



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 5

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, May 18, 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

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, May 18, 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 not in order: Motion No. 29, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.
Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, which took place yesterday. This is a day to promote the rights and wellness of LGBTQ2S+ communities. The date, May 17, was chosen as it commemorates the removal of homosexuality from the World Health Organization's international classification of diseases in 1990.

We are able to speak out against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia because of the many years of advocacy work by those on the front lines. Because of this work, LGBTQ2S+ people's identities have been decriminalized. They now have access to legal services, marriage, and are protected against discrimination and hate in Canada; however, there is still a great deal of work to be done at all levels.

Around the world, prejudice and discrimination result in inequity for LGBTQ2S+ people. While progress is being made in Canada toward a more accepting society for people of all identities, our work is far from done. In Canada, the LGBTQ2S+ community still experiences barriers in accessing health care, education, recreation, public facilities, and even travel because of their identity.

Despite these uncomfortable realities, we cannot underestimate the resilience and power of LGBTQ2S+ people. In Yukon, we have seen first-hand what a dedicated group of advocates can accomplish. We became the fourth jurisdiction in Canada to ban conversion therapy for minors after Whitehorse's high school students brought forward their vision for a future that provides safety for not only themselves but for the generations to come.

We have also seen organizations in our community come together to provide supports and resources to the LGBTQ2S+

community. All Genders Yukon Society has been providing funding and access to mental health services for trans, two-spirit, and non-binary Yukoners, as well as their network of loved ones. This work is vital in protecting the mental wellness and strengthening the bonds between our community members.

The work of Queer Yukon Society has been a foundational support for the LGBTQ2S+ community in Yukon. Since 2013, they have organized and promoted community resources and events like the Pride Parade. Most recently, Queer Yukon, along with many partners including the Government of Yukon, established the Pride Centre. Their work brings Yukoners together and honours and celebrates inclusivity and diversity.

Progress is being made here in Yukon due, in large part, to these community organizations. They hold us to account and remind us that we must do better. It has been my honour and pleasure to work closely with many of these organizations during the development of the LGBTQ2S+ action plan.

In closing, today and every day, I challenge all members and all Yukoners to stand up against homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. I challenge you to continue learning more about LGBTQ2S+ issues, find new ways to be an ally in all spaces in which you can add your voice.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Monday, May 17 as the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia — also known as a worldwide celebration of sexual and gender diversities.

We stand today to recommit to denouncing prejudice and discrimination against those based on gender or sexual preference. We commit to stand up for the rights, equality, and the dignity of all people and to ending discrimination and violence against LGBTQ2S+ individuals within our community.

I, Mr. Speaker, appreciate every step taken to help every person be their true and authentic self. I believe that every individual in our community has the right to feel safe and to live their lives without discrimination and without fear. I will continue to be an ally of this community. I'm the proud father of a beautiful, smart, creative, and wonderful daughter. My daughter also happens to be transgender. I would love nothing more than to see her continue to thrive in our community and to live her life free from discrimination. This is all that a parent wants for their children.

I visited the Rainbow Room at Porter Creek Secondary School a couple of years ago and was so happy to see that there is a safe and welcoming space where students can be themselves and lean on one another. I would also love to see all schools model after PCSS and create such a space for students where peers and staff can come together and talk, laugh, learn, and be themselves. It's important for our kids to know that they are welcome and that they are not alone. It is also important that our schools strive to follow policies around sexual orientation and gender identity and anti-bullying. I look forward to seeing

more good stories coming out of the Yukon schools and our Yukon communities.

Yesterday we celebrated sexual and gender diversity around the world, and I believe that the Yukon has made great strides toward equality for all. I am proud of the advocacy and the work being done throughout the territory today.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. I thought a lot about what to say on this topic — what the significance is of a day like today. I was talking about it with a friend, and she said, “It’s a day when people have to pick a side.” That really resonated with me.

It is a day when people have to get clear about their values, about which side they are on — and that matters. There has been an incredible amount of progress made, but it can slip away at any time unless we are willing to fight for it, unless we have allies willing to stand with us.

There is also, of course, a great deal of work to be done. There are kids out there and there are adults out there who need their leaders to stand up and say, “We’re on your side.” I have spoken before about the barriers facing members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community — barriers that range from personal attacks to subtle aggression to systemic disadvantages.

Today, I want to particularly thank the many people who are working to dismantle those barriers. There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done, but I have seen first-hand the people who chip away at it each and every day — at board meetings, volunteering at events, or by being the chosen family and community for each other. I see us fill in the cracks left by our society. I see us taking care of each other. Thank you all for doing that; thank you for doing that every day of the year.

Applause

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy that you are allowing me to take a moment to introduce a special guest and a person who has really advanced the work of the LGBTQ2S+ community in Yukon — Joe Wickenhauser, who works with Queer Yukon and who has been responsible for a lot of really great work.

Welcome to the House today. Thank you for coming.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Museum Day

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to International Museum Day. Founded in 1977, International Museum Day offers a chance to highlight the important role that museums and cultural centres play in safeguarding and interpreting the world’s cultural and national heritage.

This year’s International Museum Day theme is: “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”. The theme speaks to the upheaval of the previous year and the challenges that lay ahead as we look toward recovery. It invites museums, their staff, and the communities that they serve to share new

practices, business models, and innovative solutions for the social, economic, and environmental challenges we currently face and those yet to come.

The effects of the pandemic on our cultural institutions are undeniable but have also led to the innovative programming and opportunities for organizational development.

Yukon’s museums, interpretive centres, and First Nation cultural centres have responded to this COVID-19 moment not with submission, but with optimizing it to work on the development of new programming across digital platforms to improve reach and access and to address collections’ care needs.

This summer, we are partnering with the museums and cultural centres on a digital version of the popular Yukon gold explorers passport program aimed at encouraging Yukoners to visit heritage centre sites and cultural facilities. Yukoners are justifiably proud of the unique identity represented through our history: our First Nations’ culture and heritage, the stories and oral traditions that we share with the world, the arts and creative activities that we pursue, the internationally significant artifacts and specimens, and the built heritage and sacred places that we protect and preserve for future generations.

We are proud to recognize this international event that will share our vibrant culture and heritage with museum professionals from around the world. The International Museum Day — we commend Yukon’s museums and cultural centres for adapting to new ways of engaging the public and transmitting their knowledge and passion for Yukon’s distinct cultures and heritage. Acting as both witnesses and protectors of our collective past, the impact that these institutions bring to bear on cultural enrichment and exchange cannot be understated.

I ask the members of the House to join me in extending sincere gratitude to those who operate museums and cultural centres for their devotion, skill, and passion and ensuring that our culture and heritage are protected, preserved, and interpreted for the enjoyment of all Yukoners for today and tomorrow. I invite all Yukoners to seek out and participate in the event or program this summer at a museum or cultural centre to experience our heritage. We are proud to continue our support for these invaluable Yukon institutions and look forward to the meaningful ways in which they will continue to protect our past, interpret our present, and inform our future.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to International Museum Day. The theme of 2021 is: “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”. That says it all.

When the disease affecting the world began, all outings were cancelled and museums closed.

Museums rely on visitors who pay a fee to attend and see the displays and art. This business model has been lost for more than a year, and many still remain closed.

Museum Day was set up in 1977 to have a day to honour and draw attention to the diversity and importance of culture and science that is shared in these facilities. It is also to allow

the curators and museum workers an opportunity to celebrate their vocation, to share stimulating, educational, and interactive opportunities for guests.

When I was a bit younger, when I heard the word “museum”, I thought of a collection of old stuff from decades past — of course, way before I was born. Now, a lot of what I grew up with using is now in museums — wow.

The majority of people, when travelling, have taken time to visit a museum or some collection of interest. Several years ago, we were in Gander, Newfoundland, and we visited the North Atlantic Aviation Museum. The focus was the link that Canada had during World War II and for transatlantic flights. The main feature is the magic found between two countries — US and Canada — during 9/11 when 38 airliners were stranded in Gander and how the locals stepped up to welcome and care for close to 7,000 guests who had come from away.

We also found a private car collection museum done up with old memorabilia in relation to a particular car vintage, like a '57 Chevy with a jukebox and a soda fountain display.

There has been a rebound of sorts for museums within the virtual world by hosting virtual discussions, games, trivia, as well as community challenges. Everything is on the table to spark renewed interest.

Our national museums and art galleries in Ottawa are amazing.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg is absolutely a must. To traverse the history of humans and how rights were abused and marginalized from the 1600s to the present day — very sad, very traumatic, and very disturbing at times, but very necessary to continue the conversation about humans and how our rights can be infringed upon.

The Royal BC Museum in Victoria is a favorite for me with a history of the west coast, the First Nations, and there are even ties to the Yukon in some of the displays.

Each facility is amazing and so worth every minute that you spend there — to see, hear, feel, and interact. In the Yukon, there are the cultural centres such as the George Johnston Museum in Teslin, the historic sites like Fort Selkirk on the Yukon River, the *SS Klondike* in Whitehorse, the Yukon Transportation Museum, the Keno City Mining Museum — and the list goes on.

We have such magnificent facilities, and if you have not gone to visit yet, this is your chance. Take some family time to learn about our history and the work involved in the displays and research. You will be pleasantly surprised.

Applause

Ms. Blake: I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate history, heritage, and culture as we mark today as International Museum Day. Museums, heritage, and interpretative centres are important connections to our past. Yukon’s rich history is reflected in its numerous museums and heritage centres. These special spaces are sprinkled across the Yukon, sharing our stories with visitors and locals alike. They give us space to learn, gather, and celebrate our history.

Yukon’s museums and cultural centres allow and encourage a cultural exchange. They help us to learn more

about ourselves and those around us by building a mutual understanding of where we have come from. Yukon’s northernmost museum is perched on the bank of the Porcupine River — the John Tizya Centre. Not only does this building hold artifacts and stories of the Vuntut Gwitchin, this space has become a sacred hub of language revitalization.

I hold my hands up to Brandon Kyikavichik and the passion he carries as he immerses himself in learning, understanding, documenting, and protecting the Gwich’in language, our stories, and family history. Brandon is a living encyclopedia for us in our community. His ability to recite stories and our language so passionately enables us to stay connected to our history. With the incredible support of our respected elders — Marion Schafer, Irwin Linklater, Jane Montgomery, Mary Jane Moses, and the late Joel Peter — Brandon has dedicated himself to the preservation of our language. His journey hasn’t been an easy one, but long after we are all gone, our language will still exist because of the love that Brandon has shown our ancestors, and this is worth celebrating.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the *Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2020-2021*, dated May 2021.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling the 2020 annual report for the Yukon Workers’ Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Mr. Istchenko: I have a document for tabling and an attached letter to the Minister of Community Services with respect to Yukon government’s decision to close the Silver City transfer station and impose fees at the Destruction Bay solid-waste facility.

