



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 37

1<sup>st</sup> Session

35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, November 24, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2021 Fall Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Government House Leader* Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

\*Government House Leader: Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee to November 4, 2021; Hon. John Streicker from November 5, 2021

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Wednesday, November 24, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Dixon:** I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming a few friends here. We have Melanie Brais and Morgan Yuill here in the gallery.

*Applause*

**Mr. Cathers:** I would also ask members to join me in welcoming constituent Peter Wojtowicz to the gallery.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Movember

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to recognize Movember, the annual month-long event that aims to improve health outcomes for men around the world.

In my younger days, when I heard the word “moustache”, I probably thought of either the iconic Tom Selleck or the equally iconic Freddie Mercury, although, of course, I am dating myself. Today, the word has a much broader meaning for many of us. We think of far more important things. Movember reminds us that it is okay to lighten up if it will ultimately help to open a discussion. I think that the fact that facial hair has become a symbol for an important cause is a clear demonstration of the reach and success of the still growing international movement.

I have fairly evidently not had much success in growing a credible moustache myself over the many years, in contrast to some of my colleagues in the Assembly, but I have always been supportive of Movember.

Since its inception in 2004, the Movember Foundation has raised \$837 million and funded over 1,200 projects in more than 20 countries. These projects focus on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.

The foundation, through its Movember events, raises funds, creates awareness, and encourages men to have conversations about their health. These conversations are crucial, because they can, and do, save lives. Research shows that early detection of prostate and testicular cancer increases the chances of survival.

We also know that early intervention can save the lives of people who are thinking about suicide. There is a belief that

talking about suicide can cause a person to kill themselves or at least make them think about it. The research has also shown us that this most definitely is not true. Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide is much more likely to save their life than it is to put that life at risk, but there is still a strong stigma associated with suicide. As a society, we are afraid to talk about it, even though it has such profound impacts.

In Canada, 11 people die by suicide each day. That’s 4,000 people a year who are taken from us far too soon. Mr. Speaker, suicide is the second-leading cause of death among those 15 to 34 years of age, and, of course, there’s a specific reason why the Movember movement focuses on suicide in men; this is because suicide rates are three times higher among men than among women.

The need to have conversations about this topic has grown even stronger over the past 20 months. We know that social isolation is a risk factor for mental health issues and that mental illness is the most important risk factor for suicide. We also know that increased isolation is one of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions.

When a person is alone, there is nobody there to see the warning signs and offer help. Movember is a reminder that we need to have open conversations with the men in our lives. We need to encourage men to get regular checkups for prostate and testicular cancer, and we need to help men and boys to understand that it is okay for them to talk about their health and well-being. They need to know that this is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Yukoners to support the individual or group fundraising efforts of all people here in the Yukon. To do so, you can visit [movember.com](http://movember.com) and search for “Yukon”.

*Applause*

### In recognition of Radon Action Month

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Radon Action Month. In November of every year, governments and organizations across Canada urge citizens to test their homes for radon and to take action to protect themselves if their home tests above the Health Canada guideline.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can collect in houses. It is estimated that a non-smoker exposed to high levels of radon over a lifetime has a one in 20 chance of developing lung cancer. The incident rate increases to one in three for a person who smokes. Here in Yukon, we have some of the highest levels of radon in Canada. The only way to know if your home has radon is to test for it.

Yukon Housing Corporation has been raising awareness about radon since 1989 and has supported radon research through the testing, storing, and analysis of the data from over 3,000 homes. This year, Yukon Housing Corporation has provided a number of radon test kits in its community offices. In Whitehorse, these test kits can be purchased at Home Hardware with a subsidy for \$10.

Testing for radon in your home is simple. Homeowners use the small testers that sit in your home for at least three months. They then are sent to a certified lab for analysis. We urge

Yukoners to mitigate if their home's radon level is above the Health Canada guideline.

To help, Yukon Housing Corporation's home repair program can provide funding for eligible homeowners to reduce radon levels in their homes to meet or exceed the guidelines.

It is important to reiterate that the only way to know what the radon level is in your home is to test for it. Radon levels can vary widely from one home to another in the same area. All Yukon schools and the Yukon Housing Corporation units have been tested for radon. If mitigation was required, it has happened. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our habits and increased the amount of time that Yukoners spend at home, so we encourage Yukoners to test their homes this winter.

Thank you to all of our partners who continue to help promote radon awareness and radon action and work to keep Yukoners healthy in their homes.

**Ms. Clarke:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize November as Radon Action Month. Radon gas is not something at the top of someone's mind when they are looking to rent, purchase, or build a home. It is invisible and requires a radon kit to detect it. It is also radioactive and a leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. In fact, radon exposure is the cause of 16 percent of lung cancer deaths in Canada.

Radon is typically found in the lowest levels of the home, such as basements and crawl spaces. It varies from house to house and by neighbourhood, depending on the type of construction and air exchange in the home and the geology of the area. The gas comes from a natural breakdown of uranium in the ground and the release of tiny particles, which in turn seep into homes through cracks in the foundation, pipes, and other openings. Average radon test results throughout the Yukon from 2006 to 2018 can be found on an interactive map on the government website. Some areas south of Whitehorse show high levels of radon, and residents should know that if their home has not been tested, it is a good idea to do so. Canyon Crescent, Whitehorse Copper, Wolf Creek, and Pineridge all showed elevated levels of radon on average.

Measuring radon levels in a home is easy, relatively inexpensive, and can be done by the resident. A long-term radon detector is placed in the lowest level of the home, and the testing is done over a number of months. The detector is mailed to a lab for analysis and, depending on results, mitigation could take place. Mitigation procedures include ventilation improvement and the sealing of cracks and openings in basement floors and walls and around pipes and drains.

I encourage Yukoners to look into whether their home has been tested. If not, invest in a radon testing kit and take the steps to mitigate their homes if necessary.

*Applause*

**Ms. Tredger:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to acknowledge Radon Action Month.

As mentioned by my colleagues, radon is a colourless, odourless gas, although you might be interested to know that it

actually emits a bright yellow light when it is below minus 71 degrees Celsius and then turns an orange-red colour at minus 180 degrees Celsius, but that is not too likely to occur here in the Yukon, so we have to rely on testing kits to detect it.

As mentioned by my colleague, it gathers in low-lying places such as basements and poses serious health risks. We join our colleagues in urging everyone to test their homes for radon, but the problem is that there is a financial barrier to getting the testing kits.

As mentioned, the kits are subsidized by the Yukon Lung Association, and we thank the association for working to make them accessible. We also appreciate that Yukon Housing Corporation is making the kits available in communities, but if you are in Whitehorse, the kits still cost \$50, so today we will be tabling a motion calling on the Yukon government to make radon testing kits free for all Yukoners. The personal, social, and financial cost of even one person developing lung cancer is far greater than the cost of prevention.

So, for Radon Action Month, let's take action.

*Applause*

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

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today a report prepared by the Canadian Institute for Health Information entitled *Physicians in Canada, 2019 — Summary report*.

**Ms. Tredger:** I have for tabling a letter from the women's equality fund's funding recipients about their core funding.

**Ms. White:** I have for tabling the Yukon Employees' Union submission to the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, entitled "Recommendations for amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Act*", dated January 15, 2020. This report includes recommendation 6 to include wildland firefighters and all firefighter presumptions and recommendation 7 to expand cancer presumption for all Yukon firefighters.

**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

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make home radon test kits available to Yukoners free of cost by creating a 100-percent rebate program.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Whitehorse recycling centres and the City of Whitehorse to end the cap on diversion credits.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Battery energy storage system project

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am pleased to rise today to provide an update on the battery energy storage system project. Put simply, the battery project is being added to our main electrical grid to help Yukon Energy meet the growing demand for electricity in the Yukon. Integrating storage technologies that are suitable to our colder climate further allows us to enhance our renewable sources of electricity. This project also does so much more than just meet peak demands for power.

The battery storage project is also an excellent example of how Yukon Energy is partnering with First Nations — in this case, Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council — to displace diesel and support Yukon's clean energy future.

We know that climate change affects everyone, and it is clear from the increasingly frequent climate catastrophes in Canada and around the world that more action needs to be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the supply of renewable energy sources.

This is why the battery project is so critical. Once it is complete, it will replace the need for four rental diesel generators each winter, reducing Yukon's reliance on fossil fuels to produce electricity during the winter. The battery is a seven-megawatt, or 40-megawatt hour, energy storage system. The battery energy storage system is expected to reduce carbon emissions in the Yukon by more than 20,000 tonnes between 2023 and 2043, making a significant difference in the territory's fight against climate change.

Funding is being provided by the federal government through the Investing in Canada infrastructure program green infrastructure stream, totalling \$16.5 million. The battery itself will be made up of container units that are quick and easy to install, easy to expand, and made for our northern climate. The battery units being sourced will utilize the most common battery chemistry for grid-scale battery energy storage systems, lithium-ion. This technology provides more flexibility by allowing the battery to be charged and depleted many times throughout its lifetime. It's also considered safe. The risk for fire is very, very low.

The battery project is part of Yukon Energy's 10-year renewable plan and supports the goals articulated in *Our Clean Future* by reducing the use of diesel-generated electricity, reducing emissions, and partnering with First Nations in clean energy projects.

The request for proposal process is well underway. Currently, submissions are being reviewed, and I can share with the House that the Yukon Energy Corporation anticipates being able to announce the name of the successful battery vendor early in 2022. Currently, the battery project remains on target for completion by the end of 2022.

Mr. Speaker, the battery energy storage project is one of the many steps that the Yukon needs to take to ensure that an average of 97 percent of our electricity comes from renewable sources by 2030.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party Official Opposition supports initiatives that reduce our greenhouse gases. We have made this clear previously — most recently in yesterday's ministerial statement response. I would like to thank the minister for the update on the battery project. We have had quite a bit of information on this project during the Sitting, between the minister and witnesses, so we are looking forward to seeing it move forward. We are also looking for an updated budget and timeline when we next discuss it.

**Ms. Tredger:** Since the conversation first started, the Yukon NDP has been supportive of a grid-scale battery, and it's exciting to see this project become a reality. When this battery comes online, it will help the Yukon Energy Corporation meet the peak demands that we face for electricity during winter months. This is not only a good thing, but a critical step for the Yukon's energy future.

Years ago when my colleague, the Leader of the NDP, was attending workshops and information sessions about wind generation, storage was highlighted as a shortcoming of the Yukon's electrical grid. Being able to charge the battery during off-peak time or during times of high wind, once we see wind turbines installed, opens up new possibilities for wind energy and other renewable energy generation. We're very much looking forward to seeing these projects supported and integrated into our energy system. This is about making sure that Yukoners have a reliable supply of energy, and it is also about climate action.

There is so much work to do and we are excited to get to it. Another important step is reducing demand for energy by making homes and commercial buildings more efficient. As this government often says, though, we need a collaborative approach. While that has not been the approach to energy retrofits so far, we hope that there is still time for that to change. We remain optimistic that the Minister of Community Services will do the work to get municipalities onside so that we can support the changes to the municipal and taxation acts before the end of this session.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, I would like to thank both of the members opposite for their comments and their support; it is appreciated.

I will just add a couple of other details that I got before I came down for today's session. I was informed by Yukon Energy that the size of the project will take up about half of the size of the field inside the new track and field, so it's about 50 by 50 metres. It is in containers, so it will be about twice our height.

It's going on Robert Service Way, and the site is Kwanlin Dün First Nation land, as I previously noted here in the Legislature. Thanks for the comments from the members opposite. The clearing for the site has been happening. I

reached out to Kwanlin Dün. They assured me that they are working to make sure that any firewood is being salvaged and going to elders or citizens within Kwanlin Dün. Again, thanks for that suggestion.

For the Member for Porter Creek North, if I get any information talking about changes to timelines or budgets, I will make sure to bring them forward to members. Currently, as I said, things are on track, so that's good news.

I will agree with the Member for Whitehorse Centre that we do need a collaborative approach. I wasn't going to talk about the better buildings project, but I will make a couple of comments. I agree that we should be working with municipalities. That's why it's good that the legislation that is before us is enabling and not requiring. For those municipalities that might be ready to go — I know of a couple that the minister has been in conversation with — and also for all unincorporated communities, we can start and we can continue to work. I began the work with municipalities about two years ago now, working on this. I agree that there is a potential download around the recovering of the local improvement charges through property taxes, but I also believe that there are good solutions for that and that we can work to make it a win for our municipalities. I'm confident that the minister has been working diligently with municipalities, and I look forward to that work continuing.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Whitehorse Centre is correct that, when we have this battery project in place, we can use the battery during our morning and evening peaks of energy rather than running the diesels. Then, in the nighttime, we can recharge the battery with hydro so that it drops the use of diesels.

When we get the new wind project that is starting up on Haeckel Hill — I'm so looking forward to that, and it's another great project. When the wind is blowing, we can use that energy rather than the batteries, and when the wind is not blowing, we can use the batteries, so the batteries make our renewables better.

Of course, we will look for seasonal storage through Moon Lake in the long-term plan. These are all exciting developments and I'm glad that, step by step, we are achieving our clean future. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Before we proceed with Question Period today, I want to make mention here that we welcome the public to the gallery, but you are here to observe, not participate. Please do not clap or otherwise participate in the proceedings. Thank you.

This then brings us to Question Period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, one-fifth of Yukoners are without a family doctor. The problem has been getting worse under this government. Earlier today, my colleague tabled a report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, which is cited by the *Putting People First* report that the Deputy Premier has quoted from as recently as this

week. That report includes a startling statistic, which is that Yukon has fewer doctors per capita than any other jurisdiction.

Can the Deputy Premier explain why the Yukon is not doing more to recruit doctors when we are so clearly lagging behind the rest of the country?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am happy to stand and speak to Yukoners about this really important issue for our primary health care here in the territory. I can make reference to *Putting People First*. I am not sure that we can do that enough. It is an independent, comprehensive review of Yukon's health care system, not just primary health care from physicians, from nurse practitioners, care in our hospitals, or other aspects of the health and social services system, but it is, in fact, a comprehensive review of what needs to change and how things can be better here in the territory with respect to how we deliver health care to Yukoners, how they experience health care, and the opportunities for us to improve that going forward.

The 76 recommendations in *Putting People First* do provide us with a road map for the future. This is a road map that we are working to begin implementation of. We have implementation committees, and we are working with the Yukon Medical Association and other stakeholders to determine how *Putting People First* will unfold and the positive effect that it will have for Yukoners for health care.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the minister that the document that we have tabled and that we are citing now is, in fact, cited by *Putting People First*, and the Deputy Premier has quoted that as recently as this week. Not only does it show that we had the fewest physicians per capita, but it reveals another startling trend, which is that during the Liberals' last term in office, Yukon was the only jurisdiction in the entire country to see our number of doctors per capita decrease.

So, for context, while the number of Yukoners on a wait-list for a family doctor has been growing, the number of doctors has been shrinking under the Liberals.

How does the Deputy Premier explain this unfortunate trend that is occurring as a result of Liberal inaction and as demonstrated by the very reports that *Putting People First* cites?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** In 2013, the president of the Yukon Medical Association estimated that as many as 21 percent of Yukoners did not have access to a primary-care physician. This was, in fact, confirmed by the *Putting People First* report, which also found that 21 percent of Yukoners do not have access to a physician. During the 2014 calendar year, the Yukon was supported by a total of 61 resident physicians and 10 specialists. During the 2020 calendar year, the Yukon was supported by a total of 75 resident physicians and an additional 20 specialists. In 2020, the Yukon was also supported by 95 visiting physicians and specialists.

This is not the only answer to the issues that are raised by *Putting People First*, but it is one method, one challenge, that has been tackled by this government in moving forward to provide primary health care and comprehensive health care with wraparound services for individual Yukoners in the

territory or having access to that in a way that is supportive for them by our health and social system.

**Mr. Dixon:** I would remind the minister that the report that we tabled shows that the Yukon was the only jurisdiction in the country to see a reduction in the number of doctors per capita over their time — over the last term. I should note, Mr. Speaker, for the Legislature that this report did not come to us by accident; it was shared with us by members of the physician community who have been following this debate, presumably because they share our concerns that the government isn't doing enough to recruit more doctors and take stronger action to address the primary care crisis that our territory is facing.

We would encourage the Deputy Premier to start sharing the information of that nature that has occurred under her watch. The Canadian Institute for Health Information offers the best available information and is even cited by the Deputy Premier's own *Putting People First* report.

So, will she acknowledge that not enough has been done to recruit doctors to the Yukon, and will she agree to redouble efforts to address the growing health care crisis in Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have much difficulty with the last part of that question because I have been saying that for a number of weeks here in the Legislative Assembly about our work here in the territory to increase physician services for Yukoners — not just the number of physicians. We have nurse practitioners; we have nursing staff; we have other important health care providers. Opportunities for Yukoners to have access to them are incredibly important.

I should note that, as part of our implementation of *Putting People First*, we are moving forward with adding more nurse practitioners, expanding access to virtual care alternatives, and exploring options for primary health care reform. I can also indicate that, between 2014 and 2020, the number of resident physicians and specialists in the territory has increased by 33.8 percent. During that same period of time, Yukon's population was, as we all know, increasing and putting pressure on all of our systems. The population is estimated to have increased during that same period of time by 16 percent.

This is a critical issue for Yukoners. We recognized that many years ago, and that's why we instituted the *Putting People First* report, and that's why we're implementing its recommendations.

#### **Question re: Building renovation program**

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, 41 days ago, the Minister of Community Services tabled a piece of legislation to create what he calls the "better building program", yet, since that time, he has refused to call it to debate. He has even refused to call it for second reading. Early last week, he boldly told the media that he would call it for debate and a vote on November 18 but then didn't live up to his words.

Can the minister tell us why he got cold feet on this piece of legislation and why he is not confident enough to bring it forward for debate?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, I have to say that I disagree with the preamble put forward by the member

opposite. It is frankly wrong. Mr. Speaker, what happened last week was that — there is a lot of interest in this program, of course. There is a lot of interest in the municipalities, and there is a lot of support for this program in the municipalities. They were having a meeting on the weekend, and I was approached by several municipal leaders who asked me to put off tabling the legislation until I could actually have a conversation with them.

