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board |
| Hon. Jeanie McLean | Mountainview | Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon**

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. The following motion has not been placed on the Notice Paper at the request of the member: Motion No. 237, notice of which was given by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin yesterday.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome a few guests whom we have here today for the tribute for the Leckie Awards. We have with us Mr. Allan Nixon, who is the vice-president of BMC, and also Joel Ray, who is the chief mining engineer of BMC, and they are one of the award winners today. We also have Glenna Southwick, who is the community award winner, and Glenna has her son Eric Walker with her and co-workers Tammy Johnson and Tori Chislett. We have, from Archer Cathro, Heather Burrell, the president and managing director, and sitting next to her — you can try to pick out who is who here — is the operations manager, Liz Smith. We have Mike Burke, who is a director with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. We have Anne Lewis, who is with the Yukon Mining Alliance and Yukon Women in Mining. We also have Brooke Rudolph, the executive director of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, and could we also please welcome Lorelee Johnstone, the incoming and new president of the Yukon Chamber of Mines.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I ask my colleagues to welcome two members of our integrated restorative justice unit who are here with us today for the tribute, Christina Laing and Deanna Thick. Thank you very much for being here today.

I know that there are others who couldn't be here who are listening in. Thank you very much.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Restorative Justice Week

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party to pay tribute to the national Restorative Justice

Week. Initiated in 1996 by the Correctional Service Canada, this annual week of recognition has since expanded into an international event. Restorative Justice Week allows us to acknowledge restorative justice principles and reflect on the efforts made to find alternative, culturally relevant, and restorative ways to deal with crime outside of the current criminal justice system.

Restorative justice processes encompass respect, reparations, restoration, and reconciliation. Restorative processes are based on the understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships and focuses on repairing and healing the harm caused by crime. The goal of restorative justice processes is to reach meaningful and fair outcomes through inclusion, open communication, and truth.

In the Yukon, restorative justice processes are delivered through the hard work and dedication of Yukon First Nation governments, community justice committees, restorative justice service providers, families, elders and community members, and the Department of Justice's integrated restorative justice unit.

As a government, we are proud to be working with Yukon First Nation governments to advance and enhance the use of restorative processes throughout the territory. Restorative processes are unique and individual across Canada, although the most commonly used restorative processes include community conferencing, victim-offender mediation, community justice forums, and community circles.

It is an honour to pay tribute today to the Council of Yukon First Nations and all of the Yukon First Nation governments that lead and oversee the majority of restorative programs and services in the territory. I would like to highlight and pay tribute to the First Nation restorative justice working group that has been formed to collaborate on restorative justice and what it can look like across the territory.

I know that we have listening Deputy Chief Simon Nagano of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, who is a member of that committee.

This group has been tasked with collaborating on the development of a strategic plan, exploring opportunities for innovation and delivery of restorative justice processes, creating culturally relevant and meaningful restorative processes specific to the Yukon and to each respective First Nations government, and fostering communication about current services, emerging challenges, and new opportunities. I am grateful for the dedication and the hard work of each individual who has taken part in this important working group.

Finally, I would like to note that the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon RCMP, and the Government of Yukon are co-hosting a virtual event to pay tribute to national Restorative Justice Week. The event will be held on Friday, November 26 and is an opportunity to learn about new initiatives in what restorative practices look like here in the Yukon.

At this time, I would like to sincerely thank all Yukon First Nation governments, community organizations, and individuals in the Yukon for their continued dedication and hard work in advancing restorative justice processes.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the members of the restorative justice integrated unit who were not able to be

in attendance today. I know that they are listening in. Their hard work is leading this work. Thank you very much.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Restorative Justice Week in Canada, from November 21 to 28. I would like to acknowledge the work being done by the Council of Yukon First Nations and First Nation governments in this area, as well as the work of the Yukon Community Wellness Court, which has been successful over the last 14 years since it was implemented with the goal of building safer communities by working with offenders in the criminal justice system on dealing with issues contributing to their criminal behaviour and working through a holistic wellness plan with a team of professionals and community supports. As members may know, it has been found to be successful, based on an independent evaluation of the work that was done in this program.

So, I would conclude my comments by noting that we do appreciate the work that is being done by people throughout the territory in restorative justice programs, and I want to acknowledge those who have been successful in their results.

Applause

Ms. Blake: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Restorative Justice Week. Since 1996, this week has been used to acknowledge the positive impacts of restorative justice in Canada. At this year's National Restorative Justice Symposium, Valarie Binder and Brenda Warren will be representing the Yukon on behalf of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

There are deep indigenous roots in restorative justice. For decades, indigenous justice leaders fought for it until government finally listened. When harm happens, people on all sides need support. No matter how a person becomes justice-involved, restorative justice preserves their dignity. Instead of treating people with punishment, restorative justice is focused on healing people who commit harm and the people affected by the harm so they can find a meaningful path forward. This concept is the first step toward a better understanding of justice.

Now, 20 years later, many people are calling for transformative justice. Transformative justice looks beyond the individual and at the system instead. It asks: What problems with the system pushed this person to harm others or themselves? How can we transform those systems to help people? If we reduce suffering, we also reduce harm.

I look forward to working together in this House and in the territory to transform the way we understand justice. Thank you, Valarie and Brenda, for upholding these values and representing Yukon at the national symposium this week.

Applause

In recognition of the Robert E. Leckie Awards recipients

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today on behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the recipients of the Leckie Awards that are traditionally presented

during the annual Geoscience Forum. The COVID situation has led to the postponing of the forum until the new year; however, we still felt that it was important to recognize some outstanding members of the mining community regardless.

The Robert E. Leckie Awards honour excellence in environmental stewardship, outstanding social responsibility, and innovation in mining practices. These awards were created as a tribute to Robert Leckie, who worked as a mining inspector in Mayo from 1987 until he passed away in November 1999. Mr. Leckie was an innovator who promoted planned reclamation, research, and cooperation that benefited both government and industry.

The awards given in his honour recognize miners for their exceptional reclamation and restoration efforts. Before I announce the award winners, I would just like to give a shout-out to the mining industry, which as a whole has worked to keep their operations safe during COVID-19. It has been a lot of work, but I really want to thank them for their efforts to keep the territory safe over the past two seasons.

The Leckie Award for responsible and innovative exploration and mining practices goes to Slate River Mining. The company deserved this award because their innovations demonstrated long-term work that exceeds best practices at placer mining. This includes forested leave strips, a small equipment footprint, low fuel usage, and solar systems for camp electricity. Slate River Mining has done an exemplary job of mining on the Indian River and has a small crew that is typically the father and son working in tandem. They are very worthy recipients of the Leckie Award.

I would just like to add that I had the opportunity to go and visit Slate River Mining this past summer. I spoke with Pascal McBurney. I didn't meet his dad, but I did meet Meghan and I would just like to acknowledge that they have a new young person in their family, Cory, and I'm sure Pascal and Megan are looking forward to the day when she takes over their operations.

The Leckie Award for excellence in environmental stewardship in quartz mining goes to Selwyn Chihong Mining Ltd. Their mine site straddles the Northwest Territories border 165 kilometres east of Ross River. In 2020, Selwyn removed a significant amount of waste material and special waste, including over 160 barrels of hazardous waste that remained from the previous operator. Selwyn also did soil testing to ensure that the soil was not contaminated around the site. I understand that any soil that was contaminated is being treated on-site at Selwyn's land treatment facility. Selwyn is committed to contracting opportunities for Yukon residents and is also collaborating with First Nations to achieve a culturally integrated workspace. Thank you to Selwyn for their hard work on the site.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the awards given by the Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Prospectors Association. The Yukon Chamber of Mines awarded the community award to Glenna Southwick, an employee with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Ms. Southwick's work with the Whitehorse mining recorder's office shows unwavering, transparent, and honest

guidance through the policies and procedures for staking, recording, and filing assessments on mineral claims in the Yukon.

The Yukon Prospectors Association presented their Prospector of the Year Award to Yukon-based geologist Jérôme de Pasquale.

Last but certainly not least, the Yukon Chamber of Mines awarded their member of the year award to BMC Minerals.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to each of this year's winners. On behalf of Yukoners, I express our appreciation for the work that they have done and the positive example that they have set for us all.

On behalf of all members of this House, we acknowledge the substantial efforts by mining companies, operators, and others who go above and beyond the call of duty to support, inspire, and sustain responsible mining operations here in the Yukon. Thank you.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under returns and documents for tabling, the Chair has for tabling the 2020 annual report of the Yukon Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Yukon Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner.

Are there any other returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have for tabling two legislative returns referencing written questions posed to the Department of Education.

Ms. White: I have for tabling a letter directed to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board urging him to amend Bill No. 8 to include presumptive cancer coverage for wildland forest firefighters and the briefing note that was used in British Columbia to effect that change. They are from the BC General Employees' Union.

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 Yukon government to work with the private sector to improve access to reliable, affordable high-speed Internet service.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

United Nations Climate Change Conference

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I rise to speak about the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties, otherwise known as COP 26.

Over two weeks in Glasgow, Scotland, world leaders gathered to discuss all matters related to climate change for the critical decade ahead. While recognizing every country's unique realities and challenges, leaders from across the globe talked about the need to urgently address the biggest challenge of our generation — climate change. Leaders from coastal and island nations shared stories of their communities being inundated with rising sea levels. Other leaders shared stories of destructive wildfires, desertification, and biodiversity loss.

Closer to home, we know that we are also dealing with the effects of a changing climate. The evolving situation in southern British Columbia demonstrates the destructive impacts that climate change is having, and will continue to have, on people, homes, critical infrastructure, and the environment. In this past year in the Yukon, we experienced unprecedented flooding unlike anything that we had seen before.

To address this crisis, a collective global approach is required. Further to this, a number of commitments were made at COP 26. The conference culminated with the adoption of the *Glasgow Climate Pact*, a wide-ranging decision toward a more ambitious climate response. In a first for a UN climate agreement, the pact reached by the end of COP 26 urged countries to phase down coal and fossil-fuel subsidies. The *Glasgow Climate Pact* is critical and yet may not be enough of a commitment in reducing global emissions and keeping the average global warming increase below 1.5 degrees.

Canada played a significant role in negotiating this pact, which includes phasing out fossil-fuel subsidies, a requirement to phase down coal power, and new commitments to allocations of resources to loss and damages to the countries that have contributed the least to the cause of climate change while being exposed to its severe impacts.

The Yukon has a role to play. The Government of Yukon's recent commitment to reduce emissions by 45 percent by 2030 from 2010 levels in the territory is in close alignment with the critically important 1.5-degree warming limit. Furthermore, Yukon initiatives, such as *Our Clean Future* and the recently announced Yukon Climate Leadership Council, demonstrate Yukon's action in addressing climate change. We are making progress on several ambitious commitments set out in *Our Clean Future*, and this work will only intensify over the coming years.

With COP 26 now closed, we hope that we can all reflect on the immediate action required to address the climate emergency. I think about how Yukoners, Canadians, and those across the world are being impacted. Climate change is here. It is all too real, and it will continue to impact all aspects of our lives.

Now more than ever, Mr. Speaker, we must take collective action to minimize the impacts to future generations.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Speaker, first off, I would like to say that we appreciate the effort of those countries and individuals who are taking action on climate change. The United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP 26, in Scotland provided another opportunity for leaders

to meet to discuss how to mitigate and address the impacts. Those of us who live in the north have been experiencing the impacts of climate change for years. Our renewable resources councils, Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, and our seniors and elders have seen the changes. We have experienced the effects of forest fires, flooding, and road washouts. We know how important it is for governments to work together with our communities to ensure that the emergency preparedness plans are in place.

So, Mr. Speaker, our hearts do go out to our southern neighbors in British Columbia who have seen entire communities evacuated and supply routes cut off. That's why we support action to prevent climate change. We need effective solutions. Those solutions come from people who know how they can best leverage local actions. That's why it was disappointing to have the government cut the youth ambassador position. That position provided a great opportunity for younger Yukoners to learn about the global crisis and become future leaders for our climate action. Previously, these youth ambassadors attended high-level meetings, such as COP 26, so we hope that the government rethinks this stance moving forward, because we agree that the Yukon needs to do its part to help reduce the effects of climate change.

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, overall, I have to say that COP 26 felt a bit flat. Maybe it was the indigenous leaders, like Chief Tizya-Tramm, opting out because they were tired of being their tokens. Maybe it's because we all know that the time for talking has passed. Maybe it was the feeling that really hard decisions are being kicked down the road. It's a feeling that I hear from Yukoners a lot — that the hard decisions are being kicked down the road. How else can they feel when this government creates a double standard for climate goals, a 45-percent reduction for most of us, and then the cop-out: intensity-based targets for the mining industry? How else can they feel when the government recommends that only 50 percent of the wetlands in the Dawson land use plan need to be protected when wetlands are some of our best natural carbon sinks?

There are people out there who are taking action on climate change every day. Yukon communities are leading the way to turning off their diesel generators. Land-back leaders in Wet'suwet'en territory are fighting for their sovereignty. Our very own Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change is making bold recommendations that go beyond superficial fixes to meaningful change. A moment from COP 26 that did shine for me and that really did stand out was when 23-year-old Yukoner Ashley Cummings spoke alongside climate advocates. Ashley told world leaders how government inaction on climate change is failing indigenous people across the north. She spoke about how mental health and well-being are tied to climate justice. We are so proud of her advocacy and how she represented the territory on the international stage.

We are immensely proud of the 45-percent target in greenhouse gas reductions that the Yukon NDP negotiated for. This is the most aggressive climate change target in the country, but that doesn't mean we can stop there.