Mr. Dixon: I have for tabling a few letters: The first is dated May 3 from me to the leaders of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party regarding the Yukon Party’s exclusion from discussions about the committee structure for the Legislature; a May 10 response from the Premier; and a response, as well, from the Leader of the Third Party. I referenced these yesterday, so I thought that I should table them today.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the community of Ross River to immediately begin the process of building a new school.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to work with the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Canyon Creek, Champagne, Mendenhall, and Takhini to improve the current standard of highway vegetation control, as requested by those communities, in order to address safety concerns and improve visibility.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to take action to ensure that milled highways are resurfaced, including ensuring that contracts are issued early enough in the year to allow resurfacing to be done before the end of the construction season.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate consultations with the St. Elias Seniors Society, the Village of Haines Junction, and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on the construction of phase 2 of seniors housing in Haines Junction.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with other Canadian jurisdictions to determine what proof of vaccinations will be accepted for visitors entering Yukon starting May 25, 2021.

Speaker: Are there any statements by ministers?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon highway border enforcement

Mr. Cathers: Yesterday, the Minister of Health and Social Services was asked by media how her government intends to verify whether people entering the territory are vaccinated or not. In response, she said, “You will also be asked to sign a waiver to access your information.”

Has the government consulted the Privacy Commissioner on whether or not gaining access to people’s health records for the purpose of entering the Yukon is compliant with the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. This is an extremely live issue with respect to verifying individuals’ vaccinations records. Community Services, the chief medical officer of health’s office, Health and Social Services, and the Department of Justice are working

diligently to determine what the process will be and what provisions of our Yukon laws — more than just the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* — will be determinative of what that process will be.

I appreciate the question. Certainly, it is, as I have said, a live issue. It is something that is being worked on immediately so that Yukoners will have the benefit of proceeding pursuant to the recommendations of the chief medical officer of health — and ultimately the decision of government — about going forward to help alleviate some of the issues with respect to those individuals who are fully vaccinated for the purposes of alleviating the requirement for self-isolation upon return to the Yukon if they have left that location.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, this is concerning Yukoners because the government has announced changes, but they don’t know if they can actually legally implement those changes. As you know, the Yukon’s southern border crossing is currently staffed by private contractors. Now the Liberal government is talking about having a private contractor demand that Yukoners and other Canadians entering the territory provide their private health information.

Has the minister done a legal analysis of whether or not this is actually allowed under Yukon law, and, if so, will she agree to release publicly the legal and privacy analysis that she has conducted on this measure that actually indicates that the government can lawfully do what they have announced?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, I appreciate the question. This is a question that is top of mind for Yukoners. As I have indicated in the answer to the first question, this work is ongoing; it is being done as we speak. It has been done steadily since these matters have been contemplated and more intensely in the last number of weeks when the chief medical officer of health made recommendations that, in fact, some of these self-isolation requirements could in fact be relaxed if an individual was fully vaccinated.

I want to take the opportunity to remind Yukoners that “fully vaccinated” means both doses — in the territory — of the Moderna vaccine, as well as two additional weeks past your last dose of vaccine. It is very important for Yukoners to know that this is “fully vaccinated” — that the current recommendations made by the chief medical officer of health do, in fact, deal with individuals who are fully vaccinated, and that the opportunity for them to return to the Yukon without the requirement to self-isolate is, in fact, a great step forward. Yukon is leading this particular initiative and the rest of Canada is watching.

Mr. Cathers: I must point out that this is timely as May 25, when the rules change, is fast approaching. We don’t even know if the government can legally do what they have said they will do. This is unfortunately becoming a pattern with this government. Just like we saw with the rent caps, there is no public consultation and, when pressed, ministers can’t explain the details of their own plan.

Mr. Speaker, if someone enters the territory through the southern border, are they required to wait at the border until this private contractor can verify through their private health records whether or not they were vaccinated?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Throughout the pandemic, we have worked with the chief medical officer of health, of course, as a partner, as well as partner governments throughout the territory — First Nation governments, individual community chiefs and councils, individual community governments, mayors and councils, as well as our partners across the territory and across Canada with respect to chief medical officers of health and ministers of health, ministers of justice, ministers of community services and their responsibilities, because this is an issue that Canada has never dealt with before.

With respect to lifting some of the restrictions, if fully vaccinated Yukoners want to leave the territory and return, the opportunity for them to do so, without being required to self isolate for 14 days, is, in fact, a positive step forward. I'm not sure what the member opposite is suggesting. We, of course, will need to verify that Yukoners and those trying to enter the Yukon Territory have been fully vaccinated. The process for doing so will be a declaration for them to provide the information necessary.

We look forward to this change on behalf of Yukoners and the opportunity for them to proceed in a way that has not been allowed in the last 15 months.

Question re: Secure medical unit

Ms. Van Bibber: The construction of a secure medical unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital is badly needed. Staff at the hospital have been flagging safety concerns to the Liberal government for at least two years. Unfortunately, the Liberals have significantly delayed the construction of this project over the years. On March 8, the former Minister of Highways and Public Works said that construction would start this year.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us if this is still on track and when construction will start?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. The secure medical unit is an important element at the Yukon hospital. I appreciate that the question has been brought up. As far as the information that I have — not having been fully briefed on each and every file in Health and Social Services — my understanding is that the planning and construction will continue this year. I am sure that the other part was when it would be completed. I do not have that date with me, but the secure medical unit remains a priority for the Department of Health and Social Services and for Highways and Public Works. As a result, the project is proceeding this year.

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, as we know, the Liberals have delayed construction of the secure medical unit for years, and this has put patients and staff at risk. In his 2019 budget speech, the Premier stated — and I quote: “This year’s Budget also provides \$1 million for a larger secure medical unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital...” But on November 3, 2020, the former Minister of Health and Social Services admitted that the Liberals never spent any of that funding.

Now we know that there is \$5.7 million for it in this year’s budget. Can the minister confirm if all of the necessary planning work in consultation with the Yukon Hospital Corporation has been completed to allow construction to begin immediately?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, in 2019-20, funding was provided to the Yukon Hospital Corporation for planning and design of the secure medical unit. The Hospital Corporation provided the department with a business case for a review back in 2019. In 2020-21, we worked with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to plan for a new secure medical unit and further define funding requirements. We also worked closely with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other partners, including psychiatrists, to ensure that current psychiatric services at Whitehorse General Hospital are safe and effective. We are working with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and our resident psychiatrist to improve existing psychiatric services at the Whitehorse General Hospital. This group will continue to make recommendations on a high-level action plan to improve the current secure medical unit as the new secure medical unit is being built this year.

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, finally, when will the new secure medical unit be complete and in operation? We would like a timeline.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the question. The new secure medical unit is envisioned to improve the physical space leading to better safety and outcomes for patients, staff, and physicians to enhance programming to better support patients and to improve recognition and respect for First Nation needs and cultures. This is, of course, the ultimate goal in providing service through the secure medical unit when needed at Whitehorse General Hospital. The proposed model of care for the new secure medical unit will include considerations of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health — a full opportunity to do so.

The work has been ongoing, as I have outlined in the answers to previous questions, with respect to the opportunity to have the secure medical unit completed at Whitehorse General Hospital, an improvement that all Yukoners will welcome should they or their loved ones require the services of such a unit.

Question re: Early learning and childcare program

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, this government announced and implemented an early learning and childcare funding program for families with preschool-aged children. This is great news for those families already receiving daycare services through a licensed provider. Unfortunately, too many families are not able to secure daycare due to lack of available spaces. This, of course, has been compounded by the pandemic.

Daycares in Dawson City and in Old Crow have long wait times — in some cases, for over a year. What is this government doing to support families who are stuck on a wait-list or are unable to access affordable daycare now?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely believes that all children should have access to affordable, high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities. We recognize that capacity is a concern, and thank you very much for the question. Work is ongoing to provide more integrated, collaborative programs and services to better meet the needs of Yukon families.

We have made an historic investment, as was pointed out in the preamble for the question, in terms of our universal childcare program that is making childcare more affordable and providing much-needed resources for Yukon families.

As of March 31, 2021, in Whitehorse, there are 1,540 full-time licensed spaces, of which 1,253 were occupied. As of May 12, 2021, the Watson Lake childcare centre is licenced for 45 children. It currently has 30 children enroled, no wait-list, and capacity to add about 15 more children.

When we get into other communities such as Dawson, as of May 12, the Little Blue Daycare had a wait-list. They currently have 20 spots with 36 children on a wait-list. Tr'inke Zoo Daycare has 45 enroled with —

Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. White: Although I thank the minister for those lists, what I was looking for were solutions.

So, not only are there long wait-lists at many daycares throughout the Yukon, but some communities are without any licensed daycares at all. Ross River and Pelly Crossing are two such communities. Having no licensed daycare leaves families with very few options. Some will pay for unlicensed daycare, and others will be forced to remain home even though they want to go back to the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to support families and communities where no licensed daycare is available?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As I was going into the spots that are available now in Yukon and the work that is yet to be done, we absolutely recognize that there is a lack of spaces for early learning childcare. We are committed to, with our overall plan around universal childcare, work to advance additional spaces and licensed facilities.

Since April 1, 2021, one new childcare centre has opened up — in Whitehorse, mind you. I know that you are asking specifically about the communities, and it's going to take some time working with all of our partners to ensure that we are working to provide that capacity in the community.

Three more centres have been licensed to substantially increase the number of spaces. Again, this is in Whitehorse. However, we are moving toward more options for the communities.

We also have K4 that is coming online that will allow for more spaces in childcare centres as well.

Ms. White: So, now we've heard about lack of licensed daycares and lack of available daycare spaces through all of our communities. We've also heard from parents about the lack of available daycare for parents who don't work the traditional nine-to-five, Monday-to-Friday jobs. Many parents are looking for daycare support so they can work shift work or weekends. Finding daycare for these families is next to impossible.

What is this government doing to ensure more flexible daycare options for families who work shift work or on weekends?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, our government believes that all children should have access to affordable, high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities, and we are absolutely committed to working with all of the stakeholders,

Yukon First Nations, and others to enhance options for families and to find that flexibility in terms of what the needs are. The work is ongoing in terms of capacity concerns. We are absolutely committed, though, to realize that dream of having universal childcare for all Yukon children, which will, in many ways, advance the outcomes of education in our territory.

Question re: Contract procurement

Mr. Kent: So, the previous Minister of Highways and Public Works made the decision to change the practice of publicly opening tenders. Previously, the practice was to publicly open the tenders and post the bid prices on the website immediately. This was open, transparent, and accountable. Under the new practice that the former minister brought in, tenders are now opened behind closed doors and the information about pricing is not made available to the public and the contractors until days — sometimes weeks — later. This process, of course, is less transparent and creates delays.

So, will the new minister commit to reversing this policy and revert back to the practice of opening tenders publicly and posting prices on the procurement website immediately?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the question from the Member for Copperbelt South.

I certainly am not going to commit to any change of policy on the fly, but I can advise as follows: Government of Yukon is committed to the fair and open transparent procurement of goods, services, and construction while balancing the interests of Yukon businesses, ensuring best value for money, and adhering to trade agreement obligations.

Government procurement is a significant contributor to the local economy. Getting value for money is more than really considering the price paid. We recognize the strategic role and importance of our spending.

Our government is making it easier for businesses to work with the Yukon government through our new e-procurement system, Yukon Bids and Tenders.

Since early 2020, when COVID-19 started having impacts on the economy, the Department of Highways and Public Works took immediate steps to keep procurements running and to support procurement authorities already under contract.