I had a great conversation with the municipal leaders over the weekend, and I continue to have ongoing conversations now with municipal leaders across the territory. I had another one this morning. I'm going to continue to talk to them and answer the questions that they have about this program, because there is widespread support for it.

The thing I have learned is that municipal leaders truly do want action on climate change. They see what has happened in BC; they see what happened in the Yukon last summer. They have heard the remarks at COP 26 that it is too late. We have to stop kicking the can down the road. We have to take tangible action on climate change, and so we are going to do that.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think it's important for the minister to also realize that municipal leaders want to be listened to. We know what is clear here, and it is that the minister told media that he was going to get this piece of legislation done. He was going to bring it to a vote last Thursday, but then he got cold feet.

Will the minister commit that he will not use the guillotine clause on this bill and actually allow the Legislature to have debate on this? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I really do appreciate the opportunity that the member opposite is giving me to stand today and talk about this program, because, frankly, I have heard from Yukoners, and I was actually talking to the Yukon Chamber of Commerce this morning. They assured me that they really do want to see this program go forward, as do their members. They are solidly behind this program. These are Yukon businesses across the territory that are solidly behind this program and want to see the enabling legislation passed in this Sitting of the Legislature so that they can actually start to see progress on the municipal front and get this program offered to all Yukoners. That is what I was told this morning.

I am more than happy to bring that piece of legislation forward so that members opposite can address it and have their opposition to this piece of legislation put on the public record. We on this side believe that we have to take action on climate change. The time for waiting is far beyond where it should be. It's time to actually take tangible action to start to make our homes more affordable and to start to bring down our greenhouse gas emissions in the territory. We know that retrofitting houses is one of the best ways to do that, and I look forward to the debate in this House.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think it's important that Yukoners know that the support letter that the minister speaks about from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce — at the bottom of that letter, it said that their support was contingent on support from Yukon municipalities.

This conversation with the municipalities should have been done long before this legislation ever came forward to the House. Again, will the minister agree to bring this legislation forward and not use the guillotine clause?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Again, I have been speaking with municipal leaders across the territory for months now, actually, but in the last several weeks, as the potential opposition to this piece of enabling legislation that would allow municipalities to opt in to the program. It doesn't commit them to everything, but it enables us to actually have them come in, because they are responsible governments and they have to make their own decisions. There are three pages of legislation. It is very, very small. It simply allows the program to go ahead and for municipalities to opt in.

Just this morning, I was talking to the Mayor of Whitehorse about this and she talked about the support that she is hearing from the community as well. This is a good program for the territory. There are some concerns, and I have assured the Association of Yukon Communities in writing that I will meet and work with them on these concerns over the winter as we move forward to launch this program that will reduce heating costs for Yukoners at a time when propane costs are going up. We have seen that. It will make sure that we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, it will help our economy, and it will bring jobs to rural Yukon. This is a good program for all, and I look forward to having that debate in the coming days.

#### **Question re: Internet connectivity**

**Ms. Tredger:** With more and more people working from home and classrooms being closed on a regular basis, reliable access to good quality Internet is essential to many Yukoners. That is obvious, yet we are hearing from Yukoners dealing with Internet outages and debilitatingly slow speeds. We know that fibre optic cables are currently being installed in some communities, but some houses are metres away from the cables and still unable to connect. Unreliable Internet connection across the territory is negatively impacting many families and has been for years.

What is this government doing now to ensure reliable access to Internet for all Yukoners?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am happy to talk about Internet service this afternoon. It is a very important issue to this government and it has been since we were first elected. I know that the Minister of Economic Development and I went through and toured a number of businesses early in our mandate to talk to them about the reliability of Internet services, so we have been working on that file diligently since we were elected. We actually have worked with Northwestel to get what I am calling a "connect Yukon 2.0 initiative". We have sent letters to the CRTC, and we were actually successful in getting the CRTC's support for a groundbreaking Internet fibre link program across rural Yukon that is going to bring high-speed Internet to places like Faro, Mayo, and other rural communities that haven't seen it before. It will be transformative for the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, that's not all we've done. We've also reached out to Starlink, an Internet service provider, to make sure that we're getting more robust Internet into our rural Yukon and

places that don't have Internet, because we saw that this satellite Internet service was threatened last year. We have taken action on that as well. I have been in touch with the Washington-based company.

We are doing all sorts of things here to make sure that reliable Internet is not only expanded — I haven't even touched on the redundant fibre link, Mr. Speaker. There is more to say on this. I look forward to more questions.

**Ms. Tredger:** Fibre optic Internet is far from being ruled out in all rural communities. We have also been hearing regular reports of Internet dead zones everywhere in the Yukon, even within the City of Whitehorse, due to aging infrastructure. In some parts of town, it seems that when the cables get too old, instead of being replaced, customers are linked into neighbouring houses as a quick fix.

What is the government doing to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is upgraded?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** As my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, has indicated, Northwestel is improving Internet connectivity for Yukon's communities through its Every Community project. This new infrastructure will increase broadband speeds for rural Yukon.

The timelines for the upgrades from Northwestel are as follows: 2020, Whitehorse and Carcross were advised that it is substantially complete, and I certainly hear the comments from the member opposite about some dead zones but — nevertheless; 2021, Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Teslin; 2022, Haines Junction, Champagne, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, and Beaver Creek; and in 2023, we have Mayo, Stewart Crossing, Pelly Crossing, Carmacks, Faro, Ross River, the outlying areas of Whitehorse, Judas Creek, Marsh Lake, Tagish, and other outlying areas around Carcross. Also in 2023, we have — Old Crow satellite bandwidth and local infrastructure will be upgraded in two phases. The first phase will offer up to 15 gigabytes per second download speeds and a 200-gigabyte data allowance, while the second phase will see speeds increased to 50 megabytes per second with unlimited data.

A lot of exciting work is planned, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Tredger:** The pandemic has shown that access to reliable highspeed Internet is no longer a luxury but a necessity in 2021. Appointments with health practitioners are moving online. Education is very much online now.

But we are seeing a massive disparity in who can access these essential services and who cannot. Some families' Internet bills are tripling so that their kids can attend classes that have been moved online. Some communities have such slow connections that things like video conferencing are right off the table. This is a growing inequality and this needs to be fixed.

What is the government doing now to make sure that all communities have access to the same reliable and affordable Internet?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this line of questions today because it is fitting as we get into some other votes today as we compare and contrast.



First of all, what we are doing is building a 777-kilometre redundant fibre line across 1,100 water crossings, and we have negotiated one of the best deals in the country to finance that. The majority of the money has come in from the federal government, and what we are seeing is a complete redundancy of all three territories now with their telecommunications.

As my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, touched on, this new revitalization within the Yukon of our rural communities and Whitehorse actually has us on track to be the most connected territory or province in the country, so I think that this is very substantial. What we are seeing is fibre to, I think, over 90 percent of homes in the Yukon.

Again, where there have been challenges through COVID-19, we have stepped in, we have worked with First Nation leaders, and we have worked with Northwestel in many cases to ensure that the right capacity has been in place, and we commend Northwestel on the pricing models that they put in place. We do have that opportunity for unlimited, which is something that wasn't in place previously. So, I think that when you take a look at the complete package of what has happened from a standpoint of telecommunications, although we are in a very challenging district from a geographical standpoint, we are now looking at being a leader in this country.

#### **Question re: Rural solid-waste transfer stations**

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, residents in communities that are currently served by transfer stations that the Minister of Community Services is going to shut down remain concerned about their options for dealing with solid waste. When I asked about this earlier in the Sitting, the minister indicated that he had not yet met with several communities that will see their facilities close.

Will the minister commit to meet with all of the communities that are affected by the closure of solid-waste transfer stations before he closes them down, and will he listen to their input and reconsider closing these transfer stations?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am grateful to hear the voice from the Member for Kluane who was benched last session, so it's good to hear his voice in the Legislature again. We are modernizing and improving the territory's solid-waste management system to ensure that our practices follow sustainable and nationally recognized standards in solid-waste management, and we are committed to raising the standards at transfer stations and landfills across the territory.

This has been a multi-phase project that began with my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He started this program, and we have successfully implemented phase 1; we're now in phase 2. That does involve the closure of transfer stations in four very small communities. We're doing that, Mr. Speaker, because we know that people will dump really hazardous waste at those sites, and we don't want to have any loopholes where people can dispose of their garbage for free. We are putting in tipping fees at all of our landfills. They are going to be properly managed and supervised, and we just don't want any place where people can get around those rules. So, we are actually closing those transfer stations, but I have made the commitment to sit down and talk to communities that

are going to be affected by these changes that are going to happen, and I'm happy to do that.

**Mr. Istchenko:** It would be great to get some times for these meetings when the minister will sit down to listen.

The minister has also said before that he came to Destruction Bay as a part of his community tour. I would like to remind him that it was the residents of the community who organized the meeting and invited the minister, not the other way around. The residents of Destruction Bay were so upset with the minister's dismissive attitude at that meeting that they started a petition and demanded more consultation and more involvement. Long before that meeting, community members had solutions to propose as alternatives to the government's plans to close these facilities.

Will the minister agree to consider the input of rural Yukoners and reverse his cuts to the solid-waste services?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, I'm going to disagree with the preamble and the suspicious narrative being woven by the Official Opposition. Quite frankly, I did meet with the residents of Destruction Bay. We had a two-hour meeting on a very snowy day. I have heard their concerns, and their concerns have fed into the plans to close the transfer station. The Department of Community Services has reached out, as have I, to residents up there. As far as a cut to transfer stations, this is really where I have my dispute with the member opposite. We're not cutting our waste management.

As a matter of fact, what we're doing is making sure we invest in it so it is properly managed, so it is actually supervised and the sites are safer and the waste that goes in — we know what's going in, and we're closing any loopholes where Yukoners can actually go out and dispose of hazardous waste and oils and everything else without paying a tipping fee, without being supervised by a waste management supervisor.

I am happy to talk about this in future questions.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I would remind the minister — and actually the previous minister — that these decisions were made with zero consultation with anyone.

The minister has also said that the closure of the solid-waste transfer station in question came about as a result of consultation with the Association of Yukon Communities. AYC has indicated to us that, while they were consulted about solid waste, it was not their recommendation that the Yukon government cut or close the transfer stations.

The Official Opposition and Third Party have requested that the government reverse these planned cuts, or complete closures, to transfer stations. Will the minister listen to the views of rural Yukoners, the Official Opposition, and the Third Party and reverse these planned cuts or closures?

#### **Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Order, please. Those in attendance in the gallery, you are required to wear your mask unless you have a medical note, so please wear your mask.

Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Again, we are talking about transfer stations this afternoon, and I am more than happy to talk about

this issue. We have consulted with the Association of Yukon Communities. As a matter of fact, what happened at the very beginning of our mandate — my colleague, the former Minister of Community Services, was approached by AYC, who basically said, please, please, we have to get a handle on our solid-waste management in this territory. It is at a state where we are really concerned with the state of our solid-waste management facilities, and we really need you to step up and start to put some controls in place.

So, we listened. We did listen. We continue to listen, and I have no problem going out to the communities and hearing the concerns of people who will be affected by these changes that are coming and hearing ways that we can mitigate and work with them so that — in the face of these necessary changes — we can help them adapt to these necessary changes. That is what I have committed to do. I will continue to do that, because the voices of Yukoners matter to this government, and we will continue to go out and have those hard conversations, hear the concerns, and see how we can best serve their interests.

#### **Question re: Non-confidence in government**

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier and his Liberal government have a record of demonstrating a lack of respect for the Legislative Assembly. It begins with a habit that they have developed of often not even trying to answer questions during Question Period. Their lack of respect for the Assembly includes ignoring motions passed in this House, like the Member for Watson Lake's motion to improve highway safety for her constituents.

Last month, the Deputy Premier became the first minister in Yukon history to lose the confidence of the House, with a motion passed urging her to resign from Cabinet. The Liberals ignored that decision of the Legislature, and their record of disrespect suggests that, even if a motion were passed calling for a public inquiry into the Hidden Valley scandal, the Liberals would ignore it.

So, I have a question for the Premier: If he loses the confidence of the House, does he intend to respect that decision?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Strong leadership is exactly what we need right now in the Legislative Assembly and in the Yukon, and it has guided us through the pandemic. It has kept our economy going. The Yukon has enjoyed economic growth every single year since we took office, including during the pandemic. The Yukon had the highest GDP growth in Canada in 2020.

We will continue to provide steady and stable leadership, as required, to get us out of the pandemic and on the pathway forward.

The Leader of the Yukon Party — well, they have demonstrated in the past, as well, that they will do just about anything to get into power and say whatever they need to say, depending on who they are talking to as well. Just like the federal Conservatives, the Leader of the Yukon Party either stays silent on an issue or he takes both sides. We have seen what they play out here, as far as confidence. I have been on my feet many times to talk about how confident I am in this

government, in the leadership here, in my ministers, and I will continue to say that I have the utmost confidence in this Liberal government, and we will continue to do the good work of moving forward for health and social services, moving forward for education, moving forward for the economy, and moving forward for reconciliation as well. That is what we were hired to do, and we will continue to do that.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, the Premier seems to forget that he lost the popular vote this spring and just barely hung onto power. The Liberal government has a record of demonstrating a lack of respect for this Legislative Assembly. It includes ignoring motions passed by the majority of MLAs in this Assembly.

The main reason that there is a debate today on a motion of non-confidence is because the Liberals refused to respect a motion that was passed by this House last month calling on the Deputy Premier to resign. It is clear that if this House were to ever pass a motion calling for a public inquiry into the Hidden Valley scandal, the Liberals would probably just ignore that too.

Can the Premier tell us why his government so frequently ignores and disrespects motions that were passed in the Legislature and refuses to listen to the expressed will of this House?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, the Yukon Party goes back and forth, and it's clear that they will do anything they can to get into power. On one side of the year, we hear them talking about CASA and how horrible the items inside CASA are. Then we hear the leader, last week, saying that he will honour everything in CASA — again, anything they can do to get into power. We have seen the line of questioning, the personal attacks — we have seen it all this session, in terms of what the Yukon Party will do to get into power.

Basically, this is, for the most part, the same Yukon Party that got voted out in 2016. The Yukon Party lost confidence then in 2016. We are the government of the day. We do have an agreement with the Third Party to make sure that the Yukon continues forth in stability and security for Yukoners, which is extremely important in most times, and is definitely even more important during these times of a pandemic.

I would urge the Yukon Party to maybe change their tack a bit and try to actually work together with the two other parties to try to get us onto the path to recovery better and try to allay some of the misinformation on vaccinations and maybe even work together with us for a better Yukon for the future.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier conveniently forgets that the first thing he did in the pandemic was refuse to work with us on an all-party committee we proposed. They lost the popular vote in the spring, which we won, of course. The Liberals barely hung onto power.

It is clear that the only way to actually get a public inquiry into the Hidden Valley scandal, and to get answers for parents, is to replace the Liberals with a government that is committed to launching a public inquiry covering the entire period from when the former EA was first hired. There are parents listening who are interested in how the House will vote, because today's motion is about holding the government accountable for

leaving parents in the dark. Today's motion is the only way to guarantee that there will be a public inquiry into what happened.

I will give the Premier one last chance: Will he ask for the resignation of the Deputy Premier and launch a public inquiry into everything that happened, going back to 2014, including who knew what and when, including ministers, and why the Deputy Premier knew about the incident in 2019, but did not inform parents and did not share this information with the current Education minister?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is very interesting to note that the member opposite who is asking these questions was the Minister of Justice back in the last Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, back when the RCMP have acknowledged that these allegations began. As members opposite keep on asking what was known and when, we know that we have put forth independent reviews. The Child and Youth Advocate has also put forth an independent review, and so has the RCMP, and all these questions will be answered.

As far as the question about confidence, I have said it before, and I will say it again: I absolutely have confidence in every single minister on this team.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 236

**Clerk:** Motion No. 236, standing in the name of Mr. Dixon.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT the Government does not have the confidence of this House and the people of Yukon.

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and speak to this motion. I should note at the outset that I'll be the only speaker on behalf of the Official Opposition and I will speak to this now.

Let me start by saying that we did not arrive at tabling this motion lightly. A confidence motion is not something that I believe should be brought forward without substantial cause. I believe though that, when I look at the direction that the Yukon is currently heading on several important issues, I'm extremely concerned and that concern has culminated in this motion that we are discussing today.

It is my view that the current Liberal government has ignored the doctor shortage, ignored the teacher shortage, ignored the housing shortage, and continued to offer inadequate solutions to a growing list of issues that have been raised in this legislative Sitting, whether those issues are the ones that have been raised by the NDP regarding the growing mental health crisis in our communities, or the opioid crisis in our

communities, or issues that we have raised about the cost of energy and fuel wood, or other issues facing our health care system. The most concerning issue, however, has been the current government's handling of the Hidden Valley sexual abuse scandal.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government has continued to ignore the parents and families of Hidden Valley, who have been looking for answers about the government's mishandling of this issue. Those Yukoners have had to frequently go to the media to express their concerns and exasperation. This failure, of course, eventually led to a majority of members in the Legislature voting in favour of having the Deputy Premier resign from Cabinet as a result of her not ensuring that parents were notified of this issue when she became aware of it.

As we know, letters were prepared by the department to notify parents and a briefing note was prepared for the minister.

When asked reasonable questions about these issues, the Deputy Premier and the current minister have refused to provide direct answers. Of course, the reason we are aware of all this is because of the reporting of local media, including the CBC, and documents revealed through access to information.

After the initial report, a lot more information has come out, including a timeline that the RCMP provided to parents on November 9 that indicates that issues at Hidden Valley may have gone back even further than we originally thought. Of course, this is concerning and demands that we immediately get answers for parents and for Yukoners. We need to know who knew what, when they knew, and what they did with the information when they received it. That is why, when I announced this confidence motion, I indicated that I would immediately launch a public inquiry that would look at everything from day one of this individual being hired by the Government of Yukon.