Before the minister accuses the opposition parties of voting against climate action when we have voiced our concerns around proposed changes to the municipal and taxation acts, I will remind him and his colleagues that the Yukon NDP do support building retrofits. What we don't support is one government imposing its programs on another level of government. We remain optimistic that the Minister of Community Services is working hard with municipalities to address their questions and concerns. We hope that this work will get municipalities to be supportive of the better building program and that we will be able to vote for it in this session.

In the meantime, here are my questions for the minister. He said that climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing his generation, so will he commit to real climate targets for the mining industry instead of intensity-based targets? Will he prioritize protecting our natural carbon sinks, such as wetlands? Will he commit to fully implementing the recommendations of the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the contributions from the members opposite on this vital topic. We are in the middle of a climate crisis, and Yukoners are seeing the impacts of climate change first-hand. The scale and intensity of these severe weather events, like the unprecedented flooding in the Yukon this summer or the flooding and infrastructure crisis that BC is facing right now, will not allow us to ignore these fundamental and profound changes any longer. When it comes to climate change, much like COVID-19, we are in this together. It is only through collective action that we will be able to address this problem.

It is our responsibility as a government to take action now. We cannot afford to have leadership that does not look at climate change as an emergency. In the 14 years of government by the Yukon Party, they refused to support climate action initiatives, and with no vision or forethought, the current Leader of the Official Opposition even took the position that he did not think that the territory-wide emission-reduction targets were the right thing to do. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear: They are definitely the right thing to do. Yukoners take some pride in the fact that, since our government was elected, we have made significant progress in reducing our emissions as a territory. We are on a path to achieving our emission-reduction goals outlined in *Our Clean Future*.

Mr. Speaker, we have been able to begin to implement a plastic bag ban, incentivize Yukoners to purchase electric vehicles through rebates, and supported high-performance building retrofits and smart electric heating installations, among other actions.

We cannot stop there; I can assure you of that. Although significant action has been made in addressing climate change by this government, no one is doing a victory lap here. I am under no illusions that there is still significant, heavy lifting to be done.

This Assembly has an opportunity right now to continue to make changes that will help Yukoners reduce their emissions and save money. Our government has brought forward

amendments to the *Assessment and Taxation Act* and the *Municipal Act*, which, if passed, would allow the government to develop the better building program. The better building program would provide Yukoners and Yukon businesses in participating municipalities and outside city limits with loans of up to \$50,000 for home energy retrofits and \$100,000 energy retrofits to businesses at the prime lending rate, the lowest lending rate in Canada.

We have tabled letters of support for the better building program from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, CPAWS Yukon, and the Yukon Federation of Labour.

The results are clear. There is support for the better building program. We are not kicking —

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

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

Hon. Mr. Clarke: We are not kicking this can down the road. I urge all members opposite to support these amendments that will save Yukoners money and reduce our emissions as a territory, paving the path for a greener, healthier, more resilient future for our children and for all future generations.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Health care services

Mr. Dixon: We remain concerned with the serious situation facing the Yukon with regard to family medicine. There is a growing wait-list for people seeking a family doctor, and efforts to recruit more family doctors have not been successful. One-fifth of Yukoners do not have a family doctor. In fact, we haven't seen a new family doctor set up practice here in several years. However, there have been proposals to help address this. One of those is the establishment of a government-run walk-in clinic.

Yesterday, the minister did not provide a clear answer as to whether or not she is considering support for a new walk-in clinic, so I would like to ask again: Will the government lead the creation of a new walk-in clinic for family medicine in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am very pleased to be able to stand and speak to Yukoners about health care here in the territory. Again, it will be necessary for me to correct the statistic that was presented in the preamble to this question, which is that one-fifth of Yukoners don't have a family doctor. That is not, in fact, the math. It is 21 percent, which is not one-fifth.

Our government is keenly aware of the shortage of physicians here in the territory — and frankly across Canada and internationally — as we deal with a global pandemic with respect to COVID-19. In addition to that, we have increased the types of specialists who are here in the territory in the last number of years — having new pediatricians, new psychiatrists, and additional surgeons who perform surgeries here in the territory so that people do not have to travel. These are all important aspects of the improvement of health and

social services and the improvement of primary care and medicine here in the territory.

I look forward to continuing this answer.

Mr. Dixon: I stand corrected. There are more Yukoners without a family doctor than I thought.

So, I did ask a very simple question and that was whether or not the minister would support the creation of a new government-run walk-in clinic here in Whitehorse, so I will let that question stand again.

Will the minister support the creation of a new government-run walk-in clinic here in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As I am sure the members opposite know — but it is always important to remind Yukoners — that the *Putting People First* report noted that family physicians and primary care were a key concern for Yukoners. In addition to that, the *Putting People First* report provides us with 76 recommendations and a path forward for improving medical services, primary care, wraparound services, and individual service for all Yukoners with respect to important, critical medical services. We recognize that Yukoners will have questions about the *Putting People First* process and how we will be moving forward.

I think that it is very important to note that we are working with our partners with respect to medical services and primary care services. One of the models noted in the question about a walk-in clinic will be adopted with the bilingual health centre that will be opening in 2022. That primary health care centre will be set in Whitehorse and is expected to reduce some of the pressures on the primary health care system. The Department of Health and Social Services has also been exploring other opportunities that I'm happy to speak about.

Mr. Dixon: I am not sure that I heard a clear answer there, but I will move on.

Family doctors have told us that the business case for opening a new clinic in the Yukon just isn't there right now. In fact, we have unfortunately seen a clinic close this year. The result is that there are 2,500 Yukoners on the wait-list for a family doctor. This is an issue that requires leadership from the government.

Another proposal is for government to work with the medical community to create the conditions where family doctors have the confidence and support from government to open a new clinic.

Will the government work directly with the medical community to create the conditions where family doctors are given the right incentives to open a new family medicine clinic here in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: That is exactly what we're doing. We are working with the Yukon Medical Association in partnership; we are working with Dr. Katharine Smart, who is the president of the Canadian Medical Association. This is a key issue on their agenda for this year, addressing it across Canada. We are working with the Yukon Medical Association here in the territory. We have provided them over \$4 million for recruitment opportunities for them to lead. We are working with them with respect to the polyclinic options that are set out in *Putting People First*, as well as the opportunity to enhance

businesses here in the territory that are run by physicians to provide Yukoners with primary care.

We look forward to those opportunities in the near future. As I have said, the bilingual health centre is one of the opportunities for walk-in services for Yukoners. We are also increasing nurse practitioners. We are increasing opportunities for virtual care for Yukoners across the territory, and we continue to work with all of our partners to provide important critical care for Yukon patients.

Question re: Midwifery legislation

Ms. McLeod: Last week, an article in the *Yukon News* made it clear that the development of regulations for midwifery has not gone as planned. There has been a significant gap in service, and this has meant that Yukoners seeking the support of a midwife have had to leave the Yukon in order to receive that service. Likewise, we have heard concerns raised by the Yukon Association for Birth Choices as well as the midwifery implementation committee. It appears to us that there is much more room for collaboration.

Will the government agree to improve midwifery services in Yukon by reviewing the regulations that are currently in place for midwives?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm very pleased today to rise and speak about the midwifery program and services that are being adopted here in the territory. Our government remains committed to moving forward with the integration of funded and regulated midwife services into the Yukon's health care system.

This work, including the recruitment of midwives, is underway. This new health program here in the territory — in order to have it integrated into our medical system, we are working closely with the Public Service Commission and with the registered midwives organizations. Our government has worked closely with our integrated committee to implement midwifery, including having midwife experts participate and, in fact, be hired by the Department of Health and Social Services to guide this process. I think that it's well in hand. It's in the hands of experts. We are working hard to implement the midwife program here in the territory. It is new and it will serve Yukoners well.

Ms. McLeod: We have heard from general practitioners that they didn't feel as involved in the regulatory development as they should have been. This has led to resistance to the idea of granting midwives hospital privileges.

Will the government bring all affected stakeholders together and find a path forward for granting hospital privileges to midwives as part of a truly collaborative system that supports pregnant women?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think the question indicates that perhaps the opposition is trying to catch up. That work is well underway. Local and national midwife experts have provided advice on the midwife regulation that is needed to bring it into force sooner than later to help the transition from unregulated services — which is what has existed in the past — and into our health care system and to be supported by health care system partners.

I have been working closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation. I know that the Department of Health and Social Services has as well. The integration of midwives into the bylaws of the Yukon Hospital Corporation is well underway. That is part of the work — just one piece of the work that is necessary to bring the midwife process of integrated and paid midwifery into the system here in the territory.

Ms. McLeod: One concern that several observers have noted is that the Yukon will struggle to attract high-quality midwives to the Yukon if they aren't properly supported or compensated. The level of pay that the government has offered midwives has not been competitive.

Will the government agree to consult with affected stakeholders to ensure that the rate of pay for midwives is competitive and fair?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, an important question for Yukoners to know — work has already been completed with respect to this. As the new health program in the Yukon is developed, we are working closely with the Public Service Commission to review the classification, and compensation rates for registered midwives to support attracting and retaining experienced midwives here in the territory is part of that process. These positions will be posted in the coming days with more competitive compensation. That work is done.

Question re: Wildland firefighters workers' compensation coverage

Ms. White: A letter sent to the minister yesterday, which I tabled today, urges the Government of Yukon to add presumptive cancer coverage for wildland firefighters. It says, and I quote: "An elevated risk for cancer is expected among wildfire firefighters, especially among long-serving frontline workers."

On November 17, I tabled a letter from the Whitehorse Fire Fighters Association stating — and I quote: "Exposure to smoke over long periods of time with no PPE causes a myriad of health problems."

Wildland firefighters do not use respiratory protection and are exposed to smoke and other substances for longer periods of time than their municipal counterparts. The evidence is there.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister follow the evidence and add presumptive cancer coverage for wildland firefighters?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question this afternoon. I too have been in touch with the International Association of Fire Fighters on this issue. I have been speaking to wildfire groups as well. I am looking at the evidence, I am looking at the costs, I am looking at the availability of PPE, I am looking at how our wildfire teams in the bush work, and I am more than happy to take the evidence that I am presented with and consider it as we make decisions on this piece of legislation that is now before the House — which is, I must say, the most progressive piece of legislation in the country. I am very, very proud that this government has drafted this legislation with the help of my colleagues. I know that it will be an absolute beacon of hope for injured workers across the country once it passes this House.

Ms. White: I disagree; it is not quite the most progressive legislation, but it could be if we included wildland firefighters. Lots of us in the Yukon have friends and neighbours who are wildland firefighters. These people are first responders. They risk their own safety to protect all Yukoners, our forests, wildlife, and infrastructure. They risk not only their safety but also their health to protect us.

As Chad Thomas, CEO of Yukon First Nations Wildfire, said — and I quote: “... we are all doing the same really tough job. You get a lot of scars, some visible and some not...” And yet, the minister is hesitating to expand the presumptive cancer coverage to wildland firefighters, even though all other firefighters in the Yukon will continue to be covered in the new act.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree to cover wildland firefighters for presumptive cancer coverage?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am going to respectfully take issue with the preamble of the member opposite. This is, right now, the most progressive piece of legislation in the country — period. It is already. There is no other jurisdiction in the country with the scope of coverage that this bill will have when it passes this House, and now we are talking about adding more coverage to that piece of legislation. I am happy to have that conversation. We, on this side of the House, have family members who are firefighters and wildland firefighters as well — we have friends and we have relatives. This is an issue that touches every one of us, and we are in government to look at these things and look at all of the implications of our actions.

The proposed motion — it hasn’t even manifested itself yet — came to my attention just a few weeks ago, and this piece of legislation — the most cutting-edge piece of legislation in the country — has gone through an extensive consultation period and now, at the last minute, we are having more added to it. I am doing my due diligence to see what the implications of those requests are, and I will report back to the House once I know what they are.

Ms. White: Well, it is good for the minister that I have been clear on what I am asking for, and that is coverage of wildland firefighters for presumptive cancer coverage.

As our population grows in the Yukon and the effects of climate change intensify, we can only expect wildland firefighters to face increased health risks and be exposed to more harmful substances.

The Yukon has a rare opportunity right now to do right by wildland firefighters. The legislation is already open and it has been on the floor on the Legislative Assembly; we are just waiting for it to be called back. So, we are not asking for a complete redo. The government’s own “what we heard” report recommends — and I quote: “Expand the cancer presumption to include all Yukon firefighters, including wildland firefighters.”

Mr. Speaker, British Columbia already set the precedent for wildland firefighter presumption by doing this in 2019. When will the minister follow the lead of British Columbia and his own “what we heard” document and expand presumptive cancer coverage to wildland firefighters?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The job that wildland fire does for our territory is beyond repute. We all depend on them, and we greatly admire the work that they do. We are absolutely in lockstep with our colleagues across the way.

What is at issue here is whether or not to extend the coverage that we bestow on structural firefighters to wildland firefighters who operate in the territory in two very different environments. I am doing my due diligence to see what exactly the implications of that decision are before the House in a very short period of time. It was raised in the “what we heard” document by the IAFF, but they didn’t actually take the next step so that we would ask the stakeholders about it, because they weren’t prepared to take that step. They wanted to support their colleagues, but there was no fulsome discussion during the consultation.

Anyway, this is before the House. I understand that. I am doing my due diligence within the department to find out what the implications of these changes are. That is the responsible thing to do as a government. I am taking that responsible view, and I will report back to the members opposite when I have that information.

