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HANSARD

Monday, May 17, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

SPECIAL SITTING

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 Special Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, May 17, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. The following motion has not been placed on the Notice Paper, as it is now outdated: Motion No. 21, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North.

In addition, the following motion has not been placed on the Notice Paper at the request of the member: Motion No. 26, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming a number of people who have joined us today in the gallery for the tribute today to Archie Lang. We have with us today Karen Lang, Archie's wife, and his son Graham and his partner, Kim. I don't see Simon there, but I believe Simon must be home listening to this; Meagan Lang and Kevin Hannam and their two kids, Margaret and June. Fraser Lang and his wife Paola Lang are here as well. Their newly arrived Isabella, I believe, is also at home, staying warm and listening to this.

We have Danielle Lang, Hector Lang, Laura Lang, Mollie Lang, Heather Deuling, Luke Deuling, Ted Staffen and Bailey Staffen, Lorraine Nixon, Linda and Don Dixon. Patrick Rouble is here as well.

I think I got everyone there. If I missed anyone, my apologies, but please join me in welcoming these folks to the gallery.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have just one more name to add to the list, an old colleague of mine, Ms. Sue Staffen — if we could welcome her as well, please.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Archie Lang

Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party caucus to pay tribute to a former member of this Legislature, a friend to many of us, and a truly exceptional Yukoner, Archie Lang.

Archie passed away peacefully earlier this year, on March 10, after losing a short battle with cancer. Archie led a remarkable northern life and was surrounded by many unique, remarkable northern characters. Whether you had the pleasure of experiencing adventures, or misadventures, alongside Archie or had the pleasure of hearing about them afterwards from him, there can be no doubt that stories played a large role in his life and are a wonderful legacy that he has left for all of us. His sense of humour and his storytelling are something that all those who knew him will certainly cherish and remember. Whether he was sitting on a barstool or sitting at a boardroom table, those around him were in for a treat.

Archie's own personal story was one of a Yukon life well lived. His family moved to the Yukon from the Dawson Creek area in 1958 when his father, Hector, found work at the new Whitehorse dam working on a fish ladder. So, he, his twin brother Daniel, and their older sisters, Mary and Heather, moved to Whitehorse.

Archie graduated from F.H. Collins high school in 1967, and it is said that, while his grades have been lost to the fog of history, he was selected as class president by popular acclaim.

As his father, Hector, became one of the Yukon's premier bridge builders, Archie realized that his talents were better suited to a different type of business. His entrepreneurial endeavours were many and wide ranging, and they certainly began quite young. He was barely old enough to drink when he bought the Caribou Hotel. It was at the age of 25 when he bought the Watson Lake Hotel and quickly established himself as a renowned proprietor. It was also in Watson Lake where he met the love of his life, Karen.

Karen and Archie were known for driving much of the social activities of southeast Yukon. During that time, there wasn't a ball or gala that didn't have their fingerprints on it. They expanded the reach of their enterprise there to include a grocery store, a gas station, and an outfitting concession.

Anyone who has ever spoken to Karen or Archie about their life in Watson Lake will know how important and impactful that time was for them. It was also when they began to grow their family. All three of their children, Graham, Meagan, and Fraser, grew up in Watson Lake.

Archie was an incredibly proud father. He would regale just about anyone with stories about the many accomplishments of his children. In fact, people whom he barely knew would often be treated to stories about young Graham, "Pie Face", or "My Little Fraser" — although he did remark on occasion: "I have three kids. Two are lawyers and the third needs one."

In 1994, the Langs moved to Whitehorse and took on the Super A grocery store, the Capital Hotel, and Sgt. Preston's Lodge in Skagway. Over the following years, Archie would eventually own and operate grocery stores across the north, from Dease Lake to Old Crow.

It was in 2002 that Archie sold off his businesses and made the jump into politics. He was talked into it largely by an old friend from Watson Lake, Dennis Fentie, with the promise that they probably wouldn't win anyway, so why not give it a shot?

Archie's campaigns have become the stuff of legends. In 2002, his campaign was styled "the March for Arch". His

promise to his prospective constituents was “a chicken in every pot”. In his first two weeks of strenuous campaigning, it is said that he locked up every single vote in the Casa Loma. It was at that time that Karen took a more forceful role in the campaign and instead insisted that he expand his reach somewhat. So, he went door-knocking. He particularly enjoyed knocking on doors of houses that had the signs of his competitors. He was known to say, “Well, I can see from your sign that you are undecided.”

As election day approached, Archie received what he described as a “frightening call”. It was Dennis, calling to inform him that they might actually win. Sure enough, Archie, Dennis, and the Yukon Party won the election and formed government in 2002.

Over the next decade, Archie held a variety of ministerial portfolios throughout government. While he was an accomplished businessman, he also carried with him the wit, colourful language, and directness of a barman. This made for immensely entertaining political direction to the public service. One public servant whom I spoke with recently recalled direction being given to a group of senior officials that involved a hula hoop and a certain act of personal hygiene. Unfortunately, the Standing Orders of the Legislature don’t allow me to offer much more by way of example.

Archie also enjoyed representing the Yukon as a public official. He was always a hit at ministers’ FPT meetings. I can personally attest to ministers from other jurisdictions approaching me, years after Archie had retired, to inquire about him and how he was doing. Those conversations usually led to deep laughter. Archie also enjoyed hosting visitors to the territory. In 2007, when Yukon hosted the Canada Winter Games, Archie could often be overheard telling unsuspecting visitors to the territory that he was the captain of the men’s synchronized swimming team. The team’s name was “Ton of Fun” and they were only allowed to begin practice after 10:00 p.m., when all the children had left the facility.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knew Archie has more stories like this than they will ever be able to remember, but I know that for so many of us, we will recall them unexpectedly and they will bring a smile. As much as I enjoy recollecting the lighter moments, I think that it is also worth noting that Archie’s time in politics was substantive.

He led important files at an important time in Yukon’s development. Leadership from people like Archie Lang and Dennis Fentie helped create the Yukon that we know today. Their time in office was a period of incredible growth for the territory.

As I said at the start, Archie led a remarkable northern life. He was successful in business, in politics, and in government. He was a generous man who loved his family deeply and was incredibly proud of them all, and he has left an incredible mark on this territory and all those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Without any doubt, he was a truly incredible Yukoner, and we will all miss him.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Archie Lang. Archie will be remembered as a community leader, a champion of the territory, and a beloved patriarch to his extensive Yukon family. He is also remembered as a long-standing member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. In 2002, Archie gave up a successful career as an entrepreneur to enter politics. As was shared with us, his long-time friend and former Premier, the late Dennis Fentie, wisely recruited Archie for his leadership skills, his business savvy, and his knowledge of the territory.

Part of his success as a politician was his status as a lifelong Yukoner who knew his audience. Archie’s parents were homesteaders who worked hard to provide a good life for their four children, moving around the Yukon and finally settling in Watson Lake. Archie’s childhood friends from Watson Lake say that he was a natural leader. At F.H. Collins high school, he was vice-president of the school’s student council. At age 25, he had purchased the Watson Lake Hotel. By all accounts, Archie enjoyed running the Watson, connecting with patrons, entertaining them with stories, and being a pillar in his community.

He met his wife, Karen, in Watson Lake, and that’s where the couple raised their children, Graham, Meagan and Fraser. Archie would eventually own and operate grocery stores, hotels and gas stations in Yukon, northern BC, Northwest Territories, and Skagway. He volunteered his time with the Yukon Energy Corporation board, the Yukon Outfitters Association board, the Robert Service society, and the Father Mouchet project in Old Crow.

Archie was elected twice by his riding of Porter Creek Centre in 2002 and 2006 and served as an MLA until 2011 when he announced his retirement. During these years in the Legislature, he served as the Minister of Highways and Public Works, Minister of Community Services, and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Following his leave from politics, he remained active in his community and was able to spend more time with his family.

Mr. Speaker, when I think back, one of my fondest memories will be — over the last number of years, Archie took an opportunity to volunteer in the community and volunteer with children in some of our schools. My fond memory will be my youngest son coming home to tell me that he had a message for me, that a gentleman had been at their school making lunch with them, and that gentleman wanted my son to let me know that I have the same job that he used to have but that he was much, much better at it than I was. So, about two hours later — because that was just after 3 o’clock — a phone call came in from his teacher. His teacher was calling me to let me know that she was apologizing because there was a volunteer at school today making lunch and he might have used some colourful language. I then quickly found out who it was. My message back for the following week was: Number one, let him know that, now that the economy is really strong, he probably needs some more workers, and you should get a job from him; and the second thing was to make sure that, when he’s in your school, you spend as much time as you possibly can next to him and listen to everything he says.

Upon his leave from politics, he remained active, doing many, many things in our community. Archie leaves behind a legacy of good humour and loyalty. He will be missed.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, today I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the life of Archie Lang. I thank the others for their stories and their tributes because they were beautiful.

I remember the first time that I met Archie. The Yukon is a small place, and Hector, a friend whom I went to school with from the very beginning until we graduated, was excited about his cousins who had just moved in from Watson Lake. He was so excited that a bunch of us went over to the house on Bell Crescent to welcome Graham to town. I know that we were on the back deck, and it is foggy as to whether or not the house was white and if the deck was raised or if it was on the ground, but we were on the back deck. All I remember is Archie, because he came out and he was telling us about the war that he was undertaking against a squirrel family that had mistakenly chosen his house to move into. His story was animated and hilarious, and just like the rest of his life, it left an impact.

Since his passing, so many stories have been shared, and it makes me think of cut gems and how the more angles that a gem has, the more it sparkles, and Archie's life truly sparkled. We have been able to hear and read stories from those closest to him, and for that the Yukon is so lucky, because it is through these retellings that we have learned more about the man himself — generous, caring, genuine, passionate, and, most of all, funny.

So, to all those who loved him, we are so sorry for your loss, and the impact that he made on individuals in a place he loved will be felt forever.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to pause the implementation of rent control, as outlined in the Liberal Party's confidence and supply agreement with the Yukon New Democratic Party, in order to:

(1) develop solutions to mitigate the harm that this announcement has caused to tenants and landlords; and

(2) properly consult with affected Yukon landlords and tenants on the details of any rent-control proposal prior to implementation.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct a liquor pricing review.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to seek approval from Members' Services Board of legislative amendments that will:

(1) enable the establishment of an electoral district boundaries commission prior to the next election; and

(2) require that, if changes are proposed by any commission after their draft report, those changes be subject to additional public consultation, especially with people affected by the change.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy to be completed by September 2022 in partnership with the Yukon type 1 diabetes support network and including consultation with the following:

(1) persons who live with type 1 diabetes;

(2) the Yukon Medical Association;

(3) an adult endocrinologist;

(4) a paediatric endocrinologist;

(5) a paediatrician;

(6) the diabetes centre;

(7) the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation of Canada; and

(8) other agencies or agents as may be identified through the Yukon T1D Support Network.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to ensure that parents who choose to homeschool their children have the option of using paper-based curriculum instead of being forced to use online video courses from the Aurora Virtual School.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide the Yukon Hospital Corporation with the stable and predictable funding that it needs to meet the health care needs of Yukoners, including providing an annual increase to core funding for our hospitals.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reflect current COVID-19 measures by ensuring that all Yukon government workers, regardless of classification, have access to paid sick leave.

Mr. Istchenko: I rise in the House today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Community Services to provide communities with nearby garbage-disposal options by taking the following actions:

(1) keeping the Silver City solid-waste transfer facility open;

(2) pausing plans to close other solid-waste facilities; and
 (3) consulting with affected businesses and communities and First Nations before making a decision to implement fees at solid-waste transfer stations.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to recognize the importance of ensuring that people in the Kluane riding have a full-time doctor located in Haines Junction by taking action, including:

(1) explaining to residents why the government did not issue a tender for a replacement physician when the current physician gave notice in December 2020; and

(2) ensuring that steps are taken immediately to find a physician willing to live in the community and provide service to the people of the surrounding area.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to dedicate a portion of its Highways and Public Works 2021-22 capital budget to the north Alaska Highway.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2021-22 budget to build turning lanes at the entrances to the Takhini and Mendenhall subdivisions.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop a territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy to be completed by September 2022 in partnership with the Yukon type 1 diabetes support network and including consultation with:

- (1) persons who live with type 1 diabetes;
- (2) the Yukon Medication Association;
- (3) an adult endocrinologist;
- (4) a pediatric endocrinologist;
- (5) a pediatrician;
- (6) the diabetes centre;
- (7) the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation Canada; and
- (8) other agencies or agents as may be identified through the Yukon T1D Support Network.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon COVID-19 vaccination program

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, our territory has been managing the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic for 15 months now. While 2020 presented significant challenges for Yukoners, it ended on a hopeful note when the first COVID-19 vaccines were approved in December 2020. We began to see hope of the return to normal on the horizon.

Today, I am delighted to share that more than 75 percent of eligible adults in the Yukon have now received their first shot of the vaccine. This is absolutely fantastic news for our

territory. In just five months, we have immunized 75 percent of our adult population with a first dose — an amazing achievement. To some, those five months may feel short. To others, they feel like a lifetime. For all of the staff working on the front lines and behind the scenes to deliver this vaccine, I am sure that they have been unforgettable. We have been through so much to get to this point, and so many amazing people have put elements of their life on hold to dedicate themselves to this effort.

Many of you familiar are with Team Balto, Togo, and the team at the clinic here in Whitehorse, known as Fox. These teams are the boots on the ground. They set up the clinics and provided the immunizations. They are the faces that you saw and continue to see when you get your vaccine. Running these clinics has required hundreds of staff — everything from greeters and screeners to cleaners, schedulers, and, of course, immunizers. They have worked long hours to make this rollout a success.

We visited our rural communities three times, and now the capable staff in the community health centres are managing ongoing immunization requests.

I would also like to acknowledge the people behind the scenes making this effort possible. You don't see their faces in the clinic, but without their work to plan and carry out the clinics, we would not be in the fortunate place we are today. Our success is really a result of the incredibly knowledgeable professionals who have been leading this rollout. The speed and scope of the work that was required to get to this point has been nearly impossible to keep up with, but they have managed it with professionalism, grace, and kindness.

Finally, I want to thank Yukoners for being patient, stepping up, and taking their shot. The more people who receive the vaccine, the safer our territory will be. I am exceedingly proud of the work that has been done to date, and we should all be. Now we look forward to increasing vaccination rates further and leading the way out of the pandemic.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, as the Official Opposition critic for Health and Social Services, I would like to begin, on behalf of our caucus, by thanking all the Yukoners who have worked so hard on the territory's rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations. This includes nurses and other health professionals, managers, administrative assistants, IT logistical support, people responsible for transporting vaccine, and others.