This, of course, would cover the period of time under the previous government as well as the period of time under the current government. On this, I am less concerned about who was in power than I am about the answers coming out. I am concerned about getting answers for parents, for children, and for Yukoners. They have waited long enough, Mr. Speaker. They are tired of being told that they need to wait for answers. They are tired of being told that they need to wait until the spring or until next year. A public inquiry is required now so that parents and Yukoners can get these answers.

I have heard directly from parents, and not just at Hidden Valley, over the course of the last several months who have been asking me how this could happen, asking me why parents would be kept in the dark, and asking me why we, as the Official Opposition, are not doing more to get answers for parents. Those have been tough conversations, Mr. Speaker.

As a parent myself, I am horrified at the reality that these types of things could happen in one of our schools and that this information could be kept from parents. How could this happen, Mr. Speaker, and why did this happen? That is why we are here discussing this today.

Parents have been clear that they want answers and are tired of waiting. It's time for accountability and those very answers, Mr. Speaker. No matter who was in government, no

matter when the decisions were made, it's time for those answers to come forward. That's how I arrived at this very difficult motion today. It was after hours and hours of difficult conversations, letters, e-mails, and correspondence from families and others. It was with the interests of the parents and children in mind.

I wish that we weren't here today being forced to discuss this, but we have to. We were elected to come to this House and make difficult decisions on behalf of Yukoners. We were elected to ensure that the decisions and actions of government are given the scrutiny. I feel that this is my role as Leader of the Official Opposition. It's my obligation to live up to that duty. When the government refuses to show accountability, that is how we get into the position we are in today.

Of course, as I mentioned, this House tried to make the government show accountability last month when it passed a motion with a majority of MLAs calling for the Deputy Premier to resign. Unfortunately, to date, the government has refused to respect that decision by the House. The obvious next step from that is a confidence motion.

This could have been avoided had the government respected the will of the Legislature or even if the government had launched a truly independent public inquiry into this, but they haven't. That is why I brought this confidence motion forward.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, confidence motions are a big deal. Sometimes they result in an election, but after three elections in this territory this year, I don't think anyone wants a fourth. When I arrived at the decision that the government needed to be held accountable, I wanted to ensure that we could get answers for Yukoners and that we could get answers for parents without forcing another election.

We know that constitutional convention — especially when we are in such close proximity to a recent election — allows for the Commissioner to look to the Legislature to determine if anyone else can command the confidence of the Legislature if a government were to lose confidence. So, I began to determine how, if the government were to lose to confidence of the House, I would be able to make the legitimate case to the Commissioner that another election would not be necessary. That was when I was drawn to the comments of the Third Party leader last month after the House passed the motion about the Deputy Premier.

When asked by the media if the Third Party would vote non-confidence in the government, they indicated that they could not because the policy guarantees in the confidence and supply agreement that they have with the current government were too important to them and to Yukoners.

As you know, the confidence and supply agreement — or CASA, as we refer to it in the Legislature — is the arrangement between the Third Party and the governing party. It is the basis that the Premier used to go to the Commissioner to demonstrate that he command the confidence of the House earlier this year.

Naturally, I arrived at the conclusion that the CASA would be necessary in order to ensure that the Third Party would agree to provide us with confidence in the Legislature. Now, no Yukoner will be surprised to hear this, but there are many

policy items in the CASA that I do not like and that I have had strong words about. That much is clear, Mr. Speaker.

So, arriving at the offer of honouring the CASA was not done easily for me. I had to bring my own party on board and convince people that I, who have spent the last six months explaining why I disagree with the CASA, was now going to offer to support it. That was not easy, but I believe that it was the right course of action and worth the effort. It was worth it to make a serious offer and a serious compromise.

As I stated, the purpose of the confidence motion is with the motivation of getting answers and accountability for the parents and families of Hidden Valley, but if putting water in my wine and giving up what are significant policy concessions and agreeing to honour significant policies outlined in the CASA are necessary to deliver those answers and to deliver this accountability for families and bring about a change in government, then it was worth it to me.

To me, it was clear that Yukoners would want us to put our policy and personal differences aside to focus on this serious matter and a number of other serious shortcomings of the current government. Disagreements over rent caps or mining policy pale in comparison to accountability and answers.

So, I want to say that this offer and these significant concessions were not made lightly, and the decision to bring forward a confidence motion was not made lightly, either, but my motivation — our motivation as the Official Opposition — has always been to get accountability and answers — and recognizing our serious concerns to bring about change in government.

Today, we have the opportunity to get this accountability through our actions and our votes in the Legislature. We have the opportunity to indicate to parents that they have waited long enough for answers and for that accountability.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will close my remarks and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues in the Legislature about this motion and, of course, encourage my colleagues to support it.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, in Canada, including in the provinces and territories, there are three branches of government. There is the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branch, and there is a division of power. The division of power is as follows: The judicial branch is the courts; the legislative branch is this House, and here we make the laws, pass budgets, and the opposition questions and criticizes the government, and that is their role; the executive branch, the government, is the decision-making branch of the public service and it executes the laws and budgets created here in the Legislature. The executive branch is headed up by the Premier and the Cabinet; the Cabinet is chosen by the Premier, and that is the division of power.

In Canada, and in the provinces and territories, the Legislative Assembly doesn't, and shouldn't, tell the courts what to do — that is not our role. Neither does the Legislative Assembly pick the Cabinet. These roles are divided. What the Legislative Assembly does do is decide if we, this House, has confidence in the government. A pretty standard test for

confidence is whether or not a budget bill passes the House. If it doesn't, the folks in government — the Premier and his or her Cabinet — typically step back. What happens next is that a different group of MLAs could step forward and say that they have the confidence of the House or, more often, the Commissioner would just call an election. The motion that we are debating today, brought forward by the Leader of the Yukon Party, is asking whether this House has confidence in the government.

With that just setting the stage, let me start with a few simple observations. The Leader of the Yukon Party has stated publicly — and again, just now, when he rose to speak to his motion, and also through a news release that I saw this Monday, I believe, although it may have been released over the weekend — that he and his party don't have confidence in the Liberal government. Well, when I think back to — it has been just about five years since we were sworn in, or we may be a couple of weeks shy of that five years. For the past five years, the Yukon Party has voted against every budget that we have presented. As I said, budgets are a way that you test the confidence of the House. Is it a breaking story that the members opposite don't have confidence in the government? No, not really.

It is the opposition's job to criticize. It's an honourable job. For the past five years, they have called on the Premier to shuffle ministers out or for ministers to resign. This is not the first time, but they know that the vote from four weeks ago — when opposition members voted for the Minister of Justice, the Deputy Premier, and the Minister of Health and Social Services to step down — was not a binding vote. In fact, the Leader of the Official Opposition said so on the radio just ahead of coming in here four weeks ago when we had this debate. As it states within the motion that led to today, it is an opinion of this House.

That opinion was shared with the Premier, and the Premier said, Thank you, no thanks. And now, the members opposite are saying, Okay — therefore, you are being disrespectful. Well, actually, this is how the division of power exists within our three branches, of how we organize our government, our democracy here in the territory. Okay, but what is right is that there can be a motion today to test the confidence of the House.

I think that the Leader of the Official Opposition, who is a pretty smart person, and who I believe has studied political science, is well aware of this. I think he is well aware that opinion was not binding, and I think that he brought forward the motion knowing that it would put pressure on the government, but why then, if the Official Opposition has always lacked confidence in the government through Question Period, through budgets, through the criticism that they supply, why are we at a confidence motion today and not sometime in the previous five years?

The answer, quite simply, Mr. Speaker, is that we are in a minority government.

This past spring in 2021, the election resulted in a minority. There were eight Yukon Party MLAs, there were three Third Party NDP MLAs, and there were eight Liberal MLAs. It is a minority government. With no party having a majority of the

seats, it's necessary to cooperate in order to ensure that some group of MLAs has the confidence of the House.

My perspective is that this is exactly what Yukoners chose. They did not confer a majority. Frankly, I think that we should be working constructively together way more often, but our system is designed to be pretty adversarial. There are days here that I think are tough on all members of this Legislative Assembly. It doesn't matter where you sit, there are days when I think we go home not thinking the best of what we have done, about ourselves.

I personally think that Yukoners expect and wish we would be more respectful and more constructive in how we work to represent them here in the Legislature, but, as I say, the system is set up to be adversarial. I believe that criticism is the appropriate and correct role; it's just that it can, and should, be done respectfully, and the response to that criticism can, and should, be done more respectfully.

I personally think minority governments have some advantages. It forces whoever is the government to work more cooperatively and more constructively with other members of the Legislature, but I will note that this does not make these governments easy. They are, in fact, hard. It's hard to maintain confidence in a system set up for criticism, and it's hard to provide confidence when you are also criticizing, especially in the adversarial system that we have.

As a small aside, I bet you today that the media is listening in more than they typically do, as they did four weeks ago, when we had the debate on the motion brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition regarding the Deputy Premier. Normally, we don't have that here at this time. After Question Period is done, usually the media steps aside. This House is a completely different place during Question Period and after Question Period. I'll make some comments on that when I close my remarks for this motion.

After the election this past spring, both the Liberals and the Yukon Party spoke with the New Democratic Party. I'm not privy to how that conversation went between the Yukon Party and the NDP, but I'm well aware, based on the conversation between the Premier and the Leader of the Third Party, that there was a confidence agreement that was signed. This agreement is established for a couple of years, and it has goals like: making democracy work for people; addressing climate change; creating jobs and building a sustainable economy that works for everyone; and more. By the way, Mr. Speaker, that agreement was made public right away. It's available up on our website and the Third Party's website; it's there for all to see.

Personally, I think these goals are ones we can and should get behind. I think it's important, and as the Premier just stated during Question Period to the last question that came from the Member for Lake Laberge, here we are in a pandemic. Since that election, we have hit our first, and now our second, wave. In the middle of that pandemic, I think it's important that there be strong leadership.

Through this agreement, the New Democratic Party reserved the right to be critical of other government legislation and policies. That is part of the agreement that is spelled out. They also agreed to supply confidence to the government in

exchange for a range of policy priorities, as laid out in the agreement. Over the weekend, the Yukon Party put out a press release — maybe it was posted on Monday, but the date on it, I think, is from Sunday. I am going to talk about that press release. I think it will reflect the comments that I've heard from the Leader of the Official Opposition today.

In response to that press release, the Leader of the Third Party put out a statement as well. She indicated through that statement, and through media that I listened to on Monday, I think, that she is critical of us as the government and also indicated that she and her NDP colleagues would continue to uphold the confidence agreement. I think that's what we will debate today, but this is exactly what I think we agreed to, which is that the Third Party would reserve the right to criticize while also working together on specific policies to improve the lives of Yukoners.

The Yukon Party has brought a confidence motion, because this is a minority government. They didn't in the previous five years, even though they have had criticism throughout, but they have brought the motion today.

There was something that I found telling within the Leader of the Official Opposition's comments. He emphasized the inquiries around Hidden Valley school, but he also stated that it was to bring about a change in government. I think that the Yukon Party would like to be in charge. I actually don't think that there is anything wrong with wanting to lead the territory, but there are some things here in this motion that are incongruent and odd, and I am going to talk about those things.

As I have already stated, if this motion passes, the outcome is either an election or the Yukon Party and the NDP would need to work together.

Here is my first surprise: It's not that there is a confidence agreement; it's not that the Official Opposition is critical of us — that is their job — but it is that the Yukon Party — and the Leader of the Official Opposition has just stated it again — would honour the existing Liberal and New Democratic Party confidence agreement. That's quite a headline. The Yukon Party is claiming that we are not fit to govern, and they offer to endorse a raft of policies that they have disagreed with. Okay — and that is to gain political power.

There is a range of policies: minimum wage at \$15.20; rent freeze; 45-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions — I'm excited, personally, to learn that the Yukon Party is now supportive of successor legislation, the upcoming clean energy act, accelerated land use planning, paid sick leave, the safe supply of opioids — those are great things. It is surprising to me, but it is, I guess, welcome news that the Yukon Party has stood up and stated this both here today in the Legislature and through their press release.

If we turn back to four weeks ago, and in listening to the Leader of the Official Opposition in his opening remarks, this has all evolved from the cases of sexual abuse at Hidden Valley school. As we all work to address this awful situation, we state, as I raise this topic, that our priority needs to be protecting the health and well-being of our children. I think our hearts go out to the families at Hidden Valley school.

We now know, from the investigations that are underway, from the inquiries that are in place, that the abuse was first reported in 2015.

When this legislative Sitting started this fall — when the fall session started — at first the Leader of the Official Opposition stated publicly — because he can't say it here in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker; you can't call someone a liar here. But the Leader of the Official Opposition called the Minister of Education a liar because the Minister of Education said that she didn't know about the cases of sexual abuse. What we did know about was the case from 2019. The then-Minister of Education knew about it, reported it to the RCMP, and did all the right steps in that moment. Subsequent to that, something happened where the investigation didn't go as it was supposed to have gone, and we are working to find that out and to get those answers for the families.

The Minister of Education, the past Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education, and the RCMP superintendent have all stood up and apologized that there clearly was a mistake made and that we would work to address those mistakes, whatever they are, to put in place inquiries, investigations, and reviews to find where that happened and to make sure that whatever the findings are, wherever they go, we would follow those recommendations, and we have four of those inquiries underway right now. In fact, the one from the RCMP — the one that is being led, I think, by the external review group from the RCMP — it is the group that came out and said to us all that the 2015 incident of abuse had been reported, but it didn't get followed up at the time. So, it is important that we look backward in time and find out what happened.

After the Leader of the Official Opposition claimed that the current Minister of Education was lying and then the Minister of Education said, no, she was not aware of the cases — we had all been aware of the first case that got reported to the RCMP, but she was not aware of the additional cases. Then, the Leader of the Official Opposition said, well, the problem wasn't the Minister of Education, it was the past Minister of Education and asked for that Minister of Education to resign through a motion four weeks ago.

Now we find out that the abuse started in 2015 under his government, but we haven't switched now. It's not that, okay, that's the problem back then. In fact, I looked at what the Leader of the Official Opposition said and how he responded to the media — at least, I'm now referring to some tweets that were, I think, between him but certainly between his party and the media, asking about what was known. The answer was that the minister and the government didn't know; the MLAs didn't know. Okay, great.

That's exactly what the past Minister of Education stated — that we were not aware and were not made aware of these additional cases. We understand that something broke down with the RCMP. We know that, and we have four investigations underway.

So, all right, the answer from the Leader of the Official Opposition is, from his perspective, all right, but all the blame and all the assumption still lies here — in fact, enough

assumption that what he is saying is that we should switch governments.

Now, let's just talk about the reviews that are underway, because what the Leader of the Official Opposition is saying is that he supports the confidence agreement in order to get at an investigation for Hidden Valley Elementary School. We have four of them underway right now.

I'm not sure what the plan is. Let's say that the confidence motion is successful today; let's say that the Official Opposition is able to secure the support of the Third Party; let's say that we don't go to an election; and let's say that they form the government. Okay, we're going to get to a public inquiry. Will they throw away the work that is underway right now with these four investigations?

Because they are providing us information as we speak. They are also, I hope, trying to be sensitive and respectful to the fact that we have ongoing cases and investigations — active investigations. I say again, as I said four weeks ago, that we would never do this in this Legislature at other times because we would be worried that we are compromising those active cases right now.

But I didn't call this motion; we didn't call this motion. We will respectfully debate it, but whatever the investigations are, I sure hope that they respect the active work that is ongoing right now by the RCMP. I have not heard us talk about that, but I think that it's critical because I wouldn't want to, through our earnestness, hurt these kids and these families more.

But we have four investigations underway right now. Now, I've heard the members opposite refer to them as a "sham" in this House. Then today, I have heard him refer to some of those same investigations and inquiries in a completely different light. Personally, I think that they are all important.

So, just to be clear, the Yukon Party's suggestion for a solution is that they become the government so they can launch an inquiry. We have four of them underway, as we speak. The RCMP inquiry is the one that led to the information that this abuse started earlier than was understood — when we were first informed of it in 2019 and turned it over to the RCMP immediately.

By the way, we have an example from just over the last two days of another issue that was raised to us, and the current Minister of Education did exactly the same thing as the past Minister of Education, which was to immediately elevate it because it has the potential of a crime and elevated it to the RCMP.

I listened to the Child and Youth Advocate on the radio this morning talking about how it is important that this had happened. It is important that she is going to follow along in behind to make sure that there are supports for the families. I am sure that it is hard, but that is what I understand to have happened in 2019, but let us get to the bottom of it.

So, the Official Opposition says: Hey, make us the government. We will get to the bottom of it.

Meanwhile, I don't know what would happen with the four investigations that are underway. We have an independent investigator, Amanda Rogers — that is ongoing right now. She is meeting with families, talking to them, and hearing their

concerns. She is reaching across departments, going back in time, looking to see whether there were missteps that were made by government or the RCMP, how the system could have allowed this to happen, and what we need to do to get it right.

We have the Child and Youth Advocate doing an investigation, and we have the Information and Privacy Commissioner carrying out an investigation. I am not sure which of these the members opposite think are not independent. I mean, they have said that the Amanda Rogers investigation is not independent, but they probably have not said it to her face.

I hope that the Yukon Party will cooperate with the RCMP, Amanda Rogers, the independent investigator, the Child and Youth Advocate, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner around all of these, because I think that we all want to support children and families of Hidden Valley school.

So, this is a confidence motion that is initiated around deeply concerning and serious sexual abuse of children. Now we know that it started in 2015 — or that is the current information that we have — but the four independent investigations — and the Yukon Party's suggestion is that we launch an independent public inquiry. This is a confidence motion criticizing a confidence agreement that the Yukon Party is wanting to endorse if it is with them.

I am going to talk for a moment about several other reasons that the Yukon Party gave in their press release about why they feel that we, as a government, are not doing a good job leading the public.