The department issued guidance to procurement authorities across the government to ensure that appropriate supports to the local business community were in place. Some of these measures include increased use of purchasing cards for goods, maximizing the use of invitational tenders to local businesses, and the increased use of value-driven tenders.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, this issue came up at the leaders' debate on business and the economy. Responding to this question from a member of the business community, the former Deputy Premier made a clear commitment that a re-elected Liberal government would reverse this practice. He said that it was a good course of action and committed his party to acting on it. Meanwhile, the former minister has said that he was quite proud of the change that he had made.

So, will the new minister live up to the commitment that the former Deputy Premier made to the business community

during the election, or was this just another case of the Liberals saying one thing to get elected and then doing the complete opposite?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, just a bit of background on that debate. First, about 10 minutes before the debate occurred, I and the Leader of the Official Opposition, as well as the Leader of the Third Party, received a new question that hadn't been tabled. It was this particular question.

My recollection is that, as this was brought forward and the question was asked, for most of us — we did not have detailed information about this process. I had never been part of a procurement analysis or judging. So, at that time, as I remember, it looked to be a good practice to be as transparent as possible — and we would look into it. That was, as I remember, the answer that was there. We can go back and take a look at the footage, and I think — even from the other folks who were in the room — it was pretty consistent with where we were.

So, again, I had no understanding of this change in the process, but I think that, for anybody here, we want it to be as open as possible. It's also very important to understand: What were the legal ramifications that were taken into consideration when these decisions were made? I would assume that my colleague will probably be doing the same thing to look at what the ramifications were of the request and making sure that we use best practices going forward.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, that video is available online. The former Deputy Premier said, in response to that question, that it was a good course of action and he committed his party to acting on it.

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple question about leadership and accountability. The previous minister made a change that has made this process less transparent. It has created delays in awarding tenders and it has delayed the start of jobs.

The former Deputy Premier committed publicly during the election to the business community to reverse this change. Clearly, this was an example of the Liberals saying one thing to get elected and then getting into government and doing the exact opposite.

So, now it falls to the new minister. Which one of his colleagues will he be listening to on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the final question. I will certainly seek some guidance from my colleagues who had the honour of this position and related positions in the 34th Assembly, but I can assure the member opposite that I will also be taking the guidance of the professionals in the Department of Highways and Public Works who are managing tenders and contracts on a daily basis.

I look forward to continuing the process of receiving briefs from my department with respect to all manner of contracts that are being let this year. I also look forward to meeting with the member opposite, should he have any additional questions or concerns and any specific asks that he has of me or my department to consider matters in which contracts are being let. I am open to that; my door is open.

In any event, as I said, I will follow best practices, and ultimately, I will be in the position where I will be making the calls going forward.

Question re: Yukon Fish and Game Association funding

Mr. Dixon: Over the past several years, the relationship between the Liberals and the Yukon hunting community has declined considerably. The hunting community has increasingly felt like an afterthought to the Liberals. In fact, the Liberals didn't even mention hunting in their platform. The Liberal government and the former Liberal Environment minister cut the annual budget for the Yukon Fish and Game Association last year and let them know that a further cut is coming this year.

How will the new Minister of Environment repair the relationship with the Yukon Fish and Game Association?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The Department of Environment supports a number of non-governmental organizations through transfer payment agreements. This funding helps carry out the goals and objectives of the government's policies and programs. We support a wide range of initiatives, including participation in government processes and implementation of specific projects.

The department must make decisions in allocating limited resources to various organizations. During the fiscal year 2021-22, the department is providing a total of \$1,067,000 to fund seven Yukon non-governmental organizations, which provide public services on behalf of the government. These include the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, the Yukon and Dawson humane societies, the Yukon Conservation Society, the Yukon Trappers Association, WildWise Yukon, and the Yukon Fish and Game Association.

These are not the only funding arrangements provided by the department to non-governmental organizations, but they represent the largest.

We strive to divide the available funding among organizations to ensure that Yukoners enjoy the most services for the best value.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister listing the organizations that the department funds. I would note that the YFGA was the only one to receive a cut last year, and that was a very clear message sent to the Yukon hunting community from this Liberal government.

Now, the Yukon Fish and Game Association offers amazing programs that encourage Yukoners to get outdoors and promotes wildlife conservation and management. Like most non-governmental organizations, the Yukon Fish and Game Association operates on a fairly small, tight budget, so a 25-percent cut to their annual contribution from the Yukon government really hurts. It could mean one less family fishing day or one less Yukon women's outdoor event.

So, will the new minister reverse the cuts that the previous Liberal minister made and restore the budget of the Yukon Fish and Game Association?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the follow-up question from the Leader of the Official Opposition.

The Government of Yukon has a working relationship with the Yukon Fish and Game Association, and staff at the Department of Environment are in regular contact with the organization's leadership. Department officials meet regularly with the Yukon Fish and Game executive to discuss wildlife management approaches and associated hunting opportunities.

We support the Yukon Fish and Game Association's operations by providing annual funding. In 2020, this amount was \$70,000. This is a significant amount of money, especially considering the number of environmental groups that come to YG for annual support. Although amounts can vary from year to year, depending on competing priorities, we provide this annual contribution to ensure the continued availability of important educational programs and community outreach activities for Yukon's hunters and anglers.

Communication protocols are used as appropriate to ensure joint projects made possible through these funding agreements are communicated clearly, consistently, and collaboratively.

I look forward to meeting with the Yukon Fish and Game Association and fostering a collaborative relationship.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, in a \$1.8-billion budget, when a government cuts an organization's funding by tens of thousands of dollars, that makes a huge impact to that organization and sends a very clear signal about the priorities that this government and this minister have.

Obviously, the organizations and the hunting community at large were very disappointed with the cuts tabled by the previous minister and had high hopes that they could begin to repair that relationship with the new minister. Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case.

I am glad that the minister mentioned a communications protocol because, in the contribution agreement that was put forward last year, the Liberal government included a gag order on the organization. The gag order was aimed at preventing the Yukon Fish and Game Association from speaking up on behalf of its members and criticizing decisions of government. Thankfully, after a legal opinion, the association was successful in having it removed.

Will the new minister commit that he will end the practice of trying to put gag orders on organizations like the Yukon Fish and Game Association and restore their funding?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that final question.

As I heard abundantly in the 34th and now in our new Legislature, the members opposite are certainly very interested — and rightly so — in issues related to consultation and that stakeholders ought to be consulted. Now the member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, is asking a minister to make a decision on the fly.

As I said, I am open to further consultation and to further discussions with Yukon Fish and Game Association, and I certainly recognize the valuable work that they do for hunting and angling enthusiasts.

With respect to the issues of communication, these are normal and standard components of funding agreements with

the government. There is nothing in the agreements that were previously signed that prevented the funding recipients from speaking to their own projects paid for with funding raised by their members or other sources.

In any event, I certainly support the Yukon Fish and Game Association and look forward to a fruitful and productive relationship going forward.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, May 19, 2021. They are: Motion No. 40, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North; Motion No. 14, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake; and Motion No. 30, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South.

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, the Yukon NDP will not be putting forward a motion, in order to maximize time for debate on the budget.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 2: *Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021)*

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 2, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McLean.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 2, entitled *Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021)*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 2, entitled *Act to Amend the Child Care Act (2021)*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to present these amendments that will finalize the transfer of the mandate for early learning and childcare from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Education. I would also like to take this moment to thank the staff who are responsible for preparing these amendments and for helping us to bring them forward today.

These amendments will formalize the transfer of responsibility for the *Child Care Act* to the Minister of Education and will allow the minister to designate a director from Education to be responsible for carrying out the responsibilities under the act.

Currently, the director of Family and Children's Services has that responsibility. As per the recommendations in *Putting People First — the final report of the comprehensive review of Yukon's health and social programs and services*, we are aligning all early learning programs and services under the Department of Education to allow for improved planning and decision-making.

In order to make this possible, amendments to the *Child Care Act* and regulations, the *Health Act*, and the *Government Organisation Act* regulations are required. Until these amendments are passed and come into force, the Minister of Health and Social Services remains responsible for the act, but the director of Family and Children's Services has delegated their responsibilities under the act to a person in Education, which allows Education to effectively assume authority under the act as of April 1 of this year. These amendments are therefore essential to bring clarity and administrative efficiency in delivering the early learning and childcare mandate.

Across Canada, eight jurisdictions have integrated early learning and childcare with Education, those being Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The transfer from Health and Social Services to Education ensures that early learning and childcare services are coordinated at all levels, including the transition into kindergarten and the school years. High-quality early learning opportunities support improved long-term outcomes for children in all aspects of education and development. The integration of early childcare development programs and the education system will help to create a learning continuum that begins at birth and has a positive long-term impact.

Over the past few months, we have heard support for the transfer of early learning and childcare to Education, and people are excited about the opportunities that this presents. Early childhood educators are especially pleased about the focus on children and high-quality early learning.

I firmly believe that the act before us today will allow us to continue on our journey to support improved planning and decision-making while keeping the child firmly in the centre. During the engagements on universal childcare and early kindergarten, it has been made clear that a complete review and modernization of the *Child Care Act* needs to happen, but that will take much longer.

It will need to be addressed in a very thoughtful way, where everyone's view can be heard and considered. We will continue to work with First Nation governments, stakeholders, and Yukoners to move this forward.

Mr. Dixon: I am pleased to rise and speak briefly to this bill at second reading. Of course, this bill was tabled back in the previous Sitting earlier this year and died on the Order Paper when the election was called, and so now it comes back again for discussion.

To begin, on behalf of the Yukon Party caucus, I certainly want to thank the officials who provided briefings for our team. In particular, I want to thank Michael McBride, who I know did a lot of work on this and had briefed us the first time around and is either retired or retiring very soon, so I want to thank him for his work on this.

Obviously, this comes around the time of the implementation of the new early learning and childcare program. I wanted to let the minister know that I will reserve my questions for that program for the Department of Education

discussion and won't be raising those types of questions in the debate in Committee on this bill. I did want to note that the few questions that we did have with regard to this bill that we will ask in Committee — I will mention them now so that the minister can prepare them and we can expedite Committee on this.

We will be interested in discussing the type of consultation that occurred on the bill and which groups were met with and their respective positions. I do understand that there is a variety of opinion on where the correct location is of this branch — whether it should be in Health and Social Services or in Education. There are a few different opinions on that, and so I look forward to hearing about which groups said what.

For our part, we agree with the transfer to Education. I believe that my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, did a motion on this in a previous Sitting, and we were happy to see this change happen. I believe that placing the early learning and childcare branch in the Department of Education offers a nice integration of early learning into the education system and also recognizes the importance of early learning as a part of lifelong learning in the territory.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting this bill. As I have indicated, we will have a few questions in Committee when we do get to that period.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, today I am rising to speak in favour of Bill No. 2. The very first time I had a conversation, or even heard the concept about early learning and childcare being put into the Department of Education, was during a debate hosted by l'AFY in 2016. The reason it was suggested there is that the preamble of the *Education Act* says that every child is guaranteed and should have access to education. This is a way of making it truly universal — by moving it out of the Department of Health and Social Services toward Education.