We are doing well as a territory in vaccination rates in comparison to other jurisdictions in Canada. We have been fortunate that the federal government and provinces have recognized and supported the Yukon, NWT, and Nunavut in getting access to vaccines more quickly than a per capita allocation would have given us.

But any vaccination campaign is only successful because of the people who make it happen. It is those Yukoners who deserve the credit for our high vaccination rate — the people working on the front lines and behind the scenes of the Yukon's COVID-19 rollout. To all of you, our sincere thanks.

I want to give a special thank you to people who had retired and chose to begin working again to help out with the vaccination rollout due to their own personal commitment to our territory and their fellow Yukoners. While politicians may try to claim credit for this work, the simple fact is that the heavy lifting is being done by front-line staff and those behind the scenes who are making this happen.

Thank you again to everyone involved for all that you have done as part of this effort, and please keep up the good work.

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Yukoners care deeply for one another. That's what we see reflected in the uptake of the COVID vaccines. In my home community of Old Crow, the safety and protection of our citizens remained a priority as plans were unfolding for the vaccines to arrive in the community.

Planning efforts with community resources such as the local health centre, RCMP, and First Nation leadership ensured that support was in place for an accessible space for the vaccine clinic, appointment bookings, and transportation. The First Nation worked collaboratively with Yukon government to determine the best approach for citizens to secure appointments and ensured that our most vulnerable populations had access to get vaccinated. There was ongoing communication with the community while preparations unfolded for the COVID-19 vaccine clinic to arrive in Old Crow. With the support put in place by the local First Nation and ongoing communications, citizens felt at ease to book appointments, ask questions, express concerns, and attend their appointments. There was high uptake for the vaccines in Old Crow.

I want to tell all the people who played a role in this process in Old Crow and across the territory — to know how much their work is appreciated.

I also have a few questions for the minister, moving forward. In her response, I am hoping that she can expand on what is currently being done to encourage those Yukoners who have been reluctant to access the COVID vaccination to date. The minister mentioned that the staff in community health centres are managing ongoing immunization requests. What does that look like? Do they also deliver vaccines, or are they expected to have the ability down the road, or are we talking about managing appointments?

When it comes to vaccines for our youth, I was concerned that the minister spoke about medical travel last week and didn't commit to have vaccine teams travel to all communities. It doesn't seem very efficient to have youth, who will often need to be accompanied, travel to Whitehorse when we know that there are more people in many communities, including seasonal workers, who we could vaccinate at the same time.

I would appreciate it if the minister could share some information about how she is going to determine which communities will have a clinic for youth vaccination and which ones will need to travel to Whitehorse, either for the first or second dose.

Lastly, I am hoping that the minister can share what the timeline is to vaccinate our young people.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the comments from the members opposite. It's certainly a positive day.

Mr. Speaker, more than 75 percent of eligible adults in the Yukon have now received their first shot of the vaccine. As I said, this is absolutely fantastic news, and we are on the road to achieving an amazing opportunity to have as many Yukoners vaccinated as they choose to be, in just five months so far.

I want to, once again, thank Team Balto and Team Togo and Team Fox, along with all of our dedicated public servants who have contributed to the vaccine effort.

This vaccine rollout is a legacy project for our government and our territory. It has been noted that our territory is leading North America when it comes to vaccine uptake. Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, recently called the Yukon — and I quote: "... a model that we're all looking towards for success." That work continues, Mr. Speaker.

Last week, I joined Yukon's chief medical officer of health to announce the next stage of our vaccine rollout. I was very pleased to share that we have made arrangements with the federal government to obtain enough Pfizer vaccine doses to get all Yukon youth, aged 12 to 17, vaccinated. This is welcome news for Yukon families and great news for our territory. These vaccines are helping to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our health care systems, and they are saving lives. We will have more information to share about our youth vaccine rollout in the coming days.

In response to one of the comments that were made, the announcement last week included the plan that vaccines for youth would start very soon and be completed — the first round — by the end of school, which, in most jurisdictions and communities here in the territory, is mid-June.

I encourage all Yukoners, including our youth, to step up and take their shot. The more Yukoners are immunized, the safer our territory will be. Our vaccine uptake will also help us return to normal.

As the Premier announced earlier this month, we are beginning to lift restrictions as of May 25. Fully vaccinated Canadians will be able to enter the Yukon Territory without self-isolating. Our bars and restaurants will also be returning to full capacity for indoor table service in the very near future. We would not be able to move forward — we would not be in this fortunate position — without the dedication, patience, and kindness of all Yukoners, and I thank them. Our government will continue to provide the steady leadership needed to get us on the path to recovery.

There is a comment from one of the members opposite regarding medical travel. That is, of course, a last resort. We plan to be in as many communities as possible to reach our youth in the vaccine days coming forward very soon and be completed, as I said, hopefully by the end of school.

The comment with respect to medical travel was for individuals who might not be present at the time or who might not be able to take the vaccine on those dates. We will, of course, support them in being vaccinated throughout the territory.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Individualized education plans

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal coalition agreement states that — and I quote: “The recent cancellation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for children with special learning and neurodiverse needs will be reversed. Those IEPs that were cancelled will be reinstated within 30 days.”

In order to meet this commitment, the minister needs to know how many people this affects. We were surprised last week, when we asked about this, that the minister was unable to tell us how many students will have IEPs reinstated, so I will give her another chance to answer this today.

How many students need to have IEPs reinstated to meet the commitment made by the confidence and supply agreement?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the question. I want to reiterate what I said last week in terms of our value around education. We provide all students with educational programs that meet their learning needs so that they can reach their maximum potential.

Individual learning plans are a very important tool, and they will continue to be legislated — support for students in need of special education programs.

We have been clear that, in the fall of 2019, Mr. Speaker, the school branch staff made a presentation to school administrators and school staff that clarified the processes in place to determine which type of learning plan is appropriate for students requiring additional learning support. In some cases, this meant that the school staff worked with parents to shift a student from an individualized education plan to student learning plans or behavioural support plans. We are now working to implement our recent commitment to provide any student who was shifted from one of those plans into a different one after the fall of 2019 with the option to shift back to the IEPs.

Mr. Dixon: The inability of the minister to answer that question clearly is quite concerning. The coalition agreement between the Liberals and the NDP is contingent on the government reinstating IEPs. If the minister is unable to tell us how many students are affected, how will the Liberals meet the requirements of the coalition agreement?

Mr. Speaker, there is a confidence vote later today. If the minister isn't able to live up to this agreement, the NDP have pledged to vote against the government. So, I want to give her another chance to answer that question.

How many students need to have IEPs reinstated to meet the commitment made in the confidence and supply agreement?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Our school staff are reaching out to parents to provide them with the opportunity to switch their learning plan to the one that suits the students whom we are talking about today. We are continuing to collaborate with those parents to address their students' program needs.

I want to just say, while I am on my feet, that we are very much working with the NDP. We appreciate the partnership that we have struck with the New Democratic Party. Both of our teams absolutely appreciate the need for a stable

government to guide the Yukon right now. We will live up to our agreement, and we are working diligently to do so.

Mr. Dixon: It is going to be very difficult for the minister to live up to this agreement if she doesn't even know how many students we are talking about.

The minister has, I believe, 11 days to get this done now, Mr. Speaker. Last week, the minister claimed that there are no new resources in this budget for EAs to support the reinstatement of IEPs. So, we are left wondering how the Liberals will live up to this commitment if they are not putting any new resources into supporting the students affected by the Liberal cuts to IEPs or hiring EAs so that we can see those cuts fully reversed.

The support of the NDP is contingent on this being done by May 28. If the minister can't tell us how many kids we are talking about and she is not putting new resources into this, how is she going to live up to this commitment?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will probably not comment on some of the preamble in what I think is a question — somewhere in there — and I will try to ignore the insults.

We are working diligently with our parents to ensure that all of our students who may have been shifted from an individual education plan are given the opportunity to move back to the plan that best suits their child. They will be given a choice, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to work diligently with all of our partners.

I want to also talk about, while I am on my feet, a part of one of the reviews that we are currently doing, which is the inclusive and special education. We are working with our Yukon First Nations, parents, staff, and stakeholders to create greater clarity around learning plans.

I'm really proud of the work that has been done to date. I'm looking forward to the receipt of this review in the very near future, which will help inform us of our next steps in Yukon with all of our partners, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education

Mr. Kent: On December 12, 2019, the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education wrote to the Legislative Assembly's Public Accounts Committee, asking to meet with the committee to discuss the Auditor General's report on education. They were denied the opportunity to do this.

Can the Liberals, who held the majority on the PAC at the time, tell us why the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee were denied the opportunity to meet with the Public Accounts Committee as they had requested?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I'm happy to stand and talk about the work of our government.

The Government of Yukon is absolutely committed to delivering effective and accountable education programs and services to Yukoners. The Government of Yukon accepted all of the recommendations contained in the 2019 Auditor General's report. The department is using the recommendations from the audit to guide its plans and decisions to improve and modernize learning support for Yukon students, in

collaboration, of course, with Yukon First Nation governments and our partners in education. The department is committed to working with students, educators, families, Yukon First Nations, and education partners to address the issues and recommendations contained in the audit report and to ensure that students have the support that they need to be successful.

As I stated just a few moments ago, one of the outcomes of the Auditor General's report is the review of inclusive and special education, which I'm looking forward to receiving soon and will inform our steps going forward.

Mr. Kent: So, as I stated, in December 2019, the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education wrote to the Public Accounts Committee asking to meet with the committee to discuss the Auditor General's report on education. In the spring of 2020, the Public Accounts Committee met to vote on this request. The Liberals at the time held the majority on the committee.

Unfortunately, as the Leader of the NDP pointed out, at the CYFN leaders' debate during the election, the Liberals used their majority on the committee to vote it down. Can the Liberals tell us why they voted against allowing the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee to meet with the Public Accounts Committee?

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order, please.

The Guidelines for Oral Question Period state, "A question is out of order if it seeks information from the Chair of a Committee about proceedings in a Committee which has not yet made its report to the House but is in order if it asks only if the Committee has considered a certain matter, when the Committee will next meet, or when a Committee report will be tabled in the House."

Mr. Kent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This will be my final supplementary.

So, referencing the CYFN leaders' debate, as I pointed out, that happened during the election, the Leader of the NDP pointed out that the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education was denied the opportunity to appear as a witness. The fact that the committee denied the chiefs the opportunity to appear — the Liberals must have shut down that request.

So, why did the Premier share incorrect information when speaking at the CYFN leaders' debate?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will continue on with some of my comments around some of the work that has been done since the audit report was released. Our education agreements are in place with all Yukon First Nations, and this is something that we take a great deal of pride in. We have dollars allocated in support of those agreements. I myself — my very first meeting outside of government was with the Yukon First Nation chiefs to talk about First Nation education outcomes and our next steps going forward.

I have talked today about the review on inclusive and special education and the findings that will come out of that particular report and that I am very much looking forward to receiving. We have a good foundation to move forward,

Mr. Speaker. I am absolutely committed, as the Minister of Education, to work on First Nation education outcomes, and I am grateful for the opportunity to do so. I will continue working with all of our partners to ensure that we have respectful relations going forward and to live up to our commitments.

Question re: COVID-19 pandemic self-isolation requirements

Ms. White: Like so many others, we're very happy to hear that 75 percent of Yukoners have been given their first dose of the vaccine. This, along with the easing of restrictions for self-isolation for fully vaccinated Yukoners and visitors, has certainly made our summer a little brighter.

When the chief medical officer of health announced that anyone coming into the territory who is fully vaccinated would not have to self-isolate, there was confusion as to how this would be implemented. The *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* may prevent workers at our territory's entry points, like the Whitehorse airport and checkpoints along the Alaska Highway, from being able to verify whether people are fully vaccinated.

Does this government have a plan in place, beyond relying on our honour system, to confirm that people entering the Yukon are fully vaccinated against COVID-19?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much for the question. I think that it is a very interesting area of development not only in public health and safety across the country and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, across the world, but it is a very interesting area of public health development and law across the world and here in Canada.

With respect to plans to verify vaccinations for individuals entering the Yukon Territory, yes, there is a plan to do so. Initially, it will be quite straightforward to verify vaccinations for Yukoners and to verify vaccinations for individuals from British Columbia. Canada and health ministers and chief medical officers of health across Canada are working together to determine how this could be done for the entire country, knowing that we are in a new area, on new ground, and trying to do this all on behalf of Canadians and Yukoners for their safety.

Ms. White: Knowing that we're merely like a week and a half away from May 25, it would be great if that information could be shared with the Yukon as a whole.

Some Yukon families have begun to make plans to travel or welcome loved ones to the territory in keeping with the recent announcement that no longer requires vaccinated individuals to self-isolate. Unfortunately, we still don't know how the recent self-isolation rule for vaccinated people will be applied and, more importantly, who they will apply to. Currently, no COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for children under 12 years old, but children are still capable of spreading COVID-19. Many Yukon families are unclear about their obligations, and tourism operators don't have the answers for potential clients with young children.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify for Yukoners whether or not children under 12 entering Yukon will have to self-isolate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the very important question, because certainly it's something that Yukoners are asking themselves. Individuals with children under the age of 12 will still be required to comply with the public health and safety rules. Specifically, children under the age of 12 who are not eligible to be vaccinated yet will need to self-isolate upon returning if they were to leave the Yukon Territory. Upon returning here or if they travel here, they will be required to self-isolate. That was part of the announcement made by the chief medical officer of health two Wednesdays ago — if I can say it that way — and the Premier at that public announcement.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that was not clear in that announcement. When it was announced that Yukon's self-isolation requirements would be removed for vaccinated individuals after the May long weekend, some Canadians began their plans to come to the territory once they have received their second dose. The federal government approved a number of COVID-19 vaccines to be administered across the country, including Moderna, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and AstraZeneca. This means that workers at Yukon's entry points will have to check and validate a variety of documents that prove vaccination. With travel resuming between our territory and our neighbours to the east and south, this government will be responsible for ensuring that Yukoners and non-Yukoners alike have been fully vaccinated upon entering the territory.

Mr. Speaker, how is this government collaborating with other jurisdictions as we continue to ease restrictions and welcome vaccinated Canadians to the territory?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I can indicate that the most important part of that question is in fact the knowledge and confirmation that this government is cooperating with governments across Canada and, in fact, across the world, as well as with chief medical officers of health. As I said in response to the first question, the ministers of health meet on a regular basis, sometimes weekly, to discuss these items and others like them because, of course, they are rapidly moving. Other ministers, including myself with the Justice portfolio, are speaking to ministers in Canada and others across the territory regarding public safety issues and how that will unfold as the country gets more and more vaccinated.