The first one was around energy. Today, I stood up on a ministerial statement, and we talked about the grid-scale battery. I heard that they thought that was right. In fact, I have listened to a lot of their ideas around energy. I do think it's important to listen to perspectives that come from all sides. The one I just completely disagree with: Their idea around energy is to build a diesel energy plant. That, for me, is flat-out wrong. We had the witnesses from the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation sitting here. They told all of us, the members of this Legislature, that it is ever so slightly cheaper to rent diesels than it is to buy them. Of course, if you buy them, if you build a plant, you also have this disincentivization toward renewables. So, for all reasons, I believe this to be wrong, but that is their argument.

They said that we are not doing well with energy, and they said that we are not doing well with housing. I think it is fair to say that there is a lot of housing pressure out there. The minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation held a housing summit about a month ago — maybe a month and a half ago. I thought to myself: Okay, let me look nationally. Let's see what's going on, because when COVID hit back in March of last year, things changed quite a bit. I looked up the Canadian Real Estate Association and I saw that, from February of 2020 to October of 2021, Yukon housing prices had gone up by a whopping 16 percent. Then I checked what it is across Canada. The answer is 32 percent.

During COVID, housing prices have gone up across the country, including here in the Yukon — luckily not as much here in the Yukon. It's still a challenge. We need to address it, but to try to suggest that, as a government, this shows a lack of

leadership is kind of glossing over some stuff. If the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation gets up on this motion, I would like to hear him on this topic.

Another one I am going to speak about is the shortage of professionals and in particular the doctor shortage. It was raised again in Question Period today — I wish I had the Blues already. It was an interesting response. I heard the Minister of Health and Social Services talk about the differences in the number of doctors here compared to the date when the *Putting People First* report analysis was done — I think from 2015 to today. I think I heard something about a 25-percent increase — from 60 to 77 percent or something like that, but it was a significant increase — and yes, we also have a doctor shortage right now.

I believe that this shortage — and I've heard the minister talk about it — goes across the country. I looked across the country. I am just looking at 2021 articles, and in BC, there's a family doctor shortage impacting 911 service and ambulance waits. There is a family doctor shortage in Alberta. A doctor shortage is becoming a health care crisis in southern Alberta. One says that we really need to fill that void; rural Alberta municipalities are struggling with doctor shortages. With Saskatchewan, a national report looks at doctor and nurse shortages and has some specifics about Saskatchewan. Manitoba has a huge problem. Doctors in Manitoba called for action on a massive and growing backlog in the medical system. Ontario, Québec — I'm going to talk about Nova Scotia for a second, but I have some from every jurisdiction across the country.

In Nova Scotia, they had an election this summer. One of the main topics of their election was a doctor shortage. In May, they had 65,000 people who were on the wait-list for doctors. That is 6.5 percent. Our wait-list is 2,500, which is six percent. Their wait-list is higher than ours. That was in May. They had an election. The incoming Conservative government said that they were going to fix this problem. I am sure that is what they are trying to do. I am not trying to cast a shadow on their hard work to address this problem. I looked at an article from about one month ago today, and that wait-list has jumped from 65,000 in Nova Scotia to 78,000. It has gone from 6.5 percent to eight percent. That's with a government that ran on and got elected on addressing the doctor shortage.

The point I'm trying to make is that there is a challenge across this country, and it is not really surprising. We don't have to look very far to understand what that challenge is: It's a doctor shortage — sorry, it's COVID. COVID has put this pressure on our professions and on our labour force.

Just one last reference — I saw an article that was with the *National Post*, and the article was entitled *Canada doesn't know how bad its doctor shortage is, let alone how to fix it*. In that article, who did I read, who was there being interviewed but Dr. Katharine Smart, the head of the Canadian Medical Association, talking about the challenges with doctors across the country. I happen to know that the Minister of Health and Social Services is working with her colleagues across this country to try to find ways to improve recruitment and retention

nationally and how we can work together as jurisdictions to try to address this national problem.

I also heard from the members opposite that they criticize us as a government for not supporting doctors and say that we should be doing more. When I listen to the minister respond, she says: Yes, we should be doing more, and then lists off what more is being done.

From this Monday — and I'm now quoting from Hansard. This is the Minister of Health and Social Services — and I quote: “We have doubled the bursary program since the last number of years to help with medical professionals and our recruitment and retention of those individuals who are being educated in medical professions. I can indicate that we have not cancelled the recruitment position. We are working with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Medical Association...”

So, yes, we are working to address this issue. The members opposite — it is their job to criticize us and say that we're not supportive of doctors. In the meantime, they have stated, up to one week ago, that they disagree with our chief doctor here, and the comments made by Dr. Warshawski on CBC, saying that what we really need is a vaccine mandate. The members opposite say: Sorry, we don't agree with that, but what I hear is that we don't support what the doctors are telling us. Again, I am struck by the confidence motion that is brought before us, which is to say: We would like to be in government; we support doctors — except not when we don't.

So, on all of those fronts, in the press release that the Leader of the Official Opposition put out, there is this message of: We don't have confidence in this government, but we would be happy to sign the confidence agreement with the Third Party.

I think that it was on October 18 when the Minister of Health and Social Services stood up in this Legislature and talked, through a ministerial statement, about the COVID-19 vaccine and safety measures. That day, the Leader of the Official Opposition stood up and he said that was fake news. He said something along the lines that we were trying to avoid conversations on Hidden Valley Elementary School.

Up until that day, we had 20 times — sorry, well, 60 times, because each time the minister rises, she rises three times to respond to questions — had risen — I will have to go back and count to be absolutely sure, but let us say 60 times, to answer questions about Hidden Valley Elementary School — talking about it, going to Hidden Valley, meeting with parents, having the deputy minister go, having the superintendent of the RCMP go, and setting up these inquiries to try to address things, to get to those answers, trying to protect the ongoing criminal investigations that are underway.

But the Leader of the Official Opposition said that this was some sort of conspiracy and that the Minister of Health and Social Services was talking about a vaccine mandate because she was trying to draw focus away from Hidden Valley school. Yet, within a couple of weeks, this COVID wave hit. We redeclared a state of emergency. What we were doing was listening to the doctors who are advising us. These are hard choices. Leadership is tough; the role of government is tough; the role of opposition is tough — it's tough, but these are the



leadership choices. Members opposite have accused us of not taking leadership, not taking a tough stand. Here we are, standing up, taking a tough stand, happy to take the criticism, happy to say that we are following the advice of our health specialists — the doctors, the nurse practitioners, epidemiologists, those whose job it is to give us health advice.

I'm going to wrap up here in a second, Mr. Speaker. When the Leader of the Official Opposition put forward his press release to talk about how he was going to bring forward this motion of confidence that we are debating today, he said — and he said again when he stood today — that they would honour the confidence agreement. So, this is about — because it is all so strange to me — a lack of confidence here, but they are willing to give confidence to the Third Party. I hope that the Leader of the Third Party will stand and I look forward to hearing her comments. I anticipate that she should criticize us as government because that is the role. I heard her say, by the way, that it's a tough job. I appreciate that. I will also say that leading in a pandemic is a tough job.

But what made my head spin was — I saw the press release from the Official Opposition saying that they wanted to support the Third Party. I saw that the Third Party said: Sorry, no thank you. And then we got to Question Period that day — this past Monday. Do you recall it, Mr. Speaker? That day, I heard the Leader of the Official Opposition —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Point of order

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

**Mr. Cathers:** Members have been cautioned many times in this House — most recently, I believe, was yesterday — not to involve the Chair in debate. The Chair is, of course, supposed to be independent and not drawn into debate by members, as the Minister of Community Services just did.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I will be very careful not to involve the Speaker in my comments.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** Government House Leader, I accept your apology. Please continue.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** So, my recollection of Monday — just backing up again and setting the stage — is that the Yukon Party reached out to the Third Party and put out a press release saying that they would honour the confidence agreement, which they had been pretty critical of here. I seem to recall the Leader of the Official Opposition calling it the most left-leaning government that he has seen in his lifetime — although there have been NDP governments here in his lifetime, but that is his opinion; fine. Then he said: We will honour that confidence agreement with you. The Leader of the Third Party said: No, thank you. Then, during Question Period, I listened as the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, and the Member for Lake Laberge stood up during

Question Period and attacked the Third Party for having a confidence agreement.

How do you do that? How do you do that? How do you say: Hey, we're with you?

I thought the response and statement from the Leader of the Third Party was respectful. It was: No, thanks. There was criticism there too, of course, but it was: No, thanks.

It felt like a schoolyard. There are times when I feel like that's how this House conducts itself. In fact, there are times when I feel that the way in which we work together would not be tolerated in a schoolyard. It's amazing to me.

What I was hoping for when I listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition — there was the one thing that they would do as a government, and that is to get to a public inquiry. I have noted here that we have four inquiries underway. Maybe the Official Opposition thinks that they are the wrong inquiries. What I thought he would do is talk about why he wishes to be government. What are the things that he would propose? What's his vision for the Yukon?

We, on our side, have been talking about — and working on and delivering on — renewable energy and *Our Clean Future*. This past summer, Community Services and the folks at wildland fire responded to the biggest flood that we have had from Lake Laberge to Bennett. That is active work.

We have rolled out a new program for early learning and childcare. I am really happy to see the other provinces get on board now. That's work that is happening.

We have had *Putting People First* happening. During the second motion that will be coming later today, we will be talking about a clinic here in Whitehorse and work to try to provide services across the territory for health and wellness.

I heard the Premier reference our GDP. We just heard the numbers the other day that the Yukon was only one of two jurisdictions to have GDP growth last year. We were double the other jurisdiction, which was Nunavut, I believe. So, only Nunavut and the Yukon had GDP growth. I have not heard that talked about in the media.

This is the work that we are doing. It's good work; it's important work. The most important work that we are doing — and the hardest work that we are doing — is addressing a pandemic. It has not been easy.

We brought in hard choices that showed leadership, including border security — which, I heard from the members opposite, was not the right thing; it was done wrong, and yet, in the end, I think it reflects that the Yukon did well with these things. Again, I want to thank everyone who — in partnership with First Nation governments, municipal governments, and our bylaw folks — stood up to do this hard work, including the work that is ongoing today. That's what I think of as leadership.

I'm going to finish off, Mr. Speaker — it is not surprising to me that the Yukon Party is bringing forward a motion to say that they don't have confidence. As I've said, I don't think that they have ever had confidence in us as a government. They have stood and said that they are critical at all times. They have voted against every budget bill that we brought forward. This is not surprising. This is not really news.

They are coming forward now, and I think that it's because they wish to form government and we're in a minority situation, so we'll see what happens.

But here is something that might be a little bit different for folks who are listening — to Yukoners who care about this and are listening in. This fall, we have had 15 recorded votes here in this Legislature. These always happen after Question Period in the time when people are not listening as much. Of the 15 votes, 11 of them have been unanimous across all parties. Two of them have been with the Yukon Party voting alone, and two of them have been us, as a Liberal government, voting alone. That's closer to what goes on here after Question Period. It doesn't make the news. It's not very headline-worthy. I'm sure if I stood up today and swore or did something like that, then it would make the news, but that's not the point. The point is that we are supposed to be leading this territory. I don't mean just "we", as in the Liberals; I mean that this Legislature is supposed to be leading the territory. We're supposed to be respectful of the division of power. If we are to be the government, we need to show the confidence of this House.

I appreciate the opportunity to stand to talk through these things and to point out that it's strange that the Yukon Party is now saying that they are supportive of the confidence agreement.

I look forward to their continued support on that, because now that they have given it, they might take it back. I am a little worried about that, because I saw what happened on Monday, in Question Period, when they went after the Third Party, but I will hopefully hear their support for these important initiatives for Yukoners.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I rise here to respond to Motion No. 236, that the government does not have the confidence of this House and the people of the Yukon. I am opposed to this motion. I am opposed to it for a number of reasons.

Responding to this motion, Mr. Speaker, among other points, I will reflect on the collective goals of this government, as well as the goals and targets as set out in my mandate letter. Yukoners have seen the work that has been done already by this government in such a short time to create real change in our communities, which is impacting Yukoners every day. For example, we have been able to work together to make advancements on what I believe is the biggest challenge that Yukoners face today — climate change.

Currently, the Yukon has some of the most ambitious climate targets in the country, and we are well on our way to meeting them. We have an opportunity to engage with young climate leaders in our community, investing \$13 million for building energy projects and retrofits, helping Yukoners purchase electric vehicles through rebates, and beginning to implement various plastic bans, but there is so much work to do on this file alone. We cannot afford to lose the momentum that we have on this file, as we are seeing increasingly severe weather events, such as the unprecedented flooding that we saw this summer in the Yukon or the infrastructure and flooding crisis that British Columbia is dealing with today.

Looking across at the members opposite, I ask myself: Where do that party's values actually lie, with respect to climate change — notwithstanding the apparent "come to whoever your spiritual leader is at the moment" today with respect to the confidence and supply agreement?

I know that, in their last platform, they offered to invest in a new LNG generator in Whitehorse, furthering the city's reliance on fossil fuels. I know that, in the past, without any foresight, the Yukon Party leader himself said that he did not think that the territory-wide emission targets were the right thing to do. Mr. Speaker, this is the type of leadership that Yukoners cannot afford to have.

When I reflect on some of the other work we have been able to do with our partners in the Third Party — although we do not always share the same vision, we have been able to compromise to deliver results for our communities — progressive actions, such as the safe consumption site that recently opened in Whitehorse, which is literally saving lives as we speak, and coverage for presumptive cancers for firefighters, which will make a difference in the lives of those who work to protect us. We recognize, of course, that there are bumps in the road with respect to those discussions, but that's the development of a mature and productive working relationship — minimum wage increases that have come into effect in the territory and that are helping Yukoners pay their bills or, in fact, the newly established Climate Leadership Council — these are all things that would not have been done in a partnership with a Yukon Party government.

Even the Leader of the Third Party said on CBC yesterday that, although the Leader of the Yukon Party says now that they would put their support behind CASA, a few short months ago, the agreement was too radical, and there was no common ground to be found. The Yukon Party's position today with respect to their warm embrace of the confidence and supply agreement in all of its terms and conditions, Mr. Speaker, strains credulity.

Competent and responsible leaders look for common ground, because that is what we are here to do. We are here to work together for Yukoners and provide results that impact their lives in a positive way. The Leader of the Official Opposition and his colleagues from across the floor have expressed that they do not have confidence in our leadership. As my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, so ably set out in his comments over the last half-hour to 40 minutes, that is not unique. In some respects, it is the job of the members opposite to ask the tough questions, to question policies and programs, and to present an alternative. It is not unique that they don't have confidence in the government. What the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources pointed out quite succinctly is that we are in the first minority situation that the Yukon territorial government has been in for the better part of 30 years.

On the topic of confidence, for one thing, on one topic, I'm not certain that we have confidence that the Leader of the Official Opposition truly did discipline the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and the Member for Kluane with respect to their lewd and offensive texting in advance of our spring session this year.

He promised Yukoners that the members would take the appropriate training, yet we have yet to see any indication that such training or counselling has actually occurred. One thing I can tell you is that Yukoners care about how we treat each other. It is in our core values as a community that we treat each other with respect, and when mistakes are made, we own up to them, and although the Member for Kluane delivered a heartfelt tribute against bullying recently, the Yukon Party never directly owned up to their actions and inappropriate comments, and to me, that is a reflection of faulty leadership or of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I also think back to what occurred in this Assembly just a few short weeks ago. The Yukon Party tabled a petition, organized by a former Yukon Party staffer, which urged the government to ignore the advice of the acting chief medical officer of health's recommendation and abolish vaccine mandates. As you heard in the response to the petition, as we all heard, it was riddled with fake names, duplicates, and even, as we heard at the time, the name of a white supremacist who killed 51 people at a mosque in New Zealand in 2019. This type of irresponsible action has no place in the position of leadership in our territory and, to be frank, puts the health and safety of all Yukoners at risk.

Instead of fomenting further division and fear, we need leaders in our territory who unite Yukoners and reassure them in this critical and challenging time. Whether it be the climate crisis that we are facing or an unprecedented global pandemic, we know that it is only through our collective actions that we will be able to address these problems that we all face today.

Today, among various strategies employed, Mr. Dixon has

— **Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Point of order, Official Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Kent:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Highways and Public Works referred to another member by name, and, of course, that is against the Standing Orders. I would ask you to have the member withdraw it.

**Speaker:** On the point of order, the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, that is consistent with the Standing Orders, and I retract those comments and will certainly make best efforts to identify the members opposite by either their area of responsibility or their position within the House or their riding. Thank you.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** Apology accepted.  
Minister of Highways and Public Works, continue.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the awful child sex abuse scandal at Hidden Valley Elementary School, which is a subject of various investigations. The Leader of the Official Opposition's strategy is to bring that child sex abuse scandal to the forefront, arguably for his own political

gain. However, it does appear now, from the RCMP timeline, that the concerns with respect to the accused and ultimately convicted person at Hidden Valley Elementary School started in 2015-16, a time when the Leader of the Official Opposition has conceded, of course, that the Yukon Party was the governing party in the territory and when the Leader of the Official Opposition was a minister in that Cabinet, as were the majority of the currently sitting members of the Yukon Party.

He has stated, and I take him at his word — but he says that it is now important to get to the facts.

Of course, it is vital to get to the facts, but it may also be instructive to him that it may not have been the best strategy to debate this exhaustively on the floor of the Legislature while the various inquiries are occurring. We shall see.

Today, the Leader of the Official Opposition has brought a confidence motion in an attempt to send Yukoners back to the polls for the fourth time this year, as it is his view that Yukoners have lost confidence in this government. As I stated previously, majority governments were the rule rather than the exception in the Yukon for three decades, so motions of non-confidence were not viable because they weren't going to go anywhere.

Today, we are presented with an alternative. With former ministers who enjoy cracking jokes about genitalia as long as they are not caught, having a government endorse anti-vaxxer ideology, having a leader who has leveraged tragedies for his own political gain, and having a governing party that doesn't take climate change seriously, I firmly believe that this isn't the kind of leadership that the Third Party wants to work with, and I know that this isn't the leadership that Yukoners expect to have.

