



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 59

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, March 31, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2022 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
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Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
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Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
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THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, March 31, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding to the Order Paper, the Chair would like to remind members of the practice of this House regarding tabling of documents. Standing Order 38(2) allows for the tabling of documents other than those required by law or order, accompanied by sufficient copies for distribution. To save paper, distribution is now done primarily electronically. The Legislative Assembly Office can assist members if they are unsure of how many copies of a document are required.

The rubric of tabling returns and documents in the Daily Routine is not an opportunity for debate or for members to make statements. Members should restrict their description of documents to be tabled to the item's date, title of the document or article, or a brief description if the document does not have a title.

Descriptions should not constitute commentary or comparisons. If members wish to make members' statements, then members should change the Standing Orders accordingly.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask my colleagues to please help me to welcome a number of special guests for our tributes that are going to happen in a few moments. I would like to welcome Grand Chief Peter Johnston, from the Council of Yukon First Nations. We have young Hannah Hawkins, a grade four student and Han and Southern Tutchone language learner — welcome; Melissa Flynn, who is a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen and the new interim executive director of the First Nation School Board and Han language learner and teacher — welcome. We have Gerald Isaac, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in elder and fluent Han language speaker — welcome. And we have Roger Ellis, who is a Han speaker as well and a Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in elder and knowledge-keeper, and he also works for the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate.

From the Department of Education in the First Nation Initiatives branch we have Paula Banks, Sharon Shadow, and George Bahm. Welcome.

I want to welcome — and I know that we don't generally do this, but because it such a special day, we have a number of students from the Kluane Lake School sitting in. I want to acknowledge them and their principal, Tina Jules; their

intermediate teacher, Dr. Alyce Johnson; Amirah Miller-Hundrup, grade two student; Samantha Asselstine, grade four student; Samara Van Lieshout, grade seven student; and Eathan MacDonald, grade six student.

I would also ask my colleagues to help welcome Icarus Shannon, who is celebrating their 17th birthday today. Happy birthday.

We also have Judy Shannon, who is the chief of protocol for the Executive Council Office, and Samantha Allen, who is a friend, and Tharian Botting, president of All Genders Yukon, and Mira Sirois from Queer Yukon. Welcome to all of you.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would ask my colleagues to help me welcome Lee Hofmeister, who is here today, I believe, for third reading of Bill No. 11, from the Department of Health and Social Services. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Indigenous Languages Day

Hon. Ms. McLean: *[Member spoke in First Nation language. Text unavailable.]*

Good day, Mr. Speaker. My name is Jeanie McLean. I am Wolf; I am Tahltan, and I am Klogadena.

Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and in recognition of all 14 Yukon First Nations to pay tribute to National Indigenous Languages Day.

Today, across Canada, we acknowledge the importance of language and culture and its contribution to the well-being and resilience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. We honour our connections to our past, present, and future and the significance of the revitalization of indigenous languages.

It is important to remember why Yukon First Nations are working so hard to reclaim and revitalize their languages: due to colonial policies designed to sever First Nation people's connection to language and culture, which have had devastating results, affecting all Yukon's eight indigenous languages and all Yukon transboundary First Nations. Through these cruel practices, many generations lost the chance to learn their ancestral language in their homes and their communities, including me.

True and lasting reconciliation will need ongoing support for First Nation communities' efforts to reclaim their languages and cultures.

We are pleased to work closely and support the Council of Yukon First Nations Native Language Centre to increase proficiency and fluency in Yukon First Nation languages. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations immersion program is an intensive Southern Tutchone adult language program that is completing its fourth year of hands-on experiential learning.

Nine students are enrolled and supported by two fluent elders and an instructor.

I commend the Yukon Native Language Centre for starting the “youth today, language leaders tomorrow” program, which supports youth to develop languages, to become proficient, and to empower them to become language champions. Programs such as these provide a reason for hope, and we can feel optimistic for the growth and revitalization of these languages, and we are committed to working with Yukon First Nations to revitalize languages so that they can be heard once again in our homes, in our families, in our schools, and in our communities across the Yukon for generations to come.

I truly believe that when we can once again think in our language, we will be closer to true cultural revitalization.

Mahsi' cho, souga sin la, shaw nithän, gñilischish, tsin'jj choh, mēduh, and thank you.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Drin gwiinzii.

I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Aboriginal Language Day. In Yukon, there are eight aboriginal languages spoken: Gwich'in, Han, Kaska, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Tagish, Tlingit, and Upper Tanana. While these languages once thrived throughout the Yukon and throughout northwestern Canada and Alaska, many have been slowly disappearing. In fact, there are very few fluent speakers in any of the languages on our traditional lands.

Decades of residential schools and being forced to speak English, as well as being punished for using their mother tongue, caused much harm to the First Nation languages. This in itself has contributed to near eradication of Yukon's aboriginal languages.

The Klondike stampede for gold brought thousands north. Then the next large influx of people with the building and maintenance of the Alaska Highway caused instant contact with southerners, and the foreign language — English — was adopted even more. But this is changing.

Yukon First Nations have been working incredibly hard to revitalize their languages. All eight languages of Yukon First Nations have been resurfacing throughout the territory. Younger generations are taking a keen interest in learning from those fluent speakers, and it's a beautiful thing to see.

We are starting to see indigenous language translations on signage and buildings being named in the community's respective language. The Yukon Native Language Centre is administered by the Council of Yukon First Nations. One of their key values is that language must live in the home with families throughout the community. The richness and beauty of the First Nation language is being shared by elders and there are courses offered on language proficiency.

My mother's tongue was Gwich'in and although I never learned the language, I loved to hear it and to hear the people laugh. It seems so full of character and fun.

So, I congratulate all the people who take on the challenge of learning and sharing; it is heartwarming and thank you for doing so for the generations to come.

Mahsi'cho, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. White: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate National Indigenous Languages Day in front of such distinguished guests: keepers of languages and culture.

Language is memory. It holds intricate knowledge and information that has been kept for thousands of years. Language is identity. It is the essence of who a people are; it is a world view. It's how one speaks, connects with neighbours, raises children, and sees the world. We live in a place with rich culture of first peoples. The diversity of Yukon's eight distinct languages is reflected in the stories, the arts, and the history of our territory.

It has taken a concerted effort to regain and re-establish the use of First Nation languages after the wholesale assault by residential schools as part of the federal government's policy to assimilate and eliminate First Nations.

We're so lucky that through sheer persistence, there have been huge efforts to revitalize and re-establish Yukon's indigenous languages. We celebrate all the language-keepers and the work being done to keep indigenous languages across Turtle Island for future generations. We celebrate the work of the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Native Language Centre, which last May held their first graduation in fluent speaker recognition ceremony. This beautiful event honoured eight graduates and 13 fluent speakers of Yukon First Nation languages that were nominated by their communities. We celebrate the dedication and accomplishments of graduates Luke Campbell, Paul Caesar-Jules, Eileen Fields, Pricilla Dawson, Alyce Joe, Tahyah Van Bibber, Allison Anderson, and Georgette McCleod — and Hannah, I look forward to being able to celebrate you as a graduate in the future.

So, we celebrate and thank the fluent speakers who have kept their languages safe and passed them along to future generations: Audrey Brown, Norman James, Irene Johnny, Louie Smith, Grace Margaret Johnson, Joceyln Wolftail, Elizabeth Hall, Percy Henry, Hazel Bunbury, Sam Johnston, Marian Schafer, Patrick Johnny, and Nancy Sterriah and, of course, the two elders in our midst today.

So, these are exciting and challenging and hopeful times for Yukon First Nation language speakers and those aspiring to regain this vital piece of the essence of a culture and of a people. Mr. Speaker, the future is full of stories.

Applause

In recognition of International Transgender Day of Visibility

Hon. Ms. McLean: I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to International Transgender Day of Visibility. This is a day to celebrate trans people and raise awareness of discrimination faced by the transgender community worldwide. In Yukon, we are able to speak out against transphobia today because of the many years of advocacy work by those on the front lines. Yukon's Gender and Sexuality Alliance and the gay-straight alliance in high schools

work to create a safe space for youth of all identities to seek peer support and advocate for equal treatment. All Genders Yukon Society has been a leading advocate for the needs of trans, two-spirit, and non-binary Yukoners. Their role in providing access to mental health services for trans, two-spirit, and non-binary Yukoners and their network of loved ones has been vital, particularly in the last few years.

Similarly, Queer Yukon Society has held an important role in the community for many years. Our government is pleased to provide funding to this organization to support the establishment of Yukon's first Pride Centre. The work of other organizations, like Yukon Queer Film Alliance, addresses a gap in our territory's vibrant cultural scene.

The work of these organizations brings Yukoners together, celebrating the diversity of genders and sexual orientations. It has been my honour and pleasure to work closely with many of these organizations during the development of the LGBTQ2S+ action plan. I urge all Yukoners to take the time today to educate yourself on gender identity, gender expression, transphobia, and the many barriers that trans people still face. Utilize their knowledge to not only be an ally in our community, but to celebrate the trans Yukoners in your life and in our lives.

I would like to thank the Premier for the approval to fly the trans flag. This will now be done on an annual basis and is now flying outside of our building today.

Together we can create a future where the next generation of trans Yukoners feel safe to dress, speak, and behave how they want. Let's join hands together with the trans community to celebrate not fitting in when we all yearn to stand out.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize March 31 as International Transgender Day of Visibility. Today is dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of trans, two-spirit, and gender-nonconforming individuals and raising awareness around the discrimination that they continue to face. We have come a long way as a society to accepting people and celebrating the unique gender identities of our fellow community members. Yukoners continue to make great strides toward inclusivity and equality.

Adjusting long-standing attitudes for many is not an easy feat, as we all know. I can tell you that, from my experience and my perspective as a father, every voice of encouragement and every action taken in solidarity with the trans community means so much. It can be as simple as asking a question to learn more and to expand your knowledge base. It can be listening to stories and offering encouraging words of support. It is being kind and being respectful. I believe that we are on a good path and that there is hope for all Yukoners to be able to be as visible as they are and live as their true selves without judgment, discrimination, harassment, or violence.

I would like to recognize and thank our incredible community organizations who continue to advocate and to push our community in the right direction. Most of all, thank you to

the resilient trans and two-spirited people who contribute greatly to our community with resiliency and strength.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the International Transgender Day of Visibility. Today is a day of joy when we celebrate progress and achievement. It is also a day to consider who has access to the benefits of our society and who still does not.

Today, I want to share excerpts from Canadian writer Kai Cheng Thom's 2018 essay that rings just as true today entitled *Trans Visibility Does Not Equal Trans Liberation*. She writes about the rise in trans representation and the joy and the possibility that opens up. I want to pause there because there is so much hope in being able to imagine a future — a future for yourself.

She also writes about how the realities of life for many trans people have remained unchanged. She writes — and I quote: "... we have seen certain gay rights 'victories' such as the right to marry and the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policies, the neoliberal status quo itself remains largely unchallenged. The rich remain rich and the poor remain poor, and a relatively tiny group of queer folks got to join the rich while most of us stayed behind.

"I know that I don't want to live in a world where trans people can access medical transition care only if they have the insurance to pay for it. I want everyone to get the healthcare they need.

"I don't want to live in a world where middle class trans people can use public washrooms, but homeless trans people are barred from public spaces. I want to live in a world where everyone has a home.

"I don't want to live in a world where trans people can join the military or the police and join in the violent oppression of people of color around the world. I want to live in a world without wars or police brutality.

"I don't want to live in a world where trans people are put in prisons that match their gender identity. I want to live in a world without prisons.

"I don't want to live in a world where a handful of trans celebrities make millions of dollars while the rest of us struggle to survive. I want to live in a world where we all have what we need to thrive.

"I don't want to live in a world where some trans people are considered normal and others are considered freaks. I want to live in a world where all of our freakish, ugly, gorgeous magnificence is celebrated for its honesty, glory, and possibility."

So, today, I would like us all to think of the possibilities of the future. I want to thank the trans people who have fought so hard and so long to open doors for all of us. I call us all to imagine and create a future that truly has possibility for everyone. Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling an article from yahoo!life demonstrating that the conservative Yukon Party leader favours cooperative deals with the NDP, unlike his federal counterpart.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: Earlier today, you issued a ruling regarding what can be said during the tabling of documents and what is not appropriate. It seems to me that the Minister of Community Services just blatantly and willfully disregarded your ruling and contravened it with his introduction of that document.