In addition to that, the chief medical officers of health meet, telephone one another, and have Zoom meetings, virtual meetings, certainly weekly and often more than once a week. The opportunities that are afforded here by vaccines for Canadians are fast moving. They are changing quickly and they have to be attended to on a daily, if not weekly, basis by all of those responsible in Canada.

Question re: Midwifery legislation

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, this spring the government announced that Yukon families were closer to being able to access regulated and funded midwifery care. Until this past April, midwives were able to provide their professional services to parents and babies. That ability to provide

midwifery support was cut off as of April 15. Midwives are now unable to practise in the Yukon without providing their own insurance, which is cost prohibitive. When will midwives be able to provide their professional health services to Yukon families once again?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government remains committed to moving forward with the integration of funded and regulated midwifery services into our Yukon health care system. Successful implementation of midwifery takes the support of all our health care partners. We look forward to continuing to work with them on the integration of midwifery. We are taking a phased approach to the integration of midwifery services in the Yukon with establishment of full midwifery services in Whitehorse as the first priority. Once the program is up and running, we will then look to have midwives practise and provide services in Yukon communities.

We have now hired the necessary expertise to assist with the development of Yukon's midwifery program, and the finalization of the regulations helps us to have a solid foundation to build on the program. That work is underway, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Blake: Sending expectant parents out of territory for weeks to give birth is hardly a solution. The Yukon Association for Birth Choices advocated for an interim solution that would allow midwives to continue providing their services to parents, babies, and families. Instead, in the middle of a pandemic, the government has offered mothers, and a partner or escort, coverage for medical travel and expenses to travel to another jurisdiction to receive care from a midwife.

Has this government considered interim solutions to allow midwives to continue to offer their professional services in the Yukon, especially during a pandemic?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. Certainly, here in the Yukon Territory, the interim measures that have been noted are just that — interim measures — for the purpose of having the fully fledged and authorized program come into place. With the support of our midwife experts and other health system partners, we are working toward the launch of midwifery services in the fall of 2021. This is not initially what we had hoped would be the case, but a lot of intervening circumstances in the world have brought us there.

I should note that we know from local and national expertise — the experience of other jurisdictions and the experience that they have there — that having finalized regulations provides certainty that is needed to finish building the program and other health system partners in having their support throughout that. That is the current state of the situation. The regulations will be completed and the entire program launched to the satisfaction of Yukon families that choose to have midwifery services as soon as possible and no later than the fall of 2021. It is a delay that we have not been pleased with, but we are adjusting.

Ms. Blake: Travel during the pandemic outside the Yukon is currently not advised. For parents to have to leave their families and supports behind is not ideal and not how most families want to give birth. Even with some costs covered by the proposed travel subsidies, there will still be costs that many

cannot afford. This option will only be available to those who can afford it.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be a better way. Will the minister commit to meeting with the Yukon Association for Birth Choices to consider other interim solutions so that families can access midwifery services without having to leave the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government is committed to providing regulated and funded midwifery services as a birthing option for Yukoners — a very important step in progress for families. We support the safe practice of midwifery in the Yukon and believe that access to safe birthing will benefit all Yukoners. It is not something that has been contemplated in the past. We have done the hard work of developing regulations and standards of practice, together with health partners, and now we are investing in midwifery.

New midwifery regulations came into effect this spring to allow licensed midwives to safely support mothers through pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period and will come in. It is critically important that those regulations be fully implemented prior to the services being provided.

Of course, I think that the member opposite is mentioning a letter that I received late Sunday night from the people who are concerned about this issue. I am absolutely pleased to meet with them to talk about options and to talk about their points of view and their view going forward, because this is something that we are in together to provide services to Yukoners.

Question re: French immersion programming and capital plan for schools

Mr. Kent: French immersion continues to be one of the most popular programs in Whitehorse schools. This fall, we understand that there will be four kindergarten classes at Whitehorse Elementary and two French immersion kindergarten classes at Selkirk Elementary School. Now, Selkirk is a dual-track school that hosts both French immersion and English stream students.

The school community is very concerned that it will no longer be a dual-track school as the number of French immersion students entering the school continues to outpace the English stream students. Will the minister commit that Selkirk Elementary School will remain a dual-track school going forward?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I know that the member opposite is well aware that I have been on the job for about a week, and I'm working hard to get up to date on all of the files. I'm working hard to ensure that I am well briefed on all of the matters before me. I will endeavour to get the information that he is requesting today back to him in a legislative return or in another Question Period.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for that. As the minister will no doubt know, Whitehorse Elementary School is one of the oldest schools in the Yukon and it is at or near capacity. The five-year capital concept references the replacement of an elementary school but gives no indication of which school will be replaced. It also says that planning won't start until next year.

So, can the minister confirm if this planned school is a replacement for Whitehorse Elementary School? If not, which school is it for and when will work start on Whitehorse Elementary?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I know that the member opposite is well aware as well that we committed during the last election to build another elementary school in Whitehorse. That planning is certainly going to be underway. It is in the five-year capital plan. I would be happy to bring more information back to the House when it is available. We'll continue to work with all of our partners as we go forward.

Mr. Kent: It would be great if the minister can also let us know which elementary school in Whitehorse they are planning to replace.

In 2017, the previous Minister of Education promised this Legislature a 10-year capital plan for school replacement, which would include schools to support French immersion. This, of course, never happened, as the previous minister broke this promise year after year.

Will the new minister promise to deliver on her predecessor's commitment for a 10-year school replacement plan? If so, when will that be ready?

Hon. Ms. McLean: We continue — absolutely — to work with school communities on planning for their short-, medium-, and long-term facility needs. The Government of Yukon has a five-year capital plan which includes school replacements and renovation projects to ensure that all buildings are safe and suitable for many years to come. The plan is based on current information and facility assessments. Should needs change, this plan is flexible and may be adjusted — for example, if safety issues are identified. The priority of renovating or replacing schools is based on criteria such as building age, seismic mitigation, considerations on operational needs, and enrolment growth. Of course, conversations with Yukon school communities about the longer term planning for their facilities are ongoing and will continue over the next short time as decisions are made for future school project planning and development.

I know that the member opposite is likely aware — as we just stated — that we are planning to build a new elementary school in Whitehorse. We are moving ahead with Whistle Bend. We've committed to working with Kluane First Nation on a new school in Burwash Landing as well, along with a lot of other commitments.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Tredger: I would like to introduce a visitor to the Legislature. Jim Tredger is probably best known to most of you as the former Member for Mayo-Tatchun. He's best known to me as my dad. I would like to give him a very warm welcome.

Applause

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Motion No. 20 — Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne — *adjourned debate*

Clerk: Motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, moved by the Hon. Ms. McLean; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Pillai.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, carrying on from our comments last week, I would like to again thank the folks at Energy, Mines and Resources. I had an opportunity, as well, last week — and I will again — to thank the folks, specifically the deputy ministers, Mr. Stephen Mills and Mr. Paul Moore, who were there by my side through the last four and a half years. I just really appreciate all of their help and support.

Again, thinking about the work that we had the chance to accomplish together — the folks who are within Energy, Mines and Resources — really proud of the work that they did and so much was undertaken. I think back to the work of finalizing the Peel plan, as well as starting the Dawson regional land use plan — very key items — moving and helping folks along — and my colleagues — in developing *Our Clean Future — A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and a green economy*; at the same time, finishing off the work for the agricultural policy, which would guide our sector for the next 10 years; long-awaited work on the development of off-road vehicle regulations — again, really substantial efforts put into this work; signing our MOU, which we did with Yukon First Nations — that work was done within just the first few months of having an opportunity to work with the team there — and so very quick work by the folks in our policy teams; again, created our innovative renewable energy initiative work with Yukon Development Corporation but really aligning with the work of Energy, Mines and Resources. Again, having the team there — Energy Solutions Centre — helped guide us and other stakeholders with our independent power production policy. So, those were really good.

When you think about the power production policy, which gives the opportunity to purchase that power — the mechanism in place — the policy mechanism — and then being able to capitalize our funds through Yukon Development Corporation — what was really the ability to foster another sector, really, within the Yukon — we have seen that, whether it is driving through Whitehorse and seeing some of the work that's being done or the infrastructure that's going up or going through the riding of Lake Laberge and seeing some of the work there or the announcements in Old Crow — really, some key pieces that made some substantial changes in the Yukon that are going to lead to a lot of innovation and self-determination for many, as we see that infrastructure bring in revenues to some of those remote communities as well as to entrepreneurs here.

I will just pivot a bit over to working with Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation. I want to thank the folks at Yukon Development Corporation for a lot of

the work that I just mentioned. They were absolutely key, but when we think about the many, many projects that have been undertaken — really, almost every community — from Old Crow to Watson Lake — has a project underway at some point within the continuum. That could be anything from Old Crow, where we are seeing the infrastructure being turned on after very substantial support by Yukon government investing in that partnership, right through to other projects that are going through the feasibility stage right now and looking to develop.

Again, the board at Yukon Development Corporation — I want to thank them — the former chair whom I got to work with — and the current chair as well, Mr. Pemberton — and the entire board for committing to looking at some changes in the direction of what would happen with the Development Corporation as well as with the Energy Corporation.

When I think about the Energy Corporation — just a big thank you to Andrew Hall and the team there. Upon coming into the role early on in January — it was just a few days after signing that MOU with our self-governing nations — I had the opportunity to go through the integrated resource plan, which had just been completed. It was a very quick presentation. I remember that it was an hour to go through 64 slides and the future of energy in the Yukon.

One of the things that really became quite present was the fact that we weren't in a position — there wasn't as much emphasis on where we would go with a renewable energy strategy.

So, over the last number of years, the Yukon Energy Corporation actually continued to work closely with the Yukon Development Corporation to look what was happening with our climate change strategy. I just want to thank the board there as well — and the chair, Ms. Cabott, and the team — because they committed to ensuring that there was alignment and integrity on the commitments to the government on how they would produce energy.

Really, that led to the 10-year renewable electricity plan and really looked at developing a number of other pieces of infrastructure — both in the Southern Lakes area as well as in northern BC in conjunction with the Taku River Tlingit. But also, it opened up the opportunity to double the amount of energy that we would be purchasing from entrepreneurs, development corporations, and community-led organizations. Really, it has been a true catalyst for the opportunity of entrepreneurship in that energy sector.

Again, I think that the good work that was done in the early stages was to ensure that the Yukon might be coming to the table a little later than other jurisdictions with the independent power production policy, but that gave a great opportunity to look at best practices and to look at challenges across the country. So, the pricing mechanisms that were put in place at 16.8 cents — really the cost to displace diesel gave us the opportunity to have a system in place where we're buying energy and I would say that we're not overpaying, but we are doing it in a feasible way. We're respecting the taxpayer and the ratepayer. We're also providing an opportunity for so many folks to look at different lines of business that they can be involved in.

Turning to working with Economic Development — again, I want to thank the many folks who have been involved in the work of that department. The key is that, in the last year, the department really rose to the occasion — 53 hard-working folks — 53 or 54 hard-working folks in that department. At a time when Yukoners needed that department the most, people really committed to ensuring that they did the work that was needed. They went above and beyond. There were a lot of late evenings and time away from their families. They were given an opportunity to use their creativity and their expertise to come up with solutions and they truly did.

They did that. They took the risk. They had the support to take the risk. What we've seen is — there could be some debate back and forth in the Assembly here around the programs that were rolled out — if they were absolutely effective and if there were any challenges. For folks who have done that work — and there are some here within the Assembly as well who are now elected officials and who know that when you have 10 days to build a policy and then capitalize a program with millions and millions of dollars and there are only one or two little aspects of it that maybe need some tweaking — that's something. We have to commend our public servants for that work. Again, there are some key pieces. I get to continue to work with that group of people.

There is an immigration strategy that will be coming out very soon. There is the innovation strategy. The department has already started the good work of looking at a platform commitment around an innovation commission, which is really an opportunity, over the very short run — taking an opportunity to take some experts from the Yukon to oversee some of the proposals that have come forward from many different groups. We have a lot of different proposals.

Some groups are looking to really grow the start-up sector — looking at 300 to 400 start-ups that they want to recruit over the next decade. Other groups are looking to take that good work that was done around the angel investment report that was done by the National Angel Capital Organization, NACO, and to start that here. They are all people who many of us know, and they're leaders in our community. We just want to take that opportunity to go through those multiple proposals. That work is now getting moving at Economic Development.

The compression of the fund that was there — there were multiple funds. What really was the goal was to try to make some big impact investments, whether it be in agriculture, in the digital space, or in mining — you name it. Having that ability to pull maybe larger amounts of money together to really push some of those projects ahead with the whole mindset of continued diversification within the space — so I really look forward to the continued work and I appreciate the work of Mr. Ferbey there as deputy minister and the rest of the team. So many areas — so many people who worked so hard within Economic Development.

This mandate will give an opportunity to work with a few new departments, which I am very excited about. The tourism, culture, and heritage team — I've had a bit of interaction so far over the last couple of weeks, as we have just gotten into our roles.

There will be lots of eyes on the department as well as my office to ensure that we roll out our Great Yukon Summer. There are aspects that are all being worked on, as we sit here today, and we will be rolling out pieces of that. That is really important. We are going to see movement across the Yukon border, and we are going to have that opportunity to see visitors. That will build over time, but when you are running a tourism operation, you still have an obligation. As you get ready for those folks to come, you are still going to have to get your team hired and you are still going to have to be in a place to get your infrastructure working. In order to do that, you need cash flow. I ask — and there will be further conversation about this, but we debate here hard and we put our personal lens on things, but I think — for this one, I know — that lots of members will come together.

It is so important this summer for everybody in the Legislative Assembly to ensure that we are cheering on our tourism sector in the Yukon and that we make sure that as many of our friends and our family members are spending dollars with local tourism operators. I know that most of us here — we are all doing that anyway. But please, I ask — and for anybody who tunes in as well from the Yukon government in the public service — we have to really lean in as much as we possibly can to ensure, especially now, going into these early months of the summer, that if we have a choice on how to spend that family budget and that dollar, please spend it here with a tourism operator, somebody in the hospitality industry. Those are the folks who have been the hardest hit over the last year, and I think that we all have an obligation — they make this territory such an incredible place with what they provide. We have an onus to look out for them, like many have over the last year.