The Leader of the Third Party was clear about her experience working in the shadow of a Yukon Party government between 2011 and 2016, noting that the Yukon Party wasn't honest and willing to work with people when they were in government.

Returning to the confidence and supply agreement, I am certainly appreciative of the spirit of cooperation that I have established with the Member for Whitehorse Centre on the *Our Clean Future* implementation committee. I respect her strong commitment to apply a social justice lens in her decision-making on this committee.

How this government works with the Third Party is a critical piece of how we can measure the performance of this government. We are the responsible stewards of the Yukon. As I mentioned previously, I see a motion of confidence as the opportunity to highlight to Yukoners why our government deserves their hard-earned confidence.

We have much more work to do to support Yukoners, and I look forward to collaborating with the Third Party to accomplish this work. I agree with the Leader of the Third Party, who said yesterday on CBC that this government's relationship with the Third Party has not always been sunshine and rainbows, but I can advise that it is far better than the perfect storm that would come with the Yukon Party.

Our parties have been able to establish a responsible minority government with an agreement on a vision that we can share. There is no doubt that navigating that agreement is

complex and is an ongoing effort that requires hard work, Mr. Speaker. We certainly anticipate that, going forward, there will not be insignificant challenges.

There are still issues that we do not agree on, but unlike the Yukon Party, we know that there is a pathway forward that we can take together to benefit the lives of Yukoners. I look forward to making real changes that impact our territory now and for future generations. I look forward to continuing to build stronger communities that we can all be proud of. I look forward to serving Yukoners and creating a territory that we can continue to be proud to call home.

In closing, we would clearly be going backwards, or worse, if Mr. Dixon's and his colleagues' vision prevails.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Point of order

**Speaker:** Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, once again, the former Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, has referred to a member of this Legislature by name. He has apologized once. I would ask that he retract that and get him to apologize for a second time.

**Speaker:** Minister of Highways and Public Works, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if I apologized the first time, but if I did not, I will, and, of course, I will be more careful going forward. The rebuke is noted.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** At this point, I am going to rebuke you and you need to be more careful with your remarks and your statements. Please continue, Minister of Highways and Public Works.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will be careful.

We are the responsible stewards of the Yukon, and we will continue to exemplify the steady, hard-working leadership that Yukoners can be proud of. I will not be supporting this motion today. I know that supporting Yukoners is the most important thing that we can do right now in this challenging time, and I look forward to continuing to work and advocate on their behalf.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this today. I rise to speak to Motion No. 236, put forth by the Yukon Party, that the government does not have the confidence of the House and the people of the Yukon. As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, even saying that — reading out the motion — is certainly a gut-punch when you are in a position to have spent the last five years with your colleagues each and every day, getting up to do your very best in the responsibilities that you have. In looking back and reflecting on that, taking into consideration that there has been significant progress and accomplishments through those efforts, it becomes a really hard morning when you wake up and come to

this Assembly and the first thing that you think about is the debate that you are going to have where inevitably, because of political ideology or political parties seeing opportunity, they essentially wash away with their words the work that has been accomplished and position a particular argument in a way that is going to further their political interests.

I think that it is important to point out, as was pointed out by my colleague, that this vote that we are having today and that has really stirred up interest — both with Yukoners and with the media — will not be the last confidence vote that we have. Hopefully, today, we will be in a position to continue on our good work, but I would guess that every time we come back into this Assembly for a Sitting, whether it be in the spring or the fall, there will be a reason that is built to state that there is not confidence.

As my colleague reflected on the history of the last five years, we have never had support for our financial bills and, in many cases, we have not had support for our bigger strategies either. So, this is something that people on this side of the House, as long as we are in government, should get used to. It is going to come. There will always be an eloquent speech that is given and a justification for why the government should change or fall. I want to put that on the record today. No matter how good things are going — no matter how many things are accomplished, I might add — that will be the case.

Since announcing the 2021 confidence and supply agreement between the Yukon Liberal caucus and the NDP caucus, the Yukon Party leader has, on countless occasions, announced his displeasure with its contents, and now we have seen an about-face — stating publicly, in a news release put out by the Yukon Party caucus, that they had offered the NDP support for CASA for the duration of the agreement. Now, of course, as my colleagues have stated, we are happy to see that about-face. We are happy to see that the many items put into CASA that the Yukon Party — through deliberation in their caucus, through conversations with their leader, through a dialogue about what's best for Yukoners — has come to a place to understand that they could live with the elements of that agreement. They could last Friday. They could live with the items that we have worked on with the NDP. I think that this is something that's very significant, especially when we think about the criticism that was tabled publicly over and over again at the start of the Sitting and through the summer about the agreement that we had in place.

These agreements are always difficult to work through. I think about the positions that I have had as an MLA and as a minister. I think that it is pretty widely known that if there is somebody in this caucus or in this Cabinet who probably leans fairly far — if we want to talk about leaning — to the right, that's me. So, at times, you certainly have to go through the elements of this agreement, and you try to find common ground and try to debate on the other points.

But I think the one key item that I would say is that, as we went through the deliberations of this and we looked at the elements of the agreement, we came to a real understanding that there was some common ground. It notes that the Yukon Liberals and the Yukon NDP campaigned on policy proposals

that included points of agreement across multiple themes and five categories. One was to make democracy work for people. I think, as much as the Third Party probably also has challenges coming to the table with us, inevitably we were committed to making sure that democracy should work for people.

Addressing climate change and protecting the environment — I think that's a key one. When we think about our emissions in the Yukon, we think about transportation, and we think about our use of energy. I think when we think about, number two, addressing climate change, we could find common ground with the Third Party, but there was a drastic difference between where the Yukon Party positioned the argument around energy and where we did in the last election, only a few months back.

What we saw from the Yukon Party side was that they would build a very large thermal plant — a diesel plant — thought that was a good investment. My experience has been, working with federal counterparts, that there is not a lot of funding programs right now to build new diesel plants, so you're essentially going out and either borrowing money, or you're going to put it on the ratepayer.

The second thing that was stated during the election was that the renewable energy plan, which we were commending today, with a battery project — we touched on the wind project on Haeckel Hill, and we've all commended the Vuntut Gwitchin government for their new solar project. There was another project announced today and highlighted around another north Klondike Highway solar project — all of these things that were part of the renewable 10-year strategy. That strategy, of course, was also supported — not in the beginning — but was supported during the election.

So, we had a new \$80-million to \$90-million — maybe, with supply chain issues, even more — \$100-million — diesel plant. We had the entire renewable energy strategy which, coming into office, didn't exist. We were doing diesel and there was a little bit of renewable. The previous government could not get in place the IPP, which essentially is the mechanism that we're using now for all of these solar projects to feed into our grid. That policy work couldn't get completed.

No matter what was being said publicly about renewable energy, there was not even a mechanism to buy the renewable energy from someone. That is the first piece that we had to do. The second was to go back to the drawing board and build an entire 10-year strategy. That was completed. Then again today, we are talking about the actual fruits of that labour, and those are the projects that everyone is commending.

In a short period of time — 36 months or 48 months — that is the work. Compare and contrast: What we had on the other side was that we would see a new diesel plant being built. As I stated, we would be in a very difficult place to try to get money from any source other than borrowing or using the money that we have in our transfer agreement or from ratepayers to pay for that. Second, we were still going to build out the entire renewable, so that comes down to your capacity within your organization and your financial capacity — all of those many, many things. Third, we were going to freeze rates. Don't worry, we are going to freeze rates. Your rates are not going to go up. We are going to do what we did before. We are going to spend

for five years. We are not going to bring it to you. You are not going to have to worry about it. We are just going to put it over here on the government credit card, and then we're going to show up later and give you one big massive bill.

What I hear day in and day out in this Assembly is how the opposition is going to make it more affordable for Yukoners. Well, guess what? I don't know how budgeting was done at everyone's table here, but I can tell you that not leveraging the credit card and then putting it on people's backs five years later is probably a more reasonable and feasible way for us to conduct our business with Yukon Energy Corporation. If there is a cost — and there is a cost; there's not a territory or province in this country that is not going to have to build more energy. We have population growth, and we have growth in many different sectors. You try to do it with as little an impact as possible, but putting it in a box and thinking it's going away is not where you want to be, from a leadership perspective.

Again, I think that doesn't exude confidence. I believe that the positions and the things that we have done here are things that certainly have shown leadership, even when you have to have the tough conversation about why you are making those decisions.

So, again, I have seen it — it seems to be a very big tack and movement here around decisions and planning. Some of the other conversation points that were made or some of the public statements that were made by members across were:

“We know that the Liberals are letting the NDP co-write the new mining legislation and that it will be completed within 16 months. We know that the last time the Liberals let the NDP write policy for them, it turned into a disastrous rent control policy that one local economist has said is further left wing than Bernie Sanders.”

That is a pretty strong statement that was made by members opposite, but again, they have reconciled that this policy position was okay last Friday.

You have to take into consideration where we are right now. We are being called on that there is no confidence in this team and that we should step down. At the same time, last week, we see a brand-new political party come out and be announced — a political party that is, you know — maybe there are people who are former members from the NDP; maybe there are former members or people who supported the Liberal Party, who have joined the Freedom Party, but the individuals I have talked to who joined the Freedom Party were all former members and supporters of the Yukon Party. Those folks are not just getting in there and supporting it, but they are actually financing, helping to put money in place.

We all have many friends of different political persuasions in the Yukon — it is a small community — so, I think that we also have to take that into consideration. We are being told over here that there is no confidence in us, and at the same time, the party that wants to take over has a splinter group coming out for the first time I have seen happen in five years and are starting to build their own — a second — conservative political party. I think that Yukoners have to reflect on that and take into consideration what that means. I don't know; I will leave that

to the opposition to work that out with their members, or their past members, whatever it may be.

Today, the things that we are taking into consideration, in the initial preamble, are that we don't have — the reason that this government should change is because we don't have doctors or we have a shortage of doctors, we have a shortage of teachers, and housing — first three things, okay. I think that it would be difficult to find a province or territory in this country right now that has enough doctors. I think back to the point where I have had family members who have worked in this sector, and I think back 30 years ago, sitting with my dad when he was in a position of having to recruit doctors and having a problem then. I can think about that 20 years ago. Rural Canada has had challenges getting doctors.

What I do know that has happened in the last four years is a successful negotiation with doctors, an increase — as I remember, and I apologize that I don't have the details of their agreement, but I think we have talked about compensation here. It is 30 percent greater than British Columbia, along with professional development opportunities that are extensive. Again, I don't believe that this is a regional issue.

There was a report tabled today. I will go through it. I think that what was illustrated by the Minister of Health and Social Services is that we use many different tools, whether it is visiting doctors or doctors who make this their home. I know doctors who are known as local doctors, but at the same time, those doctors spend part of their month in another part of Canada, but the reality is: Do we have the right resources? We probably need more doctors. We agree with that, and we are looking at different opportunities to bring more doctors here.

Part of the reason we need more doctors is because there are more people here, and I will touch on that in a second: Why are there more people here?

Second: teachers. We know, across this country, whether it is Atlantic Canada or central Canada, that we are in a position where there is a shortage of teachers. We have watched this ebb and flow. I can remember going to post-secondary, and they would say there are too many teachers, that people shouldn't go into an education program. Five years later, it was that you should go into an education program.

These are the reasons, of course — why I'm going back — why we were told today that the Government of Yukon should change. There is no confidence. It was doctors and again teachers.

The third is housing. When I speak about housing, I am going to compare and contrast. In the last five years, Community Services, in conjunction with Energy, Mines and Resources — in the last two years of our mandate, we have put more resources in place than the previous four years. That's what was going on with lot development. It's challenging work, yes. You're working with other levels of government. You want to align to make sure, and that led to the largest lottery for lots in the history of the City of Whitehorse. That, in turn, led to the highest level of value for building permits in 2020 — in the history of the City of Whitehorse. Then what happened? In 2021, in the first three-quarters of this year, we surpassed that.

So, you can't tell me that we have not worked together to ensure that we are investing in lot development and, in turn, in housing, because the numbers speak for themselves. These are record numbers of where we have gone for housing.

Now, what I do remember is — and I'm not saying that things aren't tough from housing. I know. It's my responsibility to work through a housing crisis. I understand that things aren't good, and I understand that there are a lot of people underhoused. As my critic, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, will say, there were 151 people in April who were homeless. There are probably 63 children, right now, who are underhoused. What I will say is that this is why we're making the largest investment in affordable housing in Yukon history.

What I remember from five years ago was a group of tents out there and a lot of machinery. That's what I remember about where we were on housing at that point.

Again, I would say that, when I think about where we're at, the reason today was doctors, teachers, housing, energy, cost of wood — it's tough sometimes at the table negotiating with our partners. Do you know why? It's because we had a stall on land planning for a decade and a half. We walked in, and the first thing that I was briefed on as Energy, Mines and Resources minister is that we had a case that was before the Supreme Court with land planning.

I think that when we go through all of these items in front of us — the other key thing is that we talk about economy. The economy is not even here. Not one thing has been said to us about — the Yukon Party has always worn business and the economy on their sleeve as their ability to drive the economy and drive business and that they were the champion for that. In the preamble today, there is not one thing on that. The reason for that is because what we saw, in 2015, was a recession. Now what we've seen is the second lowest unemployment rate in the country. We led the country in GDP growth — only two places in the country in 2020. We have seen record real estate transactions and building permits. We have seen retail sales and wholesale sales continue to grow year after year.

The reality is that we've had an extremely strong economy, and with that, in many cases, comes population growth, and with that comes its own set of challenges and circumstances. That's why we need more doctors; that's why we need more houses. These are all key things that we have to take into consideration.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to rise today. I wish I had more time —

**Deputy Speaker (Ms. Blake):** Order, please.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Thank you for the opportunity to rise and speak to Motion No. 236 presented by the Member for Copperbelt North. I will start off by saying, of course, that I am very opposed to this motion and I will explain why as we go forward. What I want to do, of course, is start by talking about why I joined politics. The desire to lead and be part of the change in our territory was strong. I never set out in my career to be in a political position. I was actually just speaking to women from the University of Waterloo who were thinking

about coming into politics just today, and part of my discussion with them was reflecting on how I got to where I am today and that it was never my goal in life to be in a Cabinet position and to be in this type of leadership position. I discussed with them what drew me to politics and, really, at the heart of it was regarding the non-action, I think, and the delays of the implementation of self-government — that we had the most progressive agreements in Canada and there was such a deep level of frustration from First Nations — and just establishing further implementation agreements. I felt most aligned with the team that the Premier of today was putting together. I felt that I aligned with the ideals of the Yukon Liberal Party. I had never been part of a political party before that time. I have always been at the forefront of public service for Yukoners in one capacity or another and did not align myself with a party. So, that's what got me here — and a long journey and very difficult to delve into the political world.

The more that I see of it, the more that I realize how much of it can be based on power and ego. That is not what brought me here; I can guarantee that. I feel that, if you are not sure about what your values are and what your foundation is as a person, you can be lost in this world very easily. Politics is very hard on the spirit. It's hard on the soul. I know that for sure.

I always work hard to be in a place of empathy and compassion for where people are at. Even with those across the way, I try hard to understand what is driving this and try to understand some of the behaviours that we see. I try to understand what's driving it so that I can continue to try to have that understanding and look at people from that place of being a human first. I struggle on lots of days when my colleague — the Minister of Health and Social Services and our Deputy Premier — and I have taken some big hits here, particularly during this Sitting. I have referred to it as lateral violence.

Previously, in my position as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, one of the tasks that I was tasked with was developing a new law around bullying and harassment in workplaces. We established that. We all actually voted for it. It was a consensus vote to pass that legislation. Well, that came into effect on September 1 in all workplaces in the Yukon that are under the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, and that includes this place that we call our workplace. This is our office. This is it. This is where we work every day.

We have endured a lot of lateral violence here. I feel like there have been a lot of personal attacks. It has been a lot to endure, and I keep coming back every day. I struggled — and I will be very honest — with the decision to run again in the spring election but felt that there was so much work left to be done and that I had made a commitment to Yukoners in 2016 and had done so much work to really work toward making life better for Yukoners.

Before I kind of get into some of the big accomplishments and where we are today, I also want to reflect on something that happened early in my time in this Legislature, and it is something that has weighed heavy on me and something that I have been really reflecting on. I'm almost reluctant to say it,

but I'm going to anyway because I want to bring the message out.

A few weeks ago, I had a discussion with some of my elders. I feel like they are the ones whom I am very much accountable to. I am accountable to my elders. They told me to keep going: "Keep going. You are doing a good job. You have a lot of matters before you and you have to keep going. If you need to lean on us, lean on us. We will be there for you."

The reason why I reflect on that a little bit is because, when I first came to the Legislative Assembly, my critic was the Member for Copperbelt North, and we had discussions and these great debates about how we were going to change some of the attitudes here in the Legislative Assembly and how we were going to work toward being kinder to one another. I have to say that it lasted for a bit of time, and I appreciated that.

The actual first time I was — because I didn't get a lot of questions when I first came to the Legislative Assembly — I didn't. So, I sat and listened and learned, and I watched my colleagues — particularly the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — struggle and get attacked on a daily basis.

So, I didn't get a lot of questions. The Member for Copperbelt North kindly came across the floor to me one day and said: "Minister, we're going to ask you a question today. I don't want you to be caught off guard. It's a really important topic."

I thanked her very much. I said: "Thank you so much. This is important." It was about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. I remember that day very distinctly and how I went to my colleagues in caucus later and said that this is the kindness that was shown to me today.

I tell this story because it is an important one for Yukoners to hear. I am saddened that my friend and my elder across the way — that we haven't spoken, probably in a couple of years, not really. I am speaking about the Member for Porter Creek North. I'm sorry. I correct that on the record, please — Hansard, if you would change that — because this is an important point that I am making here today, because I feel like this is where we have arrived.

We started with an incredible vision, and we have accomplished so much that Yukoners can be proud of. Before the election in the spring, I went through and looked at what was really important, what we did accomplish. One of the most enduring priorities was the renewal of First Nation relationships. We worked hard at this. This was almost decimated under the previous Yukon Party leadership — almost decimated — and that is, again, one of the things that brought me here: to renew this relationship.