Question re: Psychology profession regulation

Ms. Clarke: In the Yukon, psychology is completely unregulated. This means that, unlike the vast majority of Canadians, Yukoners have no guarantee that they are receiving high-quality, evidence-informed psychological services from a regulated health professional when they go to a psychologist. Earlier this week, the government indicated that it could take up to four years to regulate psychology.

Will the government agree to speed up the process and regulate psychology before this coming spring?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really appreciate the question about health profession modernization on the floor of the Legislature this afternoon. I have met with the Yukon psychologists association just at the beginning of the session. They brought their concerns to me.

I have absolutely heard those concerns and I’m working very closely with the Department of Community Services to fast-track changes that would actually allow us to have some sort of oversight over our psychologists in this territory. The department did an interview with CBC, I believe. They did note that it does take a long time to get legislation drafted and put in place and that’s the ideal situation. However, there are other alternatives that we can pursue and the department is looking at those as well.

I know that this is an issue for psychologists. I absolutely understand the issue and we are working very closely to make sure that we have an answer for that profession and many others as well. Physiotherapists is another one, Mr. Speaker. We’re working very closely to find these solutions for these professional associations.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the government took four years to regulate midwifery, and when they brought in those regulations, they unfortunately eliminated that profession. We want to ensure that the government learns from this mistake during the process of regulating psychology. In order to reduce

the burden on their territorial government, the Northwest Territories signed an agreement with Alberta so that the NWT psychologist would be registered through that province. By following this example, the Yukon could speed up the process of regulating psychology and address this health care gap.

Will the government follow the example of the NWT and establish a partnership with Alberta so that our psychologists can be regulated through the College of Alberta Psychologists?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I'm having a hard time this afternoon following the narrative woven by the opposition. They made a suggestion just recently that we deregulate midwifery and now they're asking us to regulate psychologists, which is the right thing to do. The fact is that we have regulated midwifery and we are in the process of getting midwives up here. I will say that I was writing about midwives in the territory in 1992 under that Yukon Party government that didn't get 'er done. I was writing about midwifery in 2002 when the House Leader of the Yukon Party had the ability to get midwives in place but didn't get 'er done. I was writing about midwifery in 2004 when the Yukon Party was in power and didn't get 'er done. Here we are in 2021 — it's far too long, Mr. Speaker, but the Liberal government has gotten it done and we're now in the process of implementing that and the members opposite do not like it.

Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to find a good path forward for psychologists; I've said that, and we will do that.

Ms. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the fact that psychology is completely unregulated in the Yukon is a significant health care gap. When will the psychology regulations for the Yukon be in place?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I have indicated in the House this afternoon already, I have spoken to the psychologists association. I have heard their concerns; they are legitimate. I do understand this gap in the regulation of psychologists. This gap isn't new, Mr. Speaker; it has existed for a very, very long time — a very long time. As a matter of fact, the regulation of health care professions has been allowed to lapse and fall idle for years and years and years and years. So, now we are fit with this backlog of professions that are really being governed under legislation that was current in 1980. It's unacceptable that it was allowed to lapse this long. For 15, 16, 17 years, this has not been addressed. So, now we are addressing it, and yeah, there is a backlog, but we will get to it, just like we did for midwives. We understand how important this is to these professionals. They need these rules. They need to be operating in a modern environment and we are delivering on that modernization initiative, and we are going to continue to do the good work on behalf of Yukoners, providing a stable government in a time of crisis in the territory.

Question re: *Workers' Compensation Act* amendments

Mr. Hassard: The government currently has legislation before the House to amend the *Workers' Compensation Act*. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government sets the business of the House and decides if and when we debate legislation. We and the Third Party would like to make amendments to this

legislation, so we are curious: Will the government agree not to use the guillotine clause on this legislation and allow the opposition parties to propose amendments to the legislation?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry, again — it is great to be speaking with the member opposite after he was benched for so long — 12 days. Honest to goodness, I have spoken about this already this afternoon on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I am sorry the member opposite can't deviate from his questions; I wish he had more, but he obviously can't come up with new ones.

I have said already that I am doing my due diligence on this file to make sure I know the implications of these last-minute amendments to this piece of legislation that has been in drafting for years. I am surprised they haven't brought these concerns forward before, but here we are now at the last minute, at the very eleventh hour. We know that the opposition is reluctant to make eleventh-hour decisions on things, but here we are. I am doing my due diligence in a very short period of time to make sure I know the implications of the amendments that are being put forward by both opposition parties in the last week of this Sitting.

Mr. Speaker, I will do my very best, and we will have this discussion on the floor of the Legislature when the bill comes back before us.

Mr. Hassard: As I said in my first question, if the minister had been listening: The government sets the business, and he could have brought this bill forward at any time. My question was actually whether the government would agree not to guillotine this.

Moving on, the opposition parties would like to add wildland firefighters to the WCB amendments before the House so they are covered for presumptive cancer coverage. As first responders, wildfire fighters regularly risk their own lives to protect the lives of others and deserve to be treated equally to other firefighters.

Yesterday, the minister, as well as the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party, received a letter that was tabled today. Will the government listen to this request and allow this legislation to be debated here in this House and amended?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I have said, due diligence takes some time. The Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is running the implications of these changes to ground, and when I have a full understanding — as full as I can have in such a short period of time — of the implications of these amendments, I am going to bring the legislation back and we will have a discussion on the floor of the Legislature and see how it goes.

I have already spoken about how impressive the job of Wildland Fire Management is. I want to make one point perfectly clear, because it seems to get lost on the floor of the Legislature. If wildland firefighters get a cancer, they are covered by the WCB. It doesn't change anything, except that it just skips an assessment phase. If wildland firefighters get sick in any way — or any profession, if they get sick in any way — they can still get coverage through Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, which exists to provide compensation

for workers injured on the job in the course of their duties. I do not want to send a message in any way that workers are not covered. If you are injured or have an occupational disease, see your WCB and get coverage.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, we still see no commitment from the minister to actually bring this forward for debate without guillotining it.

Again, we and the government have also received a letter from the Northern Air Transport Association, as well as 15 prominent members of the business community, raising concerns with this legislation. Their concerns are related to section 127 of the act as it relates to liabilities for those operating vehicles. As written, this section of the act would be inconsistent with many other jurisdictions. We would like to make minor amendments to this at Committee as well.

Will the government agree to bring this legislation forward to Committee so that opposition parties can propose their amendments?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have this conversation. I believe that we have already started to have this conversation on the floor of the Legislature when the bill crossed into second reading.

We know that the amendment that the member opposite just referred to that came through from the Northern Air Transport Association refers to a change that was actually a request made to both the New Democratic Party government of a former Premier and the Yukon Party government of a former Premier. In both cases when this came forward, both governments decided of their own volition to not proceed with it. Why? It is because the Yukon is actually benefitting from getting compensation from a much larger national pool of money as opposed to just a local pool.

I think that there are profound implications to the Yukon fund if we narrow the focus of coverage, but if the opposition parties want to go that route and potentially bring higher rates to our business community, then that's a decision that this House is going to have to make. I know where I stand on that, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, November 24, 2021. They are Motion No. 236, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North, and Motion No. 113, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North.

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, November 24, 2021. It is Motion No. 239, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 9: *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 9, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pillai.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lotteries Commission that Bill No. 9, entitled *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 9, the *Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021)*, at third reading.

As we discussed at second reading and in Committee of the Whole debate, the proposed amendment to the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act* is the first step in the development of comprehensive regulations on e-commerce and home delivery. During the public engagement in 2017, a year before legalization, Yukoners were forward-thinking when it came to the opportunities that they wanted to see for cannabis in the territory. Approximately 58 percent of respondents said that they strongly or somewhat agreed that services such as online sales and home delivery should be allowed for cannabis, regardless of whether stores are privately or publicly operated, and 88 percent of respondents said that they strongly or somewhat agreed with a policy approach focused on developing legal and controlled access while displacing illegal and criminal activity.

We believe that the new proposed amendments help us to achieve the goals and opportunities that Yukoners are looking for, as well as to support our cannabis retailers.

I would like to thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly for their input on this amendment to the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*. Many of the topics discussed during Committee of the Whole were broader questions about the Yukon's cannabis framework, and I would like to touch on these during third reading today.

I will begin with cannabis pricing. We want to support retailers in tackling the illegal market, and examining pricing is one way to do this. The corporation reviewed cannabis pricing with licensees and reduced cost-of-service charges on products at the end of October. We switched a per-gram cost of service to a per-unit cost of service. For some products, this meant that the cost of service dropped from \$14 to as little as \$2.15. Cannabis flower categories over two grams now have a cost of service of \$2.15 per unit. Those under two grams have a cost of 50 cents per unit, and all other products, such as edibles, have a cost of service of 15 cents per unit. This change will assist licensees looking to set competitive prices and combat the illicit market.

The corporation also charges a 22-percent wholesale markup on all products purchased by licensed retailers. This

markup has not changed in the three years since legalization, and we are currently looking at whether the rate can be further reduced to help licensees. We are working closely with our retailers on this topic.

The second topic that I would like to address and that was touched on in Committee of the Whole is advertising. Licensees must comply with the federal *Cannabis Act*, which has detailed requirements relating to advertising products, sponsorships, and the sale of merchandise. The corporation is examining these federal restrictions closely to support licensees where possible. There are just a few instances where additional restrictions exist at the territorial level — for instance, loyalty programs. The majority of the requirements are really federal. However, the corporation continues to examine the small number of territorial-level restrictions to see if there are additional ways to help licensees.

It is important to know, at this point, that Health Canada runs a federal-provincial-territorial working group, which was discussed during Committee of the Whole, as part of its review of cannabis. The Yukon Liquor Corporation attends this federal-provincial-territorial working group and will continue participating in this important review as it restarts following the federal election. While the working group's discussions are confidential, the corporation can work with licensees to bring forward any specific concerns that they have about federal legislation.

There was also interest in our distribution system during Committee of the Whole. During the public engagement on legalization, 28 percent of respondents thought government-licensed, private distributors should oversee and manage cannabis distribution within the Yukon, 24 percent thought that cannabis producers should be allowed to sell directly to retail stores, 17 percent were in favour of government distribution to government-run stores, and 24 percent thought that retail operators should be required to purchase wholesale from a government supplier, which is the system that we now have.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation is the sole distributor for cannabis in the territory. While that arrangement does not differ from the highest ranked response in the public engagement, it puts the corporation in a position to support private retailers by arranging sourcing and supply, freight, and warehousing. The corporation works with private retailers to ensure that any challenges are met in a way that meets the retailers' needs. In many ways, the Yukon is in a unique position in terms of geography, population, and the small number of retailers that we have in comparison to southern jurisdictions.

One model of distribution that has been raised in the Legislative Assembly in the past is that of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is the only province that has fully privatized cannabis retail as well as its wholesale and distribution model. Many private retailers in Saskatchewan are owned by large publicly traded companies or chains for which privatized distribution works well. These large companies can secure supply contracts at much higher volumes and better product variety and pricing than small businesses. It is important to note that, in 2019, smaller independent retailers in Saskatchewan felt compelled to launch the Weed Pool cooperative to create

shared buying power and secure better pricing and product selection from producers.

During that time frame in the Yukon, the corporation has gone from having supply agreements with nine federally licensed suppliers to approximately 40. Licensees actively suggest suppliers for the corporation to sign on. The corporation works closely with private retailers and suppliers to ensure that appropriate supply is on hand. Private retailers have shared, during weekly calls, that supply has significantly improved, particularly during the past year. These joint efforts mean that we have a reliable supply chain with a variety of products available to licensees.

To summarize, we have a successful model that we can continue to build on through this amendment. Our retail sales continue to grow. In the 2020-21 fiscal year, cannabis sales through the corporation to licensees increased by over \$2.5 million from the 2019-20 fiscal year. Our licensees are doing a fantastic job in these turbulent times.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation continuously reviews new and different approaches to the sale and distribution of cannabis with both the protection of Yukoners and the interest of our retailers in mind. The corporation works closely with licensees in a supportive environment, likely one of the closest of all Canadian jurisdictions.

I would like to move on now to economic opportunities. When presented with possibilities for economic opportunities related to the cannabis industry during the 2017 public engagement, 84 percent of respondents supported locally grown cannabis and 72 percent supported retail opportunities. I am pleased to say that the corporation recently signed a supplier agreement with ArcticPharm, the Yukon's very first producer. We are looking forward to seeing their products on the shelves. In addition, a new cannabis retailer opened its doors in Watson Lake just two weeks ago. We now have six cannabis retail stores in the Yukon. These retailers employ more than 40 people. Together, they help us to ensure the supply of legal cannabis and reduce the illicit market.

While statistics on the illicit market share can be difficult to determine with accuracy, we do know that Canadians are switching to the legal market. According to the 2020 national cannabis survey run by Health Canada, approximately 69 percent of cannabis users reported choosing a legal source for at least some of the cannabis that they consumed. This figure is higher than just after legalization in 2019. We believe that this statistic is likely similar in the Yukon. Our sales continue to grow, and we are fortunate not to have some of the challenges that other jurisdictions have in this area, such as grey market storefronts. However, illegal online sales do exist in this territory. Now is the time to provide our retailers with online sales opportunities so that they can remain competitive and continue to seize the illicit market share. I believe that, through the proposed act amendment before you today, we are providing this important opportunity.

With this short amendment, a person performing functions in relation to e-commerce and delivery will now be able to possess cannabis provided to them by a licensee. The change prevents a person possessing cannabis for delivery purposes

from committing an offence when they possess the cannabis, having obtained it from the licensee rather than the Yukon Liquor Corporation.