Again, as we roll that project out, there will be opportunities for funding for events, which we are excited about. There is also opportunity there to help some of our local companies to update their marketing strategy and to focus it locally if they haven't before. It gives us the opportunity, as well, to do the good work of ensuring that — one thing that the previous minister did a fantastic job of, as well, is the communication out to all of the communities to ensure that communities were ready to embrace those opportunities, and they know that it is being done in a safe way and that the businesses in those communities are actually showing folks that they are doing it in a safe way.

As well, doing the work to finalize the incentive program over the summer, which we think can be something that can make a significant impact — where we have a Yukoner rate, but we have the opportunity to make the operator whole on that discount — again, another big piece.

Then looking toward the fall of this year for the early rollout — a pilot, really — for a music festival. There have been a lot of people who have contributed to that concept and I think that there is an opportunity for many. Early on — this is just really about taking a look at that shoulder season. Before COVID — over the last number of years, we have all looked — whether in the private sector or in government — to understand that the shoulder season is a key time for us to extend the opportunity for tourism operators. It is a beautiful

time of year here in the Yukon. A lot of people don't know that the northern lights viewing is pretty exceptional at that time of the year. So, looking at models across the country where the vision is that, over time, in years to come — where, for a period of a week to two weeks, if there is any community out there that wants to host these types of events, we will structure them. So, whether you're listening to some jiggling in Old Crow or it is an event in Watson Lake or an event at Eagle Plains or Dawson City — that's the goal — to really have something that will draw people. I know that, this year already, companies like Air North are really excited and will be putting packages together. Those are some of the pieces that I am excited about, just out of the gates with tourism.

My predecessor did an amazing job focusing on culture and heritage. I am very excited. I am a huge history buff and so I am loving the opportunity to support the heritage infrastructure across the Yukon — understanding how important it is and that it is here for future generations to learn and understand.

The other amazing opportunities — when I think back to working with Champagne and Aishihik — thinking about the Long Ago Peoples Place and the work done there and the special relationship at that time — from the First Nation and then again with the Yukon government and BC government at that time — and the vision, going forward, about what heritage chapters in agreements — how life can be breathed into them. So, I'll be leaning on my colleague and the former minister to help me there.

Again, on the culture side, we do know that there is an extraordinary amount of people who are involved in creative culture. When we think about analysis across North America about what can make a thriving city — when we think about scholars like Richard Florida, who has said that the creative class just adds to your economy — it helps you build a knowledge-based economy; it helps you recruit; it helps you diversify.

So, taking a look at all those individuals who can contribute so much here in the Yukon — but now, the work of my colleague — putting that into a strategy that is moving out and then being able to figure out how to really increase the GDP contribution of those folks and make sure that they can live a great quality of life and doing the things that they're passionate about and understanding how that, again, helps build quality of life for all of us.

So, those are some of the exciting things. There are some other pieces that I think we'll be talking about during budget debate on some commitments on infrastructure — really needed. So, I say to all the folks out there that I'm looking forward to spending time getting to know you — whether it's stopping at the visitor centre to see what's happening on the front line for that department or spending time with some of the scientists who work there to understand the important, important work that they do.

Moving to the Yukon Housing Corporation — we had an opportunity this morning to take a look at the exceptional building that's on Jeckell — that 47-unit building — incredibly built. Again, the senior management team was there. I want to

thank them for taking the time out of their day to walk through. What an extraordinary building. The contractor who is there — Wildstone — is doing an incredible job — lots of Yukoners on-site working — which we always want to see. That certainly was the case today. I think that it is really, again, going to add such a quality of life to so many folks who need that sort of support from us and from Yukon Housing Corporation. Really, we'll give them a good boost up. I think that we're looking forward to seeing that building completed and then opening up.

I'm still learning lots from the corporation. Of course, there are almost 1,000 units that they oversee and the staff is spread out across the Yukon. I'm looking forward to meeting with folks in the communities as well as at the corporation — and a lot of new projects that are on the horizon. We'll have an opportunity, again, during budget debate to talk a bit about that.

I was happy to have a phone call from the minister last week. He reached out to let me know that he was making sure that the Yukon is at the table in his mind when he is starting to look at programs. I had an opportunity to work with him on the immigration file — and I really have to give credit. I still remember — I was in Watson Lake and I had just attended a meeting with the Member for Watson Lake. I was outside after that meeting, and we were very aggressive to ensure that the Yukon was taken into consideration when new federal programs were being built. He listened and he executed on that and now our community pilot project is built to really help a lot of entrepreneurs in the private sector in some of our communities in the Yukon. That was birthed from that negotiation and conversation. So, I have watched that federal minister respect the uniqueness of our territory. He has reached out to let me know that there are some new programs coming and there is going to be more opportunity to build that infrastructure, so I look forward to that.

Again, to Mary Cameron — thank you for the support initially here as we go through bringing me up to speed on the work.

Yukon Liquor Corporation and lotteries — there is a new deputy minister, Mr. Dennis Berry. It has been great to start to work with him, and I have a lot of folks to get to know. I apologize to the folks at liquor and lotteries that I have not had a chance to get over and really dive in and meet folks and understand how their department works — but as was stated here, I did spend lots of time on the private sector side, where I was a client — definitely — of the Liquor Corporation, so I am coming at the responsibility — understanding that I want to see, of course, us be as client-centric as possible and understand what that relationship will look like. Of course, there was work done by my colleague and predecessor, who did fantastic work around renewed policy work. There is lots there.

Again, I think that my colleague who shepherded us through the work on cannabis — we can debate here in a partisan way, but the reality is that he did a phenomenal job. There are things we are going to tweak. I am getting advice on how to look at those things, and we want to make sure the private sector has every opportunity to thrive in that space. We are listening to folks and we are going to get that work done. There was really good early work done, and it was done in a

way — when you look at other jurisdictions, it didn't move quite as smoothly — and the same with lotteries, understanding all of their responsibilities.

So, just to close up, now going back to the responsibility that's always paramount for all of us, which is our ridings, thinking about other organizations that I'll have an opportunity to continue to work with — touch on that with the Friends of McIntyre Creek. Their ongoing efforts to protect the important McIntyre Creek corridor are appreciated by many in Porter Creek South and there is very broad support for their work. The area not only provides an important wildlife corridor through the City of Whitehorse, but it is an important recreational area and is well positioned for use by Yukon University, which we hope to see grow over the years to become a real destination for international students; it has already. Anybody who had an opportunity to watch the convocation over the last number of days would see that the student body is so international, and I think we're going to continue to see that.

That work is so important in McIntyre Creek. During the election, folks would have heard the commitment made by the Yukon Liberal Party to working with the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the university to understand how to maximize the best use of that area and, in some cases, to understand that it affects the ecosystem for southern Yukon because of how much the City of Whitehorse — how much sprawl we've seen — and then now understanding that it is a key wildlife corridor.

I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues. I'll be in a different role because, in this case, I'll be working as an MLA for Porter Creek South, but I am looking forward to working with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Minister of Environment, and the Minister of Community Services to undertake that and to look at that commitment and to follow through — again, some of the key pieces that I will be looking at to do for the citizens who have let me come back here to represent them.

Another concern that I will touch on is — just spending time at the door speaking with many elderly folks who have spent most of their adult life in Porter Creek South. Their children grew up there, and now they're in the community. It became very apparent that we need more community supports.

There are lots of individuals — I went to their homes, and of course, we had a massive amount of snow this spring — and they were looking for help to have individuals remove snow from their house or to shovel their driveway — you name it. I have reached out to the community association and have committed to providing an opportunity where people in the community, on a monthly basis, can get together. We can host an event at one of our local restaurants in Porter Creek, so we are making sure that, at a microeconomy level, we're giving back, whether it's Trails North or one of the other restaurants — you name it — Smoke & Sow. We bring folks — seniors — together where they have a chance to have those supports but also where we have a chance to understand, through very grassroots dialogue, what their priorities are and how we can, as a community, support those folks.

Third — understanding that there have been different impacts as the population has grown in the community over the years, and looking at the good work that was done by my colleague in Mountainview — is how we look at community safety plans as well. I know that other MLAs in the area will be interested to help and support to make sure that the community of Porter Creek is safe and that it is still an exceptional place, which it is, to live and to bring up a family or to retire.

The school councils continue to do amazing work. Folks take time away from their families. They are there making sure that they present the best possible opportunities for their children and their friends' and neighbours' children. So, continue to work, whether it be at the high school level or the elementary level, with school councils and to listen to what their concerns are.

Again, there are so many people who come together to volunteer. The party's executive does so much, and I want to thank the folks who are there at the executive level. They put in hours and hours and then, when an election comes, it even becomes more demanding, and so I want to thank those individuals as well as the staff in our Cabinet offices — the folks who were with us over the last number of years and the folks who are with us now. Again, when we come down to the Assembly, whether it is to give a tribute or to share some words like I am today, all of that comes together because of the great work that all of those folks do on our behalf. They really don't get the credit that they deserve. I know that's the same for the other parties as well with their caucus teams.

I would like to acknowledge the good work that was done by my colleague Pauline Frost as well as my colleague Paolo Gallina over the last number of years. I miss them and appreciate the good work that they have done. I look forward to the rest of the 35th. I'm excited to get into budget debate and I appreciate what a gift it is to be able to come back here to represent the folks in Porter Creek South.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to close debate on the Speech from the Throne for the first Sitting of the 35th Yukon Legislative Assembly. I want to thank Commissioner Bernard for delivering the Speech from the Throne in such an eloquent way. I have tremendous respect for our Commissioner, which is why I was somewhat disappointed to not hear from all of the members in the Legislative Assembly.

When I think back on my time in the Legislature during the 34th Legislative Assembly, I think often of my very first speech, which was my Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I listened intently, Mr. Speaker, to the stories and the heartfelt thoughts of why we are here.

I listened intently to the Member for Whitehorse Centre, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, and, of course, our previous Speaker, the Member for Riverdale North. Even though the former Speaker has been here for four and a half years with us,

this was perhaps the first time that he was able to speak in this way in the Legislative Assembly. I thought a lot about my very first speech, and I went back and read a number of others in preparation for this 35th Legislative Assembly.

I was disappointed to not hear from all, and I wanted to say that. I wanted to thank every member who did reply to the Speech from the Throne for their words and for helping us to understand who you are, where you come from, and what your passions are.

On that, I am not going to say much more, other than, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the Speech from the Throne is ambitious; it is inspiring; it is a reflection of our commitment to Yukoners. It is a reflection of our commitment to keep going and to carry on with the many foundational plans that we have worked on with Yukoners over the past four and half years. I am happy that it reflects the views, also, of the New Democratic Party and reflects the commitments that we have made together to continue for the benefit of all Yukoners within our government.

On that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. I will conclude my remarks.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

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

Motion No. 20 agreed to

Motion to engross Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move:

THAT the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be engrossed and presented to the Commissioner in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne be engrossed and presented to the Commissioner in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor.

Motion agreed to

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 9 — Appointments to Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges — adjourned debate

Clerk: Motion No. 9, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee; adjourned debate on the amendment, Mr. Cathers.

Mr. Cathers: I will be brief. Just to recap for members and those listening, we've proposed an amendment to this motion to establish the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges to make the convenor of the committee a private member and to propose that the chair of the committee would have to be a private member. The reason for this, of course, was that there was an ongoing problem during the last term that the Liberal private member who chaired the committee was not calling meetings of this committee and work stalled. Considering the track record of the Liberals of not being willing to call this committee, we're proposing that the convenor of the committee be a member of the Third Party and that the requirement be inserted that the chair of the committee be a private member, which in layman's terms means someone other than a minister.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that the characterization of the member opposite — of what was occurring in the last term and the former chair and their role — is inappropriate in these circumstances.

I am pleased to say that we have worked closely with the Third Party, the New Democratic Party members of the Legislative Assembly, and that each of the parties have put forward names of individuals to be on this particular standing committee as part of the Legislative Assembly. The standing committee has been constituted by way of the motion that I have put forward here, for particular reasons. Members from the Yukon Party and their role in this particular committee have not been affected in any way by the conversations and the discussions that we have had with the New Democrats, and the motion should, in my view, proceed as it has been delivered to this Legislative Assembly, and the amendment being proposed should be defeated.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea and 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 9 negatived

Speaker: Resuming debate on the main motion, Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned, we are resuming debate on the main Motion No. 9, which is to appoint the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges. Obviously, the amendment brought forward by my colleague from Lake Laberge was just defeated in the House. It would have accomplished naming a different convener to the committee so that the committee actually gets called as well as naming a private member to chair the committee. Back to the main motion, the convener will be a Cabinet minister and the chair of the committee will also be a Cabinet minister, a member of the Liberal caucus.

Again, as my colleague, the Member for Lake Laberge, mentioned, he and I were both members of this committee in the 34th Legislature in the previous mandate with the Liberal chair. I have to give credit to the former chair. At the start of the committee's deliberations, there was quite a bit of work accomplished. We put together a work plan and made some changes to the Standing Orders that all parties agree on. But then toward the last half of the Liberal government mandate, the meetings ceased to happen; the chair didn't call them. As I mentioned, we did have a fairly substantive work plan put

together which would have led to some improvements to the Standing Orders and the way we conduct ourselves in here, but we could not get the chair to call a meeting.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I am going to propose an amendment to this motion which will allow for regularly scheduled meetings and for the committee to be convened. I will read that amendment into the record now.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Kent: I move:

THAT Motion No. 9 be amended by inserting the phrase "THAT the committee meet a minimum of four times each calendar year, no later than 30 days after the adoption of this motion by the Assembly" before the phrase "THAT the committee have the power".

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT Motion No. 9 be amended by inserting the phrase "THAT the committee meet a minimum of four times each calendar year, no later than 30 days after the adoption of this motion by the Assembly" before the phrase "THAT the committee have the power".

Mr. Kent: I am not going to take very much time. Before I moved this amendment, I explained the rationale for it. But again, essentially all it says is that there needs to be quarterly meetings of this committee and that the first meeting has to be convened within 30 days of the adoption of this motion by the Assembly.

I have listened to the Government House Leader talk about how they came up with an arrangement with the New Democrats, but there are three parties represented in this House and those deliberations normally would have taken place at House Leaders' — but that particular part for this motion was included in the coalition agreement that the NDP and the Liberals have put together.

So, that said, we just want to make sure that the committees can continue to do their work; that it's not at the call of the chair; that this committee in particular has to meet four times per year; and that it has to meet within 30 days of the adoption of this motion of the Assembly. I'm hoping that all members will see that this is a reasonable request being made by the Official Opposition and will vote in favour of this amendment.