So, the very first bill we passed was Aboriginal Day for June 21. That was the first bill; it was unanimous. We worked to bring this in. We re-established the Yukon Forum. We had 16 Yukon Forums prior to the 2021 election, and we have had two since being re-elected. We completed heritage plans that should have been completed decades before, but we did those: on Lansing Post and Conrad and the Selkirk renewal of their heritage plan. Not only were we the first jurisdiction to work on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, but we completed a strategy, and we responded first in Canada. That

is, again, what brought me back here to be in this Legislative Assembly and to work for Yukoners, to see the implantation of this.

We brought culture for the first time ever. We have never had a drum in this Legislative Assembly. We did a tribute — all of us together — for the late Doris McLean, and we brought a drum in here. We were able to hear, for the very first time, that expressed in this Legislative Assembly. Those are proud moments that we need to build on.

We restored the beautiful totem pole outside the Legislative Assembly to ensure that it had life to continue. We protected the Peel watershed. I want to remind Yukoners that the architect of the failed, previous work on the Peel watershed is now the Leader of the Yukon Party. I remind Yukoners of that, because this is what brought us to where we were divided in this territory, and the work we had to undertake was to fix that.

That is what we are doing in our school system as well. They had a decade and a half to correct the issues in our schools, yet they did not. I have gone back. I've looked at the reports. I have really studied them to see where real, concrete action was taken. Now we are seeing the unfolding of the issues that are coming from our school system, and it is because of the lack of attention to our school system and the politicization.

I thank the Leader of the Third Party for pointing it out and telling it for what it is — the politicization of child sexual abuse. I have asked us to tread lightly on this right from the very first day. It has gone so far. I know these are serious issues. We are working hard to get the answers for Yukoners. I am committed, as the Minister of Education, to work through the answers that we get and to work through the recommendations that are put before us and to work with that school community to ensure their voice is there. That is a commitment I made to them. I stand by that. Whatever recommendations are brought forward, I will work to implement them. That's why I'm here. That's why I came back to this Legislative Assembly.

I have thought a lot about folks who have come before me. I thought a lot about my uncle, John Edzerza — especially in this time that we are in right now — and what he stood for and the vision he had. I recognize that he struggled to work with folks across the way. I recognize that. You know why? He was my mentor. John Edzerza was my mentor. He told me what it was like to work with people who don't hold the same kind of ideals, who don't have that same desire to work in a way of empathy and compassion and to work for the right reasons — not political reasons, but the right reasons. I would say that I'm probably one of the least political people around. I don't understand some of these strategies that go on, because they are not the way that we should be treating one another. They are just not. They go against the grain for me, Madam Deputy Speaker.

When I think about why Yukoners rehired us — because that's the way I look at it; I got rehired to do this job. Again, I look at all of the things that were accomplished. Taking on tourism was really hard for me. It wasn't really, truly my background, but I gained that passion for it and worked with the industry. We developed the first new strategy that the

Yukon had seen in 18 years. It was the first-ever culture strategy in the Yukon. I worked on that. We responded to a global pandemic, where tourism was decimated. It was because of that plan that we had that helped us get to where we needed to go. We re-established our relationships with Yukon First Nations by entering into a heritage MOU. That is signatory to all the First Nations who are part of the Yukon Forum. This is charting a new way of doing things, and it's so vitally important.

One of the first actions we took when we came back to office was to change the mandate and the name of the Women's Directorate to Women and Gender Equity. It reflects the work that we have been doing, and we worked hard, me and the Minister of Health and Social Services, back in the previous mandate, and the Minister of Justice, to establish a sexual assault response team that we are now extending to the communities. This is important work for folks who have experienced this kind of violence. I could say so much more, but I know I have a limited amount of time.

The LGBTQ2S+ action plan, I want to say, was a huge accomplishment, and there is still so much work to be done to implement that. I do not see that commitment from the Yukon Party. In fact, they spoke against — they really spoke against the banning of conversion therapy when that was on the floor. So, what will they do with the rest of these actions? There are over a hundred in this plan. What would they do with that?

I have so much more I could say about the accomplishments that have been made and the work that's before us right now to rethink, re-envision, and really dig into the work that's at hand with our school system. We do have the right plans in place and the right recommendations.

I am so very committed to this work, and I thank you very much for those who have taken the time to hear my comments today. They definitely came from the heart. Some of them I didn't expect to say, and I hope that there is nobody offended by anything that I have said, because that wasn't my intent.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I do not support this motion. I have watched this Chamber for close to 30 years, and in my opinion, today marks a low point in Yukon democracy. Today marks a day, and I don't utter these words lightly, but I believe the Leader of the Third Party has the right of it: when Her Majesty's Official Opposition has leveraged a child sexual assault scandal to attempt to seize power.

Today marks a day when the Leader of the Official Opposition, a position of trust and responsibility, has put his own career above the will of Yukoners. He does so willingly and knowingly, based on supposition, opinion, rumour, and innuendo instead of waiting for evidence that will be presented in a few short months.

Mr. Speaker, that's curious, isn't it? Why rush this? In a few short months, as early as January, an independent review will make its findings known. This afternoon, the Official Opposition leader has already admitted that these four reviews have already brought new information to light — information that has shifted his perspective.



So, I ask again: Why rush this? Why not wait? Why not wait for the cold, hard facts from the independent lawyer?

Indeed, there is another fact that needs to be considered. In public statements, the Official Opposition has, without any tangible reason, disparaged the independent review and the lawyer in that role. Why? Why would they do that — baselessly undermine public confidence in the independent review? For what reason? Why would the Yukon Party push a non-confidence motion just months before evidence is presented while simultaneously disparaging and undermining the independent review?

These are good questions for people to ask.

I have some ideas, and I'll get to them shortly, but before I do, I want to assure Yukoners that their interests are always our prime focus. Your best interests are always our prime focus — your safety, your health, your well-being, your prosperity, your communities, and your businesses.

Over the last several years, we have accomplished a lot together. In the last election, Yukoners asked us all to work together. They wanted us to work with the opposition. To their credit, the New Democratic Party has done that. We negotiated a deal with the New Democratic Party and, as the Leader of the NDP has said, it isn't always easy and sometimes it's incredibly difficult, but we are working together for Yukoners.

We have and will continue to honour that deal that Yukoners have asked us to enter. Together, we will continue to deliver the stable, responsible, and responsive government that Yukoners have asked us to provide during these troubled times — during this pandemic.

I want to remind Yukoners of some of the incredible things that they have made possible through our governance in this partnership with the New Democratic Party. I want to remind Yukoners of the incredible things that they have made possible through their gracious support. We have resolved the legal disputes around the Peel plan that arose during the tenure of the member opposite. We immediately started to clean up that mess and restore trust with affected First Nations, which was lost due to the Yukon Party's actions. Further, continuing with reconciliation, our government restored the Yukon Forum. It was cancelled by the Cabinet of the previous government and, again, included the current Yukon Party leader. We took action on a pledge to increase First Nation representation in the civil service through our plan, *Breaking Trail Together*. We overhauled the entire procurement process and established a First Nation procurement policy — a commitment long-promised but ignored by the previous government. Sadly, they continue to oppose this policy. With our New Democrat partners, we are moving forward on land claims and successor legislation. We secured agreements with First Nations for the Yukon Resource Gateway project instead of attempting to plow ahead without them, as was the case previously.

These are just some of the ways that this government has advanced reconciliation, Mr. Speaker. We have enacted an LGBTQ2S+ action plan and policies to improve the lives of that community. We have worked to improve mental health services across the territory, and we are continuing to expand and improve those services. We have put in universal childcare and

early childhood education programs. We have drafted *Our Clean Future*, a nation-leading climate change policy with set-out, measurable goals. We paved the Dawson runway — something that the City of Dawson and Yukon's tourism industry had long asked for, but it never had happened. We also built an airport maintenance facility to properly support that long-requested infrastructure. We began a road maintenance program to ensure that all of Yukon's highways received brush-clearing, line-painting, and other safety measures. Prior to this, work was done willy-nilly. Now it is being done for everyone — fairly, consistently, and thoughtfully.

We passed the airports act, a piece of legislation lacking in the territory for 25 years. It defines government control over one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure that we run and brings them in line with the rest of the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We established and certified the Mayo airport, and we have done proper consultations and groundwork so that we can proceed with a northern fibre link to Inuvik, which is being built as we speak and will improve Internet services to the entire territory — actually to both territories, Mr. Speaker.

We are currently implementing a new voice-over IP system, which was projected to save the government more than \$1 million a year. We replaced the Nares bridge in Carcross, and we are in the process of replacing the Pelly-Nisutlin bridge in Teslin — a project blocked due to lack of consultation on the part of the previous government. We replaced and are in the process of replacing many other aging, smaller bridges around the territory.

In partnership with Canada, we are undertaking the largest single capital project in the territory's history, doing major upgrades to a huge swath of the north Klondike Highway, which was all but forgotten by the previous government. We are in the process of rewriting one of the largest pieces of legislation — if not the largest piece in the Yukon government — the *Motor Vehicles Act*. We have increased the penalties for drinking and distracted driving. Through the years of lobbying efforts with our Alaskan partners, we now see money restored to the Shakwak, which will help maintain the north Alaska Highway.

We built a beautiful new French school for Whitehorse's francophone community, and we are in the process of building an elementary school in Whistle Bend — some of the first new schools that the territory has seen in decades. We are building infrastructure across the Yukon, including a new arena in Carmacks and a pool in Pelly Crossing, a new community centre in Beaver Creek, and a new health centre and housing complex in Old Crow to help people in those communities recreate better, live better, and live happier, healthier lives.

When it comes to the environment, we are taking the tough but necessary step of ending free, uncontrolled dumping stations around the Yukon. We have implemented a price on carbon. We have implemented a ban on plastic bags. We have started to fill up our government fleet with more electric vehicles. We are adding more electric vehicle charging stations throughout the territory. Our new motor vehicles act will allow the future development of self-driving electric vehicles. We have increased transparency and access to government

information through a nation-leading *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

As noted by others, we have stopped the Yukon Party's plans for a megadiesel plant, which would have ensured dependency on fossil fuel for a generation, even if alternatives were developed. We have blocked fracking. We have expanded the Yukon's solar and hydro generation. We funded a permanent American sign language interpreter for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in Whitehorse, bringing them into the public discourse.

We are about to put in place the most progressive workers' compensation legislation in the country.

This, Mr. Speaker, is not an exhaustive list, but it is a sampling of some of the things that we have accomplished together. I know that my colleagues have touched on other things.

As mentioned by others, the member opposite is leveraging a child sexual assault case to undermine confidence in this government in advance of evidence. He has disparaged and undermined the independent review that is seeking answers. They have called it a sham.

I want to remind the Yukon Party benches that this is the government that Yukoners asked for just seven months ago. As voters demanded, we are working closely with our New Democrat partners to advance our joint agendas. I remind the members opposite that this is where the popular vote truly lies.

I also want to note that the Leader of the Official Opposition's own brief record since the election is less than stellar. In May, mere weeks after the election, more than 100 Yukoners were gathered outside of this building calling for the ouster of two of his MLAs. A few days into that ugly controversy, he finally acted and publicly benched both of them, but that only lasted nine days — nine days. Those disgraced MLAs didn't even serve the full penalty. You can check the public record and will find that some of them participated in the proceedings mere days after this was announced. They were supposed to take sensitivity training, but there's no evidence or public record of that ever happening — nothing. This was just a few short months ago.

The constituents of those MLAs asked them to resign. That didn't happen. When I was up the north highway, some of those Yukoners told me that they still rejected the representation of their MLA. So, now these folks are ready to govern? I hardly think so.

It needs to be noted that, just last week, the member opposite lost a vote of confidence of his own. He has been very quiet about it, but the conservative base went through a mitosis — splitting into two. Now there is the Yukon Party and the Yukon Freedom Party. That's hardly a sign of confidence in the member opposite's leadership. It doesn't engender confidence in his ability to govern through a pandemic. In fact, the rise of such a party might lead one to make a play to seize power.

Why did that split in the Yukon Party base happen? Well, in the last territorial election, in an effort to grab the progressive vote, the Yukon Party surprisingly faked right and turned left. Unfortunately, the conservative base didn't get the memo. They ran straight, as always, then slowed to a jog and then eventually

a walk, looking around, bewildered, and wondering where the member opposite had gone — where he had taken their party. Suffice to say that, once they figured it out, they were irked. I can only imagine what they are thinking now that the opposition leader has fully endorsed the terms of the confidence and supply agreement.

Don't get me wrong — there are many important, progressive, and cutting-edge initiatives there, but they are, as the member opposite acknowledged this afternoon, light years outside of a conservative supporter's comfort zone. They were bewildered and angry enough to start another movement, and then came the federal election, another platter of bungles. On the cusp of its call, the federal Conservatives summarily dumped the incumbent candidate without explanation. Then, the Leader of the Official Opposition recruited a replacement; then, when the disgraced one ran as an independent, the Yukon Party's leader publicly abandoned the Conservative candidate — the member opposite got operational paralysis. He proved to be a leader who couldn't lead; he refused to pick a candidate, so he angered both camps again.

So, the Conservative base has literally split in two because of the actions of the leader opposite, and it puts him in a tricky spot. It makes me wonder what the former reform supporter, the Member for Lake Laberge, is going to do, and it makes me wonder what the Member for Watson Lake is going to do. She recently supported the Freedom Party-supporting candidate's petition against the vaccine mandate. It makes me wonder about the integrity of the current Yukon Party.

This marks the first time since the 1990s that conservative voters have been so disgusted with the leader that they have formed new parties. This is not good news, not good news at all, and it really calls into question whether such a divisive figure is capable of providing stable government during a pandemic.

There is another problem: In the midst of the pandemic, the opposition leader openly opposing the advice of the chief medical officer of health. The chief medical officer of health has recommended a vaccine mandate to protect Yukoners. The opposition leader opposes the mandate. He doesn't support the vaccine mandate at all. So, I ask, how did he arrive at that policy approach? What doctors did he consult? What science did he lean on? What data is he pulling on to support his position/opinion? Again, he won't say. We have no answers, but during a pandemic, is this the type of leader Yukoners could depend on to provide stable, responsible government? A leader who cherry-picks CMOH recommendations based on his whims?

I promise to come back to the opposition leader and his possible motives. I see him fast-tracking, bringing down the government before seeking the advice, seeking the evidence or the results of several inquiries, as we have spoken about this afternoon. I see his party disparaging and undermining the inquiries, using the words "sham" and "so-called independent review." I see his party splitting and challenging his position, his rampant and unprecedented hard left turn, which, as he has admitted, continued last week. Now we see him wooing the NDP and abandoning his party's principles to seize

government. It all seems, well, reckless, frantic, and perhaps a little desperate. It seems like a power grab. As I said, this is not a good day for Yukon democracy.

Just a few short months ago, Mr. Speaker, Yukoners voted for a stable, cooperative government to take them through this pandemic. We negotiated that with our partners and remain committed to that minority government cooperation for the benefit of all. During a pandemic, that's what Yukoners have asked for. We do them a disservice if we don't honour that choice.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm glad to be able to have my own opportunity today to make some reflections to my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, this past April, Yukoners re-elected a progressive and eager and responsible government to continue dealing with many important issues that the territory needs action on — and there are many.

Yukoners re-elected a government to carry out economic momentum, to address climate change, to build forward a clean future, to invest in renewable energy, to address the housing crisis, to continue strengthening strong relationships between First Nation governments — and this is for the benefit of all Yukoners — to improve our infrastructure throughout our territory, and perhaps more poignantly for us in these days, to unite — to unite against COVID and to finish this fight against this deadly virus.

Mr. Speaker, in April, Yukoners were looking for a stable government to get us through the pandemic, and they got one. Yukoners were looking for elected officials to work together in the months and years to follow the election to ensure that the progressive priorities identified were acted upon. This is happening.

I recognize and acknowledge the Yukon New Democrats for coming to the table in the weeks following the election and working with us to develop an innovative agreement — the confidence and supply agreement — people hear us calling it “CASA” probably all day — which has brought progress and stability to a Legislative Assembly that could have had far less progress, and it could have had even less stability.

As Premier, I continue to have regular meetings with the Leader of the Third Party, as does our CASA secretariat, with the NDP's team to ensure that initiatives identified as shared priorities get the attention of this Legislature and can be moved ahead.

As elected representatives, I know that we all care. Every one of us, we all care about the Yukon. We come here because we care deeply about the communities that we come from and our neighbours who have helped us out from time to time. I recognize the importance of being an opposition member. I spent five years, as you know, Mr. Speaker, in opposition. I firmly believe that the responsibilities that we hold as MLAs supersede our approaches as members of political parties; therefore, I think that, when we have an opportunity to work with our colleagues to benefit Yukoners, and if we agree with an approach, we should embrace that.

I, like yourself and others, heard after the election that, in a minority situation, the will of the people would be to see an

opportunity to see political parties working together. It's a shame that the Yukon Party has taken a far different approach. These days, in the height of the fourth wave and in the midst of a state of emergency, we are seeing the Leader of the Yukon Party saying one thing and doing another. It's concerning. Mr. Speaker, I think that Yukoners can see through the tactics of the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Yukon Party, as they claim to be willing to accept the measures and initiatives stated in the CASA, which were unpalatable for them not that long ago, in the spring, let alone weeks ago during this very Sitting, but they are willing to say that they would accept the CASA in order to take power.

Yukoners know that the Yukon Party doesn't actually believe this. Yukoners believe that the Yukon Party won't defend science. They won't defend the recommendations of the chief medical officer of health. Yukoners also know that the Yukon Party consistently spreads misinformation, providing a disservice —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Point of order, Member for Lake Laberge.

**Mr. Cathers:** The accusation — the Premier has just twice contravened Standing Order 19(h). The Premier just used the term “spreads misinformation”, which has been ruled out of order, as it implies intent by another member. He stated a position expressed by another member and then went on to say that the member didn't really believe it, which, of course, is tantamount to an accusation of a falsehood.