Further details about the Yukon's new, private retail, e-commerce framework will be available once the regulations are finalized. A wide range of options for e-commerce and home delivery are under consideration as we develop the regulations. We are working to get legislation finalized as soon as possible.

Once again, I would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their input on this amendment to the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*.

I want to thank the Yukon Liquor Corporation staff who continue to work on the legislation. I would also like to thank the Cannabis Licensing Board for its hard work and dedication. The board helps to ensure that the Yukon's cannabis industry is viable through its diligent review of cannabis retail applications.

Once we finalize the regulations, I am confident that the new legislation will take us forward by contributing to economic growth, while doing so in a socially responsible manner.

Mr. Dixon: We have spoken to this at second reading and in Committee, and I have said all that I wish to say about this bill at those stages. With that, I am pleased to note that we will be supporting this bill. We have been advocating for this for some time, and we look forward to seeing this bill pass.

Ms. Tredger: As noted, we have discussed this at second reading. That was a helpful discussion, which we appreciated. Thank you again to the officials in the department for making this happen. We look forward to supporting this bill.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I want to say a few things. First of all, I want to take a moment to thank the folks of the Yukon Liquor Corporation and, in particular, those people who helped in the first year when the government ran the government cannabis store. There were some great staff there.

They did a wonderful job talking to the public and helping to inform Yukoners who had questions and who were curious in coming into the government store. They did a really great job.

We said at that time, when we opened the store, that our intention was to do this as an interim step and that we would do this in a way to try to introduce cannabis into the Yukon — as it was being legalized for the first time across the country — and to make sure that the goals we had set out to protect the health and safety of Yukoners, including youth, and to displace the black market — in a stable and steady way. We also said at that time that our intention was to step back.

The Official Opposition at that time said: No, the government, once they start, would never get out of the business. I said that, no, we will, and we did. One year to the day from when the store first opened, it closed as a government store and we no longer had a brick and mortar store.

Just because this is just a moment when I get to do it, I would just like to say to those folks who worked at that store that I thought they did a tremendous job. There was a lot of hustling in the background with the corporation and with the staff there to get things up and running. Everybody worked super hard, and it was really well done.

I also would like to say that the fears that the opposition brought up — that there would not be a change and that we would not get out of the business of selling cannabis and it was not going to happen — well, that did happen. If this legislation passes here today at third reading, effectively what we will do is transfer over to the private sector the ability to do those online sales. Again, when the minister tabled the annual report several weeks ago, the percentage of online sales is a very small percent of the overall sales, but it is important that we provide this avenue for the private sector retailers.

I would also like to say that the private retailers here have done a tremendous job, and I appreciate that they have advocated and worked to try to move things forward. I'm excited to hear the minister announce here in the Legislature about ArcticPharm. It is great to hear that there will be cannabis growing here north of 60 — you know, probably not the last announcement that will come, but it is great to hear. I look forward to their part in this whole supply chain.

The private retail market here has some differences with larger stores and smaller stores with one chain. Those things all make a difference, and I think that it is one of the reasons why we continue to believe that the model that we have adopted on the wholesale side, being the corporation, is the right model. I know that the members opposite, the Official Opposition, have continued to talk about Saskatchewan as a model, but again, we will stand and note that, from the last numbers that I have, the amount of black market that we are displacing here is one and a half times — 50 percent — better in the Yukon compared to Saskatchewan.

So, hats off to the private retailers for the work that they are doing. I thank them for their advocacy, starting with me and continuing on with the current Minister responsible for the Liquor Corporation, to get in this amendment to the act. Again, when we brought this in, in 2018, the legislation was meant to be a first step to go from a period of time — decades, or over a century, I'm guessing — when cannabis was illegal to legalizing it. That was going to take a little bit of adjustment for us as a society. It has gone extremely well, and I thank all those involved for making this a very, very smooth transition, and I look forward to the success of the private industry here in the territory.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Again, I would just like to thank the members of the Assembly for their input. I think that it was a good exchange during Committee of the Whole — some areas, again, which I have touched on, that we will keep our eye on and that followed our responsibility and jurisdiction. I also

believe that, through that, we got a good sense to really engage at the working group table with other provincial and territorial members.

Even my mandate letter talks to a reduction in packaging and things such as that. We have a lot of things that we want to continue to work on at the national level that we think are important. Again, we are happy to be able to move this.

I want to commend my colleague. I had an opportunity to watch the commitments made — and then followed through on and executing them exactly as he stated that he would. I think that it has really led to a boon for the private sector.

I will just close by saying for folks that, whether it's in the liquor market or in the cannabis market, we want to always think about responsible use first. That is what we commit to, but also, I will let folks know that one of the very first phone calls that I received last week was from our president, Mr. Dennis Berry, who has been doing an exceptional job. It has been fantastic working with him. He was calling me because we had a bit of work to do with the flooding in British Columbia. Right away, we identified four tractor-trailer loads — four trailers — that had to be redirected through the US and then back up into Alberta. We always keep a large supply of product in place. Right now, I think that, based on the consumption trends that we've seen, we have about six weeks of supplies. People will be okay for their wine for their Christmas dinner and such. I just wanted to communicate to folks that we are tracking some of the disruption in British Columbia, and we are well-positioned to continue to deliver the service that we have been delivering and will continue to deliver.

With that, thank you to all of the policy folks who really do the heavy lifting when it comes to this work.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 9 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 9 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger): Order, please. I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Before we begin, the Chair will make a brief statement.

Deputy Chair's statement

Deputy Chair: As was noted by the Chair of Committee of the Whole on November 21, 2019, the primary purpose of having witnesses appear in the Committee is for the witnesses to answer members' questions. This purpose is also appropriately reflected in the wording of the order that the Committee adopted earlier this month for witnesses to appear from the Yukon Hospital Corporation. I will note that nowhere in the orders arising out of motions for witnesses to appear in Committee of the Whole do the orders provide for the minister to interject during the questioning of witnesses.

There is a very short amount of time that the Committee has to question witnesses and for the witnesses to answer members' questions — just two hours in total. It is the Chair's role to ensure that the Committee uses its time in the way that the Committee has directed. The order that the Committee adopted provides for witnesses, as opposed to ministers or any other members, to answer members' questions.

In keeping with the spirit and letter of the Committee's direction, the Chair is of the view that the people who should be responding to the questions asked by members of witnesses are the witnesses themselves.

The Chair will note that if a minister wishes to respond to a question that a member has posed to witnesses, there are a number of avenues available to ministers to provide information to the Assembly. One of these avenues is filing a legislative return at a later time. A second avenue is writing a follow-up letter to the member.

In addition, if the witness is of the opinion that a question received is not one that is within the scope of their area or program, then the witness has the ability to indicate this in their response to the question. In general terms, members tend not to be experts in witnesses' full scopes of practice, which is why witnesses are brought before the Committee. Questions outside

the witnesses' scope do not need to be answered by either the witness or by a minister rising during the questioning of witnesses. Once a question has been noted by a witness to be outside of their ambit, the questioner should move on and/or indicate that they — that is, the member — will follow up with the minister responsible at a later date.

Finally, members only have a brief opportunity to question witnesses. Conversely, greater opportunities exist for the members to ask questions of the ministers. These opportunities include tabling written questions, asking oral questions during Question Period, and questioning a minister during budget debates. Ministers also have the ability to respond to questions posed during those opportunities.

All members should avail themselves of these opportunities and leave specific witness questions to be asked of witnesses and answered by witnesses during the witnesses' appearances.

The Chair would like to thank the members for their attention.

Motion re appearance of witnesses Committee of the Whole Motion No. 3

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, Lesley Brown, president and vice-chancellor of Yukon University, and David Morrison, chair of the Yukon University Board of Governors, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions relating to Yukon University.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, Lesley Brown, president and vice-chancellor of Yukon University, and David Morrison, chair of the Yukon University Board of Governors, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions relating to Yukon University.

Committee of the Whole Motion No.3 agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 10: Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: With respect to Bill No. 10, I appreciate the opportunity to stand. I would like to welcome and introduce to the Legislative Assembly members Tyler Plaunt and Rebecca Veinott, both with the Department of Justice. One works on policy and the other is in charge of our legislative counsel office. I welcome them and thank them for their assistance here today.

I do have some remarks with respect to the details of Bill No. 10. In my earlier remarks upon second reading, I reviewed the legislative changes that we are proposing to the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act*. Today I am really pleased to present the bill in some more depth, which I hope will assist the members of this Legislative Assembly.

As I begin, I would like to again remind members that the process for the Judicial Compensation Commission is set out in the *Territorial Court Act*, whereby a commission is struck every three years, and their job — the members of the Judicial Compensation Commission — is to review and negotiate salaries and benefits for judges, for deputy judges, and for Justices of the Peace.

The process set out by the commission is meant to help maintain the proper constitutional balance between judicial independence and the role of the Legislature in deciding judicial remuneration. The final report of the 2016 Judicial Compensation Commission and its recommendations were approved in 2019. As a result of accepted recommendations from the report, amendments to the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* are necessary. These amendments will give life to the recommendations that were made by that Judicial Compensation Commission. As members may recall, the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* includes three schedules that articulate the provisions of: (1) the judiciary registered pension plan; (2) the judiciary retirement compensation arrangement; and (3) the supplementary judicial pension plan.

I would like to note that, while the recommendations of the 2016 Judicial Compensation Commission are directed mainly at Schedule No. 3 and the supplemental judicial pension plan provisions, some amendments are proposed to Schedule No. 1, and those are done in order to harmonize the language across the act where appropriate.

Additionally, I want to let members know that, as a courtesy and in the spirit of the Judicial Compensation Commission, the Department of Justice provided the judiciary opportunities to review the language of the proposed amendments on several occasions. I am assuming that this will help members of this Legislature to adopt the amendments that are proposed here, understanding that the judiciary has reviewed them a number of times and taken into account how they will affect their own compensation.

The proposed amendments in this bill can be separated into three components. The first major component of the proposed amendments are changes in clarifying and expanding the scheme of how reductions are applied to pension benefit amounts in the event that a member elects to commence receipt of their pension benefits prior to their earliest unreduced retirement date. In order to satisfy recommendation 1 from those recommendations from the Judicial Compensation Commission, subsection 9(1) of the act is amended to remove the notion of an actuarial reduction and instead provide for a 0.25 percent per month reduction. This subsection also amends the criteria of a normal pension commencement date by changing the continuous service requirement in subsection 9(1)(b) from 20 years to 30 years and adding subsection 9(1)(c), which captures the age-plus-service time scenario, where the member's age plus their years of continuous service is equal to 80 years. That is the first major proposed change.

Moving on, the second major component of the proposed amendment clarifies that a five-year guarantee applies to all pensions payable, including for joint and survivor pensions for a judge with a spouse. This amendment makes certain that Schedule 3 is consistent with the provisions in Schedule 1 by ensuring that a spouse or a common-law partner will continue to receive pension amounts under both the registered and supplemental pension plans for a full five-year period, even in the event that the member judge dies prior to the end of that period.

The new subsection 10(2.01)(b) also ensures that those pension amounts will continue to be paid to the spouse or common-law partner's beneficiaries should the spouse or partner die prior to the end of that same five-year period.

The last component seeks to clarify that child benefits, in terms of pension amounts, are payable under both the registered and supplemental pension plans by codifying the schedule for disbursement of pension amounts to judges' children, and that's in Schedule 3.

The amendments seek to harmonize the provisions of Schedule 3 with similar provisions in Schedule 1 by codifying the disbursement scheme under the scenarios where a member's children are to receive pension amounts in addition to a member's common-law partner or spouse and where a member's children are to receive pension amounts and there is no spouse or common-law partner who is receiving pension amounts.

Other amendments to section 10 of Schedule 3 are made as a consequence to the amendments that I have just summarized and ensure that a judge's children are captured under the disbursement scheme for pension amounts under the supplementary pension plan.

It's also worth mentioning that the amendments to Schedule 1, section 18, and to Schedule 1, section 22, are made to promote consistency between the language of Schedule 1 and Schedule 3. These amendments are all designed to clarify the rules in the three instances that have become part of the recommendations from the Judicial Compensation Commission from 2019, which began in 2016.

Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to further explain these amendments and the details of them. I look forward to discussion and questions, if there are some, from my colleagues.

Just before I end my comments, I should note that there were some questions during a briefing regarding Bill No. 10. One of the questions asked was whether the financial implications or considerations of these amendments have been incorporated as part of the budget, either in the mains or the supplemental. I think that this is a good question. I can confirm that the judicial salary and benefit considerations resulting from the proposed amendments in Bill No. 10 were, in fact, realized and reflected in the 2019-20 mains budget.

The Department of Justice has confirmed with the Public Service Commission that the financial considerations for child benefits stemming from the proposed amendments that are proposed here in Bill No. 10 were accepted, along with the changes to the judicial remuneration, back in 2019, and those have been accounted for.

Although it's quite technical, we are really taking the opportunity here to give life to the recommendations that came from that commission and to clarify those recommendations in the act that is being amended here. I can note that the *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)* is to clarify some language and lastly to make sure that Schedule 1 and Schedule 3 under those provisions are aligned.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*?

Seeing none, we will proceed to clause-by-clause debate.

Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 10 read and agreed to

Deputy Chair: The Member for Lake Laberge has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 10 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*, without amendment.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that the Chair report Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Deputy Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 3 adopted earlier today, Committee of the Whole will receive witnesses from Yukon University at 3:30 p.m.

Would members like to recess until 3:30 p.m.?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Committee will recess for 30 minutes.

Recess

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

Appearance of witnesses

Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 3 adopted on this day, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from Yukon University.