The bill in front of us is small. We could say that it was a precision bill to do one thing, but what it does is very large. I do have questions about how some of that will work, but it will be in the Department of Education where those questions are asked. At this point, I think this is the way forward and we look forward to getting this through.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: 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: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.
Ms. McLeod: Agree.
Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.
Mr. Hassard: Agree.
Mr. Istchenko: Agree.
Ms. White: Agree.
Ms. Blake: Agree.
Ms. Tredger: Agree.
Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.
Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare this motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 2 agreed to

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

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

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will cede the floor to my colleagues.

Mr. Dixon: We're eager to get into Committee on this and so we look forward to raising our questions at that time.

Ms. White: It's not often that I'll agree with the Yukon Party, but here I am — I agree. Let's get into Committee of the Whole.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I did a good encapsulation yesterday of the items in the supplementary budget, so I will also, here in the final part of the second reading, sit very quickly here so we can get into Committee of the Whole.

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 for second reading of Bill No. 200 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

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

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Madam Chair, I would request some time for our officials from the department to join us.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*?

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

**Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses,
 schedules, and the title of Bill No. 200 read and
 agreed to**

Mr. Kent: Madam Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, read and agreed to.

Chair: Mr. Kent has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 2, and Schedules A, B and C deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: Madam Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by the Hon. Mr. Silver that the Chair report Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 201: First Appropriation Act 2021-22

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm just going to introduce my official here. We have Scott Thompson, Deputy Minister of Finance, with me today. Thank you very much to both Scott and to the department for all of their amazing work to keep not only me and my team up to date and briefed, but the opposition as well.

With that, I will cede the floor to the opposition.

Mr. Dixon: In order to expedite debate and get into departments, we won't have any questions in general debate.

Ms. White: Madam Chair, we look forward to general debate in departments as well.

Chair: Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, the matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Mr. Kent: May I suggest a five-minute recess, Madam Chair, so that officials can attend with the minister?

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief five-minute recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Community Services

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, it's an honour this afternoon to speak to the budget for Community Services. I

know that there is a lot of talk about expediting the budget discussions this afternoon, and I'll certainly do my part. I just want to say that I am new to this whole role. It has been a whirlwind week as I got my legs underneath me in this new world that is Community Services.

It is a smaller department than my last gig over at Highways and Public Works, but it is certainly a many and varied department, like my last role. The Department of Community Services has the majority of the legislation that this government — well, not a majority, but it has a huge share. About 30 percent of all the legislation in the Government of Yukon resides within the Community Services realm, and so it is a very exciting and detailed department to oversee.

We are responsible for Protective Services, Corporate Services, Community Development, Finance, and all sorts of other services that are very essential for the territory — corporate registries, raffles — there are all sorts of things that we do.

Our budget this afternoon provides details on how our department is protecting people and property, how we are advancing community well-being with the work that we are doing with First Nations and municipal governments, and how we are building thriving communities around the territory. The department's main estimates include more than \$121 million in capital expenditures and just over \$106 million in operation and maintenance expenditures.

Madam Chair, I would like to provide you with some highlights of this year's Community Services budget. Infrastructure Development: The Infrastructure Development branch is responsible for managing infrastructure projects built with federal infrastructure funds. The ongoing partnerships that we have with Canada and municipalities, First Nations, and unincorporated Yukon are helping us to build vibrant, healthy, sustainable communities. We are addressing core infrastructure priorities for roads, clean drinking water, green energy, solid-waste and waste-water management at territorial and local levels.

This fiscal year, the Yukon government will be investing \$81 million to continue a range of infrastructure projects around the territory. This funding is largely supported through recoveries from the federal small communities fund and Investing in Canada infrastructure program. All of these projects address ongoing needs of Yukon communities.

Since 2018, we have been meeting regularly with First Nations and communities to develop multi-year plans for infrastructure projects. Consulting with communities, these plans are updated continually as priorities and needs change over time. These projects are providing jobs for Yukoners, enhancing economic development, and improving well-being for Yukoners.

Over 10 years, from 2018-19 to 2027-28, the Infrastructure Development branch is responsible for making effective use of the more than \$594 million that is available through the Investing in Canada infrastructure program to fund infrastructure programs across the territory. Most of these projects are cost-shared between Canada, Yukon, and other partners on a 75:25 percent basis.

This year, Madam Chair, we are budgeting \$48.5 million to build projects with the Investing in Canada infrastructure program. Many of these projects are in progress while others will be starting this year. For instance, under ICSP, the integrated community sustainability plan, several projects are underway.

The Kwanlin Dün First Nation is building a community hub that will provide a central location where their citizens can access health, social, and cultural programs and services. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is building a new community centre in Old Crow. We will also be supporting the City of Dawson on planning for a new reservoir and sewage lagoon to address the municipality's waste water needs.

Similarly, Yukon government is committed to contribute to a new recreation centre in Dawson. Community Services is funding the ongoing planning work for this important project. Planning and site selection work will continue this year.

The City of Whitehorse is building a public transit station — a hub on 2nd Avenue — that will enhance public transit for commuters. It will also be replacing aging transit buses.

We will continue to work with the Teslin Tlingit Council on a community hub for their citizens in Teslin and a community centre for the White River First Nation in Beaver Creek.

In Faro, we will continue to make upgrades to the town's water, sewer, and roads. We will begin construction of a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth centre in Dawson.

In Mayo, a new water well will be built for the water plant serving the community.

Work to upgrade Mount Sima snow-making will continue this summer as part of a larger project to replace aging diesel infrastructure used on the hill.

We are planning upgrades to sewage lagoons in communities around the territory, including Carcross, Carmacks, Ross River, and Haines Junction. For Burwash, a new boat launch is in the works.

Plans are also ready to start this year on the first phase of the next round of water and waste-water upgrades for the Town of Watson Lake.

Madam Chair, the small communities fund will be helping us work on \$25.9 million of projects around the territory. Some, as with ICSP, will focus on clean water and waste-water systems, such as public works facilities upgrades in Mayo and for the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and a new public works facility for Old Crow.

In Carmacks, construction will begin this year on a combined fire hall and emergency medical services space.

In Teslin, a new fire hall and public works building is planned, led by the Village of Teslin. As well, green energy retrofits will be made to the village's municipal centre and to the Teslin Tlingit Council public building. Construction is also underway for a new public works fire hall building in Watson Lake.

In Dawson City, ongoing water and sewer work will resume this year as part of long-term efforts to upgrade the aging infrastructure in the community.

This summer, in addition to some of the projects mentioned a moment ago, we will finish constructing the skateboard park in Whitehorse. Once complete, the facility will be turned over to the City of Whitehorse.

Madam Chair, as the main land developer in Yukon, we are working hard to address Yukon's lot shortages and supporting economic development with significant investments in developing new residential, commercial, and industrial lots around the territory. We know that, with Yukon's increasing population, the demand for lots continues.

The branch uses three approaches to deliver on land development needs: developing lots and subdivisions in Whitehorse and communities; advancing opportunities for private sector land development; and, finally, supporting First Nations to develop their land for citizen housing and economic development opportunities.

As we all know, building in Yukon is challenging given our geography, short construction season, and limited resources. As a key land developer, we can invest the required capital costs to maintain and restore lot inventory in the territory. We can also support land development planning work that builds on the municipality's important official community plan.

Madam Chair, our \$32-million budget for land development includes \$21.7 million for continued development of the Whistle Bend subdivision and Whitehorse area and \$8.3 million for development of rural lots in Yukon.

In just nine short years, Whistle Bend is already a bustling neighbourhood. We can see, from the response to lot sales, that it is a place where Yukoners want to make their homes. When it is complete over the next few years, it will be home to up to 10,000 residents. Demand for lots in Whistle Bend continues to be brisk. In December 2020, the largest ever Whitehorse lottery was launched for 249 residential and eight commercial lots. The draws on January 12 and 13, 2021, resulted in more than 780 applications with all lots selling.

Madam Chair, we have work underway on phase 6 of Whistle Bend for completion this summer. It will create some 171 lots for a planned release later this fall. The phase 7 construction tender just closed. It will supply another 90 residential lots targeted for release in the fall of 2022.

This year, we will also begin detailed design of the final phases of Whistle Bend — phases 8 to 15. We are anticipating tendering phases 8 and 9 this year, as well as a lift station. Phase 8 will be a small, one-season development intended to supplement phase 7 with another 50 or so lots in the fall of 2022. In addition, we will be releasing another 27 commercial lots along Keno Way.

Looking at infill in the City of Whitehorse, we will be servicing four new lots in Logan subdivision for release later this year — that is just down the street from me. Helping the Whistle Bend neighbourhood become even more beautiful, we will be tendering work on Kaska Boulevard and for a revised Cadzow Park design shortly. Two tenders for bioswale seeding, walkways, and a boulevard will close shortly.

Land Development branch is working with rural communities, providing support and being guided by the

community priorities and community plans, to meet short- and medium-term demand and plan for their land development needs for the long term.

We are going to be very busy this year, Madam Chair, with feasibility planning and implementation of projects across the territory in partnership with municipalities and First Nations.

We will also be initiating planning of the Dredge Pond 2 country residential subdivision and heritage park and advanced design of a commercial subdivision. As well, this spring and fall, we will be releasing some urban and industrial lots and start detailed design of the Dome Road once the master planning process wraps up this summer.

In Mayo, we are finalizing development for five to 10 vacant lots in the Village of Mayo to be available later this spring and fall. We are also designing a small downtown residential subdivision.

We have completed feasibility work on multiple sites in both Carmacks and Watson Lake. We are working with these municipalities to prioritize and tender projects for a variety of lot types this spring and summer. In Watson Lake, we hope to tender the Frances Avenue serviced urban lot extension for release of about 10 lots in the first phase. We are advancing the feasibility and preliminary design of the Garden Creek industrial subdivision and finalized country residential lots.

We are partnering with First Nations and providing dedicated support to help them meet the growing housing needs for their citizens and provide economic development opportunities. Our joint master planning process with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation is underway for the Range Point area. Subdivision construction could begin as early as the summer of 2022 or 2023.

Madam Chair, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' Marshall Creek subdivision infrastructure expansion project is extending water and sewer services from the Village of Haines Junction into the subdivision that will provide services for more than 30 future homes for CAFN citizens and improve services for some who are already living there. A lift station will also be built this year to meet future needs. I was in the community last fall, and I can attest that it's a very exciting time for the citizens of Haines Junction and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

We are finalizing the design of the Yukon government's half of the Teslin Tlingit Council-YG Lone Tree country residential project for tender soon, and that will provide about 23 new lots.

Finally, we're exploring parallel planning with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation for adjacent Yukon government and Carcross/Tagish First Nation parcels and to look at a second access in Carcross.

We have initiated planning discussions with a number of other First Nations, including Selkirk First Nation and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. As well, we will continue discussions with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kluane First Nation to identify, in advance, their development needs.

Protective Services division — Madam Chair, I will now move on to Protective Services. This division houses emergency management coordination, first response, and

public safety agencies, including building safety and standards, Wildland Fire Management, the Fire Marshal's Office, Emergency Measures Organization, and Emergency Medical Services.

Investments in personnel, equipment, training, and infrastructure improve Yukon's ability to prevent and prepare for emergencies, to respond when they occur, and to reduce the loss of life and property.

With these budget allocations to Protective Services, this government is investing in the advancement of community well-being by protecting people and property. Accordingly, Madam Chair, we have allocated \$37 million of the department's operation and maintenance budget and \$2.6 million of the capital budget for the Protective Services division.