Speaker: Minister of Community Services, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: On the point of order, I just received the instructions from your Chair this morning. I had already made arrangements to table the document today. I really wanted to say, following disparaging remarks from the Conservative leader, Candice Bergen, about a federal confidence and supply agreement between Liberals —

Speaker: Order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: Minister of Community Services, you do not continue on making the statement with the tabling of documents. You're out of order, and the document will be returned to you.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have for tabling two letters, one dated today, to the MLA for Lake Laberge regarding Motion No. 320.

I also have for tabling a letter to the Child and Youth Advocate.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 10 — response

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to Petition No. 10, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 21. It is clear that the petitioners, our government, and many Yukoners share the same views when it comes to the immediate threat and severity that climate change poses to the Yukon, Canada, and the world.

We agree that bold and urgent action is essential to avert the most significant social and environmental effects, particularly in the north.

We also recognize that, although the Yukon has a small population, every jurisdiction needs to do their part. Furthermore, the Yukon can and should play an important role in setting an example and generating solutions for Canada and

the north. Yukoners want us to lead and we will continue to lead.

We declared a climate emergency and have committed to reducing territorial greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent over 2010 levels by 2030. We also have a 2050 greenhouse gas emissions target of net zero. This aligns with the Government of Canada's announcement to legislate this as a national target.

We were pleased to see the federal government's newly released plan to achieve a 40-percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over the next eight years. Our initial review of the plan indicates that this federal strategy aligns closely with our own actions, which is encouraging.

In 2020, we released *Our Clean Future — A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and a green economy* to guide our ambitious work in the Yukon. We established a Yukon Climate Leadership Council to develop recommendations for how to reach our ambitious targets. As committed to in *Our Clean Future*, we are incorporating climate change considerations into the decision-making process for major Government of Yukon policies, programs, and projects. This includes: assessing an initiative's impact on greenhouse gas emissions; identifying appropriate greenhouse gas mitigation measures; and addressing how initiatives may be affected by climate change-related impacts.

We thank the petitioners for their suggestion that the climate change lens be applied to all projects of \$500,000 or more. We will consider the suggestion as part of our ongoing review of *Our Clean Future* and will also pass the suggestion on to the Yukon Climate Leadership Council.

To measure our progress, accurate and transparent greenhouse gas tracking and reporting is vital. The Yukon uses the National Inventory Report, which is produced annually by the Government of Canada, and the Yukon's fuel tax databases to calculate our greenhouse gas emissions. The Government of Yukon reports on our greenhouse gas emissions annually through a public document that is available on yukon.ca. We are also working toward publishing greenhouse gas information related to the Government of Yukon buildings on our open data portal.

With respect to mining emissions, the Government of Yukon will put in place a mining intensity target for greenhouse gas emissions by the end of this year. Greenhouse gas emissions from mining in the Yukon can vary considerably from year to year, making it difficult to set an absolute cap. An intensity-based target establishes a desired level of greenhouse gas emissions per mining activity or unit of material produced. That will encourage all mines to look for innovative ways to reduce emissions, regardless of how many or how few mines are in operation in a given year. If mining had been included in our Yukon-wide greenhouse gas reduction target and mining activity decreased, the risk is that we could claim we are reducing emissions without us needing to make other necessary improvements. I know that this happened twice under the previous Yukon Party government.

We are introducing requirements for mines to project their anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify ways to reduce emissions, and annually report their emissions. This fall, we

plan to bring forward a clean energy act, which is legislation to reinforce our commitment to shift to a sustainable future. Our goal is to bring the Yukon's climate and renewable energy targets in line with the most progressive jurisdictions in North America.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the concerns of the petitioners. Yukoners care deeply about climate change. We recognize that when we take on such important and high-profile work, Yukoners want to remain informed and engaged. There is much work still to do and this is work we need to do together.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize that:

(1) the \$150 one-time electrical subsidy does not lower costs for people living off-grid who depend on generators for their electrical power; and

(2) suspending the Yukon's fuel tax in response to inflation would lower the cost of living for families living off-grid, businesses, people commuting to work, rural residents, and many others.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education, in response to a letter dated January 3, 2022 from Autism Yukon to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, to:

(1) identify what steps have been taken to improve data collection on the effectiveness of inclusive and special education;

(2) commit to consulting with Autism Yukon on the development of changes to inclusive and special education going forward; and

(3) take the necessary steps to ensure that reinstated IEPs are adequately resourced and supported.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to request that the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board consider the removal or renaming of offensive or derogatory place names.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Canada digital adoption program

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the Canada digital adoption program. We live in a digital age. One thing the pandemic has taught us is that it is critical that businesses have an online presence to remain competitive and

to continue to provide their customers with the services and products they need.

In the federal government's budget for 2021, the Government of Canada announced \$4 billion for the Canada digital adoption program, which aims to help businesses expand their online presence through e-commerce and digitizing operations. This initiative can be particularly helpful for businesses across the Yukon in helping provide greater access to services for rural Yukoners and to help local businesses access new markets in- and out-of-territory.

I'm excited to say that our government has partnered with CanNor and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to support the implementation of the Canada digital adoption program for the Yukon.

Over the next three years, we aim to have this program help 140 small- and medium-sized businesses in the territory to digitize their operations and expand their businesses online. Each eligible business will receive a microgrant of up to \$5,000 along with advisory support. TechYukon has been selected to deliver the programming and they are currently in the process of ramping up their operational capacity to prepare for this significant undertaking.

Through the Canada digital adoption program, TechYukon will receive \$463,000 to help Yukon businesses expand their online operations. Our government will provide TechYukon up to \$50,000 per year to hire a program coordinator to implement the program in the territory.

TechYukon is made up of local technological companies that focus on growing the technology industry in the Yukon and is well-positioned to help local businesses expand their e-commerce operations and digitize their businesses. In addition, the federal Department of Economic Development and CanNor will also be providing up to \$61,000 per year, for three years, to implement funds available for businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this program will also provide training, work, and opportunities for young Yukoners. TechYukon will hire one student per year to be an advisor to support local businesses and learn about the application of digital technologies. It is expected that TechYukon will be launching the program early this summer, and I'm very glad that our government can support this important initiative.

I want to thank TechYukon, the Government of Canada, and the Department of Economic Development for getting this program up and running, which will support businesses across the territory in growing their operations and creating a broader online presence.

Ms. Van Bibber: We know we live in the digital age. Everyone, it seems, has a cellphone, access to a tablet, laptop, or desktop computer, and can order or check information on pretty much anything online at any time. That is why it's extremely important for any business, including small- and medium-sized, to have an online presence. With the pandemic, it seems that society has shifted online to order everything from groceries to clothes, household necessities, and trinkets for their favourite hobby or craft.

I know many Yukon businesses have utilized the digital landscape to get their products out to Yukoners and the rest of the country and the world. That is why we are pleased to see the Canada digital adoption program being set up in the territory. One hundred and forty businesses will now get the chance to benefit from this program. It gives those businesses the tools to not only learn about the online world, but to utilize various platforms to increase business, because any business person will tell you that, if you are not keeping up with the latest advantages in business or technology, you will be left behind.

The program that the minister speaks of today promises a simpler way for businesses to adapt to the digital age, from providing information on digital marketing, e-commerce, and improving an operation's efficiency and profitability to making investments in digital technology to increase business and productivity.

We do have a few questions. We wonder if the minister can tell us how the government will be monitoring the program's success. Will there be a reporting mechanism either for the business directly or through TechYukon? Also, have the 140 businesses been selected already or are all small- and medium-sized businesses eligible?

We believe that digital adoption shouldn't be limited to businesses. Can the minister provide an update on any direction he has provided to his departments to reduce red tape by improving the online experience for business owners navigating the Yukon government website?

Finally, we have increasingly heard concerns about cybersecurity and the need for vigilance. Will the minister work with cybersecurity experts and the federal government to assess the vulnerability of our critical infrastructure, including our health care sector and electricity grid, to protect us from potential cyber attacks?

I thank the minister for the update. We hope those businesses that access this program are able to expand their reach and bottom lines so they can thrive in years to come.

Ms. White: In the 2021 federal budget, the Government of Canada announced a new \$4-billion Canada digital adoption program, in recognition that the way Canadians do business has changed and that, in order to stay competitive and grow, small- and medium-sized businesses need to adopt new digital tools. In the Yukon, despite the uncertainty and challenges brought on by the pandemic, we have had the pleasure of watching some local businesses pivot and adapt to an online world.

Faced with the challenges of a new way of doing business, many Yukoners prevailed and found new lucrative opportunities, both in- and out-of-territory. With the support of industry experts, many websites were created or modernized, and even the smallest of makers started online shops, allowing them to sell their products across the country and around the world.

Thank you to TechYukon and others who will be supporting these and other initiatives to move toward digital platforms on a go-forward basis. Mr. Speaker, we are glad to know that some Yukoners will benefit from a small portion of this federal money.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First, I will start with just answering some questions from the Official Opposition. First of all, in our normal process for accountability when it comes to these types of agreements through our transfer payment agreement, we would have appendices that would identify outcomes, so then we would work with the primary organization that is receiving the funds. That is how we end up making sure that we meet the goals. Secondly, for medium and small businesses, you are correct — there are 140, but they haven't all been selected, is my understanding. I will say that, when you look at the eligibility requirements, the three key items that the federal government laid out were registered or incorporated for-profit businesses, including for-profit social enterprises, businesses with a minimum of one employee other than the business owner, and businesses that can be accessed by customers which provide in-person services to customers.

So, again, I believe that those are sort of pretty broad criteria.

When it comes to red tape — the website, our online presence for the government — I think that we can leave those questions to the departments that oversee that. It is the same — yesterday, it was brought up, I believe, in the House — around cybersecurity. Again, I will leave that to the specialists, and I am sure that during the debate of the mains there will be an opportunity for information from the ICT branch or unit within government to speak to that.

I will just share a little bit of information as well. Again, Yukon — and I think that this is important for Yukoners to hear — does have a rapidly growing technology sector and it is modernizing the way we do things across the territory, and I think that all speakers today touched on that. It is building a foundation, again, for businesses and organizations to succeed.

Some of the key information — according to the Technology and Innovation branch's program review in 2020, the Yukon technology industry is growing and represents about 3.7 percent of Yukon's GDP. That's pretty significant. That's just behind what we've seen from tourism numbers in 2019 — pre-COVID. So, again, in 2021, the Technology and Innovation unit of Economic Development worked with community partners. Some of the things that we're going to continue to do and support in 2021: We had the YuKonstruct 12-week training program, called Startup Bootcamp; we also had TechYukon's launch of the North of AI program — again, investment readiness workshops for entrepreneurs and angel investors; and Yukon University's IncubateNorth, which provides space, tools, and services to help market-ready start-ups grow fast.

Yukon government plans again to continue to support the growth of the territory's technology sector over the coming years and we'll have an opportunity to talk a bit about this in budget 2022, as our government has committed over \$2.1 million to technology and innovation programs again for 2022-23.

Again, we will continue to support programs that are already helping businesses expand and reach new markets.

In 2019, we had made major investments and we'll have an opportunity to talk a bit about that with our Panache

investment, much spoke about in the House. I look forward to giving an update on that and talking about the 16 firms that have been supported by that. I commend the First Nation governments that are our partners and are now raising funds for, I believe, a second round of this fund.

Our innovation commission was formed in 2021 and we look to the outcomes of that. I think it shows that this side of the House does understand the immense importance of modernizing the way we do business, supporting business, and making sure that our non-profits have the right resources to do the work they need to do.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Mining within municipal boundaries

Mr. Dixon: One of the very first commitments made by the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was to address mining in municipalities. In a December 2016 CBC news story, the former minister said that he would be meeting with First Nations, the Association of Yukon Communities, and other stakeholders to develop an action plan. That was well over five years ago. We have still never seen an action plan for this issue.

Can the current minister tell us if the commitment made by the former minister has been completed? Can he show us that action plan that was developed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I can say that this work is in our budget for this year. It's work that is contemplated by Energy, Mines and Resources. I know there is a "what we heard" document for the work that went on previously. I will make sure to make it available for the members across. I'm pretty sure it's available online.

We will be working to go forward and continue this work this coming fiscal year. Again, it is in our budget. We are doing a tremendous amount of work around mining and modernizing mining. We are, for example, doing successor legislation for both our quartz and placer mining acts, and this is great work. I just recently met with the steering committee. They are doing really terrific work with all the First Nations. I understand that coming up next week, or shortly, there will be an industry and environmental NGO table working together, so there's a lot of work happening around mining across the territory to modernize it and make it environmentally, socially, and governance responsible. I would like to give a shout-out to the mining industry for all the work that they are doing in this modernization.