I would ask you to have him retract those statements and apologize to the House.

**Speaker:** Government House Leader, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 19(h) talks about how you would call someone to order if they said that another member uttered a deliberate falsehood. That is the language that I see here.

I believe this to be a dispute among members. What the Premier said was “misinformation”. I have not heard that called out of order here before, but I look forward to your ruling.

#### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** I will review Hansard and get back to this House, if required. Please continue, Hon. Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Suffice to say, these actions and tactics are stoking division in our territory. In contrast, Yukoners currently do have a stable government that is working for them, embracing a collaborative approach to ensure that we do have progress on health care, that we do tackle climate change and do so much more.

We have a government that has delivered, through collaboration with our NDP partners, important projects, such as Yukon's first safe consumption site and the expansion of safe supply — both of which reflect our harm-reduction approach to the opioid crisis — an increased minimum wage, working toward banning single-use plastics, more aggressive action to

tackle climate change, working with the private sector to explore paid sick leave, and advancing our work on electoral reform. This government has guided us through the pandemic and has kept our economy going strong. Under this government, the Yukon has enjoyed economic growth every single year since we took office, including during the pandemic. We have the highest GDP growth in Canada for 2020. This government brings results.

In my mandate letter, as the Minister of Finance and also as the Minister of the Executive Council Office, I committed to my Cabinet and to Yukoners that we — and I quote: “As a government ... have a responsibility to provide strong, stable leadership as we continue to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19.” I will quote again: “We have led the nation with our response and will continue to support families, individuals and businesses as we emerge from the pandemic.”

Mr. Speaker, the fight against COVID-19 is not over — the fight to make a stronger, fair, cleaner, and more prosperous Yukon is not over. The territory needs leadership that will recognize and embrace their duties to always consider the best interests of Yukoners — leadership that is committed to the hard work ahead with a strong sense of purpose and a deep commitment to improving the lives of Yukoners and leadership that works closely with colleagues to serve the people of the Yukon each and every day.

I hold firm to those commitments. Those are promises that I made in my mandate letter. These are the commitments that I made to Yukoners, which this Cabinet and I will work toward each and every day.

We recognize that there is so much more work to be done to keep building on our accomplishments of the last five years. The Liberal government is committed to continuing to work hard to serve the needs of Yukoners, ensuring that individuals and businesses have the tools and the opportunities that they need to be successful. Our Liberal government will continue to work closely with the chief medical officer of health, continually re-evaluating the levels of restrictions in place to protect Yukoners against COVID-19.

Our government will support a strong and prosperous future for the territory, taking action to make life for Yukoners healthier, happier, and more affordable.

Speaking of the mandate letter, I am very grateful to my constituents of the Klondike and to all Yukoners for the opportunity, the honour, to serve as both Premier and the Minister responsible for the Executive Council Office and also the Minister of Finance. As both the Premier and also the minister with these two portfolios over my past five years, I have been proud to see so many tangible improvements take place in the Yukon.

In our previous term, we eliminated the small business tax, allowing businesses to hire more staff to improve their productions and to improve their services. We modernized the Yukon business investment tax credit by increasing the amount available from \$800,000 to \$4 million. We increased the company size limit to make Yukon an even more attractive investment jurisdiction. We increased the Yukon basic personal amount tax credit so that Yukoners save \$3 million annually on

Yukon tax bills in addition to \$7 million in federal tax savings by 2023. We reduced the corporate tax rate from 15 percent to 12 percent.

We designed and implemented the most successful legalized cannabis regime in Canada. We created an immigration pilot program to support employers in rural Yukon and signed a letter of intent with the Republic of the Philippines. We opened the NorthLight innovation hub alongside our partners — the Yukon University, the federal government, and Yukonstruct.

We released the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, a 10-year vision for tourism that takes a whole-of-Yukon approach to sustainable tourism. We have invested in our innovative entrepreneurs to help them reach the world stage with a \$2-million investment in technology venture, funded with Panache Ventures, providing significant local training and investment opportunities.

In 2015, our territory was in a recession. In 2016, something happened — something big, something important. Yukoners chose leadership rather than division. Yukoners chose a team that was committed to bolstering our economy, and they got what they asked for. Our economy has flourished and our unemployment rate has been among the lowest in the country.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard this from Liberal members who spoke before me and who spoke about their resolve, about their commitment to their neighbours, and about their love of this territory — Liberal members who spoke about their tremendous measures that they, as leaders in their areas of focus, have accomplished for Yukoners. This team will not be deterred by political games —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

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

**Mr. Cathers:** It seems to me that the Premier is in contravention of Standing Order 19(b) by speaking to matters other than the question under discussion or a motion or amendment. I would ask you to remind him of what the topic of this is, which, of course, is non-confidence.

**Speaker:** Government House Leader, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a confidence motion. It's talking about the confidence of this government, which is a very broad motion by its very nature. Members opposite have spoken about a range of topics, from energy to housing to doctors to the Hidden Valley Elementary School system. It's a range of topics. We are responding with a range of topics to talk about confidence in this House.

#### Speaker's ruling

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

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Where I left off is quite fitting. This team will not be deterred by political games being put forth by the Yukon Party. If the Yukon Party wishes to continue

spending our time playing politics and embracing division, well, so be it. But in the meantime, this stable government will continue to get us through the pandemic and will continue to fight for the future and prosperity of our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing me to have my opinion heard in the Legislative Assembly today.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about a matter of confidence. At the onset, I want to assure all members of this House that I do not need anyone to speak on my behalf. I am more than capable of expressing myself. I am more than capable of explaining myself.

First, I acknowledge the parents in the gallery. I want you to know that I see you. I thank those who are in the gallery. I thank those who have reached out in other ways. I have read your letters. I have had phone calls, and I know where you stand. This is an issue of confidence, and it's a tough one. I have made it clear that the Liberals have made some serious mistakes. I absolutely agree that the Liberal government has mishandled the Hidden Valley issue, but I want you to know that it is because of what you have shared, what you have experienced, and because you have shared the failures that you're living with that systemic changes will be made. I can assure you that we won't stop working toward this end to ensure that your experiences are never shared by another family.

I was struck yesterday by the intentions behind restorative justice, because restorative justice starts with a genuine acknowledgement of the harm that was caused. You and yours have been hurt, and this is not acceptable. Yukon government owes you a genuine apology. They need to assure you that it will never happen again. They owe you this. That need for this genuine apology is why we supported a motion that asks the previous minister to be removed from Cabinet. It's why we voted the way we did. It's why the Yukon NDP did the heavy lifting on that day — that need for a genuine apology.

So, let me explain why I'll be voting against this motion.

The Leader of the Official Opposition came to me early Friday evening to give me advance notice that this motion was coming. He told me that he was prepared to accept the confidence and supply agreement that the NDP had signed with the Liberals. I was surprised. I was surprised because only six months ago, after the spring election when I was approached by both the Yukon Party and Liberals, we spoke a few times, and it was that very same person who is making this proposition now who was not interested in working with us then.

The Yukon Party has repeatedly slammed this agreement for being too radical. They have continued, until Friday evening, to come out against the principles of that agreement at every opportunity and in very public ways. So, yes, I'm surprised that the Yukon Party is now willing to implement policies that they dismissed as too radical just six months ago.

But the Leader of the Official Opposition is now saying that he feels so strongly about accountability that he is ready to take these commitments on.

So, first, I want to talk about past accountability. When I was in this House with a Yukon Party majority government —

a government that regularly chose to disregard and disrespect First Nation governments, a government that forced First Nations to the courts to defend their belief in environmental protections and the sanctity of the land use planning process, a government that continually fought with First Nations in the courts and regularly lost, and a government that wanted to welcome unconventional gas extraction to the territory — under that government, I learned what a workplace laced with lateral violence meant. I remember how there was absolutely no way to work together because, for five years, there wasn't ever an acknowledgement that good and important ideas came from all sides of the House and there was never a willingness to work together. The Leader of the Yukon Party was in that government, as were four of his colleagues.

Let me touch on recent accountability. On Thursday last week, one of his MLAs came to me and finally apologized for an event that had happened in the spring. After months of silence, I got an apology. I was touched. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, this is where I'm still naïve, because I'm always optimistic. I was touched; I really was. I thought: Oh finally, after months and months of silence, I finally get an apology. It felt genuine, and I'm still hopeful that it was, but looking back at the timing, it gives me pause. It turns out that I received that apology just 24 hours before I was approached by the Leader of the Yukon Party.

Maybe folks will be surprised to hear that I just got an apology, because as we know, the MLAs were back-benched this spring, and this fall, they got their portfolios back. The leader said that amends had been made, but I don't know who those amends were made to, because it wasn't me, at least not until Thursday. I will put it on the record, Mr. Speaker, that I did get an apology in the spring, and for that I am grateful.

The day after that long-awaited apology, the Leader of the Official Opposition comes to my office and makes me this offer. This is where it is so hard, because of that timing. What felt like a heartfelt apology made me question whether or not I had been manipulated. It pains me to say this, because I don't think it was done in that way, but it made me feel like there was a bigger game being played that I never agreed to play. I never agreed to this — never.

This is not what I call accountability. This is not what I call leadership. For someone who apparently feels so strongly about accountability, this just doesn't add up to me, unfortunately, so that is why I question the proposal itself. It was made on Friday afternoon. It didn't last long. It was so rushed that the Leader of the Official Opposition forgot to tell me half of his proposal, which was about the public inquiry, but I did learn about that on Monday through media coverage. To be clear, the Yukon NDP has already tabled a motion to call a public inquiry. After the independent reviews all come in, I am prepared to call it for debate, because if answers are still needed, the Liberal government owes it to the Hidden Valley community to get to the bottom of those questions.

I hope that, if I am forced to call that motion, the Liberal government will support it, understanding that they owe it to the Hidden Valley community.

We have someone who is trying to convince me that we can work together, but they target me and my caucus as soon as Question Period starts on Monday morning, and then they go to the media and say that, absolutely, they are hoping we will change our mind, that we can still work together, when only a few minutes after slamming us in the House repeatedly, there is a difference of opinion there in the media.

To be clear, this isn't the first time that I have been targeted by the Yukon Party, and I'm not so naïve to think that it will be the last. So, yes, I have trouble believing this offer is genuine.

And top of that, the Leader of the Yukon Party is already making promises on something he has no control over — elections. Voting in favour of this motion would most likely result in the calling of an election this winter. I know that, and I assume the Leader of the Opposition knows that too, because I reached out to an expert on the matter and was told, if he had to put money down on the issue, that he would put his money on an election, because it's not up to the opposition to decide. Again, he is promising something that can't be delivered on.

Let's take a minute to talk about something that deeply troubles me. This Monday afternoon, in a media interview, the Leader of the Official Opposition was asked about the fact that these abuses started under a Yukon Party government. Because of a timeline charted by the RCMP, we now know that the first known abuse happened under a Yukon Party government and was handled internally at the time. To be clear, more children were made vulnerable because of how this issue was handled internally when the Yukon Party was in power.

Someone asked about it in the media on Monday. The Leader of the Opposition said — and I quote: "... the school made a decision to handle some sort of allegation..." Some sort of allegation — language is incredibly important, and this is a weak and disturbing change of language. "Some sort of allegation", because when it happened under a Liberal government, it's a "sex abuse scandal", but when talking about when it happened under a Yukon Party government, it became "some sort of allegation" — some sort of allegation that allowed children to be harmed in the interim, some sort of allegation that allowed it to continue.

Let us be clear — both the Liberals and the Yukon Party are responsible for hurt that was caused to children. Both the Liberals and the Yukon Party are responsible for the harm that was caused to children. Both the Liberals and the Yukon Party were in power when children did not receive the support that they needed — both of you — and they did not receive the support that they deserved.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party is using the tragedy of a sex abuse scandal at a school as leverage for their own political gain, and this is shameful. So, right now, the Yukon Party loves to quote me, as I said that I felt that the commitments laid out in the confidence and supply agreement are too important to bring down the government, but they are conveniently forgetting the other piece that I said, which was that, even though I was voting in favour of the deputy minister's resignation, I was not oblivious to the political game that the Yukon Party was playing. I am still not oblivious to the games that are being played.

I know that not everyone will agree with the position that we are taking today, and I have to answer to that — hundreds of times — just so that the government understands — hundreds of times. My job is to put Yukoners at the centre of my decisions, and even though, for some, it does not feel like that is what I am doing today, that is what I am doing today. I am well aware that my decision will be questioned and it will be criticized, but, Mr. Speaker, what we don't need right now are political games. We don't need a party leveraging the abuse of children for their own political gain.

What we need is for everyone in this House to work together to solve the crises that Yukon is facing. We need to focus on fixing what needs to be fixed.

So, let me finish by saying this to the government: This is not a free pass. If anything, the rules have been redrawn today, and I expect more, and I expect better. The government has failed to act on and address many issues, and Hidden Valley is the primary one. I hope that you understand that what is needed right now is an acknowledgement and a genuine apology, because families need to heal, and that has to be the first step.

So, Mr. Speaker, we in the Yukon NDP will continue to ask the hard questions. We will continue to hold the government accountable, because that's what Yukoners have asked us to do. We will always put people over politics.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Mr. Dixon:** I thank my colleagues for their comments. There has been a lot said today about a range of issues, some related to what I feel is the issue at hand and some not, but ultimately, the intent behind this motion was to bring about answers and accountability.

I have heard from many Yukoners about a variety of issues, but most particularly the one that we find ourselves discussing the most is the Hidden Valley issue. I have been asked to do everything that I can do — everything within my power — to bring about answers and accountability. I realize that a confidence motion is a big step, but that's the step that I need to take to be able to tell myself and Yukoners that I have done everything that I can do to bring that about.

That's why we're here. That's why this motion is here. That's why I made the offer that I have — to avoid, in my opinion, an election — which was to honour the confidence and supply agreement, despite my strong reservations and my strong feelings about some of the policies therein.

As I said in my opening remarks, I felt that this was more important than my own disagreements about labour law or mining policy or rent control or any of those kind of policy issues. I thought it was bigger than that, and that's why I made the offer that I did.

In addition, I have noted my interest in seeing a public inquiry come forward and look at the full breadth of what happened, going back right to the beginning of when this individual was hired by the Yukon government. I have done that because I think that everyone deserves to know exactly

what happened and when and who knew and when. That includes times when I was in office as a Cabinet minister. I am, without a doubt, willing and interested in participating in that kind of review. I know that others have brought forward the idea that this could come about in the spring. My intention was to not see us wait that long and to see us go back to that sort of a review right away.

I know that the government has discussed a number of the reviews that are underway. I would note that, of the four that are underway, three of them are in no control of the Yukon government at all. They were not initiated by the Liberal government and they were not supported initially by the Liberal government. I would note that the Minister of Education, at the time when the Child and Youth Advocate launched her review, indicated that it was not within the legal authority of the Child and Youth Advocate to launch such a review. We disagreed then and we disagree now with the government on that.

None of that matters as much anymore, Mr. Speaker. Ultimately, like I said, I brought this forward because I needed to be able to tell myself and tell Yukoners that I have done everything that I can do — everything within my power as Leader of the Official Opposition — to bring about a change, to bring about a change in direction, and to bring about answers and accountability. That is what this was about.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks, and I look forward to voting on this.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

**Speaker:** Madam Deputy Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Disagree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Disagree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Disagree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Disagree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Disagree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Disagree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Disagree.

**Mr. Dixon:** 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:** Disagree.

**Ms. Blake:** Disagree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Disagree.

**Deputy Clerk (Ms. Kolody):** Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

**Speaker:** The nays have it. I declare the motion negatived.

*Motion No. 236 negatived*

### MOTION NO. 239

**Deputy Clerk:** Motion No. 239, standing in the name of Ms. White.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT the House urges the Government of Yukon to establish a publicly funded community walk-in clinic staffed by primary care providers, including family physicians and nurse practitioners, who can offer a range of health and social supports.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to repeat the urgency of this issue. Everyone in the Yukon deserves primary care. We need a primary care clinic that is public — that means publicly funded and publicly run. Primary care is the first and the best defence against illness. It's where your family doctor, nurse practitioner, dietician, or a whole host of other staff work to prevent illness. From birth until death, we need health care, and a public walk-in clinic can provide that.

Until everyone has real primary care, our system is not truly universal. This government cannot call our health care system "public" until we have a real public community walk-in clinic.

Right now, we're in a crisis. There are thousands of Yukoners who don't have any primary care. To be as accurate as possible, it's 21 percent of Yukoners who do not have access to primary care, according to the experts who wrote *Putting People First*. Mr. Speaker, that is one in five Yukoners.

Just the numbers don't do this crisis justice. At the heart of this crisis are people and their stories, so I want to share some of the stories that have come out of this crisis — some that are shared with us. There is the young Yukoner who has been struggling to get out of bed lately, and no matter how hard they try, something just doesn't feel right. But without a family doctor, they can't get a referral to a psychiatrist. If they go to the ER, they won't get seen for hours, and then they probably won't get that referral and they won't get the follow-up and they are left on their own.

There is the Yukoner on the wait-list who wakes up and often feels dizzy. When she exercises, she becomes lightheaded. She knows that something is off, but she does not have a family doctor. Without one, she can't get a referral, she can't get basic bloodwork, and she can't get treatment. For something as simple as an iron deficiency, she can't get treated here.

We have heard from some Yukoners who have mild health issues — nothing worthy of the emergency room, but you never know. They don't have a family doctor, and some of these folks haven't seen a health care professional in years. There are Yukoners who are given devastating diagnoses every day but, without a family doctor, these Yukoners are left to flounder, waiting to navigate the system on their own, waiting for their illness to get worse, with little follow-up.

There is a Yukoner with diabetes who recently spoke out. Without primary care, she doesn't have access to the tools that she needs to stay healthy. She can't get prescriptions, she can't get bloodwork, and she can't get follow-up.

One of the first ways to detect diabetes is through the eyes, so a visit to the optometrist can point out the concern, but without a family doctor, that person can't get a bloodwork order, and they don't have anyone to walk them through the results. Then they don't have anyone to prescribe the medication if they do need treatment.