I would ask all members to remember to refer their remarks through the Chair when addressing the witnesses. I would also ask that the witnesses refer their answers through the Chair when they are responding to the members of the Committee.

The Member for Mountainview, I believe that you will introduce the witnesses.

Witnesses introduced

Hon. Ms. McLean: The witnesses appearing before Committee of the Whole are Dr. Lesley Brown, president and vice-chancellor for Yukon University, and David Morrison, chair of the Yukon University Board of Governors. I would also like to acknowledge Lacia Kinnear, the associate vice-president of governance and external, who is observing in the gallery today. I would like to thank the witnesses for coming to the Legislative Assembly and I look forward to the discussion.

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

Mr. Morrison: Thank you, Madam Chair, Hon. Minister McLean, and Members of the Legislative Assembly, for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would like to acknowledge that we are present on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

I am pleased to appear before you today with our new president and vice-chancellor, Dr. Lesley Brown. I would like to take a few minutes for those of you who haven't had an opportunity to meet Dr. Brown to introduce her to you at this time. Prior to coming to Yukon University, Dr. Brown served as provost and vice-president academic at Mount Royal University in Calgary. In this role, she oversaw all facets of educational programming and research at Mount Royal, which transitioned into a university in 2009. Prior to this, Dr. Brown served at the University of Lethbridge as a faculty member and administrator, including interim vice-president of research, associate vice-president of research, and vice-provost of academics.

Dr. Brown holds a PhD in kinesiology from the University of Waterloo, a master of human kinetics in biomechanics from the University of Windsor, and a bachelor of physical education from McMaster University. She has also completed a three-year post-doctoral research fellowship at the University of Oregon. Dr. Brown has proven to be a committed, energetic, and inspired leader. We are very happy to welcome Dr. Brown, who has only been here a few months, to lead our faculty, staff, and students at the university.

I won't go into a lot of the academic accomplishments from the university over the past year, but I would like to talk about a few. Students from the Yukon, NWT, BC, Alberta, and beyond — including international students — are choosing Yukon University. Last year, while we expected a drop due to COVID and initial fall enrolment was down, by the summer, credit program enrolment had, in fact, increased beyond the previous pandemic year by 36 students, for a total of 1,285 students in total. Despite the ongoing pandemic, this current fall semester, we have 964 students enrolled in credit programs, the highest fall enrolment in five years. I don't want to mix those numbers up. One was a full year and one is just the fall enrolment number.

Our research and innovation programs moved from strength to strength. The northern innovation program, which was renewed last year with a further \$2 million in funding, and in collaboration with the Government of Yukon and the University of Alberta, we created a Two-Eyed Seeing research program and established Daqualama Jocelyn Joe-Strack as the research chair in indigenous knowledge.

As well, five Yukon businesses are currently being supported by the Incubate North program, kickstarted by a \$400,000 donation from TD bank.

In closing, I would like to just say a few words about the tremendous challenge that the faculty, staff, and students at Yukon University have faced, as many of us have, during the last year. Our faculty, staff, and the administration have worked tirelessly to, first of all, deliver our programs online and then, now, switch back to face-to-face classroom delivery. Their work has been exceptional. I, for one, am very thankful for all of their efforts during the very difficult time.

Thank you, Madam Chair. We look forward to the questions.

Mr. Kent: I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing here today to answer questions with respect to Yukon University. I would also offer congratulations to Dr. Brown for assuming her new position with the university, and we look forward to seeing what exciting aspects she brings to the university with her experience — the experience mentioned by the chair, coming from Mount Royal, and other experience that she has. So, welcome and congratulations on the new position.

The first set of questions is with respect to that new position. Perhaps, Madam Chair, I will direct them toward Mr. Morrison, the chair of the university. I am just curious if he is able to provide for us the recruitment costs for the new president, as well — if the numbers exist now — as the final severance costs for the individual who served in that president

role for a very short period of time and then, I believe, moved back to Ontario.

Mr. Morrison: Madam Chair, I don't have exact numbers. I would not say that there was not a severance package for the previous president, but the only financial payout to the previous president was the three-month notice that he provided under his contract. There were no other dollars provided to him as part of a severance of any kind.

I can find the numbers for you and provide it — for the relocation costs — but essentially they are just the moving costs for moving Dr. Brown and her belongings to the Yukon, but I will get the number, Madam Chair.

Mr. Kent: Also included in that, could the chair of the university also indicate whether or not there was an HR firm or, for lack of a better term, a headhunting firm hired to recruit the new president? It would be great if he could respond on whether there was a contract in place for that.

Mr. Morrison: There was indeed a search firm hired. As it turned out, the search firm was hired initially to recruit the previous president. Under the terms of the contract, because that president didn't stay the predetermined length of time, the firm was required to undertake the second search gratis.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that response.

I did want to move into some questions around human resources at the university. A news release was put out last week by the university and subsequently updated with respect to vaccination requirements for employees and students. I think, initially, what the news release said was that students in communities would not be required to be fully vaccinated, and then that was again updated on November 18. I am curious if the witness can explain why that change was made and if there was advice provided to make that change either from the board to the operational side of the university, or was it just a decision made by senior officials at the university?

Ms. Brown: The member is correct. There was a decision initially that was overturned. That decision was overturned based on feedback from members of the community. Now students in the communities will be required to be vaccinated.

Mr. Kent: I have some questions with respect to how the vaccine mandate will affect staff and contract staff.

In the annual report it says that, as of March 31, fiscal year end in 2021, there were 322 regular or term staff and 274 casual, contract, and student staff. So, do either of the witnesses have any idea how many of those individuals will be affected — will perhaps not have vaccines? Is there any indication at this time how many of those employees may be affected? I'm curious if it will be the same sort of situation that the Yukon government has found themselves in where they are putting those employees on leave without pay.

Ms. Brown: At this point, we don't have information regarding the vaccination rates of our employees or our students, but we can project based on national averages and expectations of medical exemption from national averages. An October 5 statement from the Ontario chief medical officer of health indicated one to five people out of 100,000 should qualify for a medical exemption, so if we were to translate those

numbers to the employee and student population at Yukon University, we anticipate that it could affect up to two permanent employees, perm/term employees, and five of our students.

In addressing the second part of the member's question, we have not released details at this point in time regarding the outcomes of non-compliance with the vaccine mandate, but we will be following the precedent set by the Yukon government.

Mr. Kent: I believe that the witness mentioned that the Ontario numbers are that one to five per 100,000 will have medical or some sort of an exemption. Do the witnesses have any idea how many employees at the university may either be vaccine hesitant or have chosen not to get a vaccine — how many individuals that may affect on the faculty at the university?

Ms. Brown: We do not have precise data on the number of individuals at the university who may be vaccine hesitant. Again, we would turn to national data and translate to infer an expectation. Unfortunately, I don't have that data with me at this time, but I would be pleased to bring it forward.

Mr. Kent: So, it's my understanding from questioning ministers earlier on in Committee debate that the Government of Yukon is putting forward an attestation process, obviously aimed at November 30, which is the date that they set for individuals to have their first vaccine. It looks like, from the updated news release, that for the university, the first dose needs to be held by December 10, 2021, the second dose by February 4, 2022, and then the vaccine to take full effect by February 18. For the sake of argument, it's about 10 days behind or so from where the Yukon government is. Will the college be implementing an attestation process, like the Yukon government has, to identify which of their employees are indeed fully vaccinated or are planning to get their first vaccine dose by December 10?

Ms. Brown: In response to the member's question, we will again be following the precedent set forward by the Yukon government and following the attestation process in principle.

There was a mention of some offset in dates, and I would like to bring it to the attention of the Assembly that our guiding principle here is to ensure the student outcomes and graduation rates. The offset of dates reflects timing that would best serve students, helping them to complete their courses and examinations.

Mr. Kent: I thank the witness for that response. It's obviously important to ensure that student success is one of those guiding principles, and we are appreciative of that. I believe that, for students, the requirements will not come into effect until this current semester is over. I'm curious if the witnesses have any idea how many students are expected to perhaps not return for the second semester as a result of the vaccine mandate that is being implemented.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question. The member is correct, and I appreciate the correction. This comes into effect for students on January 4. With respect to an expectation of the number of students who won't return because of this requirement, it is very difficult to say. I am unable to answer that.

Mr. Kent: We will look forward to sometime in the first week of the new year — getting a sense of where student enrolment numbers are at compared to the fall. I am sure that the witnesses will have a better idea then, so we can follow up with the minister in the spring on that.

Again, with respect to employees at the university, December 10 is the first date, so I am assuming that, shortly after then, they will have an idea of how many of the faculty or how many of the employees of the university, contractors, and others are affected. We will look forward to perhaps following up with the minister via a letter on those numbers as well after that December 10 date.

In the news release as well, it says — toward the bottom — that this year, 60 percent of credit classes are in person and 40 percent are online and that a significant number of continuing education classes are in person at the main campus. For unvaccinated students who wish to enrol in the second semester, are they able to continue with distance learning or online learning, even though they don't meet the vaccination requirements that the university is putting forward?

Ms. Brown: The expectation is that all students, employees, faculty, and staff at Yukon University will seek double vaccination. In response to your question, I would say that, despite the fact that there are online courses available to be taken, students will also be required to seek double vaccination.

Mr. Kent: I thank the witness for that clarification. Perhaps we will follow up with the minister on that as well. You have probably already answered this question, but I am going to ask it anyway. I am assuming that, in order to be in student residence, you will have to be double vaccinated or show the intention to get double vaccinated.

Again, I know that perhaps the witnesses won't have this data or information with them, but I will be curious how many students will no longer be eligible for student residence based on their vaccination status — perhaps I can get the witnesses to give an indication of following up with those numbers when they become available.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question. If I understand the question correctly, we have 133 students currently in campus housing. Again, we don't have a full idea of how many of those students may be vaccine hesitant. Again, we would turn to national data to provide some inference. At this point, all students will be expected to be double vaccinated to continue to stay in residence.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate the response from the witnesses.

I wanted to move on to the strategic planning. The 2016-21 strategic plan is up for renewal. When I went through the annual report and the chair's message, it did say that the 2021-26 strategic plan is due this fall, but when visiting the website this morning, it now says that this work will not be completed until 2022. I am hoping for a better indication of when in 2022 we can expect that next five-year strategic plan for the university, and if the witnesses can give us any sense of what the cause was for the delays in preparing it to be tabled this fall.

Mr. Morrison: The strategic planning process has been ongoing for a year. It is in very good shape. We are coming

down to the finish line. When we brought Dr. Brown on board, we took a decision at the board level to slow the development down a bit so that Dr. Brown could have some participation and influence in the plan, given that, under her leadership, she will have to implement the plan.

While, yes, we were looking at the fall, now, given that all goes well and we think everything is on track, we will take the plan to a board meeting in January. If the board approves, we will be prepared to provide that publicly shortly after that.

Mr. Kent: I will look forward to seeing that. As the witness said, the planning process has been going on for a while. I believe that it was earlier this year that an online survey was conducted. I am curious if the results of that online survey are published anywhere. I couldn't find them on the website this morning, if they are available there — if the results are available or if the witnesses can make those available in some sort of a "what we heard" document with respect to that survey.

Mr. Morrison: Sure. The plan is an iterative process, so those results were pretty early on. We don't have them with us, and we are not averse to making those available, but they would be very early in the process. We have done a number of engagements with stakeholders within and outside of the university during the process, and hopefully, that is what you will see when it all comes together, but we are happy to make it available.

Mr. Kent: We would look forward to just getting a sense for what the online survey results were.

I am going to jump around here a little bit now. I wanted to ask about the land use plan for the main campus here in Whitehorse. It was in 2015 that the land use plan was done for the entire 97-hectare land reserve. On the website, it mentions that the Yukon College Board of Governors has begun the task of working with the many stakeholders to source funding and planning approvals, allowing us to begin the incremental implementation of this master plan.

Has any of that implementation started at this point, or is the university still developing that preliminary list of who to engage with respect to funding and planning approvals?

Mr. Morrison: Unfortunately, we have not advanced that and I think that basically the events of COVID have turned our attention to many, many other things and that has not been on the board's agenda for the last year and a half.

Mr. Kent: Can the witness give us any indication on when that work might be resurrected, with respect to the land use plan?

Mr. Morrison: I think once we have our new strategic plan in place — which would be, as I said, early next year — in conjunction with the priorities established under that plan and also in conjunction with the business plans that will be developed by the executive team, we'll look at where we can build that work into our new schedule.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to ask a few questions about the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining and the role of the governing council there. Obviously, it's an industry-chaired council that provides direction to CNIM. I'm curious — the website says that the council meets quarterly to review plans and set budgets and priorities. Do the witnesses have any

indication when the last meeting took place and what kind of plans and priorities came out of those meetings?

Mr. Morrison: I don't have those at my fingertips, but I'm happy to provide the information.

Mr. Kent: I know that a number of years ago, there were some good synergies developed with the universities in Alaska with respect to training partnerships for CNIM. Obviously, COVID has thrown a wrench into any of those cross-border exchanges, but are there plans being considered to resurrect that? I know some of the Yukon individuals were trained near Delta Junction in Alaska, and I believe the CNIM simulators were over there at that time. So, I guess a couple questions: Are those simulators back at the main campus here of Yukon University? Is there consideration being given to resurrecting those partnerships with Alaska?

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question. The mine simulators, as the member refers to, are located in Delta Junction. It was part of the equipment and infrastructure associated with the partnership program with the University of Alaska. That is correct; the border closures during COVID prevented our students from accessing the equipment and subsequently the infrastructure for training.