Speaker: There appears to be some missing language and I will re-read the amendment:

THAT Motion No. 9 be amended by inserting the phrase "THAT the committee meet a minimum of four times each calendar year;

"THAT the committee convene no later than 30 days after the adoption of this motion by the Assembly"

before the phrase "THAT the committee have the power".

So, what was inserted after "calendar year" is "THAT the committee convene".

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to seek a five-minute recess for the purpose of conferring with my caucus. We had not been advised that this amendment would be coming forward. It is not generally the role of the House to indicate when committees should be convening. It is in the spirit and intent of working together that I would like to consider this with my caucus, but I'll need five minutes to do that.

The other question I have is whether or not the words that have been inserted by you, Mr. Speaker — “THAT the committee convene” — have been accepted as the amendment. Is that the proper form for the member opposite who has brought the amendment to the floor?

Mr. Kent: Just for the record, I do accept the changes that you read in, Mr. Speaker, with that correction to the amendment to the main motion.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, perhaps in my earlier submission to you, I wasn't clear that I would need to request unanimous consent for the five-minute recess that I've requested in order to meet with our caucus about the amendment that has been brought to the floor.

Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: The House will recess for five minutes.

Recess

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Does any other member wish to be heard on the amendment to Motion No. 9?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, we are now addressing the amendment to Motion No. 9, having been brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt South. I also note that four additional words were added to make it completely clear that the plan would be for the committee to meet four times within each calendar year and that the first of those meetings would be convened within 30 days after the adoption of the motion that is on the floor today.

I appreciate very much, Mr. Speaker, having the opportunity to speak with my caucus regarding this motion and the amendment to it. I note that, as I have earlier, I was not aware that it was coming forward. I think that it is important to note that we all understand and support the value of the committee — what's known as SCREP, the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges — because of the important work that they do regarding the work of this particular Legislative Assembly. I appreciate the comments from the member opposite about giving credit to the former chair, because, in fact, the committee did meet a number of times early on in the last 34th Sitting of the Legislative Assembly and did some important work going forward.

In the 14 years prior to that, the SCREP — or the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges — met, I think it

is fair to say, very erratically. My quick opportunity to look was that they only met maybe twice in that period of time. Certainly, four times a year is going to make an increased opportunity for the important work of that committee to be done. That will be supported by all of the parties here in the House. I am happy to indicate that, in the spirit and intent of working together — and presumably, in particular the Yukon Party's commitment to regular meetings — we can support this amendment to Motion No. 9, noting that it will not only be a new day for the government and the important work of SCREP but a new day for the participation by the Yukon Party in what has been very low commitment to the SCREP in the past. I'm happy to see that change.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, today, in speaking to this amendment, I think that it's important to note that we can revisit the mistakes of the past and we can bring up what I would consider to be less than stellar reputations from all parties in this House, or we can choose to chart a path forward.

I appreciate that, in the past, SCREP, at different times, has had a substantial amount of work ahead of it. It had a meeting or two, and then it has fallen off. We will be supporting this motion in the hope that future legislative assemblies will have that ability to meet four times a year and make those changes that are important. We thank the Yukon Party for this amendment and I look forward to a final vote.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment?
Amendment to Motion No. 9 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

Motion No. 9, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 10

Clerk: Motion No. 10, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Hon. Nils Clarke, the Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Yvonne Clarke, Brad Cathers, and Annie Blake be appointed to the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments established pursuant to Standing Order 45(1);

THAT the committee have the power to call for persons, papers, and records and to sit during intersessional periods;

THAT the committee review such regulations made following the date of its appointment as it may decide upon;

THAT the committee review such other existing or proposed regulations as are referred to it by the Legislative Assembly; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is the third in a series of motions to set the standing committees for the Legislative Assembly of this particular Sitting. I note that the names have

been provided by all three parties, that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments be established pursuant to Standing Order No. 45(1), and I urge the support of this motion on the floor of the House this afternoon.

Mr. Dixon: It is a pleasure to rise and speak to this motion, which, of course, names the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments. Like some other committees in the past, this is one that has seen sparse use and we would like to change that. So, going forward, Mr. Speaker, we think that this particular standing committee has a lot of opportunity to conduct work on behalf of Yukoners and on behalf of the Legislative Assembly.

So, with that, and consistent with discussion in the Legislature previously, I would like to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Dixon: I move:

THAT Motion No. 10 be amended by inserting the phrase “THAT the committee meet a minimum of four times each calendar year;

“THAT the committee convene no later than 30 days after the adoption of this motion by the Assembly”

before the phrase “THAT the committee have the power”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT Motion No. 10 be amended by inserting the phrase “THAT the committee meet a minimum of four times each calendar year;

“THAT the committee convene no later than 30 days after the adoption of this motion by the Assembly”

before the phrase “THAT the committee have the power”.

Mr. Dixon: The amendment to this motion is consistent with the previous amendments that we dealt with earlier today. Given the unanimous support given earlier, I expect there to be the same with this. We are hopeful that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments can begin the important work that it is tasked to do in this motion, including calling for persons, papers, and records, as well as reviewing such regulations as sent to it by the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing this amendment pass.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, again, I thank you for the amendment from the members opposite. Again, it’s not something that we were aware of going forward for today’s debate. As a result, a quick consideration needed to be done for this particular amendment to the motion. I am going to indicate that I think it’s incredibly important that the parties here in the Legislative Assembly work together on the legislative committees and in many ways. I’m certainly happy to hear that from the members opposite and the Official Opposition.

We have committed to working together with all parties. We will, of course, convene, if this motion were to pass without the amendment, a meeting of the statutory instruments

committee — important to do so — but I think it would be foolhardy, at this point, to commit to the number of meetings that are necessary in a particular calendar year based on the fact that a full review must be done by the members who will be appointed to this committee, and that includes me — to the roles and responsibilities of the committee, the scope of the committee, the parameters of the work they are required to do. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I note that the committee information that I have been able to obtain is that the committee only met once in the 34th Sitting of this Legislative Assembly and never in the 33rd, never in the 32nd, and never in the 31st.

So, but for a few members of this Legislative Assembly who sat through the 34th, nobody has any experience with respect to the roles, the responsibilities, the scope of this committee, and the work that it should tackle. It is no doubt important work, Mr. Speaker, but it would be inappropriate at this time to commit to four full meetings. Maybe we need six meetings in a calendar year; maybe we need 10 meetings in a calendar year. I’m not sure what the scope of that work would be — bringing forth to that committee — and the idea of committing to four meetings in this particular calendar year with the record of the committee not meeting and work to be done going forward, I think, is something that the committee should do. We will commit to convening a meeting of that committee and determining that with the members who should be appointed and hopefully will be appointed by virtue of this motion.

So, I’m not supporting the amendment.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 10 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion?

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise today. Unfortunately, the history with this committee has been that the committee has not met, when in fact there was a need for it to meet. As the Liberal members should recall, we — as the Official Opposition — on multiple occasions, urged government to call this committee during the pandemic to discuss and review ministerial orders and orders-in-council that were in place and that were affecting the lives of Yukoners and to empower the committee to have the ability to hear from the public regarding those. Unfortunately, the government chose to dismiss those requests multiple times.

It is also interesting that the Government House Leader claimed that this committee had met once, but to the best of my recollection, the committee did not actually meet during the time that the Liberals were in office. It certainly — if it did meet — did not actually do anything that fulfilled its mandate. This committee has been part of the Standing Orders for many years, and if the committee is not acting in the way that is envisioned, then the effort of the Government House Leader tabling this motion is really, to some extent, a farce.

We want to see this committee doing the work that is envisioned under the Standing Orders, and that includes that the committee actually has to meet.

Another matter in this that we have, Mr. Speaker — that we believe that this motion should be improved — I will speak to momentarily. I do just want to remind the House and those listening and reading that the NDP-Liberal coalition — or the Liberal-NDP coalition, whichever they prefer to call it — departed from the long-standing practice of this Assembly of having an all-party discussion on committee membership and structure and chose instead to cut a backroom deal that includes membership of the committee and who would be chair of the committee — which party, I should say, would chair which committees — and set the membership of those committees. That is a disturbing trend.

Subsequently, the coalition that chooses to try to say that they're not a coalition — but what walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, if I may use the analogy — chose to come up with another backroom deal to shut down this Sitting after 11 days, which, of course, would make it one of the shortest Sittings in history. Our staff, in reviewing the amount of time that legislative assemblies have sat during the spring in the last number of decades, have determined that the shortest Sittings in the spring were under either a Liberal government, an NDP government, or the Liberal-NDP coalition government. If this Sitting is to be 11 days in length, it would be not as short as the mere nine days that this Assembly sat last year, but it would still be shorter than the previous Liberal government, which held the record for the shortest Sitting with 23 days.

So, again, speaking to the role of this committee itself — if a committee never meets, there's no point in having the committee on the books. That is, to some extent, the show of having a committee when the committee doesn't actually fulfill its actions.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of strengthening this as well as allowing the committee a clear mandate to address the issue that is most frequently raised by Yukon citizens and businesses as well as NGOs, faith leaders, sports organizations, and so on, I am pleased to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Cathers: I move:

THAT Motion No. 10 be amended by:

(1) inserting the phrase “or Executive Council” after the phrase “referred to it by the Legislative Assembly”; and

(2) inserting the phrase “THAT the committee review any regulations and ministerial orders issued under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* within 45 days of such regulations or ministerial orders being issued;” before the phrase “; and THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge:

THAT Motion No. 10 be amended by:

(1) inserting the phrase “or Executive Council” after the phrase “referred to it by the Legislative Assembly”; and

(2) inserting the phrase “THAT the committee review any regulations and ministerial orders issued under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* within 45 days of such regulations or ministerial orders being issued;” before the phrase “; and THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly”.

Mr. Cathers: What we have seen during debate on this motion earlier — it was surprising to see the NDP voting against having this committee meet to hold the government to account. We are hopeful that, if this committee is established, all members will recognize, including the convener of this, that there's no point in having this committee in the Standing Orders if the committee doesn't actually meet and do its job.

With the amendment that I have proposed here this afternoon on behalf of our caucus, we have recommended increasing flexibility to allow the Executive Council to refer matters to this committee — that is to provide more flexibility between Sittings in the Legislative Assembly, as currently the wording tabled by the Government House Leader requires matters to be referred to the committee by the Assembly itself, so that amendment would simply increase flexibility.

What we are proposing with the second part — that the committee review any regulations and ministerial orders issued under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* within 45 days of such regulations and ministerial orders being issued — is all about creating more of a public process and oversight to allow people who have concerns, suggestions, and comments regarding how ministerial orders issued under the emergency powers being used by government — which I remind members that, despite the constant pretence by government that those decisions are

being made by the chief medical officer of health, in fact, they are being made by Cabinet and the minister responsible. That is the very definition of autocratic government, when, behind closed doors and without public process, Cabinet makes a decision, uses emergency powers, and Yukoners are forced to live with it.

The proposal that we have brought forward today would provide for a process, using the statutory instruments committee, that, if regulations or ministerial orders under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* are issued, there would be the requirement for the committee to review it, and the committee could choose, for those that it felt appropriate, to hear from the public regarding those matters. That is inserting democracy in place of the autocratic approach that is here today.

So, for the NDP, they have a choice here today. They have a choice to vote for the committee working and listening to Yukoners, or to vote for secrecy and autocratic decision-making by the Liberal Cabinet. I would also just make one mention — the Government House Leader had suggested that maybe four meetings weren't enough. If they would like to propose that this committee should meet six times a year or 10 times a year, we're certainly open to having the committee do more work. In fact, the Liberals have chosen not to allow the committee to fulfill its function at all. I would encourage members to vote for this amendment for public oversight, for democratic process, and a review of emergency orders. If they choose to vote against it, it will be a sad day for democracy and a sad day especially for the NDP, which may want to consider a new party name since they're no longer new and it's not very democratic anymore.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'll rise briefly this afternoon on this proposed amendment to express a bit of concern. I'm quite puzzled by the comments of the member opposite in his criticism of me having brought this motion forward. I think he was suggesting that we not have a statutory instruments committee at all, which is puzzling. Then I thought that he might be speaking against the committee, and then, ultimately, he brought in an amendment to the motion that, of course, is to strike the committee. I'm not sure where we are, but I'm going to go forward on the basis that there is support at the Yukon Party for the statutory instruments committee.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to administrative law, tenets, and all good rules, committees should, in fact, set their own agendas. I think that the submission here in this amendment will potentially interfere with the scope, roles, and responsibilities of this particular committee. Of course, I would have perhaps more cogent thoughts about all of this had we known that this was coming forward and the opportunity to make a true debate. Nonetheless, I think all of my comments are relevant in this particular situation.

I guess I want to remind the Official Opposition, as well as Yukoners who are out there listening, that the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, in fact, has the authority to review any regulation that comes into effect after the committee is formed.

The Legislative Assembly may also refer — this body may also refer — existing or proposed regulations to this committee for review. That's the current scope and responsibility.

I could go on, but that's the summary of the current scope and responsibilities of the Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments — an important committee and an opportunity for us all, with the motion that's before this Legislative Assembly, to strike that committee and have that work get underway without the amendment that is before the House at the moment.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'll add a few more comments. The first one is that I don't understand. I went and checked with the Clerk of Committees to ask how often this committee had met from 2002 — from when Premier Fentie was elected — including the Member for Lake Laberge, who was elected at that time and who, I think, joined Cabinet a few years later. The committee met no times during Premier Fentie's first term, it met no times in the term after, and it met no times in the Pasloski government after that.

When someone is talking about ducks in here, the thing I'm looking back at is: What is the record? What does it show? Okay, fine. That's all right.

I also think that we want to be able to suggest that the — well, the member opposite, when he was putting forward his submissions on his amendment, he talked about how, if we voted against this, it would mean that the committee is not allowed to do something or it is not allowed to look at regulations or not allowed to meet. It's just the opposite, Mr. Speaker. The committee is entirely allowed to look at it. As my colleague, the Government House Leader, just pointed out, that's there in the rules of the committee. I would think that the committee gets to decide what it would look at.

I want to talk, just for a second, about those *Civil Emergency Measures Act* ministerial orders. I was responsible for those during the last Legislature. When we broke after nine days because of a pandemic — an emergency that hit here and everywhere — and it was unanimous, by the way, Mr. Speaker. It was unanimous in this House that we agreed to end the session early. Then there were requests to reconvene the Legislature. We said, "No, we're not doing that, but how about we do the next best thing, which is to come into this place and allow there to be open, recorded debate — answering questions on a budget and on any of these orders." The response that we got back was, "No, thank you." We submitted that.

I think that there were five letters coming from the Government House Leader, and I tabled them all here in the Legislature. They are on the record. The members opposite said, "No, thank you." That is not what they wanted.