Mr. Dixon: It was over five years ago that the former minister promised an action plan for mining in municipalities. Unfortunately, it seems that this promise never materialized. It is clear that he couldn't get that commitment done, and now the current minister is scrambling to finish the former minister's work.

Last year, the current minister told us that a draft policy would be released this year. Can the minister tell us when the government will release a draft policy for mining in municipalities?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I actually went to a lot of these meetings as they went through our communities. I sat down and listened to what folks were saying across our communities. When I talked to the department, they told me that it was by far industry that had contributed a lot of feedback. I know that things slowed down a little bit because of COVID-19, but I want to thank the department for all of the work they are doing.

I just stood on my feet not a moment ago and said that this work is ongoing and that I am happy to report back to the member opposite that this is important work. The department is doing that work and I want to thank them for the work that they are doing.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the current minister's defence of his colleague, but my question was when the draft policy was going to be released.

The former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources also promised to establish a McIntyre Creek park in the City of Whitehorse; however, maps that we have obtained of the proposed park show that there are a considerable number of mineral claims in that affected area. This means that the inability of the former minister to live up to his commitments in 2016 is now interfering with his election promises made in 2021.

Can the current minister tell us whether or not the government is considering expropriating mineral claims in the City of Whitehorse in order to create the proposed McIntyre Creek park?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I would like to know is where the Yukon Party stands on mining in municipalities. We have gone out; we have engaged with all those places where we have plan zone areas, including municipalities. We met with the Association of Yukon Communities. We met with industry. We've developed a "what we heard" document. I'm not sure if the members opposite have seen it. I'm happy to share it with them. We're doing that next phase.

This was always contemplated as a two-phase process. The first phase was to talk with communities and industry. We have done that work. Now we will take that out and we will talk with the public as well. I'm looking forward to that work. I am really happy about the work that is happening around McIntyre park. That's great work. I know that other departments have been meeting with the City of Whitehorse. That is really great work. I know we're doing a ton of work around modernizing our legislation. We're working with all First Nations on that legislation as part of the devolution transfer agreement. It is really going well.

I would like to thank the industry for all of the work that they are doing in order to modernize our mining industry. You know, I will thank the members opposite, because I think they said it the other day: Our mining industry is flourishing.

Question re: Beaver River watershed land use plan

Mr. Hassard: So, in March 2018, the former Deputy Premier announced in a ministerial statement that the Beaver River land use plan was — and I quote: "... setting a strong course for the development of Yukon's economy and for the benefit of our communities throughout the territory."

He touted this as a new way of doing business. At the time, the minister said that the plan was going to be ready by March 2020. Unfortunately, this is just another case of where the former minister made big promises but couldn't get 'er done.

Can the current minister provide an update on the status of the Beaver River land use plan?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have been in close conversation with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. I think my last conversation with them directly was during the last Yukon Forum.

What I can say is that the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Government of Yukon remain committed to the 2018 intergovernmental agreement that supports a proposed tote road and calls for the completion of a land use plan for the Beaver River watershed and a road access management plan before that road construction occurs. We have been advancing the land use planning process for the Beaver River watershed and we have completed three stages of public and stakeholder consultation and are working toward completing the land plan early in 2023.

I will just say that, yes, it has taken longer than we wanted it to, but again, I have been pleased that the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and our own Energy, Mines and Resources branch are working toward this and working with industry as well.

Mr. Hassard: In December 2020, the former Deputy Premier tabled a legislative return about this issue. That legislative return said that the draft plan was expected to be concluded by January 2021 and presented to the parties in March 2021. Unfortunately, that is yet another commitment made by the former minister that he was unable to back up with action.

Can the current minister tell us for sure when this Beaver River land use plan will be completed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can say is that we will work respectfully government to government. There are times when priorities take over with other governments, so it is not for me to stand and say when another government will help us to reach that end goal, but I can say that I have worked with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and they have recommitted to this process. I thank them for their work on this. I will say that we are working diligently with them, but I think we have to be respectful of the government-to-government relationship. I will continue to do that.

Mr. Hassard: It is unfortunate that this government is so good at making promises, but unable to follow through on them.

In November 2020, one of the companies that have claims in that area put out a press release after they were denied permits for a tote road. In that release, they said — and I quote: "... you have to wonder if Yukon is in fact open for business." The minister of the day responded that the proponent — and I quote: "... does have the ability to improve their application and apply for this. This is not a full stop on this. They do have that opportunity."

Can the minister tell us what, if any, work has been done on that since the application was denied?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, do you know what I can say? It is that mining is doing well in the territory. I can say it's doing well because mining is working with our communities and reaching out to our communities. We are doing land use planning. The Dawson plan is working its way through. We have fixed the Peel plan from the Yukon Party. That had to go through the court system.

We are really happy that mining is doing well in the territory at the same time as making sure that it is environmentally responsible, socially responsible, and respecting the Yukon government and First Nation governments. I would like to thank the mining industry for all of the hard work and how well they are doing in the territory.

Question re: Land use planning

Ms. White: So, I guess that it is all a matter of perspective, because yesterday we learned that the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has petitioned the Supreme Court, arguing that this government is not meeting its treaty obligations. The petition states — and I quote: "The treaty promise of land planning is meaningless if there is no land left to plan when the planning finally begins."

We can't help but agree. After years of open disregard for First Nation governments under the Yukon Party, the Liberals have had years to do better, but they haven't. Not only is the government attempting to have the lawsuit dismissed, they are still no closer to meeting their obligations under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

When will this government listen to the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and proceed with land use planning in their territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I was just talking about this — the importance of land use planning — so, let me go there.

The Premier put it in my mandate letter to advance land use planning across the territory. When I am at the Yukon Forum, I have that conversation with other governments about wanting to move forward with land use planning. At the last Yukon Forum, I had a direct conversation with both the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Selkirk First Nation. But, of course, when we are talking about the Northern Tutchone region, there are three governments there. I want to be respectful of all three governments and we are in direct conversation with them. I have said to them that I will do everything I can to help move land use planning forward as quickly as possible and in the direction, through our table, at the Yukon Forum.

I look forward to doing further work and I would just like to acknowledge how well the Dawson plan is doing right now. We expect it out this year and I look forward, as I said to Chief Mervyn, to working with them on the Northern Tutchone plan.

Ms. White: Again, I guess that it is a matter of perspective.

Since 2006, there have been over 500 quartz and placer mining projects put forward on the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. Out of all of these, only one was ever declined. The First Nation has been clear that it does not

support any more mineral development until there is a regional land use plan in place and not just the spot land use plans, like the one proposed for the Beaver River watershed area. Enough lawsuits and courts — industry and First Nations alike want certainty and a government that honours its treaty obligations.

Has this government learned nothing from the Peel watershed land use plan? When will this government learn that it can't win these court cases?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, you know, there is a lot of different types of development that happens across the Yukon: agriculture parcels, energy initiatives and projects, roads — all sorts of issues. What we have done under successor legislation is get to all four pieces of it: land use, successor legislation on placer mining, on quartz mining, and on forestry. I think that's great work. We are respectful in working with our First Nations. For example, under the Peel plan, the Yukon Party ended up in court, and we are dealing with all of the extra claims that came in. Under the Dawson plan, what we did was go in — once we were given a recommended plan — and we withdrew all of those areas from staking.

I know that the meeting with the Yukon Prospectors Association and the Yukon Chamber of Mines — they would like there to be more land opened to them, but what we said was, “No, let's respect the land use planning process”, and we withdrew those areas. We will continue in that vein. I've said that directly to other First Nations that, when we get into the land use planning process with them, we will keep going with withdrawing as recommended by the planning commission.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I was referencing quartz and placer mining claims in the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. All but one were accepted.

All that Yukoners have heard over the last two decades are poor excuses and bad decisions. How the Peel land use plan was treated by the Yukon Party led to a disaster. The Liberals promised to do things differently, but the spot land use planning exercise in the Beaver River watershed area has been a disaster. Land use plans are there to bring certainty. Instead, what we've seen is that a lack of land use plans has cost millions of dollars in court costs and caused uncertainty in all sectors. There are still five areas requiring land use plans. At the rate that this government is going, they won't be completed until 2084. So, when will the government honour their commitment under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and put in the time and resources needed to complete all outstanding land use plans?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Here is an example: When there was a suggestion about the development within the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, we sat down with them and said, “How about we do a subregional plan?” They agreed. In my previous response to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, I said that we would be respectful of a government-to-government relationship, and we will.

And when we talk about land use planning, there are two that are completed: the Dawson plan is due this summer. There are four remaining. When will we start on all of them? Right away. So, this is what I've said at the Yukon Forum — that we will start on all of them right away, but I will take the lead from other governments — from First Nation governments — about

where they want to start and where they don't. It's a complicated answer, but I will be very respectful of those other governments, and I have said to them that, once we get going, we will make sure that the federal government is there in support as well. I would be happy to see land use planning happening everywhere.

I thank our First Nations for their dedication to this process.

Question re: Stevens Quarry development

Mr. Cathers: Development of Stevens Quarry was first proposed in the 1990s. Every time it has been proposed, it sparked concern in the surrounding neighbourhood. Farmers and tourism businesses are worried about negative impact on their animals and operations; homeowners are concerned about noise and dust; recreational trails will be impacted, and it's in close proximity to the research forest.

In 2013, Yukon government issued a YESAB decision document stopping development of the area. In February last year, an official from Energy, Mines and Resources told media the government was moving forward with a plan to develop Stevens Quarry, but during the election, the former Deputy Premier held a public meeting and signed a letter promising area residents that the Stevens Quarry “will not be developed” over the next mandate.

Does the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources plan to honour his predecessor's election promise?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have taken a look at the Stevens Quarry issue. The first thing I want to say is that we are committed to developing lots across the Yukon, including in Whitehorse. We know that there will be a need for gravel, so that's important to note. That's our priority.

I took a look at the decision document from the Stevens Quarry that was made several years ago and I see that there is important work that would need to take place. I have had a conversation with the City of Whitehorse, at their request, about working together to identify where there are opportunities for gravel across the city and what the status is of each of those. They have asked us to inform them about the Stevens Quarry.

I let them know about the requirements that are there under that YESAB decision. I'm happy to answer further questions, but I think it's important to say that we want to make sure that the territory continues in its strong development with all of the capital work that is happening through Highways and Public Works, through Community Services, and also through municipalities that we have identified in our current budget.

Mr. Cathers: This Liberal government is infamous for telling people what they want to hear but conveniently forget their promises later.

Last April, the then-Deputy Premier realized that the Liberal plan to develop Stevens Quarry was unpopular with people ranging from cattle farmers to homeowners and kayakers to hikers. They signed an election promise to “... maintain the administrative hold that is currently in place on Stevens Quarry.”

Now, the City of Whitehorse manager recently told Whitehorse City Council that discussions between the minister and mayor about Stevens Quarry are happening regularly, and said that "...it's a topic that I would say gets raised at least every other week for the last couple of months." It seems strange that there would be discussions at least every other week about developing this if the minister plans to keep the promise made by his Cabinet colleague.

Can the minister please explain why developing Stevens Quarry is such an active topic of discussion between himself and the mayor if the Liberal government actually plans to honour the promise they made to my constituents less than a year ago?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just stood a moment ago and talked about meeting with the City of Whitehorse. I think what I said was that we were talking about gravel because gravel is really important. Who knew that this would be a major issue? But it is. I will continue to have those conversations. I thank the City of Whitehorse for reaching out. I thank the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for doing its diligence around this issue.

One of the places that we will look at is Stevens Quarry. The Stevens Quarry application and approval happened, I think, under the Member for Lake Laberge. If I go back in time, he was the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources at some point there and I think it was his approval of this.

We are working to be diligent and make sure that we live up to the requirements under the approval. That does require some planning work. I have alerted the City of Whitehorse that there is work that would need to happen. We will at all times be diligent in that work and make sure that we are doing things as approved previously under the Yukon Party government.

Mr. Cathers: Well, the minister's attempt at a zinger fell flat. In fact, the government denied Stevens Quarry when I was minister in 2013.

As of February last year, Energy, Mines and Resources planned to develop Stevens Quarry later that year, but in April 2021, the former Deputy Premier, then-Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, signed a written promise to maintain the administrative hold that is currently in place on Stevens Quarry. We know that the Liberal caucus isn't very united and the change in portfolios has some of my constituents worried that, instead of developing other gravel supply options, the new minister seems to be holding backroom discussions — quote: "... at least every other week..." about developing Stevens Quarry. The minister is clearly full speed ahead despite concerns of farmers, businesses, and residents.