Madam Chair, since the global pandemic was declared in March 2020, Yukon has been largely successful in mitigating the importation risk of COVID-19 in the territory due, in large part, to our health protection measures such as self-isolation upon arrival and the provision of information about such requirements.

The Emergency Measures Organization in the Department of Community Services has responsibility for the Emergency Coordination Centre and its activities related to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yukon's border support measures have afforded our government the opportunity to provide meaningful local employment opportunities to members of the Liard First Nation, reflecting our government's priority to work closely with First Nations and local governments to foster positive, respectful relationships and build local capacity.

We are allocating \$3.2 million in O&M funding in 2021 to support the continuation of ECC operations and border support measures. While we are beginning the process of easing self-isolation restrictions for vaccinated individuals entering the territory as of May 25, some measures of border support will be required well into 2021, later this year.

Fire Marshal's Office — Madam Chair, we are budgeting \$1.7 million this year for operation and maintenance of the Fire Marshal's Office and approximately \$1.2 million for capital expenses. This includes \$450,000 to operate 15 community fire and rescue halls and two special operations groups, as well as honoraria and training travel expenses for approximately 130 community volunteer firefighters.

The Fire Marshal's Office provides all infrastructure related to unincorporated fire departments. This includes fire halls, personal protective equipment, and training resources.

From September 2020 to February 2021, volunteer fire and rescue halls have responded to approximately 140 calls across the territory. In addition to fighting structural fires, Yukon's volunteer fire departments work with Wildland Fire Management crews to manage urban interface wildfires that may threaten community infrastructure throughout the territory.

We also support training, recruitment, and retention of volunteers and promote gender diversity in the fire service through such programs as the Ember Fire Academy.

Madam Chair, fire prevention planning continues throughout the Yukon with an emphasis on communities with low volunteerism in fire departments. The Fire Marshal's Office participates annually in Fire Prevention Week, a nationwide initiative in October to reduce and prevent the loss of life and property from home fire and other home safety incidents. The Fire Marshal's Office also works with partners to conduct annual fire safety and carbon monoxide public awareness in social media campaigns.

As part of the Yukon government's COVID-19 response, the Fire Marshal's Office has been providing staff to support the Emergency Coordination Centre and the CEMA enforcement team at the Whitehorse airport since the pandemic was declared in March 2020.

Wildland Fire Management — Madam Chair, we have undertaken a strategic renewal of how Wildland Fire Management operates, focusing on a modern approach to managing wildfires. This requires investments in forest fuel management near communities and a continued focus on prevention, mitigation and preparedness, and response.

We are investing \$21.7 million in operation and maintenance funding for the Wildland Fire Management branch. Wildland Fire Management is moving toward being an agency that leads a whole-of-government approach to forest fire management and the creation of wildland-fire resilient Yukon communities.

Wildland Fire Management's new strategic vision includes support for the creation of community wildfire protection plans. It also includes continued FireSmart investments and large landscape-level fuel management projects. Last year we treated an estimated 225 hectares of land. This year, we are planning to treat another 245 hectares of land and are committing \$1.27 million to hazard-reduction investments this year.

Madam Chair, we hired a full-time fuels management forester in late 2020. This was designed to lead landscape-level fire risk reduction projects such as the Whitehorse south hazard-reduction project, partially funded by the federal government. This 400-hectare fireguard will greatly reduce the city's wildfire risk and provide a ready-made control line to help firefighters safely work on future fires in the area.

For more than 20 years, Wildland Fire Management has worked closely with Yukon First Nations. We are increasing investments in Yukon First Nation initial attack fire crews, training, and generally enhancing the capacity of Yukon in the wildfire season. We recognize that a changing climate means that the fire risk is unpredictable in Yukon and can extend into the fall. For 2021, we have hired four new seasonal emergency response officers to increase our capacity to oversee crews and manage incidents.

This year, the White River First Nation has an initial attack crew for the first time, so all 14 First Nations will be involved in keeping communities safe from wildfire across the territory, with YG employee initial attack crews for the same length of season. This means that the Government of Yukon now has a full response capacity to wildfires from April 1 to September 30 every year.

In addition to significant investments in wildfire resiliency in Yukon, Wildland Fire Management continues to be dedicated to providing world-class fire suppression to protect life, property, and infrastructure across the territory. Wildfire management funding further supports our fulfillment of action items in the government's climate change, energy, and green economy strategy, as well as the Canadian wildland fire strategy, and recognizes the higher cost of managing fire in the boreal forest.

To support Emergency Medical Services this year, we are budgeting \$10.4 million in operation and maintenance funding and \$581,000 in capital.

In 2020, Yukon EMS responded to 6,094 ground incidents in the Whitehorse catchment area and 1,722 in the communities, 871 incidents via Yukon EMS air ambulance, and 2,092 client visits to the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter.

Madam Chair, as well as the two stations in Whitehorse, Yukon Emergency Medical Services supports 15 ambulance stations in rural Yukon communities. Together we provide professional, coordinated care throughout the Yukon guided by leadership, dedication, and partnership.

This past year, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted additional safety measures for our first responders —

I will leave it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. McLeod: I would like to congratulate the minister on his appointment to Community Services and to welcome and thank the officials for attending with us today.

My first question today is about staffing. I would like to know how many new positions are being contemplated in Community Services this fiscal year.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for her congratulations. I will extend the same. It's great to be debating with my colleagues across the House again, albeit in a new role. I would also like to take a second before I answer the question to welcome my officials this afternoon — Matt King, the deputy, and Phil MacDonald, the director of Finance — who are here with us today.

To answer your questions, we have three new positions in our wildland fire office. They are helping with reorganizing with the wildland fire unit to management. That's it; we have three new positions. They are going to help with our transition in working with the Yukon First Nation wildfire crew — 20-person unit. We will have a number of different roles, but that's how many positions we have — three new positions.

Ms. McLeod: So, if I heard correctly, there are three new positions in wildland fire to assist with the transition. Can the minister confirm that those three positions are all in Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, I can report that, of the three positions, two are actually located in the communities; one is in Haines Junction, one is in Dawson City, and the other one is in Whitehorse.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that.

I have a few questions about CEMA. What is the number of ministerial orders issued under CEMA? We probably want to go back to when the pandemic was declared in March of 2020.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We don't need a whole history lesson, but on March 27, that is when we declared our first state of emergency under the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. My colleague did an amazing job shepherding that aged act into action and actually using it to protect Yukoners.

The effort that this government, working collectively as a whole, has put on has really led the country and kept Yukoners safe, and from that safety that we provided, it allowed us to have an economy that is one of the leaders in the country as well.

The ministerial orders we brought into place cover a range of topics and are reviewed by departments on a monthly basis to ensure their necessity to support Yukoners and respond to the pandemic. Again, that is one of the things that my colleague made sure of. We are constantly reviewing these things to make sure that we need them. We don't want to be bringing in orders that aren't necessary to the safety and well-being of Yukoners.

He also made a commitment to bring every order before Cabinet for clarity and to make sure it was transparent and that we knew what we were doing as a government and not unilaterally putting orders in place, and he has been absolutely fastidious in his approach to these orders. For that, I thank him.

We were asked how many active orders there are in force at the moment. There are actually 14. There are amendments to the liquor licences, declaration of the state of emergency itself. There are some education measures. There is an enforcement order under COVID that sets out the authority and powers of enforcement officers as well as arrest powers of the RCMP in enforcing CEMA. There are health protection orders that outline the self-isolation requirements, including exceptions to these requirements, and lists the various limitations on gatherings, eat-in restaurants, bars, dentistry, personal services. That's an important one as well. There are leases, approvals and regulatory timelines, which allows deputy ministers to renew or extend the term of a lease or approval that was granted by their own department and was set to expire during the emergency. We have a leave regulation that provides one leave of absence without pay for 14 days for employees who are subject to a health protection matter. Again, when it comes to leave, Madam Chair, the territory is leading the country in terms of our leave provisions. Limitation periods and legislative time periods — it enables the suspension of various limitation periods during the state of emergency for a prescribed time immediately after it ends.

We have masks in indoor spaces. These things that we continually use in this building are brought into force and regulated through the CEMA orders we have.

Medical practitioners' provisional licensing — we know that some medical practitioners cannot operate without some sort of registry. This allows that to happen so we have the medical professionals we need. Pharmacist authorization enables the expansion of scope for pharmacists to allow prescriptions to be extended during the state of emergency.

Rent deferrals — this is under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, which resides in Community Services and protects those who are required to remain in place while

adhering to health protection orders. It gives some protection from rents being in arrears.

Telephone and electronic meetings enable organizations — including business corporations, associations, limited partnerships, and societies — to hold meetings electronically or by teleconference so they may continue operations and comply with relevant legislation. Again, a very, very important order stemming from this CEMA legislation.

And last, the waiver of airport fees. This is very important to our local airlines. We waived airport parking fees, landing fees, loading bridge fees for all aircraft. This was set to be self-repealed in December 31, 2020, but it was repealed by OIC 2020/93, and then it is brought back into force.

So, that's what we're looking at, Madam Chair. That's what they're for. There are 14 of them. They're very important to the operation of the territory's business and to actually maintaining the safety that we so need in the face of this global pandemic that is afflicting millions and killing people around the planet.

Ms. McLeod: Madam Chair, my question actually was a query about how many ministerial orders have been issued under CEMA, which the minister did not answer, but he did answer the question that I was about to ask, which is how many are in force currently. So, there are 14, and I acknowledge that.

If the minister could get me that number of how many orders have been issued under CEMA since it became necessary, I would appreciate that.

What public and stakeholder consultation was done on any of these ministerial orders?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, there's a lot to unpack in that question. I appreciate the Member for Watson Lake's clarification of the question.

As with anything, when you're dealing with government in situations like this, the answer can be as complicated or as simple as you want. I listed the 14 orders that are currently in effect, but underneath each one of those orders, every time we renew them, there is another number.

So, you could actually probably count that as 30 orders, but in fact it deals with 14 different issues and they are one order, but the way that this rolls out — when you renew it, you get a new number, it adds to the list, but it actually isn't a new order at all. We have 10 that have been repealed or have been let to expire, and they include amendment of government contract provisions, which enable deputy ministers to amend and finalize government contracts administered by their own department without any right of appeal by the contractor. That one has now been allowed to expire. Underneath that one item, there are two renewals that happened, so that could be counted as, really, two separate orders, but it's not; it's one.

Border controls measures, which were repealed on June 30, 2020, set out the parameters of who is permitted to stay or travel through the Yukon. That was allowed to expire as well. Medically exempted drivers who are 70 years of age or older, who were required to submit a medical examination certificate from having to do so during the state of emergency — that is one order that has now been either repealed or

expired, but underneath that one order are two other numbers that could be counted toward the total, but it is the same order.

Exemption to self-isolation requirements — this was repealed on November 20. Exempted residents from BC, NWT, and Nunavut from having to self-isolate upon entering Yukon is now repealed — again, two separate numbers underneath that one, as well, which would add to the total but doesn't actually add to the number of orders that we were enforcing.

Property tax relief — repealed on September 9 — enabled property owners in the Yukon to benefit from an extended due date regarding taxes that were otherwise payable — now repealed.