I ended up coming to the impression that they wanted to criticize that we weren't meeting. I don't know, Mr. Speaker.

So, I think that it is important to note that, when it comes to these ministerial orders, I then stood up in this Legislature several times and said, "Please bring forward the ones that you are concerned about. Let's talk about them here in the Legislature." It didn't happen.

So, okay — and I have no problem that the members opposite still wish to talk about these orders; I think that is

great. What I would like to do is to let the committee that we are looking to create today, or populate today, through the main motion make its decisions about what it wants to do with regulations.

I will leave it there. I think that it is important that we talk about the democracy of this place. I will always stand up and challenge when members opposite suggest that this is a lack of democracy when, in fact, I think that we did additional.

One last point I will note: When we are talking about shorter sessions, I believe that it was under the Pasloski government, when they got re-elected, that they convened for nine days. We are convening for 11 days after an additional five days earlier this spring. So, just when we are comparing these things, that is the comparison. The members opposite — I think there are one, two, three, four, five, six of them who were members of that government — chose to sit for nine days, and they are criticizing that 11 days is short.

The other thing that the Member for Lake Laberge criticized was that he doesn't like special warrants, but, of course, if you get to 11 days here, what you do is you pass the budget before you get to a special warrant, which somehow contradicts what he is saying, but that is fine. I am looking forward to voting on the amendment.

Mr. Dixon: I hadn't intended to rise to speak to this amendment but feel compelled to do that now.

First of all, I know that members opposite in the government caucus want to spend a lot of time talking about the past. They want to talk about 2002; they want to talk about 2006, 2011, and 2016. We have a chance now to move forward and to do things a little bit differently, and the way that we want to do that is to actually have these committees meet and do the work that they are tasked to do. In the past — and whether it happened under the Yukon Party or the Liberal Party or whatever other party in the past — this particular committee never met; it didn't meet.

Last year, it was asked to meet. Members of the committee asked to meet to review the OICs and ministerial orders issued under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and the then-chair denied that opportunity.

This committee has been sought to meet before from its members and was denied the opportunity by the Liberal chair at the time. So, that is one of the problems here. That is why this amendment has come forward, because the Liberals have used their opportunity, and their chair of this committee, in the past — as recently as last year — to deny the committee the ability to do its work. That is the issue, Mr. Speaker. The issue is that this committee needs to meet.

We can discuss whether Dennis Fentie or Darrel Pasloski called this committee to meet — that doesn't matter. What we are talking about is how we move forward now. That is why we put forward this amendment, because we want this committee to meet. We want this committee to begin to engage in the types of activities that are contemplated in the original motion. That's why my colleague outlined some of the questions about the nature of his committee in his opening remarks. If we are not going to have this committee meet, then why do we bring it

forward? That's why we are saying that we want this committee to have a clear sense of what it can do and what it cannot do.

That is the opportunity we have here today. That is the opportunity that I am worried is going to go past if we don't pass these types of amendments and allow the Liberal Party to continue to use their chair of these types of committees to deny them the opportunity to meet. We know that is what happened. We know that has happened a number of times. Yes, it happened under the Yukon Party, and it happened in years past as well. But it needs to stop, and that is why we want to see these changes come forward.

I have heard the Premier talk about how he wants to do things differently now and how he wants to see changes to the way that these committees operate. Well, here is an opportunity to do that, Mr. Speaker. Here is an opportunity to pass an amendment to this motion that will give a clear sense of opportunity for this committee to step forward and start to review some of the things that we think are important.

Obviously, the members opposite are correct: Of course, the committee can meet and set its own agenda. But it cannot do that if it doesn't meet. So far, the Liberals have used their chair of this committee to deny the opportunity for it to meet. That is the problem. That is why you see amendments like this one, which have clear timelines for meeting, explicit direction for the committee to actually do some things, because we want to see that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously will be supporting the amendment. If members of this Legislature do want to see this committee meet and do the work that we are tasking them to do, then they should pass this amendment as well.

If they do not, fine. Fair enough. But at least what I think I am hearing from my colleagues across the aisle is that they are now willing to call this committee to meet. None of them have said that yet. They have said that the committee can set its own agenda, but not one of them has yet committed to having this committee meet. If my colleagues across the aisle would like to take the opportunity, I would encourage them to at least make a commitment to have this committee meet and do the work, regardless of how they vote on this amendment.

Ms. White: It's impressive to know that it has taken merely days for the new, nicer Yukon Party to shed that skin. I'm always hopeful; I'm an optimist — anyone who has been here before knows that.

I would just like to have a word with my colleague, the Member for Lake Laberge, possibly suggesting that, if he wants anyone to take him seriously when he speaks about collaboration in this Chamber and working with others, maybe he should consider the way he speaks to other people. Maybe that would be a start.

Then maybe I would suggest that, when we talk about the new, nicer, kinder Yukon Party — one that is more inclusive — that maybe we would check about how we speak to other members or about other members in this Chamber.

There was a real opportunity — I would like to point out that this motion was tabled days ago, knowing that it was coming for debate. But instead of the Yukon Party having a

conversation with either me or others in the Yukon NDP or across the way with the Liberals, instead we have a motion moved on the floor of this Chamber without the ability to actually have a conversation in a way that can be a back-and-forth, because only one person is able to speak at a time here.

So, if we want to talk about collaboration, maybe we can think about how we refer to each other; maybe we can think about the words that we choose. Because there just hasn't been enough time to look at this, we will not be voting in favour of this amendment.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I wasn't going to speak, either, on this, but I concur with the Leader of the NDP on her statements here. It's about the sincerity of whether or not the Yukon Party actually wants to work to make things better or if they want to play "gotcha" politics in the Legislative Assembly. This motion has been out for a while. The Leader of the Official Opposition has not made any overtures to reach out to talk about this, yet they will have the Member for Lake Laberge speak about how, well, if a committee doesn't meet, maybe we shouldn't even have that committee.

Yet again — and I will bring up the past, because the past is an important part to discuss how we move forward — again, in 14 years of the Yukon Party, they had this committee and it didn't meet. So, I guess what the member opposite is saying is that it shouldn't have even existed in the time of the Yukon Party.

Now, it is always good to compare the past — and we will always bring up the past on a motion of how we can move forward. Now, we've taken an amendment already. We want to work with the Yukon Party. We asked the Yukon Party if they would provide a deputy chair and chair of the Committee of the Whole; they denied. We're still waiting to see — if we're going to meet you halfway, Yukon Party, you have to be there to that other side of halfway. We're still willing to partner. We would love to be able to discuss these types of motions in advance. This committee has not met in decades. To give a commitment on the fly like this for a committee that hasn't met in a long time — I think that we've already done enough today with talking about the amendments that are on the fly here. We've already convened about them with our colleagues and said we're willing to go halfway — we're willing to meet halfway. But, again, it's the sincerity right now at this point which I'm really questioning.

Mr. Kent: I want to take the opportunity to respond to some of the stuff that the Premier said and just mentioned in his remarks about working together.

So, let's go back to the CASA or the coalition or whatever agreement was signed between the NDP and the Liberals. The structure of these committees appeared in that agreement. At no time — and for obvious reasons — did the Yukon Party have any involvement in developing that agreement, nor would we have expected them to. But I was quite surprised, as the House Leader, to see the legislative committees referenced in a coalition agreement between the Liberals and the NDP. It was quite disappointing. So, to accuse us of not working in good

faith or not providing information is a little bit rich coming from the Premier when it comes to his remarks here today.

Then, at the initial House Leaders' meeting with me, the Government House Leader, and the Member for Whitehorse Centre, we were informed at that meeting that a deal had been reached between the Liberals and the NDP on an 11-day Sitting — no discussion and no idea of what the legislative agenda was going to be. I had to ask the Government House Leader after that what bills were coming forward — if it was just money bills. It turns out that it was money bills and the amendments to the *Child Care Act*.

But again, doing side deals, doing backroom deals, and ignoring how we normally do things is something that we've seen in the early days of this Liberal and NDP agreement and it's pretty disappointing — and again, pretty rich for the Premier to stand on his feet and criticize the Yukon Party for not bringing forward amendments for consideration when backroom deals have been done not only on committee structure but on the length of the Sitting.

I would remind the Premier that he should think twice before making those comments and accusations against the Yukon Party.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment by the Member for Lake Laberge?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 10 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 10?
Motion No. 10 agreed to

Motion No. 11

Clerk: Motion No. 11, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT Currie Dixon, Scott Kent, the Hon. Richard Mostyn, the Hon. Jeanie McLean, and Kate White be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts established pursuant to Standing Order 45(3);

THAT the committee have the power to call for persons, papers, and records and to sit during intersessional periods; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak to Motion No. 11, which is the institution and structure of the Public Accounts Committee. Each of the parties have put forward names of individuals they are naming to take on the responsibilities of this important committee, and I urge everyone to support this motion.

Mr. Kent: The Official Opposition will be supporting this motion as is. We look forward to the Public Accounts Committee getting on with their work as soon as possible, and we look forward to having those meetings convened as soon as we possibly can.

Ms. White: I have had the pleasure of serving on the Public Accounts Committee for a number of years and look forward to getting back to work.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?
Motion No. 11 agreed to

Motion No. 12

Clerk: Motion No. 12, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Hon. Nils Clarke, the Hon. Ranj Pillai, Scott Kent, Geraldine Van Bibber, and Emily Tredger be appointed to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees established pursuant to Standing Order 45(3.1);

THAT the committee have the power to call for persons, papers, and records and to sit during intersessional periods; and

THAT the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly be responsible for providing the necessary support services to the committee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, this is the fifth in the series of motions to bring forward and constitute a committee here of a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly. This is the

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, established pursuant to Standing Order 45.

I can, of course, note that the committee has met many, many times over the last Sitting of the Legislative Assembly. I can also indicate that they do very important work with respect to the structure of other boards and committees throughout the territory. Each of the parties have put forward these names, and I urge everyone to support this motion.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?
Motion No. 12 agreed to

Motion No. 4

Clerk: Motion No. 4, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, notwithstanding Standing Order 75(2), the maximum number of sitting days for the 2021 Special Sitting shall be 11 sitting days;

THAT, notwithstanding Standing Order 75(7), the provision of chapter 14 of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly shall apply to the 2021 Special Sitting in the same manner as if it were a Spring or Fall Sitting; and

THAT the provisions of Standing Order 76 shall apply on the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for the 2021 Special Sitting.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Yukoners have sent a clear message, and we have discussed it on several occasions here today on both sides of the House — that we need to move forward together for the benefit of our territory. We are committed to working collaboratively with all MLAs and to make Yukon a better place to live. This matter is before the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of determining the length of the Sitting with respect to, primarily, a budget that was introduced almost in its entirety — almost in its exact same form — on March 4.

The other individuals in the opposition were briefed in early March. I appreciate that some of them weren't here. Following the election, it was made very clear throughout the media, and since the election over a month ago, that we would be proceeding with a budget that was virtually the same as the one previously introduced. There have been briefings on this version of the 2021-22 budget recently — I think early or late last week — and they continue. The opposition has been clearly informed on the earliest possible date that the budget bills would be the ones introduced primarily for the purpose of dealing with them in this Sitting. There is one other bill — the *Child Care Act* — for the purposes of having those responsibilities transfer from Health and Social Services to Education. Again, the members opposite are quite familiar with that.

Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual for a post-election Sitting. I appreciate that the members opposite aren't that keen on looking back or seeing what happened before, but it is the basis

of the concept of “precedent”. It is an important one in this House, and it is an important one in our legal system and important for us all to recall how things were done in the past — and was that an appropriate situation, or should we change?

The members opposite have been very concerned about comments regarding when the Yukon Party formed governments, both in 2006 and in 2011. Mr. Speaker, after the 2006 election, the Assembly sat for 12 days — I dare say not that different from 11, recognizing that we sat for five days early in March — and that Sitting saw two budget bills and amendments to the *Income Tax Act* — no doubt, serious changes to the law. After the 2011 election, when the Leader of the Yukon Party was first elected, the Assembly sat for only nine days, and that Sitting also saw two budget bills passed.

My point is that it’s not terribly unusual following a general election. The opportunity for us to speak and debate the budget is an important one. It is critical, on behalf of Yukoners, that this work be done. The Legislature was recalled as soon as possible, exactly a month following the general election — and an opportunity for those bills to be introduced. Again, I indicated to House Leaders, as soon as possible, that the motion would be coming forward. We filed a motion at the earliest possible opportunity to indicate that there were to be no surprises, that this is an appropriate length of this particular Sitting, and that the work on behalf of Yukoners can be done in the Legislative Assembly for the purposes of passing the bill and moving forward on the important initiatives that are set out in both the supplementary budget and mains budget for 2021-22. I urge all Members of the Legislative Assembly to support this motion.

Mr. Dixon: I suppose it goes without saying that we don’t agree with this motion. We certainly don’t agree with the Sitting length. We have expressed that several times so far.

Obviously, the members who spent their time — across the way, at least, over the past week or so — researching previous Sittings and determining Sitting length — based on those, I would note that, in none of those cases that they cited was there a \$1.8-billion budget. That’s a substantial piece of public business that needs to be thoroughly scrutinized and considered. Quite frankly, we don’t believe that the 11-day Sitting that is being proposed in this motion is at all sufficient.

The first several days of this Sitting, as we know, were populated by the throne speech and some of the attendant issues related to the legislative Sitting that come after an election. That is obviously not unusual, but what is unusual is the significantly small number of days to scrutinize this size of budget. That is a remarkable departure from reviewing budgets of this size in the past, Mr. Speaker.

I would also note that this Legislature has not fully considered a budget since the spring of 2019. Last year, we had a truncated session as a result of COVID. That was something that all members at that time agreed with, and that is fine, but we don’t have that excuse anymore. I don’t think that we are faced with the kind of constraints and issues and pressures that were faced in the spring of 2020, and 11 days to consider a \$1.8-billion budget is, quite frankly, inadequate.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not just me who feels this way. Obviously, our colleagues on this side of the House certainly note the inadequacy of it.

I took great interest in the postings of the former Clerk of the Assembly, Dr. Floyd McCormick, who, of course, is Yukon’s preeminent scholar and authority on these issues in the public. He noted that the current post-election Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly is a Special Sitting. This means that chapter 14 of the Standing Orders does not apply. The Assembly, therefore, is back to the procedural situation that existed prior to 2002 where there is no mechanism to: (a) designate a maximum number of sitting days for the Sitting and (b) arbitrarily bring the Sitting to an end once the maximum number of sitting days has been reached.