Despite that, the University of Alaska was able to continue training the students using the mine simulators. As an aside, we are hopeful that the tremendous draw of the beauty of the territory will attract those students to come over to work here in the Yukon, so we are pleased that they will continue to be trained. At this point, we are just considering next steps and moving into some conversations about how we are going to perhaps resurrect this or what the next steps will be once borders officially open and our students can access those simulators.

Mr. Kent: I am going to move on to some of the capital projects at the university. I am interested if the witnesses can give us an update on the science building. Where is that in the procurement process? The last time the witnesses were here, we talked about that as well. Is there any update on the budget and funding for it? I know that the Government of Canada made mention of it in a budget speech. I don't think it was this spring; perhaps it was last year. I am curious where that funding is at and if there are any preliminary cost estimates done for the science building here at the Whitehorse campus.

Ms. Brown: The member is correct. We have embarked on the exciting process of building a new science building. This building will be one of a kind. It will be unique in the fact that it will be built on the predicated foundation of blending western knowledge with indigenous knowledge and therefore become the envy of the rest of Canada.

We, of course, experienced the pandemic, which absolutely ground to a halt a great many construction projects, the science building being one of them. Since arriving at Yukon University, I have been working with the executive team to revitalize the project and to see where we are now. The member is correct: We were fortunate to receive a \$26-million investment from CIRNAC — from the federal government — which we will use to leverage some further resources to meet

the rising costs associated with building a building in a post-pandemic environment.

We are seeing an increase in cost in current market conditions; we are seeing cost escalation for equipment and also for construction materials. We are also considering a commitment to a net-zero build, and we are exploring that, which of course builds in some extra costs. At this point in time, we are working toward making some sort of a summary of what the building may cost right now so that we can uphold the commitment to build a building that is going to be a great draw for the territory and for the rest of Canada.

Mr. Kent: So, \$26 million is the commitment from the Government of Canada. Can the witnesses give us an indication of when they might be in a position to have some of the preliminary cost estimates done so we know what the potential ask is of other partners, such as the Government of Yukon?

Mr. Morrison: I think probably closer to the new year and perhaps the spring. We have a lot of work to do yet on how, as Dr. Brown said, COVID-19 and cost increases have affected the project and whether we can scale it down or what we have to do. That information has to get in front of our board, and the board has to make a decision, so I would say, hopefully early in the new year.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. I am also curious — I know that the university, and the college before it, struggled with housing for students. I know that the president mentioned earlier the number of students who are currently in student housing.

Are there any preliminary plans or discussions with respect to adding additional student housing on campus, or perhaps off-campus, whatever the case may be? I know there was some work — we talked about it last year — done with a private sector partnership that I don't believe was continued, but again, I am curious what the plans are to increase the student housing capacity at the university.

Ms. Brown: In follow-up to my previous comments, we currently have 133 students living in campus housing. I can't emphasize enough the importance of exceptional campus housing to a student's post-secondary experience. Because of that, as we look to the future, we have plans to increase our campus housing over probably the next 10 years or so. We will be looking at all possible ways to do that. Most likely, it will be in a partnership model, but regardless of the method to achieve an increase in student housing, we are hopeful that we will be able to provide more spots for students so that they can each achieve a true sense of belonging and affinity to our institution.

Mr. Kent: We will look to revisit that student housing discussion with the witnesses, or the minister, at the appropriate time. I believe she mentioned that there is a 10-year time horizon that they are looking at to increase the supply of student housing. We will be excited to find out some of those plans.

When we were provided with the five-year capital plan for the Department of Education for the Yukon University transition — in this current fiscal year, for the Yukon government, it is \$500,000. We are in the main estimates, and that is the forecast. Then we have \$500,000 a year going out for the next three fiscal years, so I am curious what the plans are

for that \$500,000. I think last year, a lot of that money was spent on exterior signage for the university and, I'm assuming, interior signage as well. I am curious what the plans are to spend the capital allotment from the Department of Education that appears in their five-year capital plan.

Mr. Morrison: I will maybe just get a little bit of clarification on the question. Is this the transition dollars or — capital dollars; okay.

Mr. Kent: When we received our briefing on the Department of Education on October 18, 2021, for the supplementary budget, it says that the program is "Yukon University" and the capital project is "Yukon University transition", and then there is \$500,000 in the mains and the forecast, and then that number is carried out for 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25. I am just curious what plans the university has to spend those dollars.

Mr. Morrison: I thank the member for that. I don't have that detail at my fingertips, but again, we are happy to provide it.

Mr. Kent: Yes, we look forward to some information from the university on the plans for that capital line item, and any details that the witnesses can share for those subsequent years would also be appreciated.

I wanted to ask a few questions with respect to the Canada Winter Games bid for 2027. Has the university been engaged in any discussions on what their role may be, as far as hosting the games? I know that, when the games were hosted here in 2007, the two facilities were built up there. One is now a seniors residence, and I believe that the other one is a student residence and houses some of the research centre staff. Have there been any initial discussions with partners as to what the role for the university would be with respect to hosting the Canada Winter Games in 2027?

Mr. Morrison: Early days yet in the Canada Winter Games process. The bid committee is meeting regularly. We are involved in those discussions, as a member of one of the committees that the bid committee has put together. There haven't been any meetings with partners. It is a matter, at the moment, of looking at possible options for the Canada Winter Games bid and whether or not further discussion with perhaps potential partners might occur at a later date, but that is what we are aware of to date.

Mr. Kent: Again, that is another one of those things that we will look forward to getting additional information on as the bid progresses and then hopefully the award and then whatever plans there are for the university campus here in Whitehorse and potential additions to the infrastructure that is on campus.

I do have just a couple of questions with respect to the NorthLight campus. I'm curious if the witnesses can give us a sense of what course offerings, or what work, is being done at the NorthLight campus, from a researcher, as I mentioned, a course offering standpoint, what the staffing complement is there, and if there is any information with respect to operational costs, that would be helpful as well.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question. Madam Chair, we were just a bit confused, because we don't regard the NorthLight centre as a separate campus. It is part of the

Ayamdigut Campus. That's the location where we offer our innovation entrepreneurship presence. Currently, we are supporting two programs: There is the Elevate program, which is a partnership with Yukon Tourism, and we also have IncubateNorth.

Overall, I can give you a snapshot of some of the contributions of the I&E presence into the Whitehorse community. We have served 179 innovators and entrepreneurs, and these are community members, not necessarily students — although some might be. We have funded over 100 projects. We have supported the development of 23 new prototypes. From that, 10 new products and services were brought to market, bringing some economic impact into the community.

Mr. Kent: With apologies to the witnesses, when I was researching that question, it was on page 7 of your annual report, and it refers to it as Yukon U's NorthLight campus in the second bullet. Apologies to the witnesses for not interpreting that it is part of the main campus.

I guess the other question is then — and sorry if the witness answered this — but are there any operational costs? I'm assuming that the space is leased either from the landlord or from the non-profit that operates that centre. Are there some operational costs that the witnesses are able to share?

Ms. Brown: I don't have the operational costs for the NorthLight campus at my fingertips. I will be happy to follow up and provide that for the member.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that, and I look forward to getting that information from the witnesses.

During the spring territorial election, the governing party made a commitment to work with Yukon University to investigate the feasibility of a varsity sports program. This work appears in the mandate letter for the Minister of Education. It's going to be led by the Department of Education with support from the Department of Economic Development, so I am curious if there have been any discussions as to what that varsity sports program might look like, at this point, and if there are any preliminary cost estimates for putting that into place, with the feasibility work that is underway.

Ms. Brown: At this point, the member is correct that we are in the very, very early stages of exploring the feasibility of providing varsity sports at Yukon University. I can't overemphasize enough the contribution that sports and varsity sports bring to a university, particularly to student life, as well as being a terrific source of community pride for the community in which a university or college resides. We are very much looking forward the outcome of that feasibility study, but it's still early for me to provide a definitive comment on cost.

Mr. Kent: Can the witnesses give us an indication of when that feasibility study may be completed? Is there a rough guess as to when it may be completed?

Ms. Brown: The timeline for the feasibility study would be beyond the capacity of our control. At this point, we are just looking at an RFP.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that and, again, we will look forward to some more information on that, as time progresses, with respect to that varsity sports program.

Obviously, the transition from a college to a university was extremely exciting. It took a number of years; it was very well-planned and well-executed. One of the questions that I am interested in is if the witnesses can provide us with any sort of a snapshot on what the oncoming years will bring, as far as additional degree offerings at Yukon University. Is there any indication, at this point, on what some of those might be or when we may find out about what some of those might be?

Ms. Brown: As we look to the future of Yukon University, we have to consider the priorities that are set forth in the upcoming strategic plan. I won't spoil the punchline at this point in time, but I will share that one of those priorities is a commitment to the north, and another one of those priorities is a commitment to the hybrid nature of Yukon University.

With that in mind, as we consider the potential for new program offerings, I would say that, first and foremost, there will be a commitment to upholding the comprehensiveness that is inherent within a hybrid university, meaning that we will provide a commitment to ensuring the relevance and the challenge, I suppose, of courses within our skilled trades, diplomas, and certificates as equally as we will to the development of new diplomas and new degrees. With a priority to building a focus in the north, I would expect that some of those program offerings will reflect the unique needs and the unique challenges in the north.

At this point, first and foremost, we're considering a bachelor of northern studies, which has been underway for a little bit of time. We are still looking at that, and I will share with the Assembly that the development of a new academic program is a very long process and an arduous process in and of itself, taking anywhere between a year to two and a half years.

Beyond that, it will require some conversations within the university, as well as conversations outside of the university, so that we can ensure that our decisions are informed by stakeholders across the territory.

Mr. Kent: I want to talk specifically about a couple of the programs offered at the university. The first one that I want to ask about was the licensed practical nurse program — LPN.

Do the witnesses have any enrolment figures for that program? Is it trending up? Is it trending down? Obviously, it's one of those programs, I believe, where there would be a significant number of employment opportunities for anyone who graduates from that program. I am just curious where the trends are with respect to the LPN program at the university.

Ms. Brown: The enrolment trends for the licensed practical nursing program are trending up. In 2019, we had an intake of 28. That dropped down to 25 in 2020 — a COVID-related decline — but we are back up to 30 students for the fall of 2021. It's a very resource-intensive program. We serve 30 students through two cohorts that are offered concurrently.

Mr. Kent: Another one of the program offerings that I am curious about is with respect to early childhood educators. Can the witnesses give a sense of what the numbers are looking like there? Obviously, there was a significant investment made by the federal government as far as our early learning and

childcare centres. I am curious about what kind of demand there is for that program at the university.

Ms. Brown: I apologize. I don't have information on early childhood with me at this point in time, but I definitely will bring it forward.

Mr. Kent: I just want to jump back to the LPN program, the licensed practical nurse program. The witness mentioned two cohorts. Are those annual intakes for that program, or are the intakes for the LPN program at the university on some other schedule?

Ms. Brown: In response to the member's question, yes, those are annual intakes.

Mr. Kent: When I'm looking at the transfer payments specific to some of these program areas done by the Department of Education, outside of the operational funding — in 2019-20, the actual was about \$23.6 million. The estimated for this fiscal year is \$24 million. But then the other programs here — the youth exploring trades, the LPN program, Yukon Research Centre, Northern Institute of Social Justice, and the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining — have all been steady at the same amount: youth exploring trades, \$75,000; LPN, \$491,000; Yukon Research Centre, \$1.386 million; Northern Institute of Social Justice, \$450,000; and then the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, \$1.2 million.

I'm curious if there are funding agreements that are entered into that don't have escalators — or why these numbers would be stagnant across the board. If the witnesses can't answer, perhaps that's a question that I can follow up with the minister on.

Ms. Brown: The member is correct on the transfer agreements. I will emphasize, however, that the university is committed to ensuring an effective expenditure of funding that we are provided. In that assurance, we are always reviewing our current offerings to ensure that they respond to the needs of the community and of society and also the needs of our learners.

Mr. Kent: In the most recent annual report on page 17, under Revenues, it says that contributions — the core funding from Government of Yukon is at 56 percent of the overall revenues for the university. I'm curious if the witnesses can let us know if this number is trending up or trending down as a percentage of the overall revenues for the university.

Ms. Brown: I can report that, in 2019-20, we had a contribution of \$27 million — I'm sorry, I can't translate that in my head — of an annual budget of \$48.4 million.

In 2021, we also had a contribution of \$21.8 million out of \$39.4 million — but I do want to indicate that it is a stub year, a nine-month fiscal year — and in 2021-22, it is \$30.5 million out of \$46.8 million, which, you have identified, in 2021 is 56 percent.

Mr. Kent: I just have one more question for the witnesses before I turn it over to my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt North, and then to the Leader of the New Democratic Party. It is with respect to international student enrolment.

In the fall of 2020, according to the annual report, there was a total of 124 international students enrolled. In the previous fall of 2019, there were 144 international students enrolled.

Obviously, COVID would have had a major impact on this, but I'm curious if the witnesses have the fall of 2021 enrolment numbers for international students.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair. In fall 2021, Yukon University accepted 126 international students, representing 13 percent of the credit student enrolment.

Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to the witnesses. I will be brief. I know that our time is short. I just wanted to build on some of the questions that my colleague had asked.

With regard to the LPN program, the witness indicated some of the numbers for intake. I was also interested in getting an understanding of the demand. Is there a wait-list? Is there more demand than the program can handle? If so, what does that demand look like, and could the program handle additional resources to accommodate additional intake?