There are so many aging seniors in the Yukon, and all of these Yukoners need health care. As they age, they face new health issues. Without primary care, these issues — like high blood pressure, arthritis, dementia, and so much more — are just left to get worse.

There are seniors who can't get a driver's licence without a doctor, because a doctor fills out their forms and they've had to wait in the cold to take the bus or rely on neighbours and friends for rides to basic errands. You are only 70 when you need your first medical for licence renewal in the Yukon.

There are thousands of Yukoners who are going to the emergency room for non-urgent care, from ear infections to sore throats to headaches to skin conditions. Right now, Yukoners are going to the emergency department for non-urgent care. It's not where they want to be. We know that this is the most costly and most expensive and least effective form of health care. People in the communities are forced to drive for hours, or days, just to sit and wait in the ER for something that isn't even an emergency, but they have to do it because they are desperate.

People looking for referrals are being turned away because they do not have a family doctor to follow up with. Every time a person needs to return to the emergency department, they are pretty much guaranteed to have a different doctor, and they need to start the process all over again.

To be clear, I'm on the side of physicians working in the emergency department. It must be frustrating to know that there are dozens of people waiting for non-urgent care while trying to help patients with real emergencies. Mr. Speaker, in the emergency room, they are left to deal with renewing prescriptions, dressing changes, wound care, or stitches needing to be removed — or mental health support when really what you need is your family doctor to refer you to a psychiatrist. What you really need is a family doctor to refer to any of our specialist supports.

*Putting People First* didn't just give the government a checklist; it told them what we need to do to fundamentally shift the way we think about health care — that we need to do health care differently. We have seen some of the recommendations implemented, and that is great, but there are some bigger tasks ahead.

They talk about clinics with integrated care support, and I would hope that, with the creation of a community clinic, we would include nurse practitioners and social workers, mental health support workers, a dietician, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and midwives when that becomes a reality. Mr. Speaker, I imagine that this clinic would have walk-in

services so that, at any time, someone can come in and get the help that they need with no barriers, no hurdles, and no thousand-person wait-list.

When we talk about *Putting People First*, we need to be looking at the whole person and their needs, not just what they might present with. Why would you treat a person with diabetes if you don't even know if they have access to healthy food or have adequate cooking facilities? Why would you treat a person with respiratory problems if you don't know what their living situation is? Are they living in an overcrowded situation? Are they living with mold?

The social determinants of health are just as important as acute health care. We are not talking about reinventing the wheel. Public community clinics already exist across the country. When I lived in Australia, I didn't have access to a primary care doctor. I was a visitor. What I did have access to was a walk-in clinic. I would call, make an appointment, I would go to that clinic, and I would get primary health care.

The *Putting People First* report looked at the Nuka model in Alaska as one that the Yukon could adapt and follow. Mr. Speaker, this is not a new idea; in fact, we talked about this model in opposition when I was first elected 10 years ago. What the *Putting People First* committee found was that the Nuka was a model that promoted decreasing health care costs and improved health care outcomes, as well as increased satisfaction of clients and providers. That should be the focus — improved health outcomes. Improved health outcomes first, while recognizing our steadily increasing health care costs.

A public clinic is one where health professionals are paid a fair wage. It's where they are paid a wage, so it's not a fee-per-service model. A public clinic is one that could offer a holistic and health-focused service to Yukoners. A public clinic gives everyone access to health care. A public clinic treats patients with dignity and respect. Making it a walk-in clinic would help Yukoners who are in such desperate need for real care, and it wouldn't be the revolving door of an emergency department that is not built to address health-focused services.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you have heard from folks about the wait times in the emergency department. Imagine if all of those individuals with non-emergent care had a community clinic that they could access. In *Putting People First*, they talked about implementing big changes to improve Yukoners' health. We can't ever lose sight of that. Primary care is not just about treating the unwell Yukoners, but focuses on improving the health of all Yukoners. It's about tackling the problems upstream so that they don't come back downstream.

Community clinics have a holistic, whole-person approach. No one is just an ear infection, and no one is just a head cold, and no one is just a broken bone. At the heart of health care are people. At the heart of this decision are Yukoners, so I urge everyone in this House to do what is right for people.

I will continue to urge that this government open a public community walk-in clinic, because I believe that it is doable. I know that it is recommended, and this would put people first in our decisions.



**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would like to start by thanking the Leader of the Third Party for bringing this motion forward. I am mindful of the time today, but I do want us to continue to speak about this motion as long as possible and certainly in the future. I am concerned that we may not finish the full debate with respect to this, and I appreciate the timing of this particular session, and I want to express the hope that we continue.

I will reach out to the Leader of the Third Party to have a more detailed conversation about the options that are real here in the territory, because I have a number of things to say about that, but before I go there, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Leader of the Third Party for her comments and for her submission to this Legislative Assembly on the first motion that was spoken to here today, because I know how complicated these issues can be, and I just wanted to express thanks to her for that, because I think that she spoke from the heart and she spoke about people. She spoke about people here in the territory with respect to this motion as well.

As a result, I want to express my concurrence in that, my agreement. Many of the comments that I will — well, or all of them — will be based on the concept of people, and people are at the heart of our medical system, and they are at the heart of the needs for our medical system to be changed and adjusted.

Mr. Speaker, the *Putting People First* comprehensive review of the Yukon health and social services system here in the territory was unprecedented. It was a complete review of the details of how we provide health and social services to Yukoners and how we need to do better at doing so. It examined the way that the Yukon government currently delivers health and social services and how this compares with high-performing health care systems in other jurisdictions.

We heard the member opposite just mention some of those. I won't go through the details of all of it, but I think it's very important to note that one of the primary pieces of information that was given to government and given to Yukoners through this process was the fragmented nature of our current system. There were all kinds of very important pieces of information, all of which have been accepted by government, because it is critical that we accept these changes, acknowledge these shortcomings, if we are going to improve.

We treat illness and emergencies pretty well here in the territory, but we need to focus on prevention. We do not have a health system that tailors to individual needs. We do not have a health system that is culturally safe for some people. That's not acceptable. The work is sometimes done in silos, and we need to work better together — hospitals, home care, primary care, social services, et cetera — we need to remove silos.

We need a single, clear vision and a common purpose of our health and social services system. This is almost insurmountable as a topic, but it also is an exciting piece of information, because we know that we can develop such a thing — a single, clear vision and a common purpose for the Department of Health and Social Services and for the ways in which we deliver all health care across the system. There are costs to the system. There are costs to individual people. There is too little coordination, and there is a lack of data. There are many more details, but we certainly got the message that we

need tools and procedures to evaluate, to plan, and to improve the system going forward.

I think that it is also important to note that *Putting People First* also identified strengths. It is important to highlight these, because these are all about people. They are all about the people who deliver these services, and these are the strengths of our system. We have compassionate and dedicated care providers. We have strong First Nation service delivery; we have strong, caring NGOs; and we have health centres in all communities — not something that exists everywhere in Canada. I know that seems strange, because it is so inherent in our understanding of Yukon medical and health services. We have nursing staff who are interested in expanding their scope, and we have fit and physically active Yukon citizens, higher than the national average, and we have emergency wait times that are below the national average. We have, overall — as I said a minute ago, our system takes care of sick people pretty well, but that is not to say that we don't have incredibly mountainous hills to climb.

We need an emphasis on prevention, both for health and for mental wellness. We heard that clearly, particularly from communities. We don't have what Yukoners want and need in that area.

Mr. Speaker, *Putting People First* is about creating a new vision of wellness here in the territory. It is about creating a system of integrated, whole-person care. I think that the member opposite, who is sponsoring this motion, said it very, very well. We can't do that — we can't treat one piece of a puzzle if what we are trying to do is put a puzzle together. It requires big changes. I can't possibly go through all of those today, but I do want to speak specifically about some of the efforts that are being made to provide the kind of service to fill the gaps that are currently being felt here in the territory, and across Canada, with respect to a shortage.

The key categories of recommendations — and people will know that there are 76 of them — are all broken down into about seven categories.

The one that I want to concentrate on today is “building a new health care system”, because that is what this motion is asking about — a way in which we can serve Yukoners with a walk-in clinic.

Some of those recommendations will take time to implement. Some actions can happen more quickly and have begun to happen, and some have happened already. Others will take much longer as we look to review the system of health and social services.

There is integration of work required. I am going to stop for a second to say — and my colleagues have heard me say this, and people who know me have heard me say this — that all complex problems require a spiderweb of solutions. There is no panacea. There is no one magic bullet that solves these kinds of complex problems — particularly the complex problems that we have with respect to social services and health care but in all areas where people are at the centre of these kinds of services. The integrated work is absolutely critical.

Many of the recommendations in *Putting People First* are also integrated into some of the ongoing work that is based on extensive consultation and engagement already being done by

the Yukon government — things such as the aging-in-place action plan, the medical travel review, and the response to the Blackjack inquest, just to name a few.

As I have said, 11 of the recommendations have already been completed. I can speak to some of those, but work is underway in the planning and the implementation of the remaining recommendations, including relevant commitments that we have made in the 2021 confidence and supply agreement. There is the creation of a policy implementation committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations. *Putting People First* calls for broad health and social services changes, and it is anticipated that completing some of those will be over an extensive timeline. That is certainly not to say that work is not underway.

The introduction and implementation of affordable childcare and the transferring of the childcare services unit to the Department of Education happened on April 1, 2021, and that is because it was recommendation 3.8. That was critically important and has been done; it has been done by this government. It has been done and drastically changed the services that are provided to Yukon families with respect to affordable childcare.

We have doubled the medical travel subsidy. We have extended the days eligible for reimbursement, and we are undergoing other reviews of the medical travel program. We have already added locations where people can travel for service. Those were recommendations 2.4, 8.1, and 2.8. We have expanded eligible vaccines. Yukoners are now able to receive things like the Shingrix, Pneumovax, and the Fluzone high-dose vaccines for Yukon seniors — recommendation 2.14.

Mr. Speaker, it's easy to list these achievements, but they are not easy to accomplish. Each and every one of them have either days, months, or sometimes years of work behind them. People work — people who work on the policies, people who work on engagements, people who work on drafting legislation, orders, or regulations that need to give life to these things. There are many more that I could list. We have reduced pharmacy markups. There has been the creation of an evidence and evaluation unit, which has been required by the report. We have expanded palliative and end-of-life programs and supports for Yukoners living in communities, and we have increased the daily rate for residential long-term care, which was also a recommendation. We are hiring additional nurse practitioners where needed to increase access to primary health care providers. A further 30 other recommendations are currently in progress.

I will take the opportunity next to speak about the bilingual health clinic here in Whitehorse because it is an important element of what is being asked for with respect to this motion today.

The bilingual health clinic is slated to open early next year. It actually will likely occur in the spring of 2022. We are looking to try to do that sooner. I can indicate that the bilingual health clinic will open here in the City of Whitehorse. There are a number of conversations happening with respect to how that clinic will be staffed. We expect it to be staffed by two full-time

doctors, nurse practitioners, and other care providers, and it will provide the opportunities for after-hours care as well as the opportunity for, we hope, a walk-in element.

I am going to speak a little bit about the polyclinics, because I think that this is one of the most important parts of *Putting People First* that is in relation to this particular motion. I say that because this motion is asking for a walk-in clinic to serve Yukoners for all of the reasons mentioned earlier, which is an important aspect of our health and social care system. To ensure that Yukoners have access to primary care services, the independent expert panel envisioned creating integrated and collaborative health care clinics, primary care settings that are supported by a variety of health and social care professionals working together with clients to discuss treatment plans and options for care — much as the member opposite described. These integrated and collaborative health care clinics would be made up of primary care providers, such as a physician or a nurse practitioner, who would collaborate with a team of professionals to deliver personalized service and develop treatment plans.

In 2022, we will be opening a bilingual health centre in Whitehorse, which is an example of this type of clinic. The primary care setting is expected to reduce some of the pressures currently being experienced across our primary health care system — so, as noted by the member opposite with respect to our hospital. The Mental Wellness and Substance Use Referred Care Clinic is also an example of an integrated and collaborative health care clinic. The Referred Care Clinic includes a team of Mental Wellness and Substance Use services staff, such as licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, outreach support workers, and an opioid prevention coordinator, as well as contract physicians with respect to this.

We continue to work closely with the Yukon Medical Association to discuss options for improving access to primary health care services and integrated collaborative care. I think that this is an important point for me to emphasize here in the short amount of time that I have today, because this is critical to achieving what is asked for in this particular motion. We must work — and we are keen to work — with the Yukon Medical Association and with individual doctors here in Whitehorse to envision and have them advise us as to what their vision is with respect to a walk-in type of service that could be provided.

We are not looking at years of engagement here; we are not looking at months of conversations that go nowhere. We are having those conversations in very real time, and the bilingual health centre that will be opening is a key part of this.

Further, a community clinic that is anticipated, or asked for, in this motion is something that requires that kind of work. We have to have those conversations with our partners. Medical professionals — and doctors in particular — here in the territory are private business owners. That is not at all the barrier to this. By the way, they are funded by public funds here in the territory with respect to the negotiations that happen with them. How they are paid — and the scales and the categories

for which they are paid — are open to negotiation, and that is underway in the near future here in the territory.

But it is absolutely critical for my colleagues to understand here that they are individual doctors, and other groups — the Yukon Medical Association, the Canadian Medical Association — are all keen to address this issue. They are keen for us to have conversations with them — what they envision a clinic might look like, how they might help us staff such a clinic. Those conversations are ongoing.

Just to note that we are working closely with the Yukon Medical Association to discuss options for improving access to primary health care services and integrated collaborative care — it is absolutely critical. Primary health care reform, Mr. Speaker, focuses on providing comprehensive services to a defined population by a collaborative team of providers. Let me just say it again, because I think that this is an incredibly important part, that primary health care reform, which is what we are talking about here — how we can do things differently, how we are going to adopt services for Yukoners that are meaningful and relevant for them and provide them the service they are seeking — focuses on providing comprehensive services to a defined population by a collaborative team of providers, as I have noted, similar to what has been mentioned by the member opposite in her opening remarks.

Integrative and collaborative health care clinics are an important component of primary health care reform. We are working toward including objectives such as increased opportunities for Yukoners to access walk-in appointments, same-day services, and practitioners who are working jointly on person-centred care. I think those are important paths that our government has chosen to go down to provide better services to Yukoners.

In order to determine how we might staff a walk-in clinic and other services across the territory, our government is committed to supporting and offering financial supports to individuals who are pursuing health and related education. I am interested in making this point today because there has been some information that is not accurate put forward in the Legislative Assembly. This is an opportunity to address this, as it is an important one. Our government is pleased to offer financial supports through a medical education bursary, a nursing education bursary, and the health professional education bursary programs. \$89,000 is available for 16 new health-related education bursary recipients each year. That is provided by the Department of Health and Social Services. These three education bursary programs represent just one part of the overall funding to support health care recruitment and retention.

In 2021-22, our government budgeted \$4.39 million for the Yukon Medical Association to support 13 physician recruitment and retention initiatives and programs, as well as an additional \$125,000 for the Yukon Medical Association to administer their medical student bursary program. Just by comparison, back in 2014-15, Health and Social Services budgeted \$2.36 million to the Yukon Medical Association for their recruitment and retention initiatives, which was good at the time, including the medical student bursary. We have

increased that significantly. This \$4.39-million funding is used by the Yukon Medical Association to administer incentive programs, such as the continuing medical education program and the preceptor support program. It's used for locum support funds, parental benefits programs, the physician relocation program, a recruitment program, a retention program, resident and medical student support program, and the office renovation program, among other things.

Information about these programs is available on the Yukon Medical Association's website. I think that this is an important thing for Yukoners to know.

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, the Department of Health and Social Services also provided \$150,000 to the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, and they administer the continuing nurse education fund with those dollars. Yukon residents who are studying medicine, or are intending to apply to medicine, may also apply for a number of other funding programs that are not administered necessarily by the Government of Yukon, but financial assistance is available through the Canadian Medical Foundation, the First Nation health program at Whitehorse General Hospital, and the Yukon Foundation.

As I noted, these are important pieces of information. The reason I bring them to the attention of the floor today is that it is critical for us in considering walk-in elements to the medical clinics we have or the ones that we will have. It's critical for us to understand how we will be staffing those locations, because as I said, we must work closely with our medical physicians in the territory. The opportunity to work with them going forward includes education and continuing education for those professionals.

Since 2016, we have increased the number of in-territory resident pediatric, orthopaedic, and psychiatric supports, and we are supporting Yukoners living in communities to access primary care. I also should add that we have increased significantly the in-territory surgical team and are providing more and more services to Yukoners right here at home within the last number of years. We will continue to grow those programs, as the need arises.

During the 2020 calendar year, the Yukon was supported by a total of 75 resident physicians and an additional 20 specialists. In addition, there were 95 visiting physicians and specialists providing coverage, and 24 of these resident physicians also serve Yukon communities, which I think is an important point.

Services continue to be available at Whitehorse General Hospital and at the Yukon Women's MidLife Health Clinic and are available to support specific care needs. Yukoners are also encouraged to register for the "find a family doctor" program, which we know has, since 2019, matched over 1,000 Yukoners with a family doctor.

Is that enough? No. Do we have folks on a waiting list? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. In the coming months, we will continue that work with the Yukon Medical Association in determining how we can provide those kinds of increased services. We are working with our partners and options here in the territory to increase virtual health opportunities.

I should mention something that gets missed pretty regularly in our relatively short answers here when being asked about this in the Legislative Assembly Question Period. It is just a reminder to Yukoners that we have the 811 nurses line, which is seven days a week, 24 hours a day and operates for you to have access to a nurse health professional with experience who can often answer questions that are of an urgent nature, or not so urgent, that Yukoners might have: This is my situation, and this is my issue. Should I seek urgent care, or should I make an appointment? Should I do a trip to emergency? Can I see a nurse practitioner? Those kinds of —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*Debate on Motion No. 239 accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*