Why is developing Stevens Quarry such a high priority for this minister and what does he intend to say to people who made the mistake of believing the election promise his predecessor signed less than a year ago to — quote: "... maintain the administrative hold that is currently in place on Stevens Quarry"?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: You know, I have stood — this is my third time — and let me just be very explicit: Gravel is important. It is important because housing is important. It is important because all of the infrastructure that we are building

is important. I am not relying solely on Stevens Quarry; neither is the department; neither is the City of Whitehorse, as a matter of fact.

What happened was the City of Whitehorse asked to talk to us, and our departments are working together to identify this critical resource here in Whitehorse and beyond because it is very important to all of the development work that we need. I will go back and check, but when I read the decision document, I believe that it was approved under the member opposite, but I will check that to be sure. Whoever it was that approved it, it was before we were here as a government and there were certain requirements that were called for under that decision and we will fulfill those appropriately.

In order to do that, we will work diligently with the City of Whitehorse and we will make sure to have conversations with the member's riding. I know that he is concerned about it. I thank him for his concern, but I think that the critical thing we need here is to make sure that we have access to gravel for development.

Question re: Consultation with Filipino community

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month, the Yukon government signed an MOU with the Philippines Department of Labour and Employment. This was a good first step to recognizing the importance of the Filipino community to the social and economic development of the Yukon. However, I do have some questions about the agreement.

First of all, it does not appear that the MOU is available on the Yukon government website. Is the minister willing to table this document and ensure that it is available on the government's website so that the Filipino community can see it for themselves?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It is fantastic to be able to get up and actually answer a question after all of that.

Yes, we are very excited about the groundbreaking deal. We are actually the first jurisdiction in Canada to use this type of agreement.

Also, on the day that I was there signing the agreement just a couple weeks ago, we had representatives from Thailand and from Indonesia reach out to us because they also felt this was groundbreaking. Other provinces and territories have also shown interest.

After two years of negotiations and discussions, I am pleased that we have been able to reach an agreement. There is no problem with putting the agreement online; it's a public agreement. I will work with my department to make sure that's available. Certainly, the president of the Canadian Filipino association was there when we signed this agreement and we're happy to share it with others.

Again, on March 18, I met with Secretary Bello from the Philippines. Again, it was groundbreaking in the fact that the national secretary was there virtually with us, but has actually been here as well to visit with us. This MOU will make it easier for Filipinos to come to the Yukon. It also gives us an opportunity to reduce the costs for individuals who are coming. We felt there was a cost that should be borne and I look forward to question numbers 2 and 3.

Ms. Clarke: In discussing this new MOU with the Filipino community, it has become clear that the community would like more information about the agreement. The community has offered suggestions for how to improve communities and coordination between the two countries. The Filipino community would like to be formally consulted on improving programs and policies that will affect them directly and would like that consultation to be Filipino-led.

Will the minister agree to empower and support the Filipino community to engage with Filipino citizens when it comes to the implementation of the MOU and any future decisions about program changes?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It was like the member opposite was reading my mind. Two weeks ago, when I sat down with the Filipino community in Riverdale at their board meeting, that's exactly — I said, "You know what? I think it has been too long where policies have been defined by other organizations and individuals in this community. It should be by Filipinos for Filipinos." That's exactly what I said.

I also said that if there are any situations where the Filipino community feels they're being mistreated in an employment situation — I have to say that our employers are fantastic in the Yukon. Speaking with the consulate in Vancouver, I was told that we have never had a complaint to the consulate in Vancouver, but I said that if there is ever a case, to please let me know.

I want to be able to work alongside. I need to know, at a grassroots level, how we can make things better. Inevitably, this information that came up to build this agreement was from individuals who have moved here from the Filipino diaspora.

Again, since 2007 through our nominee program, the largest number of individuals have come from the Philippines. I think it's very important that we have the right safety nets in place. As well, this gives us an opportunity to build a Yukon-centric orientation that will be provided to Filipino immigrants before they actually leave Manila.

I'm very proud of this — another opportunity to show that the Yukon, although small, can lead the country and that's what we're doing with this policy.

Ms. Clarke: While the MOU is a good step forward for improving the process of getting here, we have also heard that many Filipinos face challenges once they arrive in the Yukon. The transition to a new country, a new job, and a new environment can be challenging. Finding housing, understanding Yukon's labour laws, and knowing what programs and services are available to them once they arrive in Yukon are all challenges they face.

Beyond the MOU, what plans are in place to ensure that Filipinos who have come through the Yukon nominee program are adequately supported once they arrive?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will just go back to the answer from the last question. Again, when we talked about that Yukon-centric orientation, I think that's going to be key because it really gives individuals an opportunity to understand specifically not just what it's like to move to Canada but what the very unique parts of our society are here in Whitehorse.

Again, the MOU — some of the key items: It improves the ability for Filipinos to be identified and recruited through the Yukon nominee process. It supports the safety of Filipino nominees coming to the Yukon through requirements of Yukon employers under the Yukon nominee program. It formalizes the Yukon and Philippines' cooperation on labour mobility through the creation, so making sure that folks have the right credentials and are met with the right employer. Again, it waives fees that were in place for a long time — certainly under the previous government where it didn't seem that this was a priority.

Again, it clarifies the interaction between the Yukon nominee and the Filipinos in a pre-screened and vetted pool of employees.

I wish there was another question about what else happened that day, but I'll share. We also had an opportunity to have an agreement signed off between Air North and PAL — Philippine Airlines. This is not just good for individuals coming from the Philippines; this is great for all Yukoners who want to travel abroad. Now we'll have an interline agreement in place. We look forward to seeing what that will lead to in the fall. Again, giving a streamlined process for our tourism sector and making sure that Filipinos here — more Filipinos can call Yukon home.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 11: *Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act (2022)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 11, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 11, entitled *Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act (2022)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Health and Social Services that Bill No. 11, entitled *Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act (2022)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would just like to take a moment to thank everyone who is here in attendance today for this really important matter. It would be dangerous to start to name people behind masks, but I recognize many of our visitors and I thank them all for being here.

I'm truly honoured to present these amendments which respond directly to our mandate to work in cooperation and partnership with Yukon First Nations to realize the changes stemming from the *Child and Family Services Act* review with the goal of enhancing opportunities and outcomes for all children, youth, and families.

The process used to develop Bill No. 11 has been precedent-setting. Given the disproportionate impact that this act has on indigenous people in the Yukon Territory, this government worked with Yukon First Nations and the Council

of Yukon First Nations government to government on all amendments in Bill No. 11.

We are where we are today because of the shared commitment to change and the invaluable work by everyone at every level, from front-line staff through every level of government, right to the floor of this Legislative Assembly.

It will not always be easy, but we are all committed to moving forward together, to hearing the voices of all involved, to exploring all potential options, and to being open to change.

As of January 2022, there were 81 children in care of the Department of Health and Social Services, and 96 percent of these children are indigenous. While we have seen a significant decrease in the number of children in care, this number must continue to go down. We must continue to address the overrepresentation of indigenous children in care.

Every single required action in the report *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* was thoughtfully and carefully considered by representatives from 12 Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations. The policy direction for this bill was developed by consensus by the *Child and Family Services Act* Steering Committee.

Reconciliation is a journey, not a destination. We are on this path, working with Yukon First Nations to listen and learn to better the lives of all children and families here in the territory. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to thank the representatives from the Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations as we would not be at this monumental moment without all of their hard work, expertise, and dedication.

We are here today because of the work of the Yukon First Nations *Child and Family Services Act* Steering Committee members: Darla Jean Lindstrom, representative for Carcross/Tagish First Nation; Robert Van Lieshout, representative for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Soulia Pourabdi, representative for the Teslin Tlingit Council; Terri Cairns, representative for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation; Natasha Frost and Paige Tizya-Tramm, representatives for the Vuntut Gwitchin Government; Crystal Bolton and Dylan Loblaw, representatives for the Ross River Dena Council; Robin Westland, representative for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation; Kelli Backstrom, representative for the White River First Nation; Paul Sahagian and Tanya Silverfox, representatives for Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation; May Stewart and Melissa Charlie, representatives for the Liard First Nation; Dennis Peter, representative for the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation; and Heather Griffiths, representative for the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

I would also like to thank the following for their support and engagement on Bill No. 11: Jason Peters and Lucy McGinty from the Selkirk First Nation. Similarly, I would like to thank Kathleen Johnson and Tralee MacDonald from the Kluane First Nation for their engagement and support on the work for Bill No. 11.

The Council of Yukon First Nations played a significant role in assuming the role of co-chair and supporting the critical work of the *Child and Family Services Act* Steering Committee. Thank you to Shadelle Chambers, executive director of the

Council of Yukon First Nations and co-chair of the steering committee. I truly admire Shadelle's work. I don't know how she does it with the hours in a day. I would also like to thank the Council of Yukon First Nations' child welfare analysts Shauna Strand and Kayla Brinda.

We must recognize the work of the advisory committee, the authors of *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. They were: Mo Caley-Verdonk, chair; Raymond Sydney, vice-chair; Doris Anderson; Debbie Hoffman; Lori Duncan; and Rosemary Rowlands — many of whom I have had the pleasure to work with in different capacities over the years.

A successful team needs every player. There were many people within this government who have worked alongside the Yukon First Nations on this project and have done so with dedication and humility to envision systemic change in child welfare. Thank you and recognition must go to: Bobby Prematunga from Family and Children's Services as a senior program strategist; Paula Mowat, who is a policy analyst; Leeann Kayseas, former Family and Children's Services manager; our legal drafters, Sheri Hogeboom and Andrea Bailey; Caitlin Knutson, our senior policy advisor; and finally, Geraldine MacDonald, the director of Family and Children's Services and the co-chair of the steering committee.

The foundation and focus of Bill No. 11 are to have children safely supported within their families, extended families, and communities. These amendments will support many of the structural changes that are necessary steps forward toward long-term and significant reform of the child welfare system. These amendments will entrench in law the principles and the provisions to hold children and families up wherever possible in the face of adversity.

Embedded in the preamble of Bill No. 11, this government acknowledges the mistakes of the past and we are on a path with Yukon First Nations to establish a child welfare system based on non-discriminatory values and fundamental child and human rights. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling 41 acknowledges that too many First Nation children were unnecessarily apprehended from their parents and communities and suffered harms that included abuse, the loss of language, culture, and attachment to their families. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling 41 states — and I quote: "It is time for a true paradigm shift in Canada so that we do not repeat history."

Over the last five years, the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations have been shifting practices and we will continue our critical work together with the Government of Canada to support long-term reform that will address these structural problems inherent in the child welfare system. It is important to recognize that child welfare reform is well-underway.

Over the last five years, Family and Children's Services has worked in partnership with Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and other partners to create the infrastructure to support the amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act*. This philosophical shift has led to significant work that had already been completed prior to the tabling of this bill which includes changes in practice, implementation of critical initiatives, changes in processes and

procedures, enhanced working relationships with First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations, extensive policy revisions, alignment of current and new resources, and new training.

Through working directly on these amendments, we have continued the journey of building trust and transparency and open communication with Yukon First Nations on child welfare matters. Bill No. 11 will provide the legislative tools to take the necessary steps on our path to reform Yukon's child welfare system. Bill No. 11 will support family preservation and family reunification. Bill No. 11 will improve access to cultural activities and establish cultural plans for all children in the care of the director. Bill No. 11 will expand transitional support services up to the age of 26 and past this in exceptional circumstances. It will expand these critical supports to youth who are leaving extended family care. Bill No. 11 will provide access to preventive support services for expectant people at risk of becoming involved in child protection after the birth of a child. Bill No. 11 will provide the ability for the director to place children with their extended family or a community member which will result in more children remaining closer to their families, communities, and cultures. Bill No. 11 will increase the involvement of Yukon First Nations in decision-making processes with respect to their children. Bill No. 11 will increase the level of service quality and accountability. Perhaps most importantly, Bill No. 11 will work to improve outcomes for all children and families involved in the child welfare system here in the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, these are groundbreaking, precedent-setting moves to benefit our children. We will continue to tackle the hard pieces and realign resources and supports to where they need to be through the implementation of this newly amended act. We will maintain and build upon the relationships with Yukon First Nations and follow through with concrete actions that demonstrate real changes for children and families. This change will also include working with those First Nations interested in delivering child welfare services for their own members and citizens.

Immediate next steps include a meeting with Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations next week to discuss our next steps on this path of reconciliation. An implementation focus committee will be established to provide guidance for draft implementation policies and practices alongside other child reform activities. The details of this committee will be discussed and developed with Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations.