Ms. Brown: Unfortunately, I don't have data on demands, nor do I have data on yield rates, but when we assess the size of a program and consider how many students we can serve, we consider many factors. One of those is community need. In the case of the practical nursing program, we are seeing that community need would reflect the demographics of the city or the demographics of the region. It is something that we are constantly considering and constantly ensuring.

The other thing that we would also need to look at is our capacity to teach those students and ensure that they have an exceptional student experience, so there are many, many factors that go in as we identify the cohort size for any program.

Going forward, this is absolutely something that we will be looking at to ensure that Yukon University is best serving the needs of the community within its means.

Mr. Dixon: Obviously, my question comes in the context of a fairly strong demand for medical practitioners, not just in the Yukon but in the country, and so my question was in relation to that. I appreciate the witness' comments about how they view those.

I would ask a very similar question about the early learning and childcare program. The witness did indicate that she didn't have the numbers at the tip of her fingers, which I appreciate. We can circle back with that. But is she able to give us a sense of the similar trends with the early learning and childcare program? Has there been significant demand? I assume that there has. Can she give us an indication of what that looks like — whether or not there is a fairly large wait-list or not for that program — and what they are doing to expand the capacity of that program?

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question. Again, I don't have the specific numbers on early childhood education, but I think that this program in particular is one that also responds to demographic trends. It also responds to needs of the community.

Recently, the federal government announced an investment in early childhood education, and Yukon University will be keen to see how we can move forward in ensuring that we can serve the needs of the territory. I don't think that we have to think too far beyond our current state of pandemic to

realize the importance of education for our youth, and we are very excited to be contributing future educators.

Mr. Dixon: So, just to be clear, has the university received any additional funding or additional support from the Yukon government to enhance the early learning and childcare program at the university? If so, how much?

The witness made a very good point that there is federal money available as well, so perhaps they could elaborate a little bit more on what that funding might look like and how we would go about applying for it.

Ms. Brown: The university has not received additional funding at this point in time for early childhood education. I am looking at our transfer agreement from 2020.

Mr. Dixon: Another feature that we have heard expressed from the childcare community is the need for a teaching or learning lab to accommodate the early learning and childcare program. The way the system works now is that students will go on practicums in various daycares throughout the community, but I think that there is a desire from some in the childcare community to see the physical capacity at the university expanded to allow for some sort of practical, hands-on learning to occur at the university.

Has there been any consideration from the university to look at a teaching or learning lab that would allow for that?

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair. It is early days for us. Again, we would have to assess demand and also assess the availability of opportunities for internships for our students so that they can achieve the experiential learning that will ensure that they are industry-ready upon graduation. It is a little bit early for us to provide a definitive answer on that one.

Mr. Dixon: So, further to that, earlier today, the witnesses talked about the process by which we launch new degrees, or consider new degrees, and I wanted to ask whether there had been any consideration to the idea of expanding the early learning and childcare program from the current two-year model to something beyond and perhaps even a degree program here in the Yukon.

Ms. Brown: The member is right. We have an early childhood diploma — certificate — and an opportunity to expand that into a degree, but that decision would be informed by the industry needs, and so we would have to do a full environmental scan as a starting point.

Mr. Dixon: So, I understand that. I guess my question would be: Has there been any direction or indication that we would go in that direction — of having an environmental scan to look at that?

One of the reasons I ask is just that obviously childcare has taken increased prominence in our society in the last few years, and the programming and supports for that have increased dramatically from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. There is certainly a large demand for post-secondary learning in that field. I am not aware of a degree program for early learning that is informed properly with indigenous perspectives. I think that would be an opportunity that the university may want to consider breaking trail on. We may be well-positioned here in the territory to lead the

development of an early learning and childcare degree program that would be informed by an indigenous perspective and indigenous ways of knowing as well. It could be a tremendous opportunity for the university.

It is more of a pitch than a question, but I guess I will ask the witnesses to respond to that.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the pitch, Madam Chair. The member has identified a tremendous opportunity that is present for the university. Again, we will need to be mindful, going forward, to ensure that we are responding to needs. We will need to be mindful to ensure that we are collecting as much data to inform decisions, that we are aligning with the priorities of our strategic plan, and investing our budgetary resources in accordance to those priorities.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the response.

My colleague asked earlier about the science building. In order to avoid confusion, I would like to ask about the building science program. Has the university begun any work to develop a building science program at the Yukon University that would be tailored to northern climates?

Ms. Brown: Madam Chair, may I ask for a clarification?

Mr. Dixon: My question is whether or not the university has begun to look at the development of a building science program that is tailored to northern climates.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the clarification, Madam Chair. Again, in deciding investments and developments for academic programs, we would consider the priorities of our strategic plan, consider our available resources, and also consider opportunities and industry demand so that we are responding to the people of the territory. I thank the member for the enthusiasm about that possibility.

Mr. Dixon: Just so I'm clear, the Government of Yukon hasn't provided any funding to the Yukon University — or direction — to develop a building science program at Yukon University that would be tailored to northern climates, as a part of its commitment to address climate change?

Ms. Brown: If I'm interpreting the member correctly with respect to the notion of building science, to the best of my understanding, we do not have any priority funding, or core funding, dedicated to that program. There may be the case that there are concepts or notions within that program, or sprinkled throughout other programs, but as far as a dedicated degree or credential in building science, we do not have that.

Mr. Dixon: I guess it would probably be helpful for context. That was a commitment that the governing party made in their election platform, so I was curious if there had been any action on that, but it doesn't appear that's the case.

The final piece I wanted to ask about was — my colleague did mention the varsity sports program, and the witness has indicated that an RFP would be going out. Can I ask for a bit more detail about what the RFP would be looking at? Obviously, there is a financial consideration to a varsity sports program, but having attended small universities in this country, I can attest that certainly not all schools are well-suited to the full breadth of sports or varsity programs. In most cases, universities will cater their varsity programs to a single or a very few number of sports. Can the witnesses comment a little

on that? How will we delineate that, or how will that decision be made? Will it just be left up to the consultant, whoever gets the RFP, to come up with a variety of options, and we'll consider them then?

Ms. Brown: Again, it's very early, but the intention of the feasibility study is to understand exactly that: Is varsity sports feasible? Specifically, what sports would be relevant and appropriate and be successful and provide a positive experience for students and for the community here in the north?

Mr. Dixon: I will conclude and just thank the witnesses for appearing today. I will allow my colleague from the NDP to raise some questions now as well.

Ms. White: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the witnesses for being here. I will apologize ahead of time for turning my shoulder to you as I ask the questions. I thank my colleagues from the Yukon Party, because they took us through a lot of things and I do appreciate that.

For starters, I would just like to offer my congratulations for the epic amount of work that has happened in the last 20 months, as we hear that the pandemic is ongoing and how it has affected things. I think that the full credit goes to the entire breadth of staff, across all of the Yukon campuses — that the Yukon University has been there. I can say that when we initially started having those conversations about the college transitioning to the university, I flagged concerns — I did — because I think that one of the powers of Yukon College was that it was accessible throughout the territory and there were those community campuses. So, I stand here a full year later and offer my congratulations on the work that was done to make sure that those campuses remained relevant, that the programs that were needed in communities continued, and that there has been an expansion. So, I just wanted to start with that because I feel like it is not often that I get to have both the chair and the president in a room and, of course, one of the master organizers up in the Chamber.

Just before I get started — there was a joint commitment actually in 2019, signed — there was a renewed memorandum of understanding with l'AFY. I can't find anything on the website except for the initial press release that was signed in 2019, but one of the reasons why I am asking about it is because of the importance. Of course, in Canada, we have two official languages and the website — to the best of my ability — is entirely in English. There was a commitment — and I am not going to read it in French, otherwise Hansard has to get a translator in, and that seems unkind, but the title of the press release says: "L'AFY and College commit to new suite of services and programs for Francophone students". So, I just wanted an update on that memorandum of understanding that was signed to promote the advancement of French language education at the post-secondary level in Yukon.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question, Madam Chair. I have met with the executive director of l'AFY and discussed the importance of upholding francophone education here in the territory. I learned an awful lot about the presence of the francophone community, particularly here in Whitehorse. I will update that, since the signing, Yukon University has been

working with the francophone association to provide our Yukon First Nation course online and also in French.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. That seems to be a benefit for everyone. As we progress, I think it's always one of those outstanding numbers that I think we are the fourth most bilingual place in Canada when it comes to French language — possibly the third, actually — and more than 12 percent of our population identifies as being francophone primary. As we expand that, it is an exciting thing.

I couldn't help but notice when I was on the website the sheer number of experts that Yukon University has. Can the witnesses walk me through what an expert at the university would be called on to do or what they are able to do? Just to give reference to folks, there are dozens of experts. I have to say that if you want to find out how many PhDs are in the Yukon, probably a pretty good spot to start is on this list. Can the witnesses walk me through what kind of services or support the experts at the Yukon University provide?

Ms. Brown: I would answer by saying that the first service that the experts at the university provide is education for students, first and foremost. The other thing that I would say is that often people who are regarded as "experts in their field" inform a number of decisions, whether that be policy, whether that be research priorities, whether that be social or economic changes, or even court witnesses. Experts are regarded to be the top in their field and to have a very strong and broad sense of knowledge in a particular area. They are often called on to guide decisions and inform change.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. The annual report does highlight the number of international students. There is something so magical, I would say, that has happened in the Yukon landscape since I was a kid. When I was a child growing up here, there was not a lot diversity in the Yukon. I think that, as we become more diverse, there are more and more reasons to celebrate.

I would like to switch to talking about our international students. I know that often there is targeted recruitment in different regions in the world. Could we just talk about where we might have recruitment efforts and the reasons we might have them there? Then maybe we could just talk a little bit more about our international students.

Ms. Brown: I will start by speaking a little bit about international students and the benefits of bringing international students into communities. It is twofold: First, it is to provide international perspectives for the students who come to the institution from local areas and to help broaden perspectives; the other thing is that we want to emphasize and invite international students to stay within our communities and subsequently introduce new cultures and globalize our communities.

The other thing is that students who return or move on to other countries bring a sense of the community where they attended the institution and furthermore can begin to globalize other communities as well.

With respect to where we attract students from — I had said earlier that we currently have 126, which is 13 percent of our enrolment. We attract students from India, Japan, China,

Italy, Jamaica, Australia, Spain, Bosnia, France, Germany, Mexico, Vietnam, and the USA. With respect to why those markets — international student recruitment is a very precise science, and those markets are available. It of course depends on the demographics of students and their interest in different locations around the country.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. I have to say, that list is a lot more expansive than I would think anyone would actually realize. I think that is reason to celebrate.

Maybe when we are back on the other side of a pandemic world, we will be able to have a bit more of an introduction as far as our international students and the community at large.

One of the concerns that we saw a number of years ago was, in the recruitment of international students, housing. We have talked a bit about housing right now and the challenges that face it. I know that we were told that there are 133 students currently in student housing and that there are plans of expanding. One of the things that it would tie into would actually be the endowment lands. It has been mentioned that there are 97 hectares. Are there intentions to build housing on-site, or are we looking at spacing out within the community?

Ms. Brown: At this point, our priority and decisions will be guided by our need to serve students, both domestically and internationally. We will consider all possibilities. At this point, it's a little early to say definitively where we would be expanding into, but we would want to ensure that we are serving our students in the best way possible.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that. I do look forward to additional housing. Folks might imagine — but it's actually in the riding of Takhini-Kopper King, so I'm quite familiar with the housing that is nestled throughout the campus. Some of it is really beautiful, some of it is striving to be as beautiful, and some of it is a little bit more tired. I think I'll leave that for my description. But I'm sure folks can understand that.

I think that it was two years ago when there was a conversation happening with the university and Yukon Housing Corporation about moving the daycare into the basement of 600 College Drive. The reason why I will bring that up is that is a seniors residence. At the time, I had conversations with folks at the university — the then-college — about maybe how to best broach those conversations. There was a barbecue that was hosted. I'm wondering what the status of those conversations is.

Ms. Brown: I was informed that a feasibility study was conducted in 2019-2020 in response to student requests for childcare facilities on campus, but that the need for services, which would be required to operate extended hours from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to serve the fulsome needs of students, did not meet the requirements of government subsidies and subsequently would have been too expensive to operate. The bottom line is that the feasibility study indicated that it was not feasible — expensive.

Ms. White: Understanding that the feasibility study would have been ahead of the government's announcement about the universal childcare — and keeping 600 College Drive out of it, because I think that just complicates part of the conversation — is there an interest at the university in revisiting

that? I do think that one of the most valuable assets that we can offer people as far as continuing education is actually having access to childcare. At times, not having that access is actually a barrier, so if we believe that education is truly a right, which I believe it is, making sure that people with children are able to attend classes is important.

Will the university be revisiting those conversations with Yukon government now that the universal childcare program exists?

Mr. Morrison: The short answer is yes. It relates back, as well, to an expansion of early childhood learning programs at the university and the need to have more practicum spaces for people who are in these kinds of programs. So, yes, we will revisit it; yes, we are interested in revisiting it. I can't give you a timeline, but yes.

Ms. White: I thank the chair for that. In listening to my colleague talk about the ability of having labs and learning spaces, it seems like a lovely partnership. I look forward to that. When the university is ready to have those conversations with my senior friends, I will offer my support in broaching those. I say that with a smile on my face because they are fantastic, and I can maybe help with that conversation.

I think that an incredible thing about the university actually is the endowment lands. There was a lot of forethought that was there when that gift was made. One of the things that I just wanted to know is — during the territorial election, there was a commitment from the government to work on McIntyre Creek park. I just wanted to know if there has been any conversation with the university around McIntyre Creek park.