In response, the Government House Leader has proposed Motion No. 4, which, of course, we are debating today, which, if adopted, according to Dr. McCormick, would impose (a) and (b). There would be 11 sitting days with Standing Order 76, the guillotine clause, being applied at the end of day 11.

To quote Dr. McCormick further: “This is a very low number of sitting days for a Sitting where the Assembly is debating a main appropriation bill ... The government should not proceed with Motion 4. Instead, the Assembly should consider the main appropriation bill and a few other measures on the Order Paper without the prospect of an arbitrary guillotine-induced ending.

“Instead, the Assembly should, by motion, bring in other, less draconian measures, to ensure a higher level of scrutiny.”

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not just the Yukon Party posturing on this.

This is a legitimate case where an insufficient amount of time is being offered up for debate on public business of this size. We don’t believe that a \$1.8-billion budget can be thoughtfully or thoroughly scrutinized in the allocated time in this motion. We don’t believe that the entirety of the business that is put forward to us in this Sitting can be thoughtfully and thoroughly considered in 11 days. The combination of the throne speech, a \$1.8-billion budget, and legislation is obviously a unique amount of business. It’s a significant amount of business. That’s why we proposed a much longer Sitting that would be more in line with past practice with regard to main appropriation bills.

Now, I know that members have given examples of years past where supplementary budgets were introduced or changes to the *Income Tax Act* — or whatever it was — but that is not the case today. Today, we are dealing with a throne speech, a \$1.8-billion budget, and a piece of legislation, and 11 days, quite frankly, isn’t good enough.

Now, in discussing this, I know that, over the course of today, we’ve had a chance to review some of the discourse between the party leaders about this. I note that on May 3, I wrote a letter to both of the leaders of the two political parties asking for — and I’ll quote from myself: “In the spirit of collaboration and in order to fix this issue and ensure that committees include a proper and reflective balance of MLAs, the Yukon Party caucus is willing to sit down with members of your caucuses to discuss a path forward.” Of course,

Mr. Speaker, that offer of collaboration and that offer to sit down was met with silence. The only letter that I received in response from the Premier confirmed that the membership standing committees would be determined by the Members of the Legislative Assembly, as we did earlier today. Of course, I noted no willingness to take me up on my offer to sit down and collaborate.

Nor did the Leader of the Third Party. Her response to me came in the form of an e-mail, to which I won't speak at length, but she asked some questions about it. I, of course, replied. The end of my reply, though, I think is worth noting and that is that — and I quote myself on May 6: “We are genuinely interested in coming to a solution that is agreeable to all three parties as we believe Yukoners have sent the message that they would like us to work together collaboratively. I believe compromise is possible and I would be willing to meet at your earliest convenience.” Again, that e-mail unfortunately went unresponded to.

So, now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the length of this Sitting, we've had similar interactions, obviously, despite requests for better engagement through House Leaders, as is the normal practice when it comes to the setting of sitting days. Our offers and requests to be further engaged were denied. Obviously, this is a result of the confidence and supply agreement agreed to by the Liberal Party and the NDP. As a part of that agreement, this 11-day Sitting is what we've had foisted upon us.

So, for the reasons I have outlined, we disagree about the appropriate length of the Sitting. This is an inadequate amount of time to deal with this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Dixon: I move:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the word “11” and replacing it with the word “30”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the word “11” and replacing it with the word “30”.

Mr. Dixon: In speaking to this amendment — the reason why I have proposed 30 days is because, as we all know, the Standing Orders suggest that the Legislature should sit for 60 days a year. Typically, the Spring Sitting is a longer sitting, somewhere between 30 and 40 days, especially when considering a main appropriations bill.

Obviously, in normal circumstances, if there isn't able to be agreement among parties for the Sitting length, the default is to go to 30 days. That is what has pushed us to this number, why I proposed it as an amendment, and why we believe that this Sitting of the Legislature should sit for 30 days. I believe that 30 days is much more in keeping with past practice when it comes to the consideration of main appropriation bills. Typically, the main appropriation bills debated in the Spring Sitting last anywhere from 28 to 40 days. Obviously, as I

mentioned in my opening, the Legislature hasn't properly considered a main appropriation bill since the spring of 2019, and I think that it is an entirely appropriate thing for this Legislature to do to begin to dig into the main appropriation bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that 11 days simply isn't enough and we look forward to voting on whether this Sitting should be much longer, and in the case of this amendment, I propose that it be 30 days.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: You know, just for — through you, Mr. Speaker — in speaking to the comments from the Leader of the Official Opposition — the Member for Lake Laberge, last session, also suggested that I don't run numbers and that I let that stuff go. I'm afraid that I won't be able to. It is just so in my nature to try to add things up and count things up — I'm sure much to the chagrin of my departments, when they see me convert their PDFs into spreadsheets and try to look things up.

I actually did the work of looking up the past sessions while I was sitting here in the Legislature after the Member for Lake Laberge spoke. I downloaded the data off of Hansard and then I ran it into my computer. Here is what I said the other day and I will say it again: The average length of Sitting for the spring session is 29.5 days — this, since the year 2000 — and the average length of Sitting for the fall session is 30 days. Okay, if I take out COVID — because COVID really was an anomaly; it was not normal, and if I take it out, then the average for the Spring Sitting is 30.5 days and the average for the Fall Sitting is 29 days. It is not — as the Leader of the Official Opposition just characterized it — between 30 and 40 days.

Sure, okay, it is between 30 and 40 days — it is 30.5 — but it's not to suggest that it's somewhere near 40 days.

The other thing that I want to comment on is that — and I really believe that there are two things that we have to keep in mind here. The first one is the democracy of an election. That election was held, and Yukoners voted in the people who are here in this Legislature. It wasn't a majority government; it was a minority government. The seats are balanced as eight for the Official Opposition, eight for us, as the Liberals, and three for the New Democrats. Our belief is that what that message was — exactly with what the Leader of the Official Opposition said in a comment recently and in his correspondence that he was talking about — that we should find ways to work together and to take decisions for Yukoners based on that.

I don't believe that will always mean that we agree. I fully understand, appreciate, and like that there are ways in which we disagree — but we have to find a way to do that respectfully, as always. I think that is, in effect, direction from the public.

So, it was not 100-percent yes on the budget that we had tabled, but it was more or less close to a yes, with some working together. We sought to work together. I believe that the Premier spoke to both leaders. I stand to be corrected, but that is my understanding. I think that one of the things — when the 11 days is discussed here now, the way that I would like to describe it to Yukoners is that 11 days takes us to May 31. The reason that's important is because we had in place the ability, through

a special warrant, to spend up until that time. If you go past that time, you have to create another special warrant.

We did that with an abundance of caution but, really, what I would rather do — and what I would debate here today — is that I would rather get the budget passed so that we can move on and come to the recovery that we're expecting here. We need that ability, as a territory, to move ahead on the path of recovery.

I heard the Member for Lake Laberge actually debate that when he first spoke — I'll have to check back through Hansard, Mr. Speaker — but he spoke either to the second reading of the budget or it was to the throne speech, and he talked about his concern that we would use a special warrant. Well, here's the opportunity — the 11 days gets us to a decision on this budget. The thing that we should note — and the Government House Leader mentioned it earlier — is that this is not a new budget. It's not something that was sprung on the members of this Legislature.

We effectively tabled this — very close to the same budget — in fact, it's \$6 million to the better, more or less, is my recollection — and I think that is just saying, "Here, it's the same budget that we tabled before with a few improvements, and now let's get going with it without a special warrant."

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yays, 10 nays.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 4 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 4?

Mr. Kent: I too am going to weigh in on the length of the Sitting — the motion that is before us today asking for an 11-day Sitting in this current Sitting. I spoke about it earlier today, but when I was informed at the first House Leaders' meeting that the Liberals and the NDP had come to an agreement on the length of the Sitting and that it would end on May 31, I have to tell you that I was incredibly shocked, surprised, and dismayed by the fact that the Government House Leader made that announcement at our first House Leaders' meeting.

It was extremely disappointing because, in past Sittings, in my role as Opposition House Leader, we had discussions on the length of Sittings, depending on the number of bills that would be introduced. Obviously, that would go into the Sitting as well — usually by day five, all of the bills have to be tabled and then, after that, discussions that normally would have started a little bit earlier would pick up in earnest. Sometimes we agreed on the length of the Sitting and sometimes we disagreed. If there's a disagreement, obviously the default under the Standing Orders is to go to 30 days. Sometimes the government will agree with one of the opposition parties and the amount of time is set that way. But again, there's an open dialogue and a discussion and we're not bringing forward amendments on the floor of the Legislature to try to discuss and set the number of days that are available for the Sitting.

Listening to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — and to be fair, he reached out to me over the weekend, after I made an off-mic comment during his comments last week about the number of days in the year 2000 — because he did go back to the turn of the century when he presented his data here — and he got back to me and mentioned that there were 23 days after the change in government that year.

I think that the most important thing — when we're talking about the year 2000 and the year 2021 — is that both of those years saw spring elections. All of the other years with the Special Sittings that happened after elections were in the fall. There was already a budget in place; there were perhaps some money bills, as mentioned — supplementary budgets of some sort. But again, just going back to 2000 — I did do a little bit of research, but I was also here; I was a member of the Assembly who was elected for the first time in 2000. There were eight days that the former McDonald government had at the start of that Sitting. They introduced their budget and then they called the election.

When you look to 2021, we spent five days in here before the Liberal government called a spring election. To note, as I mentioned earlier, those are the only two spring elections that have been held without a budget in place.

When you look at the Sitting in 2000 that happened under the new Duncan government, it was 23 days. It started in early June, and it went into July. It wasn't the most fun Sitting that I have ever experienced here — given the temperatures, the heat, and the evening Sittings and the other aspects. There was no guillotine clause in place — none of that had been enacted yet. But again, the Duncan government sat for 23 days and debated

what was largely an NDP budget. It was largely the budget adopted from the previous government, similar to what the Minister of EMR said here earlier.

So, when you look at that spring, there was the eight days of the NDP and 23 days of Liberal — so that was 31 days. Since then, there has been a 29-day Spring Sitting in 2006 and a 28-day Spring Sitting in 2016 and then, of course, last year's anomaly with the pandemic and the nine days that we sat. But, for the most part, all of them have been, as mentioned, 30 or above.

When talking about the Special Sittings during a fall election, I think that the government is comparing apples to oranges, because the only Spring Sitting without a proper budget in place was in the year 2000, and there were 31 days total. Now they're asking us to commit to 16 days.

When we adjourned prior to the election call — adjourned on that Thursday, the fifth day of the Spring Sitting — we had just concluded second reading on the budget and then picked up after the election with the throne speech — obviously that's a day; it's a truncated day, but it's a day nonetheless — then responses to the Speech from the Throne that concluded today after a break last week on Thursday. Then there was the budget speech and second reading speeches again by many members. Of course, there are new members in here as well who would have liked to respond to the budget and others who kept their responses relatively brief.

The fact that the government is trying to equate this Special Sitting to others that have happened in the fall when spending authority is already in place is — well, it's an alarming thing that they're doing in trying to let Yukoners know that this is the usual way of doing business. Obviously, the Member for Copperbelt North — the Leader of the Official Opposition — went through the comments made by the former Clerk of the Assembly, Dr. Floyd McCormick, so I won't repeat what Dr. McCormick said.

With last year's COVID pandemic, this year's early election call — spring election call — and the fact that it was done before the budget was passed — you have to go back to 2019 to go to the last year that the main estimates were actually scrutinized in a fulsome way in this Legislative Assembly. By the time we do it again, it is going to be 2022. So, three years, Mr. Speaker — three years without any scrutiny or oversight of spending authority by the government.

Again, I am not arguing about last year's nine-day Sitting; I know why we truncated it. There was a lot of fear and trepidation and other things that were happening in the Yukon, throughout Canada, and the world. But, again, we have an opportunity here to sit for a reasonable amount of time to allow an incumbent government to be scrutinized on what they say is the budget that they presented to Yukoners — largely the budget that they presented to Yukoners before they called the election in March.

Again, as I mentioned, normally these discussions would be held by House Leaders, but I am going to make an amendment to this motion.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Kent: I move:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the word "11" and replacing it with the word "20".

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the word "11" and replacing it with the word "20".

Mr. Kent: I'm going to be brief in my remarks. Obviously, normally these discussions on the length of the Sitting would take place at House Leaders', but we were not given that opportunity. The Government House Leader announced that it would be an 11-day Sitting and let us know that it was after discussions with the New Democratic Party. Those closed-door discussions are certainly not the way that I'm used to operating in this Legislature as the House Leader, and I have to say that I was very disappointed.

We're hoping that the government will consider 20 days, which would align more closely to what occurred in 2000 with the 31 days total that were sat the last time that we had a spring election in the Yukon.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't think that this amendment is substantially different from the last one. I think that we've had extensive debate with respect to the matter. I am happy to either speak briefly on the actual motion — but I guess it's important to make sure that I correct the record here.

Here in this Legislative Assembly is where the sitting days are determined. I expressed the information to the House Leader for the Yukon Party about what motion I would be bringing forward and informed him of that. We had an additional discussion today about the length of the Sitting, very briefly.

I am not going to disclose in this House what the Yukon Party was talking about with respect to the length of the Sitting today because I have respect for the House Leaders' meeting; I have respect for the opportunity for us to have open discussions at that place —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order. The member has the floor.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much.

I am disappointed, frankly, that the member opposite has characterized our conversation about the length of the Sitting as somehow it being decided. What I expressed was the event that I would be introducing a motion, that the length of the Sitting was going to be introduced to the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of determining what that is.

I also think that it is important to correct the member opposite in relation to — I believe I heard him correctly when he said that there would be no opportunity to scrutinize this budget if this Sitting was 11 days. I can indicate that we have spent approximately three hours debating motions here today — all time that could be determined and used to scrutinize the budget. Of course, the "no scrutiny" makes the impression that

nobody is going to do their job here for the next however many days that we are here in the Legislative Assembly, and I certainly hope that this is not what is being said. We won't be supporting the amendment.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 4 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion?

Mr. Cathers: While this afternoon has not been overly surprising, it has been disappointing that we have seen the government, along with their NDP partners, vote to shut down the constructive amendments that we proposed. I would note that my colleagues, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Official Opposition House Leader, proposed a longer Sitting earlier in debate on this motion. This motion itself does not need to be brought in.

I would quote, as well, the former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Floyd McCormick, in his capacity as a private citizen now — who, in weighing in — as he has chosen to do on several occasions in his area of expertise but as a private citizen — noted today on social media — and I quote: “The government should not proceed with Motion No. 4. Instead, the Assembly should consider the main appropriation bill and the

few other measures on the Order Paper without prospect of an arbitrary guillotine-induced ending.”