As I noted earlier in this debate, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate — who I see is here today with her deputy Child and Youth Advocate — and the Information and Privacy Commissioner will both be invited to participate on this implementation committee.

We want to thank all those who worked so diligently on this bill and the commitment and the dedication of those who will continue to walk on this path of reconciliation and child welfare reform.

I also want to thank all the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their support of Bill No. 11.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to speak to this bill at third reading. I would like to thank the minister for her third reading remarks as well.

As I did at second reading, I took the opportunity to thank a number of people for their contributions to this. I note that the minister has done a very good job at outlining the list of people who were involved with the crafting of this bill and who have put in a significant amount of work to achieve this accomplishment that we see before us today.

I want to begin by noting the importance of the *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* report in getting us where we are today. At second reading, I listed off the names of the people on the advisory committee, so I won't do that again today. That report was obviously an incredibly important first step to reviewing the act and getting us here today.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to sit down with Mo Caley-Verdonk in Dawson, the chair of that committee, to talk about their work and of course Bill No. 11. I appreciated her counsel and insight as to the work.

One of the things that I found most striking about that report, and that was further highlighted to me by Mo when we met in Dawson, was the commentary piece around what we traditionally think of as recommendations. In their report — and I'll quote again from it: "We were asked to look at the Act and its implementation together with the way supports and services are delivered under the Act. We were asked to produce recommendations following our review. However, 'recommendations' do not capture the type of change that is needed, and we have therefore outlined the 'Required Actions' that must be taken to show Yukoners they have been heard."

I thought that was a fairly profound aspect of that report, Mr. Speaker, and really emphasizes the need for action and the need for these required actions to be thoughtfully considered in the development of amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act*, which of course are included in Bill No. 11.

During the course of the last few weeks, we have had the opportunity as legislators to review this bill quite thoroughly. We spent, I believe, two or three days in total going through the bill line by line and debating, considering, and discussing this bill. I appreciate the minister's willingness to do that. When we consider the impact of the *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* report and the 149 required actions that they outlined, we had asked the minister to explain which of those actions had been included in the bill and which had not. The minister did go through those and explained which had been included, which had been contemplated but not included, and which had been somewhat included.

I think that, for those who are interested in reviewing them, the minister's comments in Committee about inclusion or not of those required actions will be a useful resource.

I also wanted to thank others who have submitted interventions or letters for the Legislature to consider in discussing this bill. Chief among those, of course, was the Child and Youth Advocate, who submitted a *Child Rights Impact Assessment* on March 10, which of course was tabled in the

Legislature. The *Child Rights Impact Assessment* includes a number of thoughts about the bill itself, the context within which the bill was drafted, and includes the suggestion of a number of amendments to the bill.

I'll quote from the executive summary, as I did at second reading, because I thought it was a good piece to consider: "The amendments to the CFSA as proposed are strong, and taken as a whole would create a significant positive impact on the rights and well-being of children in need of services under the CFSA. But there are also a few changes that require a second thought and still other areas where no changes were proposed but may represent a missed opportunity to meaningfully impact children's lives. If the enclosed recommendations are considered carefully, this CRIA would represent an opportunity for the government to implement exemplary and transformational legislation, providing the benchmark for jurisdictions across the country."

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly took that advice very seriously. The *Child Rights Impact Assessment* was the subject of considerable debate and discussion in Committee of the Whole on this legislation. I wanted to note that, last week, the minister wrote a letter to the Child and Youth Advocate, copied to me and the Leader of the Third Party as well, providing a careful issue-by-issue response to the Child and Youth Advocate.

The Child and Youth Advocate, to my knowledge, has not responded to that response yet. But ultimately, based on that response and the willingness of the minister to engage with the Child and Youth Advocate and the commitment she made in Committee, as well, today to include the Child and Youth Advocate in the implementation committee, we thought it was sufficient to us that amendments on the floor of the Legislature were not going to be needed.

So, while we do remain somewhat concerned and have some further questions about how those amendments that are suggested by the Child and Youth Advocate will be considered going forward, we opted to not propose amendments in this legislative Sitting to the bill. Instead, we will vote in favour of the bill to see it pass.

I do want to note, though, that in passing this bill today, I do hope that the work of the Child and Youth Advocate in their *Child Rights Impact Assessment* is thoroughly considered going forward. I do hope, in the course of the coming weeks and months, that the minister has the chance to meet with the Child and Youth Advocate and discuss these issues, and I hope that if there are further amendments that are needed, the government is able to make the time in their legislative agenda to bring those forward as soon as possible, because one of our concerns was, of course, that this was a unique opportunity to open this act up and provide amendments to it, and we didn't want to miss the opportunity to include some of the provisions that had been suggested by the Child and Youth Advocate.

So, I do hope that can be considered by the government going forward.

We are also in receipt of a letter from the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner, who had raised some specific concerns related to subsection 180 of the bill and, of

course, the IPC had provided a very specific suggestion for amendment as well. Likewise, with the Child and Youth Advocate, the minister wrote a letter to the IPC last week, copied to the Leader of the Third Party and me, which explained the minister's response to that suggestion. As with the changes proposed by the Child and Youth Advocate, we had considered amendments to the bill in Committee, but opted to not propose those at this time, given the minister's response to the IPC.

I would also encourage the minister to take the opportunity to reach out to the IPC following the passage of this bill, meet with that office and ensure that the response that the minister has provided through her letter does indeed address the concerns raised by the IPC, because the concerns raised by the IPC were serious in nature. They relate to the privacy of children and their right to privacy. That is a very serious matter and so we do hope that the minister is able to address those concerns raised by the IPC.

We were also in receipt of a letter from the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations. In that letter, the Grand Chief expressed the will of the CYFN to see this bill enacted as quickly as possible. We took that advice very seriously as well, and that overture from the Grand Chief certainly influenced our approach to debate on this bill. I am sure that, like us, CYFN is pleased to see this bill pass today.

The work done by the Legislature on this bill over the last few weeks has been important, but, Mr. Speaker, the important work is just yet to begin. The implementation of this bill and the new *Child and Family Services Act*, as amended, is incredibly important work. Whether it has been noted by the minister or by the advisory committee in years past, that work needs to be done in strong collaboration with Yukon First Nations. I know from the minister's comments today that this is the intent of the government. We will be watching with great interest to see how the implementation of this new act unfolds. We do hope that the possibility or need for further amendments down the road is something that the government does consider.

Passing legislation is an important part of the work that we do as legislators, but the implementation of that law — the implementation of these provisions — is what really affects people's lives here in the Yukon and in particular affects the lives of the most vulnerable, the children of the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, we will be, as I have indicated, voting in favour of this bill at third reading. We do think it is a marked improvement in the course of how this business is conducted and we appreciate the work that has been done by all those who have been noted today on this. We will be watching closely to ensure that implementation goes as it should and that the advice and recommendations provided by independent officers of the Legislature, as well as others, is thoughtfully considered. If further amendments are needed, we do hope they come forward.

In closing, we are pleased to see this bill come forward. We are pleased to support it today. We will be watching closely to ensure that implementation is done in the right way. With that, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to voting in favour of this bill.

Ms. White: I thank my colleagues for their comments today. One thing I would like to acknowledge is that it was the stories of individuals and families that brought forward these changes. It was people who were brave enough to go to a room around a board table or community centre — wherever those meetings were held — and share their stories. Today, I hold those stories. I think about those people. I think about friends who definitely shared and how that got us to this point. It was those honest re-tellings that got us to these changes today.

It is one of the reasons why the folks who brought forward that report, *Embracing the Children of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, were so adamant that something happens. It is because they promised that they would. They made commitments to families that things would change, that it wouldn't just die, that the stories wouldn't be shared and they wouldn't go anywhere.

Today is an incredible thing, and it is because of the bravery of families and individuals who shared those stories that we are rewriting what the future can be. It doesn't escape me that we are also doing it today on National Indigenous Languages Day, when we talk about a bright future and making changes.

When we talk about Bill No. 11 and the amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act*, I echo the thoughts of my colleague, the Leader of the Yukon Party, when he says that this is just one part. Really, without the regulations and without it coming into force, there are so many good things that can't happen. I am hopeful that this doesn't turn into the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* that passes and comes into force six years later, or the *Condominium Act* that passed and still hasn't come into force, and that we are able to move forward.

In conversation with the minister, I asked if the intentions of this bill — if they could help someone now, would the director be able to act? She said that they would try. I say this because I think that one of the really incredible things that is included is the prenatal interventions. I have a person in mind right now for whom this will be life-changing for that family.

When we talk about this act, it's more than just words. There is incredible work from up there — incredible work — but this is just the first step. We all have a responsibility now to breathe life into this. We all have the responsibility to make sure that this has the wings that we designed — that you designed — that we discussed and that if, five years down the line, we look back and something didn't work, then we need to be brave enough to say so and come back and fix it.

Let this not be a piece of legislation that changes once and never changes again. Let this be a piece of legislation that adapts and grows and continues and gets better as we go forward.

I appreciate the assertion from the minister that she will continue to work with the Child and Youth Advocate and the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I appreciate the intentions of the nations to continue to do the work. But, again, it's our responsibility to make sure that this is more than just words on paper, that we breathe the life that was intended into it, and that we do see the change of the future of children. We

have that responsibility — that responsibility but that honour to be able to be here. I hope the folks in the gallery and those who are listening feel the pride and feel change, because it's a really big day.

It's a beautiful day to be on the floor to be able to vote in favour of this.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will keep my comments fairly brief today. I just really wanted to take the opportunity to talk about this important act that's coming into effect today. I'm really happy that the Commissioner will be coming into the House today to assent to this. It's a historic day. I too am very happy that it's happening on National Indigenous Languages Day.

I worked a very long time at the front line in child welfare and I know very well the struggles of our families. I know that this new law that's coming in today will help a lot of families. It will go to the heart of where we need to go as a government. There are a lot of days in this House that roll right in, one to the other. I'm not saying that in a disrespectful way, but it's the days like this that make this job everything it can be when we can change a law and really, as the Leader of the Third Party said, breathe life into the work that we do.

I want to thank everyone — every single person who has worked on this and all of the folks who work on the front line. I see you; I see you here today, and I know so many others who put their heart and soul into working for our littlest people, for our children, to keep them safe and to keep them connected. This law is so important in reconciliation. We talk about reconciliation every day, probably, but when you see it come into action in the way that we have — and I want to thank the minister for the endless hours of work on this and all of the writers and drafters.

I don't think I listened to one single story in the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry that didn't have something to do with the failing of the child welfare system. I know that this is a major step. It is embraced in the strategy that we developed in the Yukon. It is embraced in our strategy, and this new law is going to help change the story for so many. My hope is to not lose people. We see it every day. It is connected to the emergency that we have in our territory around substance use. It's connected to that.

So, again, these are the days that make everything really worthwhile and all of the hard work and sacrifice you make to come into a position like this. I'm so happy that we've come to this point, and again, thank you to everyone who had anything — even a little bit — to do with this. I appreciate the work that you've done, and I look forward to the implementation of this. It is breathing life into the law.

Mr. Cathers: I am going to be relatively brief in my comments. I do just want to begin by thanking everyone who was involved in this current review, as well as those who worked on the drafting of the *Child and Family Services Act* that replaced the child act, back 14 years ago. It was, in fact, 14 years ago tomorrow that, as Minister of Health and Social Services — I had the honour of introducing the bill at the

second reading stage and beginning debate on the legislation. At that time, major changes were made to the legislation following a five-year process involving CYFN and working with First Nations on it. I also recognized at the time — as you will see, if you refer back to Hansard from April 1, 2008 — that, after the changes that were made, it was our expectation at the time that more changes would be needed down the road, after people saw what the new act was — how it was actually working once it was implemented. And we expected that, due to the importance of that legislation and the effect that it has directly on the lives of Yukoners and Yukon children, that there would be a need to review the act and to make further amendments. In fact, we actually anticipated that it would probably be sooner than has happened now.

I just want to thank everyone who was involved in that original process of bringing forward the *Child and Family Services Act* and all of those who have been involved in this most recent work to update this legislation to determine what was working well, what needed to be changed, and to bring forward those changes.

As my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, noted, we did recognize and were concerned by the concerns being expressed from the Child and Youth Advocate and the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We did also consider the possibility of proposing amendments to this legislation during the Committee of the Whole stage, but also recognized that concerns had been expressed by CYFN about the possibility of changes being made because of the way that would not directly involve them and others who were part of the review.