Remote cannabis sales — now I know this is of interest to the members opposite. They like it. We didn't do it under CEMA; we are looking at doing it legislatively, properly. This was something that we didn't have to keep doing under CEMA, so it has now been revoked. Again, two extensions to that one — we could count it as two extra orders, but it is not. It is one order, now repealed, and we are going to do the actual ability for cannabis retailers to sell their product online properly through legislation.

School council elections — again, repealed.

Self-isolation exception for traditional activities — that was repealed on September 9.

Social assistance regulation override — that was taken out as well. It made CERB fully exempt from social assistance income calculations until June 2020 — no longer necessary. It's gone.

Virtual commissioning, signing, and witnessing — again, now gone — two renewals under that as well.

Madam Chair, what I'm saying here is that, in total, with the orders that are in existence — 14 — and the repealed/expired of 10, we had a total of 24 orders. We have been very careful and diligent about how we actually enact these orders and how we don't let them stay beyond their best-before date. We get rid of them as soon as we possibly can, and we'll continue that practice.

The other question that we had was on consultation. We had health consultations three times a week with every community and First Nation at the beginning of the pandemic. After several months, we went down to weekly meetings, by agreement, so we didn't hold them as often. They weren't as necessary, but in the very beginning of the pandemic, my colleague had regular meetings with First Nations and communities three times a week.

We had a business advisory committee made up of businesses across the territory, a cross-section; we had the tourism advisory committee that also advised us. We had, I would say, weekly meetings with our federal and territorial counterparts across the country as to the state of the pandemic and what sort of best practices they were bringing into effect to manage this pandemic. We had our public health officers of Canada. The CMOH, the chief medical officer of health's office, also consulted with community members on a regular basis throughout the pandemic.

We had lots of consultation going into this thing, guiding us as we navigated this unprecedented health crisis that the territory, Canada, and the world faced since last March.

Ms. McLeod: Does the minister know how many briefings were provided to opposition members?

On the back of that, does the minister have an idea of the number of staff who are dealing with CEMA enforcement and the number of staff involved in developing CEMA policy?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm going to deal with the relatively easy answer first, and that is the number of officers we have enforcing CEMA orders. We currently have five CEMA officers under Justice tasked with enforcing our CEMA orders.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we utilized conservation officers, natural resource officers, and liquor inspectors and Yukon government enforcement staff at various sites across the territory such as the borders and our airports to make sure that people were checked and that we had some sort of oversight on our borders. That number is difficult to pin down at the moment. It was an all-of-government approach, and it was pulled from many, many different players. The numbers ebbed and flowed as needs came and went during the months of the pandemic. But currently, we have five CEMA officers under Justice dedicated to enforcing our CEMA orders.

As far as the briefings that were offered, I know from my colleague that we had briefings with the chief medical officer of health at least every week at the beginning. I know that we were in front of the cameras talking to Yukoners on a regular basis as well. Those briefings were certainly available to all Yukoners, including the opposition. We also had opposition briefings with the CMOH — that is what I'm led to believe — at the beginning. Those were on a regular basis. They dropped away probably over the summer months. I know that we offered to have a briefing in here in the House, but that offer wasn't accepted.

Then, in the fall, we also had another briefing for opposition members. We also had the debate in the House — many, many hours of debate — over our government motions day during that fall session where we debated our CEMA orders.

We had updates, as well, in many government departments. It's very difficult for CS itself to aggregate all of the meetings that we had because they happened in Health and Social Services and in Education throughout as we went through this pandemic, but we certainly offered briefings, gave them, and were open to talking with the opposition on this matter.

Ms. McLeod: I don't know if the minister can answer this, but I will ask anyway. It was one that I had asked previously and he didn't answer, and that was the number of staff involved in developing CEMA policy — if the minister could give us some indication of how many employees are involved with that.

What is EMO's role in managing the pandemic response?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am going to start again with the policy question. It's a little bit easier. In Community Services, we didn't have any additional policy staff to help with the

pandemic. The crew stepped up and triaged their existing policy work in favour of the COVID response, and we made it work.

For Health, I'm sure you can ask when my colleague comes to the floor under budget debate. Health had the COVID response unit, which helped the chief medical officer of health's department, and they'll be able to talk about what resources were deployed there.

As for CS, there were no new policy resources needed in that shop. The member opposite, the Member for Watson Lake, asked about the Emergency Measures office. The director of the Emergency Measures office is a civil emergency planning officer under the act. He takes that role. The Emergency Measures office coordinates the Yukon government response through the Emergency Coordination Centre. It provides incident command. It was the office that brought in people from across government to make sure that they were pulled in to help with this emergency.

The Emergency Measures office made sure that these people were supported and trained. They also supported community emergency plans, supported the planning work, and they basically provided the structure through which the Yukon government responded to this pandemic throughout the territory at an operational level.

Ms. McLeod: Madam Chair, I thank the minister for that.

The previous minister was opposed to using time-limited legislation instead of the emergency orders, so will the new minister consider a more democratic approach by considering time-limiting legislation?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Just to be clear, I believe that the member opposite is asking us to bring in time-limited legislation, as opposed to CEMA. I am not entirely sure if the member opposite was asking us to bring in time-limited legislation in the midst of the pandemic, which would have been impossible, given that legislation probably takes a minimum of 16 months to get through and drafted and the whole bit. What we did have though is the CEMA, which is an ancient document. We have committed to reviewing that, to have a committee struck to review CEMA to make it better for the future. We can hope that this will be the only crisis we will face, but there will be other crises that future Yukon governments will face, and we need better tools to do that. We are more than happy to look at the toolbox and fix how we do it, to learn from what we have just gone through and make the improvements necessary.

That said, CEMA itself is a time-limited structure. We have orders that are in place for 90 days at a time. Even the state of emergency is something that lasts for 90 days and isn't extended over a period of time. It is not something that is ubiquitous which comes into being and never goes away; it is something that we have to consciously renew every 90 days. So, that in itself is a time-limited measure. You can see the breadth of the 14 orders that are currently in place — the 10 that have been repealed or have been allowed to expire, a total of 24 that we have used — were essential in managing this crisis and making sure that Yukoners were kept safe and were allowed to conduct their lives in a structured way throughout.

It's not unprecedented — this once-in-100-years event that this pandemic has proved to be.

The fact that we were using this antique legislation that, I believe, came into being in 1966 — am I correct in that? I'm calling it "antique", Madam Chair, but it's actually three years younger than me. So, I guess I'm dating myself and calling myself names at the same time. In 1966, the legislation came into effect. It's three years younger than me, so it is a very old piece of legislation and needs to be retooled. We're more than happy to do that, and I'm sure, with the cooperation and good fellowship of my colleagues on the opposite side of the floor, we will get that work done so that future governments will have a better regime.

That said, as I was saying, the current CEMA structure that we put in place did actually, in the end, serve Yukoners very well. We have made it through this pandemic better than almost every other Canadian jurisdiction — arguably, probably better than any other Canadian jurisdiction — and we have kept our citizens safe. We have allowed them to conduct their lives in a way that approached normalcy for much of the year. We have our children in schools; we have avoided many of the great lockdowns that we've seen in many of the other jurisdictions of the country. We have had our people out playing hockey; they are going to the gym; they are still going to restaurants; our restaurants are open. That's not happening — the UK just opened their restaurants. In many cases in Canada, these places are shut down and locked down and have no access to the public. That's not the case here, Madam Chair. Here, we have managed to have one of the strongest economies in the country and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country throughout the pandemic because of the measures putting people first that we put in place. We haven't seen that in Alberta; we haven't seen that in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, or Québec — we have seen it here. We have seen it a little bit in the Maritimes, but the structure that we put in place — the approach that this government took, the sacrifices that our Yukon citizens made in the face of this pandemic — and they were significant. And because of their thoughtfulness, and their compassion for their fellow Yukoners, we have had a very good showing throughout this pandemic. It's not that people haven't suffered, not that there haven't been costs, but relatively speaking, Yukoners should hold their head high and say, "Look at what we've done", because it has been magnificent.

Ms. McLeod: I guess the short answer to that would have just been no.

The minister's reluctance to subject these orders or the path forward through a pandemic or any other emergency through a legislative process and a democratic process is not something that is seen as desirable. Okay.

I want to move on from CEMA, then. I would like to talk a bit about community pools and rec centres. So, under Community Development in this budget, there is a \$125,000 increase to \$250,000 for community pools capital maintenance. Can the minister provide more information about this increase?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Madam Chair, thank you for your patience.

Yeah, there is a \$125,000 increase in our pools maintenance budget. Environmental health went out and identified some issues with our pools. It costs \$125,000 to fix. We're fixing them so our citizens across the territory have pools that work and that they can use this summer. That's the short answer.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Ms. McLeod: We were speaking about the \$125,000 increase for community pools capital maintenance. The minister advises that it is as a result of requests for upgrades from environmental health. I am going to leave that one there for now.

The Pelly Crossing swimming pool closed on February 18 — or the tender closed on February 18. It looks as though it has not been awarded as of today.

Can the minister provide an explanation on the status of the project and the reason it has not been awarded?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Pelly pool is a very exciting project. I am happy to say that we are, of course, proceeding with it. It is an important facility to the community of Pelly. It was built back in — close to the 1990s, I think. It has been around for a long time; it is in need of replacement.

The bid came in during the election, so the department had to extend the irrevocability period. With the election resolved, we have moved forward with the tender. We have reconfirmed the project and are in discussions with the low bidder, and we are working toward an award, so it is happening.

Ms. McLeod: I will note that the election was called some weeks after that closing date. However, are there any other community projects that have been waylaid or delayed due to the election?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think that the member opposite referred to any other government projects that have been waylaid or delayed as a result of the election. I can speak for Community Services. This was the one major project that we had to deal with, upon being sworn in as ministers. This was the project I had to deal with. There were no other projects of substance — really big capital projects — that had been waylaid or delayed as a result of the election.

Ms. McLeod: I'm going to come back to that response in a little bit. I want to stay on pools, though. The pool in Haines Junction was closed about three years ago due to structural issues. Can the minister give us an update on discussions that the government is having with the Village of Haines Junction on a new pool and recreation centre?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: When it comes to community projects and Community Services, it is the communities that come forward with their wish list. I can report to the member opposite that we are actually looking at the cost and scoping of the project, but Haines Junction has a list of priorities that they have presented to us. We make those submissions through the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, and it's assessed at that level.

At this point, the pool is not top of the list for the community of Haines Junction. There have been some discussions about it, but they have put forward a list of their priorities and we're following through on their list.

Ms. McLeod: The Beaver Creek community centre recently changed hands and is now operated by the White River First Nation. Can the minister confirm whether the community centre is now open and accessible to the community as it has been in the past? Can he confirm that the gym and the pool are now open?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It doesn't come as any surprise that our pools are seasonal operations. We are currently working with the White River First Nation to open it this summer. The community centre is not open yet. We are working with the White River First Nation on operational details for that facility in opening it up, into the future, but we're still working out the details of that project.