Mr. Morrison: Yes, there have been some conversations — early days — around that concept — and very early days. Where that goes from here — we'll be very interested in participating in further discussions.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that. I have been a big advocate of protecting that area for a large number of years. It's right behind my house, so I am very familiar with the marsh space and the creek there and can see it as being a valuable asset to all Yukoners. I will just put in the plug that it's very accessible by public transit, which is one of the very few green spaces you can get to by city bus. So, I thank them for that.

Just flipping back to our international students and understanding that there were travel restrictions in place, did we have international students attending classes remotely from their home countries?

Ms. Brown: It's information that I can't say concretely; however, I will go out on a limb and say that, yes, we did. One of the benefits of online delivery, of course, was that students were able to access their courses in different time zones.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. I think that it actually should be a feather in the cap of the university that out of every institution in the world, folks who don't live in Yukon were still choosing to go to Yukon University. I think that is a real success, and I hope that it can be expanded on and we can use that as a growth point.

As a tradesperson, trades are always near and dear to my heart. I know that online right now, we have carpentry, electrical, heavy equipment, millwright, oil burner mechanic,

pipe trades, and welding. I would say those are the ticketed trades, although possibly not — the heavy equipment technician. But for our trades training, for those that go toward the seal — so, the journeyperson recognition — what levels are taught in the Yukon? Typically, in trades, you will have possibly one through four. So, for example, if I wanted to be a millwright, which years are offered in the territory?

Ms. Brown: We offer, I think, three and four, but no red seal trades.

Ms. White: Sorry, just to seek clarification, then — carpentry is a ticketed trade, as is electrical. So, the fourth year needs to be taken out of territory? Is that my understanding?

Ms. Brown: Rather than speculate, I will bring that information forward.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. I possibly muddled the water by not asking the question clearly.

One of the concerns that I had highlighted initially, when there was talk about transitioning to Yukon University, was actually losing the trades programs, just because of how incredibly valuable they are. I am happy to know that not only do they continue to exist, but they have actually expanded in the last number of years, which I think is really important.

One of the things — along with the trades programs, there was a really high-tech trailer, and by "trailer", I mean something that would be towed by, like, a very large truck. Sorry, I have lost my vocabulary. So, this very large truck would tow a trailer to communities where folks could do trades training within that trailer. Understanding that last year was a bit exceptional, is that trailer still operational and is that trades training still happening in communities?

Ms. Brown: Madam Chair, the trailer that the member is referring to is our mobile trades trailer. It is absolutely unique — one of a kind — and incredibly impressive. The intention, as its name implies, is to take the trades outside and beyond so that trades training can become accessible. Currently, the trades trailer is in Whitehorse, and it is hosting three introductory courses: introduction to welding, introduction to millwright, and introduction to heavy equipment mechanics.

Earlier in 2021, it was in Dawson City for multi-trades in the mining program, which is co-created with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Minto Mine. Then in January 2022, it will be deployed to Dawson City again for another multi-trades program.

Another benefit of the mobile trades trailer is that it allows us to get a sense of the needs for trades training in communities and to inform future decisions.

Ms. White: I thank the witness for that. Again, I think that is another thing to celebrate, another asset that Yukon University should be incredibly proud of, especially knowing that, despite the challenges in the last 20 months, the trailer has made it out and folks are learning in their communities. I think that's a really lovely thing.

There has been lots of times in this House when we talk about education. I have talked about education in terms of non-academic. I say that in terms of — trades, for example, are not academic. The environmental monitoring program through the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining is an incredible

program, but it is not packaged up in a way that typically academic programs are packaged. It meant that students were having a hard time accessing funding for that program. It's expensive. It's okay that it's expensive; I think the price tag was around the \$10,000 range. One of the points I brought forward to this House before is that education looks different for different people, but if that education leads to career opportunities, it should have access to adequate funding, or equitable funding, to be able to do those programs.

Have there been any conversations between the Yukon University and Yukon government about making sure that students who have graduated from Yukon schools and have access to Yukon grants have the ability to access adequate funding for those non-academic programs?

Mr. Morrison: I will endeavour to get a bit more detail, but we have actually been able to have a fair bit of success with that program in that we have been able to get folks out to some actual mining sites and do some on-site actual teaching as well as the practical side of things. We do recognize the issue. My memory tells me that we had found a solution for some of the funding issues you are talking about, but I will endeavour to get some more information for you.

Ms. White: I thank the witnesses for that and the commitment to get information back. Ultimately, my goal is just to make sure that as many individuals who want to take that program, especially if they have graduated from high school in the Yukon and would qualify for the Yukon grant, could.

With that, Madam Chair, I just want to thank the witnesses for appearing. More than anything, I would thank them for the leadership that they've shown in making sure that education has been accessible in the territory, even though it hasn't been an easy time.

Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger): Are there any further questions for the witnesses?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that we will take the opportunity to ask a few more questions today. I know that we only have a few minutes left, but I think that since we have both the chair and the president taking the time to come and visit with us today, we will maximize the opportunity to share with Yukoners.

During the last mandate, there was a lot of work done between the university as well as with the government around indigenous governance and the degree of work there. I guess I would start with just asking if maybe they could just share with us how the launch of the indigenous degree has gone, maybe give us a sense of what the uptake has looked like, what you're hearing from instructors, and how it has resonated across the country.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question, Deputy Chair. The bachelor of arts in indigenous governance is one of the points of pride for Yukon University. As a southerner coming to the north, I can tell you that it is a degree program that has resonated across this country. I am very proud to share that, at this point in time, for fall 2021, we have 40 students enrolled in that program, which is up from 19 when it was launched in 2018. Last year, we celebrated five graduates and, the year before that, another five.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Great, thank you very much. That is good to hear. I think that this has always been looked upon as potentially a great program that public servants as well as people in the private sector across this country can learn from. As the Leader of the Official Opposition said, it's a great example of a homegrown project.

If the witnesses could share with us a little bit about the strategic planning — the strategic planning previously was probably some of the best I have ever seen. I had an opportunity to sit on that board prior to the university coming into play. Actually, it was right around the time of the announcement. There was an extensive consultation that was done for strategic planning. It really drove all decisions at the board level. Some of that was done internally. One of your former VPs took a lot of that work on. I'm just wondering: What does that work look like? Who are some of the key players in getting that work done? And maybe give a sense that we can tell Yukoners — as that work happened, there was a lot of opportunity for people to feed into the process. If you can maybe share some of that, that would be much appreciated.

Mr. Morrison: I'm going to start, and then Dr. Brown will finish up. From the board's perspective, this is one of our most important tasks as a board, to get that strategic plan — to take it through a process that is thorough and involves as many people in the community as possible. Since early spring, I think we've been doing that. I don't have the numbers at the tip of my fingers, but the number of people that we have consulted is very extensive. We have included students, faculty, and staff within the university but as many groups, organizations, and industries as we possibly could outside the organization. Some of these consultations have happened two and three times, depending on where we're at with folks, particularly staff, faculty, and students.

The process is being managed by the board, but it is being managed primarily by a committee of the board along with Dr. Brown and a facilitator or consultant who facilitates the discussions. I would say that as part of a very busy year, the folks who are on this committee have done a terrific job of making sure that it is as inclusive as possible when it comes to seeking the opinions and the thoughts and suggestions of folks regarding what our strategic direction should be.

I want to just reconfirm that, as part of that, the base that we start from are the commitments that we made when we took on the transition from the college to the university — and those were a couple of the points that Dr. Brown made earlier, and I think they're really important; we are 100-percent committed to continuing what we delivered as a college and delivering additional degree and university-style programs as a university. We will not lose the trades, certificate, and diploma programs that we currently run and we will not move away from the communities. With those underlying tenets, this plan should build on that, and I will let Dr. Brown say a few words.

Ms. Brown: I can't comment on the process of developing the strategic plan prior to my arrival, but I can say that I am incredibly grateful to the board of governors of Yukon University for allowing me a bit of time to catch up to the breadth of the institution and to feel the culture of the institution

and not just understand the organizational structures, the budget, or the academic programs, but to actually feel the institution so that, as we move forward with developing a strategic plan, the final product would be most reflective of the possibilities and the aspirations for Yukon University.

I am very much looking forward to launching a new strategic plan in January 2022 to commit Yukon University as a thriving learning and research institution shaping Canada's north.

I will say that, with respect to the process that I have participated in since arriving here in August, I have read all of the information that was collected prior to my arrival. I have digested it, I have synthesized it, and I have stepped into it. I have held numerous listening sessions with the Yukon University community and, as well, sessions that are directed to the development of the strategic plan. Just this past week, for example, we held engagement sessions with the key stakeholders — starting with students, staff, and faculty of Yukon University — to get feedback as we develop the plan.

We are very close to finalizing a plan. We are at the point of putting a little bit of sparkle onto it. I am very hopeful that it is going to pass through all governance processes in a very positive way and that we will be able to share with our community and the rest of the Yukon the strategic plan for Yukon University 2022-27.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that it is very important to be able to share that information. It is actually a new process, with different levels of governance that have to look at your strategic plan. It's not — as in the previous process which is being accepted by the board. So, I think that it's important that Yukoners understand that.

I'm going to rift a little bit off that. You are, of course, going through a very extensive consultation process. I would like to know: In the current construct of the university, what is the engagement like with indigenous governments? Originally, there was PACFNI, which was the presence committee and was a key interface with First Nation communities. The *Yukon University Act* requires that the university develop an accountability framework that includes engagement with Yukon First Nations as well.

Maybe you could just share with the Assembly what that looks like now, either through your office or even through the board, and how does that feedback come into the decision-making that you are responsible for?

Ms. Brown: I would like to ask the member for a clarification. My question is: Is the reference toward a development of the strategic plan, or is the reference toward the overall decision-making of the institution as a whole?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm open to hearing both. I think that a sense of — maybe around the strategic plan, but also just in general. This new configuration may have led to a different process on how you work with some of our indigenous leaders and how you are actually bringing that in. So, strategic plan — how do we go forward? Also, just on an annual basis — and departmentally and through your office — how are you also gleaned direction and advice?

Mr. Morrison: I will just talk a little bit about the board piece, and Dr. Brown will talk about some of the other parts.

The board of governors has been very focused on a lot of things in the past year and a half. One of the challenges that we have always faced is that the board has indigenization principles that we have committed to as a board, and those are published. They actually sit on a big plaque on a wall that everyone can see, and we take our commitment to those very seriously. To help us at the board level, the board has, in this new university situation, a bicameral governance structure, as you know, but we have thought hard about how we do our work as a board and how we measure the work that senior staff and management are doing in terms of making both the strategic plan and our indigenization principles come to life.

We haven't got all the i's dotted and the t's crossed, but we have struck what we call an "indigenous advisory circle" within the board. That comprises particularly the First Nation members of the board. There are six or seven, I believe — as well, Robin Bradasch, who is responsible, on the program side, for our indigenization work at the university. I think that there is also one other position. That structure is there to provide the board with guidance when it is trying to make its decisions, not just on a one-on-one with board members around the table. As we all know, a lot of the work of a board — we meet quarterly and maybe the odd other time during the year, but the committees of the board do a lot of work. We see this as giving us a hand up in terms of how we do that work at the board level.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for the question, Deputy Chair. With respect to the strategic plan, I would inform the member that our board of governors strategic planning committee has representation from not just the board of governors' indigenous members but also faculty indigenous members, who guide and provide feedback regularly.

With respect to my decision-making as the president of the university, I am very privileged to have on my executive team an AVP of indigenization whom I turn to for counsel regularly.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am just going to finish with an area of our work that is very important, which is the labour market. One of the things that we have been doing and that we have been very happy with when it comes to the labour market — and this has been touched on this afternoon — is also the many international students we have had. The Member for Takhini-Kopper King asked where the students had come from. What I would like to just leave this with is just some information from you — when you are out recruiting international students, I would like to know what trends we are seeing.

The Government of Yukon is in the midst of just getting very close to completing our immigration strategy for the next 10 years, so this key. We consulted with the university around this, but I would like to know: What are the trends and things that employers can keep in mind from what they are hearing here, but also what can government keep in mind as we move forward with our immigration strategy? That will be my last question for today.

Ms. Brown: My answer is informed by my experience prior to coming to Yukon University. I will say that the current trends for international students, first and foremost — Canada

is a desired destination for international students, and because of that, it is a tremendous opportunity for us to recruit students.

The other thing that I will say is that Canada is also a destination that students want to come to. They want to stay, and they want to have a family life here — again, another opportunity for us. I will leave it at that.

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

Hon. Ms. McLean: I would like to thank our incoming president for Yukon University, Dr. Lesley Brown, and, of course, our chair, David Morrison, and Lacia Kinnear for being here today. I thank the witnesses for the information that was shared. I very much appreciate your attendance here in the Legislative Assembly today.

Deputy Chair: Thank you. The witnesses are now excused.

Witnesses excused

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 10, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Also, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 3 adopted earlier today, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to answer questions related to Yukon University.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled November 23, 2021:

35-1-31

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. Tredger related to general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — carbon tax tracking (Pillai)

The following legislative returns were tabled November 23, 2021:

35-1-15

Response to Written Question No. 4 re: Whistle Bend school (McLean)

35-1-16

Response to Written Question No. 11 re: individualized education plans (McLean)

The following document was filed November 23, 2021:

35-1-29

Amending Bill No. 8, *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, to extend occupational cancer presumptions to wildland forest firefighters, letter re (dated November 22, 2021) from Stephanie Smith, President, BC General Employees' Union, to Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Services (White)