Again, I just want to echo the comments of the Leader of the Official Opposition. We hope that the government will take those concerns expressed by those two independent officers of the Legislative Assembly seriously and work with them to determine whether the response provided by government to their formal concerns has in fact adequately addressed those concerns or whether additional legislative changes may be needed and that, if indeed they determine that additional changes are necessary, that they also involve other partners in considering those so that no one is left out in bringing forward future legislative amendments, if indeed those are necessary.

So, as my colleague noted, we do still have some concerns about the legislation, but we will be supporting it. We recognize that there seems to be general agreement that this is an improvement to the legislation and we do hope that the ministers will listen to those independent officers and others and, if additional changes are necessary, will bring those forward in an appropriate, timely manner.

I would also note that there are a lot more people who were involved in and touched by this than the minister listed even in that rather long list. I am sure the people whose stories and concerns and life experiences have contributed to the work that we're seeing the results of here today — I'm sure that not everyone who has been a part of this process has been acknowledged. I do just want to thank and acknowledge everyone who contributed to trying to improve this important area of law.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The world is changing, and it's about time. Back in 2008, when there was a bill similar to this to change the law at that time to benefit children in need of protection, there were protestors outside. Today, we have an audience filled with passion and caring. The drums of Canadian First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities beat today in St. Peter's Square in Rome and were brought to the world stage.

Knowledge of and respect for our First Nation people and the harm that they have suffered is now spreading across Canada. Reparation for that harm is needed. The Yukon is a leader on the path of reconciliation for this country. The First Nations in our territory have shown the way with self-government agreements, priority-setting at the Yukon Forum, and a First Nation School Board, to just name a few.

Earning trust and working in partnership with Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations has been a top priority for our government. Today, we take a giant step forward together to reform our child welfare system by passing Bill No. 11, which was collaboratively developed.

I am hopeful and I know our government is committed to adapting this process that we used here and will use in the future for developing legislation or programs that affect our Yukon First Nation citizens. Acknowledgement and credit must be given today to every one of Yukon's First Nations who rolled up their sleeves and came to the table with every one of their children, youth, and families at the centre of their minds. All parties came together, knowing that we could do better for their children and for all children when we have the responsibility to keep them safe, attached to their cultures, languages, and traditions, and to help them grow up to be happy and healthy. We know that we can do better, and today we take a giant step in that direction together.

Mr. Speaker, in the prayers that you say at the beginning of every day, you often reference the significant responsibilities that we all have to the people whom we serve. Days like today should bring those words to the forefront our minds. The changes brought by Bill No. 11 will change the experiences for Yukon children, mostly for Yukon First Nation children, and that is the work that we are here to do today: real change for the people we serve.

I look forward to all members supporting the passing of Bill No. 11, and it is truly my honour to do this today and present Bill No. 11 to this Legislative Assembly. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in getting us here and will take us on the path forward.

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: Agree.

Ms. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 11 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 11 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of the Yukon in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor to grant assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Bernard enters the Chamber announced by her Aide-de-Camp

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Third Appropriation Act 2021-22; Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act (2022).*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. Please be seated.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 204: *First Appropriation Act 2022-23* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to welcome the officials here today. With us are our Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture, Mr. Justin Ferbey, as well as director of Finance, Ms. Kate Olynyk. I'll just share that we want to thank the Department of Tourism and Culture and the hard-working folks there. It has not been an easy couple of years. We feel very proud of this budget that we're presenting to you today. We think that it has the right tools in place for us to work toward recovery.

What we're seeing for the Yukon for this upcoming year is promising. I think we'll be well on our way for recovery. I think what we're seeing across this country, information just over the last 24 hours, about more planes being put on tarmacs and folks starting to tool up to levels that should get us in the right direction.

With that, I'm going to keep it short. We want to get right down to questions. I'll cede the floor to the opposition.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you to the deputy minister and staff for joining us today.

I have a quick question follow-up from the border discussion we had earlier this week. Obviously, the Top of the World Highway is an important economic and tourism artery into the Yukon. The border crossing there, with the pandemic, has been closed. Dawson residents are curious about whether it will be fully opened this year.

Does the minister have any information about the plans for the Poker Creek border crossing at the Top of the World this summer? Will it be fully staffed and open as it usually is?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, I am happy to say that our conversations with Canada Border Services is that the Goldbottom site will be fully staffed and will be back to pre-pandemic levels by Canada Border Services at our regular border crossing. This is good news for Yukoners, good news for Alaskans, and good news for the placer industry.

Ms. Van Bibber: Moving on to the topic of the arts operating fund, there is a line item. Can the minister please provide how the arts operating fund is structured? How many groups receive funding through this arts operating fund and what is the eligibility criteria for the fund?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The eligibility for the arts operating fund for the operating component is that it's a Yukon non-profit society or an ongoing and year-round — with year-round activities primarily engaged in literary, visual, or performing arts activities — and that activities of the society have a territorial impact or that it is a society that is recognized as an umbrella arts organization and activities of the society have a territorial impact. That is the eligibility. Eligibility for a project-style component is that it would have Yukon non-profit societies, First Nations, school councils, municipal governments, local advisory councils, or industry associations with an arts-focused project that meets the following criteria — there are three items here: the project fosters the creative development of the arts in Yukon and supports Yukon arts policy principles; the project is arts-focused, including literary, visual, or performing arts; and the project is established as an annual activity for at least three years.

The authority for the fund is under the *Arts Act* and the Yukon arts policy. Decision-making for this is overseen through the Yukon Arts Advisory Council, which reviews applications and makes funding recommendations back to the minister.

For intake, there is one application deadline per year and that is on February 15. The budget for this is \$825,000, which has been available each year, and applicants — limits the maximum per project — again, there is no maximum on this one. A very, very important fund for us, and I think we have all seen — maybe from the work in the Assembly — a number of us who have worked on appointing individuals through our boards and committees to this very important work. Again, we tried to have many different points of view.

What we have seen over the last number of years — about 20 recipients for this.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you. That answered my next question, which was: How many applicants? Was that the number of applicants — 20? Or was that the number of successful applicants? Maybe you could give me a total of exactly how many applied for this fund.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There were 19 successful applications and there were 20 submitted. So, there was just one that was not successful in our last round, and of course, we will have to see what comes this year, after we have our funding in place and we have an opportunity to review and have recommendations from the committee.

Ms. Van Bibber: Can the minister tell me how groups are prioritized for this funding availability?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that basically, based on the criteria that we touched on earlier and the fact that essentially everybody was funded, I think that we could say that, in this case, it really comes down to that eligibility — again, it is the group sitting there. I would probably have more to share if there was a larger number that haven't been funded, but I think that

what we have seen over the years is that, as far as I am aware, we are seeing groups — basically every group get funded, very similar to what we have been seeing at Economic Development with the community development fund.

Ms. Van Bibber: Of the groups that were not successful — or the one, in this particular case — in receiving funding during the last application round, was it because they did not meet the criteria? Had they applied too many times? Is there a set limit of time that you can apply or is there a turnaround for applications?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What has happened in the past is the applications that had been selected for recommendation, which I had an opportunity to see — we can go back and take a look and find out if they didn't meet eligibility or what that was. I'll also have to take into consideration what the potential privacy concerns are with that process, but I'm more than happy to go back. We'll just make a quick note, and it's something that we could come back to the House with at a later date.

Ms. Van Bibber: Has the minister given consideration to reviewing the arts operating fund — perhaps reviewing the intake process to ensure that all applicants can secure funding and reviewing dollars allocated to this fund to ensure the amount is adequate for everyone?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is a funding program scan and review, and it will begin in the spring of 2022. It will include the arts funding programs, all of our programs. It's part of the commitment that we made. It will address action 1.1, and that comes back to our cultural strategies document and work that we have done. It has been highly lauded here in the Yukon, and that's really a focus and commitment to modernize and streamline our existing funding programs, very similar to the work that was taken on and completed through all our programs at the Department of Economic Development.

Ms. Van Bibber: On to events. I know the department supports these three events: Adäka, the indigenous days celebration, and the upcoming Arctic Arts Summit that's happening this summer. Could you tell me how much funding is provided to each? Who are the organizers or hosts of these events? Are they all the same group or different? With the current situation, I'm assuming all these are going ahead this year — pandemic, economics, and everything that's happening. So, could the minister give me an update on those particular celebrations?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We'll just go through these festivals. First, the Arctic Arts Summit — very exciting opportunity for the Yukon — not only the Yukon but Canada. This is the first time this has been held in Canada. It has been held, to my knowledge, twice before — once, I believe, in Finland and once in Norway, I believe. This is something pretty special for us.

The Government of Yukon and Canada Council for the Arts will be the co-hosts for this. It's the third international Arctic Arts Summit. The summit is scheduled for June 27-29, 2022 and it will coincide with Adäka. Everything is a go. We're moving forward on planning. I'm very excited about that. The summit has a strong indigenous youth focus and a team of indigenous curators are also going to be involved. That includes Katie Johnson as a Yukon representative in that

work. There are over 300 artists and cultural leaders and policy-makers that we will be seeing during that particular festival.

As you see, there is a combination between Canada and others on this one, so that both of those festivals are a go. Our contribution to Adäka is \$30,000 from Tourism. Again, for the Arctic Arts Summit, it is \$300,000. But again, this is a one-time contribution. We get to host it but, of course, it will move to another region. The two locations previously were Norway and Finland. So, those are the two festivals. I think folks are well aware of Adäka and the great contribution that makes to us.

The member opposite mentioned three festivals, so I might have missed one, but those are the two I can speak with. I can gather information on the other one as well if I missed one.

Ms. Van Bibber: Yes, it was National Indigenous People's Day.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you. National Indigenous People's Day has been, from my knowledge, organized by other groups, like the Council of Yukon First Nations, I believe. There have been times where the Department of Economic Development in the past has contributed funds, but that was when the national broadcast for the actual event took place in Yukon.

That is not something that is happening this year — previously, we have contributed money — but really, this year, the two big focuses will be that and other organizations outside of government that are contributing or that help produce events on June 21. What we have seen in other communities are nations hosting their own events, whether that be Haines Junction, Teslin, or Carcross on June 21.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer. On to visitor information centres — Watson Lake is the first stop in the Yukon for highway travellers coming north from the south. As such, there is much concern that the visitor information centre in Watson Lake should be treated as a priority and not as an afterthought. Are there any current plans to rebuild that visitor centre in the very near future?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just for our listeners, our visitor information centres open on May 1. I know that I am looking forward to being out there and welcoming not only our visitors to our information centres, but our very well-experienced individuals and staff members back to the visitor information centres.

Just speaking about Watson Lake, I did have a great opportunity last year to spend some time with the team in Watson Lake. There were a couple of meetings and I had the opportunity to chat with the Member for Watson Lake. There are a number of ideas that were passed on that I have tasked our team to look into for a location. There have been two things that have been in play. One is that the location that the visitor centre is currently in is not optimal, which is what the staff has shared with me. The Town of Watson Lake has kindly provided us with that space, but there were some other ideas that were passed on with some existing infrastructure.

As well, the work that has been done on a longer term plan has been done in concert with the Liard First Nation. That has really been about trying to do two things. It is a similar model that I would compare to Haines Junction with Da Ku, where

you had the Government of Yukon come to the table as an anchor tenant with the First Nation. My understanding is that those conversations are still underway. I think that we can maybe look at some other interim measures. I can't speak to right away.

Again, when you are in a partnership such as that, you have two different groups and there is a list of priorities. I think that what we will talk about, as well, is that housing is a major priority right now in Watson Lake, and Liard First Nation is working very closely with us on that and we are going to be talking about how we are going to be spending some funds this summer around housing. So, I think that is a good priority, but I agree that the Town of Watson Lake has done an extraordinary job in beautifying their community. The flags and the flowers and the great work that is there are incredible and they should be commended as a gateway city for us, but I do agree that we need longer term infrastructure there and appropriate infrastructure there, as it is the first place that so many tourists see when they come to the Yukon.

Ms. Van Bibber: I hope that the discussions with Liard are soon, because really, it is not conducive for our welcoming border town to have an office or a space in a rec centre.

How long does the government intend to use the space to house the VIC? Do you know if there are talks with Liard soon or is there anything in the offing that the minister can share?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I might have misrepresented; those talks are ongoing — the discussions about working in a partnership agreement for infrastructure started under the previous Minister of Tourism and Culture and we have just continued on with those discussions. At this time, again, the space that is there is not optimal, but the team at the Watson Lake visitor information centre has done an incredible job ensuring that the space that is there looks very well done. It presents well, and you know, there are a number of historical photographs and information pieces that are in place. Sometimes there is a bit of a challenge with sound and there is a lot of activity in that community space. So, that, of course, can be a bit of a challenge.