Ms. McLeod: Can the minister provide us with an update on the work for the Ross River pool?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have contracted an engineer to do the upgrades to the pool in Ross River, and the plan is to have it open this summer. The upgrades that we're contemplating, through the engineer we have hired, are part of the \$125,000 that we talked about earlier. It's important to these communities that they have facilities that operate this summer. We're working hard. Operating these facilities in rural Yukon is not without its challenges, but we're confident that we'll be able to have the kids in these rural communities swimming this summer in the pools that they have in their communities.

Ms. McLeod: I would ask the minister to speak up a little bit, because I am having trouble hearing what he's saying. Thank you very much.

Can the minister provide us with an update on the Carmacks Recreation Centre?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will work at projecting my voice a little bit more. It's one of those things that booms and it sometimes trails off, so I will endeavour to project a little bit more.

The new arena in Carmacks is an important project, of course. It will enable the community to, once again, enjoy ice skating, hockey, curling events, and community gatherings.

We all know some of the history of this project. I can report to the House and to the member opposite this afternoon that the contract has been put out to finish the structure. We have been working very closely with the Village of Carmacks on the project. Of course, we do appreciate the citizens' patience surrounding this delay, and we are dedicated to completing the project, which is why we've let the contract and we are

optimistic that it will be finished relatively — well, “relatively” in air quotes — soon.

Ms. McLeod: The minister said that the contract had been put out. Just a little clarification on that — has it been tendered or has it been awarded?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Relatively quick this time — tendered, not awarded.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you very much for that.

Now, I want to switch gears a little bit here and go over to solid waste. Can the minister provide an update on where the government is at in terms of negotiations with municipalities on regional landfill agreements and the status of each of those?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Solid waste — this is a world unto itself and it is one that I am wading into slowly with the assistance of my colleague and my colleagues in the Department of Community Services. We are working with municipalities to improve solid-waste management operations to develop regional agreements. That is very important — explore enhanced stewardship through next steps in the *Designated Materials Regulation* and explore extended producer responsibility and develop a strategy to handle landfill liabilities.

Garbage is expensive; garbage costs money. The stuff that we buy and the stuff that we chuck out on a regular basis doesn't come for free. You can't put it in a free store because there is too much of it. We overwhelm our ability to consume in this territory and frankly across the continent. It costs money to dispose of the things that we buy, the things that we get rid of and cast off in favour of the new stuff that we buy. That cost is tangible, and it is something that we have inherited because, in the past, we haven't done it well. We have decades of garbage — nauseous substances that are sitting in our rural communities. We are trying to wrangle that. I know that my colleague, since his election in 2016, has been working with this file to bring a little bit more order out of the chaos.

Municipalities are continuing to evaluate liability and other factors in order to implement regional facilities. Overall, our collective vision with municipalities is for sustainable solid-waste management. It includes improving waste-management facility operational standards, implementing user-pay across the territory — because, as I said, Madam Chair, garbage is not cheap and it comes at a cost — enhancing the designated materials regulations, implementing extended producer responsibility where possible, and ensuring an efficient and effective recycling system.

We are making changes, Madam Chair, and we are asking all Yukoners to join us as we improve how we deal with solid waste as a territory. With collective efforts, we can, and should, reduce waste, maximize the life of our landfills, which is vitally important, and limit the negative impact that we are having on the environment. I know that we have all committed to that in this House, and this is part of that. There is a cost that is going to come through these initiatives.

Phase 1 of our plan, Madam Chair, was for all Yukon government sites in Whitehorse and the Whitehorse periphery to have tipping fees, gates, and staff in place. We did that by August 1, 2020, and that is now implemented. We have done

that. It was a colossal effort, and it is a difficult transition for people to have to start to pay to get rid of the stuff that they have accumulated over their lifetimes, but you can't just go chucking it in a pit anymore and expect it to go away, like magic. There is a cost to these things.

Phase 2, which is where we're at now, includes tipping fees, gates, and staff in place in all other Yukon government rural sites, except for Old Crow and Beaver Creek. The reason for this is that people will go to some of these sites and chuck their stuff out to avoid paying \$5 to get rid of it out of the back of their truck, or whatever it is, in the dump. They'll drive 50 or 60 kilometres to avoid paying a \$5 fee.

So, we have to have consistency across the system, and that's what we're striving to achieve, and that's what phase 2 is all about. Part of that reconciliation will be the closures of the Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, and Keno sites, and we know how difficult that is. I have heard from the member opposite from Klwane and his advocacy for keeping the Silver City site in place, but the object is to close them. I know that it's a difficult decision for this territory to make, but it's a necessary decision, and we're going to move ahead with that.

But before we do that, we want to make sure that we have regional agreements in place with municipalities. We don't have those agreements in place, and those sites that I just mentioned won't be closed until we have those agreements in place. We're going to continue to work with our rural partners to make sure that there's a consistent approach to garbage, to waste and refuse, and to recycling across the territory. That's difficult. Absolutely, it's a difficult adjustment for people in the territory to make, but it's an important adjustment for people in the territory to make, because frankly, this is stuff that we're buying and have to get rid of. We have to pay for that, and we have to make sure that the territory can sustain the cost of the garbage that we're getting rid of in the territory.

I'm sure that you'll have more questions, and I'm happy to answer them.

Ms. McLeod: Indeed I do. Just a quick question on why Old Crow and Beaver Creek are exempt from the current work that the government is doing by way of closing landfills — and, of course, that we are not going to close Old Crow and Beaver Creek is what I'm guessing — but insofar as applying the tipping fees and the staffing?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the Member for Watson Lake for that question because it's a good one and it allows me a little bit of clarification.

The member opposite asked why Beaver Creek and Old Crow were exempt. As I stated in my previous answer, they are not exempt. There are no exemptions here. We are striving for a consistent approach throughout the territory. There are no exemptions here. This is trying to find a consistent approach throughout the territory, and Old Crow and Beaver Creek are captured in that effort. There is a phased approach. I talked about phase 1 — achieved — tick box — thanks to the good work of my colleague, my predecessor, the MLA for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

Phase 2 is in process, and it involves all the things that I talked about in phase 2. It is challenging, but we are working

through those challenges. It actually came at a request of the AYC to get a sustainable solid-waste approach across the territory. That is where it came from. The Association of Yukon Communities said, "We want this to happen." So, we dove in. It is important that we have a consistent approach across the territory. There is an advisory board and their recommendations are public, thanks to the transparency of my predecessor in this role.

But we were talking about Old Crow and Beaver Creek. They are not exempt, but they are part of phase 3, which is scheduled to be brought into effect in April 2022, just like the other ones were in April 2021 and April 2020. But like everything, COVID has had its effects on this thing, and these are challenging issues to deal with at the best of times, so we are going to work through the difficulties. We know what the difficulties in Old Crow are.

Madam Chair, you will know this better than anybody. How do you get solid waste out of Old Crow? It has to be flown out or brought out on an ice road or something. It is very, very challenging, so it takes a little more imagination and a little more elbow grease to get a consistent approach in a community like Old Crow. Same thing with Beaver Creek, up the north highway. Their landfill is further out of town. It is further out — it is one of the furthest communities that we have in the territory anyway — and apparently their landfill site is somewhere in no-man's land between the US and Canada border, further complicating things for us. You have to cross the border when you go to the dump, or so I am led to believe.

So, there are no exemptions. Beaver Creek and Old Crow will be brought into this plan. It's just going to take a little bit more time and a little bit more work with those communities to make it happen, and we're committed to doing that. As I said earlier, garbage is expensive. The waste that we produce in this consumer society we live in is costly, and we have to start accounting for the costs of getting rid of the stuff that we no longer want.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that clarification.

The minister recommitted to the closure of the transfer stations at Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, Silver City, and Keno City and is proceeding full speed ahead on that.

Can the minister explain to the House how the shutting down of rural waste transfer stations is consistent with supporting those small businesses that support those rural transfer stations or how shutting those transfer stations down is consistent with, for instance, the aging-in-place strategy and keeping seniors in their homes? They depend on these transfer stations — if the minister could just comment on that, please.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is an adjustment for Yukoners, especially Yukoners living in the catchment areas of a regional landfill catchment area served by a much larger landfill and yet inconveniently betwixt and between — currently having landfills nearby that are very expensive to operate — for a very small population. So, we're looking at changing the model, and we're working with the communities contained within the catchment to come up with a plan for the operation of these landfills.

You can imagine that, if we had one of these very small landfills like Braeburn, Silver City, Keno, or any others that we've mentioned — Braeburn and Silver City are probably better examples — where we had no controls on it and people were dumping noxious substances because we just can't afford to have them gated and managed like we would the other ones.

We're trying to set up a consistent approach throughout the territory. You have people from, say, Haines Junction going up to Silver City, dumping stuff in there, and then the government has to then truck it all the way back down to the facility where it should have gone in the first place.

It is one of those things that people are going to have to adjust to. We are working with the communities and the regional centres to make sure that this helps the individuals. It is not going to help. It is going to be an inconvenience. There is no doubt about it, but there are ways. Yukoners are industrious, they are innovative, and they adapt to things like this, and maybe there will be garbage pooling. Community Services may be able to put dumpsters out there that will be collected and brought into those facilities on a regular basis to make sure that these are done, but we are working with the regional centres to make sure that we have solutions for these residents who are caught by the closure of something that was very convenient — a legacy landfill that really now has to be shuttered as part of the consistent approach that we are striving for throughout the whole territory.

We have heard from the members opposite and we have heard from citizens, from Yukoners, how inconvenient this is. We are listening to these things, and we understand that, but we also understand that maintaining these expensive sites — boutique landfills — in small areas with very little population just is not something that we can sustain any longer.

I think that is a good point, too. It is not just about the money either. There is an environmental cost to having landfills that are not monitored properly, where people go and throw whatever — used oils. All of these things have an environmental cost — very extraordinary environmental cost — and we have to start to manage that better for the benefit of all citizens.

Ms. McLeod: Madam Chair, we have heard a number of concerns about tipping fees at rural solid-waste facilities. Can the minister please explain how the fee rates were set and whether or not there was any effort to coordinate these fees with municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I don't think that the member opposite was suggesting that the rates set at these regional land use facilities are set willy-nilly or fast and loose. They were done in concert with the communities that they are serving. Deep Creek, for example — the rates that we charge residents of Deep Creek are the same rates that we charge in Whitehorse. There is no difference. So, that's a deal if you're out in Deep Creek. It's not a deal if you're driving from Whitehorse to Deep Creek, which used to happen. People would take their stuff out to Deep Creek and dump it because it was free and they didn't want to pay a dollar a bag here in Whitehorse.

If you go out to Deep Creek and take your garbage there, it's a buck a bag; bring it into Whitehorse and it's a buck a bag.

What we're seeing is that there is less garbage going to Deep Creek, because there are fewer people driving out to Deep Creek to dump their stuff from Whitehorse, which we would then have to truck back in. The cost for us to manage the garbage from Deep Creek, as the government, is about five times what the residents are paying in tipping fees. So, a dollar-for-dollar amount — you pay a dollar to dump a bag of garbage in Whitehorse, and it costs the government about \$4 to \$5 to actually deal with that garbage.

So, by keeping the garbage from being trucked out to Deep Creek and then trucked back in by YG, it is a significant cost to the government, and we are saving that money. So, that is the method to what we're doing, and it aligns with the regional facilities. I don't have the number at the moment for what it would be in Haines Junction, or whatever it could be comparatively speaking, but in Whitehorse, it is the same as it is in the regional landfill. That is how it is working; it aligns with the closest facility. The fees are the same.