So, it is not just the Yukon Party Official Opposition saying that this is a problem. This motion does not need to be brought forward. It invokes an end to the Sitting. It shuts down debate. It will allow millions of dollars — probably tens or hundreds of millions of dollars — in departments not to have scrutiny in this Assembly.

What I want to also point to is that there is no good reason for this Sitting to be short. We have heard excuses from the government. We have heard them attempting to compare Fall Sittings, which don't deal with a budget of the same size, which we know is comparing apples and oranges — but coming back to the simple, fundamental point that there is no good reason why this Sitting should be shorter than normal.

This government has been returned. They only have one new minister. We have the largest budget in history. We're in a pandemic, and as we have stated consistently, in a pandemic with unprecedented restrictions and unprecedented spending, with unprecedented rules affecting people's lives should come increased democratic oversight and debate in the Legislative Assembly, not less.

Again, the one simple question that defines the question we're voting on here today — all of the questions — comes down to this: There is no good reason why this Sitting should be shorter than normal. Instead, we have seen the Liberals and the NDP cut a backroom deal that would slash this Sitting down to 11 days, which is effectively 10 days, because the throne speech took up one day — there was no Question Period and no debate.

I would have to remind members that, although we are tied with the Liberals at eight seats apiece, the Yukon Party won the popular vote. What they have done, through their backroom deal, is deprive the party that won the popular vote of the chance to even ask questions in this Legislative Assembly — slashing both Question Period and debate in the Assembly to one-third of what is normal, with two-thirds of that simply being lost.

Again, the fundamental point is that there is no good reason this Sitting needs to be shorter. There is no good reason, during a pandemic or with the largest budget in Yukon history, to have shorter debate than normal — no good reason, just excuses.

If members vote against democratic oversight, that fact stands for itself. They can attempt to spin it, they can attempt to provide excuses, but voting to shorten democratic debate is an action that stands for itself.

Spring budget debate is typically the longest here in the Legislative Assembly — typically 30 to 40 days. Even one of the government ministers, in attempting to spin excuses, acknowledged that Spring Sittings typically were around the 30-day mark according to the numbers that he was pulling from selected Sittings. Here we would have a situation of it being a third of that if this motion passes unamended.

So, I'm going to give the other members of this Assembly who are not part of the Yukon Party one final chance to accept a constructive amendment to this motion, and that is to delete the application of the guillotine clause so that if there has not

been debate on all departments, they will not simply be able to ram through hundreds of millions of dollars, potentially, without any debate on those departments. If indeed there is enough time for sufficient questions to be answered to satisfy members — all of whom were duly elected by people across the territory — then, of course, the Sitting could wrap up on schedule. Of course, the other option is that it could simply go longer.

So, again, just before I introduce the amendment, I have to again remind members that excuses are one thing, but the question comes down to the fact that there is no good reason for a shorter Sitting. There is no good reason to suspend debate on the largest budget in Yukon history through the premature use of the guillotine clause after only, really, 10 days in the Assembly, some of which were taken up by matters other than the budget.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Cathers: Accordingly, I move:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the phrase “; and THAT the provisions of Standing Order 76 shall apply on the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for the 2021 Special Sitting.” and inserting the word “and” after the phrase “11 sitting days”.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member Lake Laberge:

THAT Motion No. 4 be amended by deleting the phrase “; and THAT the provisions of Standing Order 76 shall apply on the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for the 2021 Special Sitting.” and inserting the word “and” after the phrase “11 sitting days”.

Mr. Cathers: I would point out that having a Sitting this short in the spring and pushing through this motion — which, as I mentioned, not just the Yukon Party but also the former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Floyd McCormick, expressed his view: “The government should not proceed with Motion No. 4. Instead, the Assembly should consider the main appropriation bill and the few other measures on the Order Paper without the prospect of an arbitrary, guillotine-induced ending.”

Again, it really does beg the question: Why is the government afraid of facing the oversight of this Legislative Assembly? Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason for the Sitting to be so short. To push through Motion No. 4 in its current version would be an unprecedented step by Yukon government to ram through its agenda with a short Spring Sitting.

Members will have to choose for themselves how they want history to remember them. If you vote against democratic oversight and for invoking closure of debate without proper oversight, that fact stands for itself — choose wisely.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. 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.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment defeated.

Amendment to Motion No. 4 negatived

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 4 agreed to

Speaker: Pursuant to the Order of the House, I declare that the current Sitting shall be a maximum of 11 sitting days with the 11th sitting day being Monday, May 31, 2021.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 200: *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 200, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm pleased to rise and begin debate on the *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*. Overall, Mr. Speaker, the *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21* forecasts an increase of \$33.4 million in gross operation and maintenance and capital spending. This is made up of \$24.9 million in operation and maintenance and also \$8.5 million in capital. This is offset by an increase of \$28.7 million in operation and maintenance recoveries and also \$9.6 million in capital recoveries.

Revenues are forecast to increase by \$8.5 million due to an increase in own-source tax revenue from continued economic growth. These changes are forecast to result in a revised deficit of \$7 million, which reflects an improvement in the government's fiscal picture from the first supplementary estimates.

This also reflects a slight increase of \$300,000 over the supplementary estimates that we tabled in March, which include \$125,000 to cover the cost of the territorial election and \$205,000 for additional costs related to pension plan expenses.

This overall change from last year's main estimates is largely the result of Yukon's positive collaboration with Canada and our ability to access federal funds to support Yukon and Yukoners through the pandemic.

The year-end debt is now forecast to be \$88.5 million. The year-end net debt is forecast to be \$88.5 million, which also reflects the adjustment for the 2019-20 Public Accounts based upon actual performance.

Overall, these changes show a government responding to the needs of Yukoners as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, directing supports where necessary and working with our federal counterparts to access recoveries whenever possible.

I will get into some of these details. Overall, we are seeing an increase of \$24.9 million in O&M expenditures as part of the second supplementary estimates. While this amount is not negligible, it is offset by an even larger number of recoveries. While the recoveries are indicative of the level of federal support that we received to deal with this crisis, the numbers

also demonstrate that the Yukon government took action when it saw the need to do so.

Some of the costs included in the appropriation bill introduced last October were for measures that did not have federal support at that time. Mr. Speaker, this government did not wait for federal funds to be guaranteed before it put the work in for Yukoners. We did, however, leverage those positive relationships afterwards to secure support funding — which are included in this bill.

These expenditures are also critical at a time when so many Yukoners need an extra bit of support. While a notable share of these expenses are for COVID-19 supports and related expenses, there are other costs as well. COVID-19 O&M expenses can largely be broken down into three categories, and that includes \$8 million in economic relief and recovery, \$6 million for health care and public health response, and also \$5 million in emergency management expenses.

Under education supports, there's also a \$1.9-million decrease. This represents a deferral under the safe return to school funding for classes in April, May, and June of last year to 2021-22. This funding is also 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

I am happy to provide further information about each of these. Economic relief and recovery spending represents the supports that Yukoners have come to expect during the pandemic. This has enabled businesses to stay open and has allowed employees to receive paid time off if they need to self-isolate, and it has also allowed us to maintain critical supports for our tourism and arts sectors.

\$3.9 million went toward the regional relief and recovery fund under this category. This program provides supports to medium- and small-sized northern businesses impacted by economic disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is also 100-percent recoverable from Canada. Within the Department of Education, \$3 million has been provided to enhance supports under the workforce development agreement.

In order to keep Yukoners safe, mandatory self-isolation requirements have restricted Canadians and international visitors. This public health measure has resulted in a significantly reduced 2020 tourism season, unfortunately. The government is committed to supporting our tourism and culture sector throughout the pandemic. In the first supplementary estimates, the Department of Tourism and Culture was approved for \$7.8 million, the majority of which was for economic relief supports for the industry.

In these second supplementary estimates, we are reflecting the allocation of some of the funds approved in the first supplementary estimates, which includes \$2.7 million for the tourism accommodation sector, \$1 million for the tourism non-accommodation sector, which includes visitor-dependent food and beverage businesses, and \$300,000 for tourism and cultural non-profit organizations.

We are also including additional supports for this sector. These funds are coming from lower spending in other areas of the department. There is \$450,000 for implementation of initiatives in the tourism relief and recovery plan and \$350,000

to enhance cultural funding, such as the Advanced Artist Award and “On Yukon Time” initiatives.

Under the health care and public health response segment of COVID-19 spending, I mentioned the \$6 million in additional O&M spending. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the success of “this is our shot”, the largest vaccination campaign in Yukon’s history.

Since vaccines began, tens of thousands of Yukoners have been vaccinated against COVID-19, with the aim of vaccinating 75 percent of the territory’s eligible population. As we heard today in the ministerial statement, we’ve achieved that for the first dose and we’re on a clear sight toward getting that for both doses.

Funding appropriate under Health and Social Services will primarily be directed toward the cost of this vaccination program and other associated costs, including staffing for mobile teams and the mass vaccination clinic in Whitehorse as well.

Resources will also go toward transportation and accommodations in the communities as well as technical supports.

Lastly, under COVID-19 O&M spending are costs associated with emergency management. This includes costs to respond to immediate needs during the pandemic. This work includes things like installing space dividers in Yukon government work spaces, procuring PPE equipment, maintaining border controls and highway messaging boards, as well as maintaining the COVID call centre. \$5 million in O&M spending is included as part of this category, as additional spending was required across various departments.

Mr. Speaker, there are also non-COVID O&M increases as part of the supplementary estimates and they total \$7.8 million. The largest individual expenses are in Health and Social Services — \$2 million was directed toward social assistance, with \$1.5 million of that being in Whitehorse and \$500,000 in the other communities. Also under Health and Social Services was \$1.1 million for extended family care agreements.

The Executive Council Office also saw \$1.08 million directed toward capacity funding for the implementation of final and self-government agreements and for consultations and negotiations for Yukon First Nations and transboundary indigenous groups.

Highways and Public Works made up the bulk of the additional non-COVID funding at \$4.24 million. This includes: \$1.1 million for electricity and fuel costs at Yukon government workplaces and buildings as a result of rate increases and higher demand; \$540,000 for emergency road washout repairs on our highways; \$400,000 for the Dawson City ice bridge construction; \$861,000 in winter snow removal and plowing; and \$325,000 for additional staff at the Procurement Support Centre.

Lastly, as I mentioned, \$125,000 of this supplementary estimate went toward funding the territorial election in April and also \$205,000 went toward additional pension plan expenses.

The remaining O&M is split between various projects including more initial actions as part of the *Our Clean Future*

and additional care and maintenance work at mine sites, particularly at Wolverine.

I will talk a bit about O&M recoveries. While these costs are notable, they do come with significant federal recoveries as well. Members may notice that, despite this increase in spending, Yukon’s deficit has been reduced in this supplementary estimate by \$24.6 million. This is partly the result of an increase in projected revenues but more so a result of our positive relationship with Canada and maximizing cost recoveries wherever possible.

Some of these recoveries are being applied to expenditures that were included in the first supplementary estimates. At the time, we knew that we had to ensure that departments could respond to the pandemic, but we had yet to finalize the next phase of the northern support agreement with the federal government. We now have certainty on that funding. As part of the supplementary estimates, Yukon will see an additional \$28.7 million in total O&M recoveries, compared to its \$24.9 million O&M expenses.

The largest recoveries are in Health and Social Services at \$12.2 million, followed by \$4.6 million in Community Services, \$3.9 million in Economic Development, and \$2.6 million in Energy, Mines and Resources. These recoveries consist of \$21.8 million for COVID-related expenses and \$6.9 million for non-COVID items.

Moving to capital, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon government saw an increase of \$8.5 million in gross spending, as I mentioned earlier. Contrary to the O&M spending, these capital expenses were largely incurred for non-COVID projects. The largest capital expense occurred within the Yukon Development Corporation. \$11.6 million is included in these supplementary estimates to cover progress on electrical capacity projects, such as the Mayo-to-McQuesten transmission line. This expense is 100-percent recoverable, with 75 percent of recoveries coming from Canada and with 25 percent from Yukon Energy Corporation making up the remainder.

Additional capital expenses include \$1.1 million under Yukon Housing Corporation’s community partnering and lending to cover additional costs on the Normandy Manor project and \$500,000 for additional costs to cover more work than forecasted on Whitehorse’s mixed-use housing project. The former is 100-percent recoverable.

Throughout the year, some projects were accelerated, while some other projects experienced delays. This supplementary estimate reflects a \$10-million increase in highways and other transportation projects and a \$10-million decrease in building development projects that are being deferred to the next year when further progress will be made.

The last noteworthy capital expenditure was for \$1 million for repair and maintenance work on equipment at the Whitehorse hospital.

There are also minor changes in revenue in this supplementary estimate. We are forecasting revenues to increase by \$8.5 million. This is driven primarily by \$11.8 million in additional revenues coming from personal and

corporate income tax and a \$2.5-million decrease in investment income related to lower interest rates.

Income tax revenue modelling is more volatile as a result of COVID-19. These revisions from the 2020-21 first supplementary estimates result from higher than expected positive impacts of economic and financial supports at the territorial and federal levels and from a delay in the final 2019 income tax data, which resulted from income tax deferral provisions.

Mr. Speaker, overall, these supplementary estimates show a Yukon government doing what it takes to support Yukoners while also leveraging positive relationships with other levels of government to maximize value for our dollar. We positioned the territory well so that we can continue to benefit from the strong economic foundation that we had prior to the pandemic. This will also allow economic growth to continue to trend positively in the year ahead, and we are ensuring that this territory navigates this pandemic with as little harm as possible, both to Yukoners themselves and to our economy.

We will continue to do what's right to make sure that we support industry, and also individuals, until we can all resume normal life.

I would like to once again thank every Yukoner and public servant for the contributions to these many efforts. I want to thank mayors and councils, and chiefs and councils, for the conversations that we've been having over the last 14 months in dealing with the pandemic that we're in. If we didn't have the financial wherewithal coming into this pandemic, I shudder to think where we would be.

Also, if we didn't recreate the conduits to communication through the Yukon Forum, helping to make sure that we — in tandem with all leadership in Yukon — dispel some of the initial onslaught of misinformation that was happening nationally, internationally, and locally — having that leadership in all communities, helping us —

Speaker: Order, please.

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

Debate on Bill No. 200 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

**Written notice was given of the following motions
May 17, 2021:**

Motion No. 39

Re: liquor licence discount (Dixon)

Motion No. 40

Re: Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments review of the *Child Care Act* (Dixon)