Right now, the Department of Highways and Public Works has extended their lease with the Town of Watson Lake, with the VIC and the recreation centre, until October 31, 2024. I will also just put on the record that the annual cost for the space that we transfer over is \$51,175.

Again, the Yukon government is in preliminary discussions, as I touched on, with Liard First Nation on working together on a potential cultural and community services building. As I said, though, I have requested that our team at Tourism and Culture work with the folks who are on the ground at the visitor information centre, as there are potentially some other options in the community that could be a good fit.

I don't want to misspeak at this time; I want to make sure that the team has time to work with the staff and talk about some of those options, but if those discussions become fruitful, I certainly will be back to the House to discuss potential interim measures in Watson Lake.

Ms. Van Bibber: I'm not sure — I was kind of a little off with the answer. Has the Government of Yukon signed a

new contract with the town or municipality of Watson Lake for this current rental space and the cost of that rental for the summer months, or is it annual?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: No, I don't think it was off. We have a lease in place, and it's just over \$51,000, and it's in place until October 31, 2024.

When it goes back to our other work, we have developed a functional program to identify the needs that we have for space and utility for a new centre, so we are moving along with that work with the Liard First Nation, and we have a lease in place, and we will also look at other options in the interim. I think that most folks know; to build a brand new cultural and visitor centre is a significant undertaking. If you look at the time from the idea coming into place to the buildout in Haines Junction, that was significant, and the opposition would know that work was done during one of their multiple mandates.

We want to make sure we maximize visitor experience, but at this particular time, we have a spot, we have it until October 31, and we will continue to look at moving forward with a partnership with the Liard First Nation.

Ms. Van Bibber: Has the minister considered working with the Town of Watson Lake, as well as the Liard First Nation, to maybe co-fund or to have a building that is conducive to more than just Liard?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our perspective on this side of the House is that, when we work in concert with First Nation governments, especially in this particular case, that it's going to enrich everybody in the community. It's something that was committed to a long time ago. I can harken back to conversations that happened with the previous government on these concepts. At that time, I think there was some other infrastructure that was available in the community at the time and I will say that when you're undertaking something of this significance, you're always going to be consulting with the community — whether it's a municipality or a First Nation government. But at this time, what I'm aware of is that the work that was underway and coming into this was to focus on a partnership on a cultural centre and tourism centre. Certainly, if the members opposite are aware, I can reach out to mayor and council and see if there is interest, I guess, in contributing to a project. But what I've seen in the past — at least in Haines Junction as an example — has been a great partnership and then of course the community has applauded that. There are always good conversations that happen within a municipality. We're always going to work with members in the community on projects such as this.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's good he will keep the conversations open with everyone.

Can the minister provide an update on the status of the new Yukon museum and cultural centres policy?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I had a great opportunity to speak to the team at their annual general meeting this year which was held in Dawson City. It was virtual, but we did have a chance to speak with a number of stakeholders on that work. At this time, we're going to be starting our consultation work on this. There are a number of different organizations that we have to support. We have 19 different First Nation cultural centres and museums

and we support them through different financial agreements. I can say what we've heard is that there's a real need to revisit the supports that we have in place for those organizations. I've reached out to the Yukon museum and heritage association. They were the same group of folks that were here this week, and I have sent off a letter to their president and have identified the fact that we're going into a consultation process in 2022 to understand exactly what the needs are of those stakeholders so that we can make sure that we have the best understanding of what a modernized policy would look like and that folks have the right resources to do the work they want.

That's a commitment we've made to those organizations. It's key work that has to continue, and we're looking forward to hearing that feedback over 2022.

Ms. Van Bibber: There's an increase of \$850,000 to complete the planning stage of a multi-year project for the arts and heritage collection facility. Can the minister give us an update on this multi-year project?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It's a very important project and very long overdue. Speaking to folks just in the last week the other night at the Beringia Centre, this is something that — we have world-class collections, and all folks in the House — and I know the member opposite, from the extensive tourism work and work in this area — know that we have this incredible collection, and it needs the right home.

What I would say is, right now, we're looking at site planning, and we're in the design stage. That's the key work. So, we haven't picked a site yet — I think that's important to say. We're looking at a couple of different locations, and we're working with our team on that. As well, we'll be looking to design.

We have done a bit of needs assessment, because when you undertake these types of projects, you look at an A, B, and C of different models, as an example, and each one is more impressive and more expensive and gives you different pieces of infrastructure and tools. That's the work we're going to do. This is something that we've committed to bringing forward. The previous minister was a great champion of this project, and I made that commitment to her that we would keep on this work.

Speaking to people who have retired now but who spent a career in that department, this is so important to them and important to all Yukoners and really important to this country, when you take into consideration that there are so many items there that are second to none, whether it's palaeontological or archeological finds. It's just incredible work, and I think we all know — whether it's placer mining, the goldfields, or the ice patch — that the things that we find are extraordinary and we have to make sure that we preserve them. With climate change now, they're finding even more items as time goes on.

This is something we are committed to. We have a great team, and we want to make sure that we get them the right home for the future.

Ms. Van Bibber: That sounds exciting. There was an increase of \$360,000 for exhibit renewal at the Beringia Centre, which you just mentioned. Can the minister provide more information on the spending? Is the renewal complete now?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: For the \$350,000 for the Beringia Interpretive Centre exhibit renewal, it's not done yet. It's the first year of a two-year project to renew the great hall — the large, open primary space at the Beringia Interpretive Centre.

The objective is to create a more hands-on exploratory and immersive visitor experience. The space will also be more flexible so that we can continue to serve as a gathering space, which we did the other night.

We also have some work to do — significant work — next year. It's sort of a two-year project. But I would say that we're looking for support from this from the members opposite in our budget because this is just such an important item. We'll be watching for that as we go into budget vote later on this session.

Ms. Van Bibber: There is a \$150,000 allotment for the Yukon signage modernization project for this year and a total budget ending in 2023 of \$350,000. Can the minister tell us: What are the key recommendations to improve signage throughout the territory? Could he also give a priority of where this project starts?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So, again, we have \$150,000, yes, as stated, for the Yukon signage modernization project to address our key recommendation from the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. It's to improve signage.

This would undertake — this work, in totality, would be looking at signage right from, we'll say, coming south to north — right from Watson Lake right through to Beaver Creek. But there is still key work to be done.

Some of the key items to this is ensuring that we work with those communities where the signage is going. Some of that work has been done. My sense coming into this job was that we needed to do more. I wanted to ensure that there was a sense of ownership in each one of those communities and that signage truly reflected, in many cases, the work or the aspects of indigenous culture that were unique to each one of those communities. Sort of the name, or what we have called them, is this concept of “welcome installations”, and it was, again, to welcome tourists in a way that reflects our unique regional identities and community priorities.

At this point, we haven't prioritized which ones would go in first. We want to make sure that we have the right concept and template. Some of the early work that I will say had been done — there was some design work and it was very unique. There was work that was undertaken, and one of the key things that I said to our team was: “Let's make sure that the work for these installations — that we maximize the potential for Yukon companies.” Some of the models they have looked at had a lot of steel fabrication, and the key that I had asked for is to make sure that we are looking and speaking with our local manufacturers so that it is a Yukon welcome installation that is built in the Yukon and we have as much economic impact, even on the buildout, as we possibly can. That work is still underway. We have some of the consultation completed, but we still have more work to be done.

Ms. Van Bibber: Under capital spending, there is \$75,000 allotted to the Conrad historic site. Could the minister provide me with a bit more information on what that would be for?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are very excited. This work is culminating with a celebration — the work around Conrad is culminating with an event this summer. I believe that there is a potential date right now of July 20. It is also important to note that this week, when we honoured Art Johns, that much of his work — not much of his work, that amount of work would be incredible to go through — but he did provide key work, I should say, with the team around this work. It was very nice to hear one of our very well-known specialists in this field, Mr. Greg Hare, reflect on that opportunity he had to sit with Art around Conrad.

This is going to be an ongoing piece. I mean, this is very important work. It was done in concert with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, of course. And just to touch on a bit, for this year, it is a priority again in 2022: implementing the new Conrad historic site management plan, along with our existing plan.

So, the things that will continue — everything from key infrastructure that you need on-site, such as bathrooms, right through to — I have dug through contracts that we have let last year and work and it's even retaining walls and making sure that you have the proper geotechnical work done on-site for some of the different pathways, so that's the type of work.

We could give a breakdown. We could come back with a little bit more information on some of the specific pieces in there, but I think also, from my recollection, we do have some capacity that we support at Conrad. There was that ongoing commitment where we have individuals who are out there doing some key work as well. Those are some of the items. My officials may have a little more information.

Again, that is correct — jointly hiring a Carcross/Tagish First Nation citizen as part of the implementation of the management plan. It's key: making sure that we have folks from there on-site and completing some of the other little pieces of work. We look forward to celebrating it this summer, because it is such a key milestone. We didn't have a chance to do it, of course, over the last number of years.

Ms. Van Bibber: It was recently announced that CanNor is investing \$300,000 to support marketing initiatives directed toward francophone audiences in Québec. Can the minister confirm if Tourism and Culture has a role in assisting with this or putting any money toward this initiative?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, we were sharing this information this week. We are very excited about this. CanNor is investing \$300,000 in this two-year project, with a further \$37,000 investment from the Government of Yukon. We are involved in this. Again, CanNor funding will support a six-week marketing campaign that leverages materials from Tourism Yukon's new French language marketing campaign for the francophone market in Québec. It will also promote the Yukon as both a winter and summer travel destination. There is help from our partners here at L'AFY in developing relationships with francophone tourism sector media, as well as participation in the tourism summit that is held in Montréal, Québec in the upcoming year. We think that this is a good place to be spending our marketing money.

Again, it is \$37,000 from us and \$300,000 from CanNor for that undertaking. It is exciting. If anyone has seen it on social media, there has been lots of praise and people are quite excited, not just with the French diaspora here, but with many folks across the country.

Ms. Van Bibber: In the budget, it states that there's going to be a visitor survey done and the dollar amount is \$175,000. When will this survey begin and where will the surveys be taking place? Will it be at airports and border crossings only?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The survey will take place from October of 2022 until September of 2023. I believe it's going to be at both land crossings and at airports, but I want to make sure that I — if there's any other additional ways that it will be shared, I will make sure. Yes, the survey is at the airport year-round and at highways, but it will only be the summer of 2023 that we'll be delivering those at highways.

Ms. Van Bibber: So, it's an annual — it starts this October and it ends next September, but it's only through the summer months; is that what I heard? Or is it this October that we're starting to track visitors coming in?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm sorry. I wasn't clear on that one. It's from the fall of this year, October, until September of 2023. Airports only in the winter — what I was touching on is that the highway surveys will only be provided in the summer of 2023. So, if you take that into consideration, it's basically a one-year program, but it would be next year that we would be doing the highway traffic with surveys.

Ms. Van Bibber: The dollars allotted for creative and cultural industries strategy implementation is \$155,000. Is this strategy implementation on track and on time? What is the outcome you're looking for?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just want to make a quick correction with the last question. The airport surveys are provided year-round. The highway surveys are only in the summer. I just wanted to make sure folks know that.

The goal of the cultural strategy is really — I can boil it down to one thing — about increasing the gross domestic product in that sector. What has happened is you take into consideration this country — across the country — and what you'll find out is we're not at the same GDP output when it comes to the cultural strategy. I'll give you a quick example on this one.

In 2018, our culture GDP was just under \$60 million, but it represented two percent of the total territorial economy. But Canada at the same time as a country — our average was much larger. It was \$56 billion, but it represented 2.7 percent. We think that there's some room to grow. Why do we think that? We think that because there are a couple of things at play. We have the highest per capita number of artisans in this sector in the country. We want to make sure that this strategy is a catalyst for those individuals to be able to produce more. We need to be able to export those goods in the different forms that they come. Of course, there is lots of work that we're doing here.

I think the member opposite touched on and said there was about \$150,000. Actually, I think approximately \$500,000 in total has been allocated to new initiatives starting in the fiscal

year 2022-23. This funding will help support the sector's recovery from the pandemic, which in turn contributes to the recovery and well-being of the territory.

There are 22 key actions. I think our comfort level is that we're on pace with this. I did have a document last week that came to me on one of them. We just wanted to make sure that we went back at a grassroots level to folks to make sure we're getting it right. We have three key items that we'll be moving out the door in the short term. We think that those are going to be key.

Of course, this was built by the sector — the strategy. I can remember that first day that we all came together and the previous minister was very committed to this.