Ms. McLeod: Yes, there was nothing really — I was just asking how the fees are set. For that one landfill at Deep Creek, I gather that it is based on the Whitehorse rate. I know, for instance, that some landfills around the territory — those rates are double what Whitehorse charges, so the question was whether or not there has been any effort to coordinate the fees throughout the territory so that Yukoners are paying the same rate, but we can come back to that another day.

We also understand that, recently, it was decided that fees would be waived this coming weekend for the Whitehorse area. However, there has been little or no communication about this. In fact, the former Minister of Community Services has posted on Facebook that more notice was needed.

So, will the minister consider extending the waiving of the fees for more than just this weekend?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I begin with a correction because, inside Whitehorse, a buck a bag does cover the cost of garbage. Whitehorse itself, the municipal landfill here in the city, does recover costs. It's the outside periphery places where it doesn't cost a buck a bag; it's significantly more expensive — so just a point of clarification to correct the record. But Whitehorse is covering its costs. It is places like Deep Creek that cost a lot more than a buck a bag. Nevertheless, that's what they're charged.

How are these rates set throughout the territory? They are set by municipalities for their own landfills. Dawson City and the other municipalities set the rates for tipping fees within their landfills, and those are the fees that will be charged by YG in the periphery site that we run. It is municipalities setting the rates, and YG will match the rates that municipalities deem necessary to run their landfills responsibly. That's how it's being set.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that clarification, but can the minister answer my question regarding the extension of the free weekend of garbage deposits beyond one weekend?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It's all very exciting in this new role. You are learning all sorts of things all the time.

The order just came in to my colleague and me — I think I'm on day 10 — and we signed the order for this tipping fee holiday, as of, I believe, late Friday. The point being is that we have partners in this in Whitehorse — the City of Whitehorse and the Whitehorse landfill. I'm going to be talking to my colleagues at the City of Whitehorse about promoting the tipping-fee free weekend. The reason why it's happening this weekend is because that's when Whitehorse decided to hold their tipping fee holiday, and we're aligning with the City of Whitehorse for precisely the reasons that I've been talking about this afternoon — so you don't have people from Whitehorse driving out and dumping their garbage in one of the satellite landfills, and then we have to truck it all back in again.

Unfortunately, no, we will not be extending the date beyond this weekend. We are aligning with Whitehorse so that all garbage is treated equally. We will work with our partners in the future to publicize this. I will say this, on behalf of CS, that we have been publicizing the tipping-fee free weekend — a little tongue twister — locally, with posters and that type of thing, but probably more can and should be done. I'm certainly in support of that, and we will work with our partners at Whitehorse and with my extraordinary crew at CS to do that promotion in the future.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the minister for that. I am going to move on a little bit here. I want to talk about infrastructure and development.

In the Village of Haines Junction, they have been undergoing a number of years of water and sewer upgrades, and they are currently awaiting the award of phase 3. There was and is a concern that, due to a number of factors, including the current wait time for procuring materials, they will not see any work done during this construction season. The minister, in a previous answer when we first started today, had indicated that this project was one that was delayed due to the election.

Can the minister confirm that this project will be awarded in time to get the work done this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I hope that I have this right because I may have misheard the member opposite. You are talking about in-ground infrastructure in Haines Junction — Marshall Creek. Is that correct? I am seeing a nod.

So, working with my officials — I do not know what information the member opposite has. If she has information that she is willing to share with me, I will gladly look at it, but the information that we have is that there is no delay on this project. There are no expected delays on this project this year. As far as the Pelly pool goes, there are no expected delays on that one either. We are within the time period with the contractor honouring its agreements, so we are confident that both projects are slated to go ahead this year. I have not heard anything to the contrary.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for his response.

In the minister's opening remarks, he was referencing the development of building lots in Watson Lake. I would like the minister to expand on that a little bit and tell me what the plan is. I can say that today was the first time that I have ever heard that this is a phased approach to lot development for the Frances Avenue extension and the release of 10 lots this year. I would

like a confirmation of the stage of development for those lots and whether or not the government is able to confirm that 10 lots will hit the market this year.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am sure that it is no different for my good colleague from Watson Lake — when I was out on the hustings a few weeks ago, housing was the issue that was consistent at the doors; it was the issue that we heard about most often.

We are committed to providing the supply that the territory needs to meet the demands that we see in the territory and, by so doing, lessen costs, allow businesses to recruit people, if they have to, to come out here. We have other initiatives, like the universal childcare program, to free labour within the territory to come back to the labour pool, and by so doing, not have to house those employees, but we do have a supply-and-demand issue in the territory that we're addressing.

In Watson Lake, we have completed feasibility planning and design for various country, urban residential, and industrial development projects. We're awaiting Watson Lake council's direction pending the official community plan completion — Liard First Nation challenges. The target is the spring and summer of 2021 for tender and construction of country residential lots and small urban residential subdivisions.

That's the plan. That's where we're at. We're targeting, for Watson Lake, the Frances, Thompson, Garden — 25 lots in 2022-23. So, next year, we have slated for lots to be released: 25 lots in Watson Lake, for Frances, Thompson, and Garden Creek.

Ms. McLeod: The Frances Avenue extension was reported to be in line for the release of 23 urban building lots this year. So, the minister indicated in his opening remarks that this was a phased approach to development for Frances Avenue. If the minister can confirm that 10 urban building lots on Frances Avenue will be released this year, I would like to hear that — or not.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my earlier answer, we completed feasibility planning and design for various country, urban residential, industrial development projects within the community of Watson Lake. We are awaiting and working with both the Watson Lake council and the Liard First Nation on direction from those two entities — those two governments.

At the moment, the information that I'm getting is that we have: at Frances, 10 lots, urban residential; in Thompson, country residential, 10 lots; and in Garden Creek, industrial, five lots. Those are slated for development in 2022-23.

It looks like, to my mind — and we're going to look into this with my departmental officials — that we will have 25 lots, both urban residential, country residential, and industrial lots, at those three sites in 2022-23.

I don't have any information about lots being released in Watson Lake this year. We will check with our partner governments at Watson Lake — the Watson Lake community as well as the Liard First Nation — about where we're at with these lot developments.

Ms. McLeod: I'll certainly be reporting back to my mayor and council, who will be very disappointed to hear this — I can tell you. But I want to thank the officials for joining us

today, and I would like to turn things over to my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King.

Ms. White: So, one of the questions that I've asked often — well, actually, in the last four years for sure and probably the years before that — was about emergency planning and sharing those plans with others. I know what your predecessor had to say and so here's a new day.

I'm sure everyone's familiar with the Wood Buffalo municipality — so the municipality of Fort McMurray. There was a fair-sized disaster there, as some might remember, when there was a forest fire.

On the website, when you go to the municipality of Fort McMurray, it talks about the regional emergency management plan, and it says that — it is described as "REMP". It says that the REMP is not designed to address all hazards, risks, and community vulnerabilities. It is adaptable to different emergency events and flexible to meet the needs of a municipality with regional communities.

The reason I bring this up is because, whenever we ask about emergency planning in this House, we are told: "Well, things could change, the plan might change, and we can't give people information because it might not be adequate." So, it is important to note that this plan that they have tied to their website is 88 pages long, and the reason I say this is because it has an incredibly different series of plans, under different circumstances. I highlighted one section and so, for Hansard, I will send them the link, but it says: "The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is no stranger to disasters and can attest to the importance of emergency preparedness and collaborative resilient communities. Given the ever-changing emergency management environment, Council and Administration determined the need to develop a Regional Emergency Management Plan (REMP) inclusive of our urban and rural communities. The REMP is developed with the clear objective of addressing both natural and human-induced hazards and disasters as these are increasing in both frequency and severity across the world resulting in ever-growing human suffering and economic cost."

So, Madam Chair, the reason why I bring this up is that, in these 88 pages, it gives examples of what might have to happen during emergencies. It talks about different situations, different emergency plans, different things. The reason why I am highlighting it is, on a regular basis — for sure in the City of Whitehorse when people say, "What is the plan during an emergency?" We are told, "Well, it depends on the emergency and it depends where it is happening." I appreciate that, but I also know that, during times of crisis, if we were to reach out and try to put something out — I remember 9/11. I remember when downtown was being evacuated. That was an exciting time. I remember when the former Member for Mayo-Tatchun, Jim Tredger, was a principal and he talked about what happened when his school had to get evacuated and how that caused mass panic across families. It was upsetting.

The reason why I want to highlight the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and their emergency plan is that they say it doesn't take every hazard, every plan, into account, but they want people to have an idea.

So, if someone wants to read to have an idea of what their plans are, there is this document online. It gives people a bit of an idea. For example, I did not know until a number of years ago that the Canada Games Centre could be our gathering spot — absolutely. Some people in Riverdale know that you can cross the dam if you need to. We understand that emergencies can happen. We understand that forest fires or floods can happen in different places — all these different things — but the reason I am bringing up the emergency plan and sharing it with people is so they have an idea of what might be expected of them in that time of crisis.

There is an entire six minutes before we move on. I am going to put another thing on the record.

I have talked often about seniors and vulnerable people in times of emergency. I bring this up because, for example, 600 College Drive has an elevator and has three floors, and there have been times over the years where I have advocated to try to get people with mobility issues off the third floor to the first floor because, when the power goes out, the elevator does not operate. We know that there are problems with the Closeleigh Manor elevator. We know that there are problems with elevators in the territory, to be perfectly honest. One of the concerns is: If we have a large-scale emergency, what happens to vulnerable populations?

Interestingly enough, again, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has a vulnerable persons registry. You can choose to sign up. It is free, it is voluntary, and it is a confidential service. It is aimed at improving the safety of residents living at home who would be at greater risk during emergencies. The VPR provides key information to local emergency services about vulnerable people within the region during local, large-scale emergencies. The reason why I am highlighting this is that, when we talk about emergency preparedness, I often ask about cases of fire. Do we have fire drills in seniors complexes or apartment buildings? Do we talk about what to do in the case of an emergency?

When I was a kid, we used to talk about escape plans from fire in your house. It was something that we did in school. I don't know if my nephews are still doing it.

I just wanted to highlight this one area in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, or Fort McMurray. We know that they had a large-scale emergency, and this is what they developed after it — in recognition that, in times of crisis, if people have a bit of an idea of what they need to do, it is helpful.

Madam Chair, I look forward to having further conversations about this, because today is unfortunately just not that time.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. White that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Madam Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by the Hon. Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 200, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2020-21*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2021-22*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled May 18, 2021:

35-1-3

Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2020-2021 (Speaker Harper)

35-1-4

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board 2020 Annual Report (Mostyn)

The following documents were filed May 18, 2021:

35-1-1

Standing committees of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, letter re (dated May 3, 2021) from Currie Dixon, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier, and Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (Dixon)

35-1-2

Standing committees of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, letter re (dated May 10, 2021) from Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier, to Currie Dixon, Leader of the Official Opposition (Dixon)

35-1-3

CASA (confidence and supply agreement), e-mail re (dated May 6, 2021) from Currie Dixon, Leader of the Official Opposition, to Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (Dixon)