We think it's a great way to diversify our economy. We feel we have the right tools in place, but I think that's because it was probably the most comprehensive conversation with this sector that ever happened and then that led into a blueprint that would help them meet the goals that they want to meet.

So, there is a number of things that we'll be monitoring this year to ensure that we continue to increase GDP output in this sector.

Ms. Van Bibber: Under the heading "Heritage Sites Projects", it looks like it's a new allocation but only a small budget of \$15,000. Can the minister provide a breakdown of this amount and what it would do under "Heritage Sites Projects"?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'll just touch on a few different items that we're working on within our historic sites. We work, of course, closely with a number of different groups, whether it's First Nation governments or municipalities and different communities on this. A number of our historic sites are co-managed by the Yukon and First Nations. We talked about Lansing Post this week, because the two individuals who have made that their home for decades were honoured in their contribution and working closely with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation.

The funds, for the most part, in this line item are to implement various management plans and to improve our interpretive signage. That's where we've continued to spend most of our funds out of that \$15,000.

There are some other projects. We are going to continue to be working on the Robinson Roadhouse. We're going to be doing a bit of stabilization work. The train crew house 2 — most of those renovations were complete. We're looking to provide an opportunity in 2022 for public use.

We also have our historic properties program — nine different projects in Dawson, Carcross, Whitehorse — that last year were funded for a total of \$64,000.

There are a number of pieces that we continue to work on. It does get a bit overwhelming for us when you think about — climate change has such a tough impact on some of these places, when you think about the amazing infrastructure that is at places like Herschel Island — but, again, looking at some of the challenges that come with erosion and with differences in our climate.

That \$15,000 that we talked about goes toward heritage sites identified under final agreements and undergoing

management planning. So, last year, the \$15,000 went to Conrad, and this year it is going to Dawshe.

I hope that helps a bit, but, again, so much to do and so important to maintain this history. I would say that I want to commend the folks there, because the work that has been done — Lansing Point — and then, again, I had that opportunity to be at Fort Selkirk last year, so I think that there has been — we continue to move and use our resources well and to stretch them as far as we can and also understanding from a capacity standpoint that, in many cases, it is very technical work when you are trying to repair period infrastructure. It is beyond the fact that you need, in some of these cases, red seal carpenters; you also need red seal carpenters who have a great understanding on how to do this specific type of work.

Ms. Van Bibber: Yes, I do appreciate the work that I have seen at Fort Selkirk and at various other projects. It is amazing what they can accomplish — and also seeing my hometown, Dawson, transformed since I was a kid to what we have for our visitors today.

So, on that note, I will again thank all of the Department of Tourism and Culture for the work that they do in marketing, and I hope that we have a more than semi-normal tourism season coming up, because we do need those small businesses to prosper again with the influx of tourists.

So, thank you, minister, and thank you, Deputy Chair.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just want to thank the member opposite. Thank you for the collaboration. I think that we can all be proud that the three of us have been working together on making sure that the border is open. I know that the member opposite has a long, professional history working in the sector, and so I appreciate the questions at all times and the professional approach that we have and share in the Legislative Assembly.

Deputy Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 204, *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

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

Ms. White: I apologize to the Assembly. The bells seem to go faster than I remember them previously.

I would like to start off by asking: Does the Department of Tourism and Culture supply any funding for advertising to Holland America?

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent is required for members to return to general debate on Vote 54.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted. We will return to general debate.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will come back to the member opposite. This was a question that was asked earlier this week. The practice for our department has been to make sure that we get back. We did a ministerial statement this week and this was one of the questions, so I will make sure that we get back to clarify that. I don't want to misspeak and I am not sure, so I will come back to the House as soon as I can.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that from the minister. The reason why I am asking is that, like many others in this Chamber, I spend a fair amount of time in Carcross in the summertime. One thing that I have heard from lots of folks at the Carcross Commons is their concern about how short the visit is from folks who get off the train. The reason why I was asking about funding with Holland America is that, in previous years, there was actually advertising within the brochures or on the train itself that said to explore Carcross. I wanted to know if there had been conversations about extending that stay, because that had been brought forward to me by folks in Carcross.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, our officials have — we do joint marketing together. We put \$75,000 toward that endeavour. I think it's important to touch on quickly — when you think about passengers coming into Carcross, you have a number of different groups. Of course, you have individuals coming in on the train through White Pass. That joint marketing is focused on land tours. I got to know some of this work quite well over the last couple of months, just because of working on the border working group. So, you have both White Pass and Holland America, but you also have Alaska Coach Tours, which are also bringing people into the Yukon and into Carcross.

Of course, there are some folks in the Carcross area who have a lot of visitors. That's what I alluded to earlier this week when we had that discussion. Millions of dollars are spent in the area. Again, it's always an ongoing conversation to try to maximize the potential spend. I think as folks in the Assembly know, based on the discussions we had this week, for any of the members opposite who had endeavoured to understand that border issue, what is at play is it's down to minutes when they come in.

I agree with the member opposite in the sense that we always want to maximize the potential spend, but also as a private sector entity, they're putting together the opportunity to maximize the opportunity for their clients and for themselves. But there are always — when I'm back in Carcross having discussions — and the member opposite can direct me to certain organizations that may want me to have discussions with them to understand what that looks like.

We did have a meeting to meet with the local area committee not too long ago, which I touched on this week. We'll continue to be working with Carcross/Tagish First Nation, as well as business owners in that area. This week, I had a chance to meet with — to chat with the individuals who own the Caribou Hotel just to get an understanding of what they're going to be offering this year. I had made a commitment

to go down and spend some time there with some of those entrepreneurs to understand ways that we can continue to support and help them.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

I was specifically asking about the train, though. The reason I was specifically asking about the train is that it is a very short turnaround. The reason I was asking about it specifically is it has been highlighted by merchants, for example, from the Carcross Commons and folks who were even directly across from the train that often it is so quick that people are heading toward the washroom block. If they're lucky, they get a photo, and then they're back on that train.

So, if we are paying \$75,000 toward a joint advertising portion — just whether or not that discussion had been around about extending that. Following up on that, it has been highlighted in the past concerns around the burden of — I think probably “burden” is a fair term — maintenance of that washroom block by Carcross. Have there been discussions on how Yukon government will better support the community in all the work that they have to do? It is septic services. It's not attached to something. It is a lot of effort. So, if the minister can expand on that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I want to clarify. So, the \$75,000 that we spend with Holland America is focused on land tours. The train is White Pass — so, different companies. White Pass is actually — I think there is an appropriate conversation to have with White Pass, but White Pass is also almost — I think we're concluding in April; we're concluding an acquisition. So, there will be a new ownership group as well with White Pass, just to speak to that.

So, again, two separate companies. Our \$75,000 is going to land tours, and then the train is White Pass and a company, I think, based out of New York is about to acquire the ownership of White Pass, and that includes infrastructure in Skagway as well as the train — so, again, passing hands.

I'm just going to sit down. If you could clarify — I think there was another question that you were politely maybe asking about other infrastructure too.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that. The last information that I could access was 2018, and it was Holland America was working with another company in Alaska for ownership. My point was that, to the best of my understanding and information I could find, is that White Pass & Yukon Route was actually a subsidiary of Holland America. If that's changing, that's great. It's good to know. But it's mostly if we're advertising — and advertising, for example, with White Pass & Yukon Route — what are we getting? We can have signs that say “Visit scenic Carcross”, but if a person only has 15 minutes to make it to the bathroom and take a photo, they're not seeing a lot.

So, that was my second question — about the bathrooms. So, in Carcross, there is a great bathroom block that was built, but one of the concerns that I have heard for multiple years is that the maintenance of that facility is arduous, and I wanted to know what the minister's conversations have been with the community and what support exists for the community in dealing with that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So, again, I think that it is fair to say that if you meet with a local advisory council, it is going to be a continuing concern, and that was really about the fact that what was transpiring is that we were getting groups that were coming into the Yukon. They would pass — and things were happening, actually, in another province versus Carcross, but we had concerns and complaints where private sector buses were pulling into a British Columbia area and folks were getting out and using the washroom, and they were not using the washroom infrastructure that was there that BC would have had in place as outhouses.

What we have done is we now have a working group of assistant deputy ministers across government, because you are absolutely correct that there are multiple entities that play a role in this conversation, and it is something that we have heard in our work around our strategy and others, that we have to make sure that infrastructure is upgraded. To be open with you, I was having a discussion with the deputy minister this morning about this.

So, again, it is a key item and the First Nation has been concerned about it. The Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes shared with me, as well, that the infrastructure that is there — we have also looked to open that earlier, but it needs better insulation and work, and I will look into that. We don't want the pipes to freeze earlier in the season, but it is important to have that in place. So, again, this is work that is ongoing. We know that it is key. There are lots of concerns.

I think that if anybody would know in this Assembly, the member opposite would — about Montana Mountain — different views in the world on that — where infrastructure can go. It seems like a very simple thing, but it is quite complex, and it is always difficult when you don't have a municipality there, but you are working with multiple departments. It is something that I have asked our team to make progress on. And certainly, as we do, I can come back and share, and I think that the member opposite is very dialled-in to what happens in Carcross and probably will know as quickly as I know or will be monitoring conversations in that community.

Ms. White: I do thank the minister for that. Actually, initially, it was the twice previous Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes Kevin Barr who championed getting that facility open for the time the first buses arrived, because that had not been the habit before that. It was work that Kevin did to make sure that, when folks got to Carcross, they had a place to go. That was important.

In 2014, for the first time, there was a tourism-related project for a resource access road program. That was an upgrade to the Montana Mountain road itself. I am not sure if the Jeep company will be running this year, but there is a Jeep company out of Skagway that does tours on Montana Mountain. Mountain biking is something that obviously happens there and, of course, there is a relationship, like the minister said, where there are lots of different perspectives.

Has there been a conversation with the First Nation about possible road upgrades for Montana Mountain for tourism access?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Not that I am aware of. I can endeavour to speak with our officials. It is not something that has come up to date. I have had other members of the Assembly reach out to me with concerns about the state of potential tourism use roads. I just replied to the Member for Kluane about potentially — hopefully, he is getting the letter soon that has been signed off about an opportunity to look at these different types of programs.

Again, no, I have to say that in my dialogue with the lands folks in Carcross, there has not been a discussion about upgrades to that road.

Ms. White: I would urge the minister to possibly have those conversations.

Yukon is in an interesting position, because in the last decade, we have seen a huge uptake in actually active tourism adventures, I would say, when looking at mountain biking. The City of Whitehorse has more than 300 kilometres of single track within its city limits — probably extensively more than that. It used to be 300, but it's probably more than that. Trails are built in partnership with First Nations. They are built in partnership with the City of Whitehorse and others. We have seen beautiful work done by the Carcross/Tagish First Nation on Montana Mountain in Carcross, but then we could also go to another part of the territory, such as toward Dawson City and the work that is being done by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth.

Has the department looked into doing any kind of advertising for Yukon as a mountain bike destination?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think those comments are well said. We're in the unique situation in that the deputy minister sitting here with me today, of course, was a key individual in that work to see Montana Mountain with Jane Koepke and Derek Crowe and drove that. I remember those early days in his tiny office in the Dana Naye Ventures building and looking at the plans that were there and the young individuals that were being mentored to do that work.

We see the value of course in that. We have been supportive of what has happened with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. I have had further discussions with Selkirk First Nation. I agree; I think that building infrastructure, having the infrastructure in place in our communities is a great anchor for a different type of tourism product. The conversations with Selkirk First Nation were very encouraging. There is good opportunity there to do similar projects. I look at things as the — you look at the campground that has been under-utilized on the Pelly River right across from what we would call the "Tatchun Centre." We think that there's a real opportunity to be working. That's why I have been mandated to do this trail development work and we're very focused on it.

We work with our partners to highlight this. I think part of our thoughts are also though that we want to get more infrastructure in place. But I do agree. I think that the Yukon — the demographic that we're looking at is the right type of visitor to meet the strategy that we roll out. We think that those individuals like to spend. We think that they understand that sustainable tourism is important.

My officials also wanted me to share that the TCMF does support mountain bike tour operators like Boréale, so we are

spending information there. We again feature mountain biking on our webpage and social media. Seeing the webpage really doesn't give credit to the level of digital infrastructure that's there — very, very significant investment into our online presence.

We agree with the member opposite. We think there needs to be more. It's just such a great holistic approach to having our youth get out there and undertake these activities and get the pride in building this infrastructure and having it as an anchor for tourism throughout the Yukon.

We're going out and we're having those discussions. The communities that are interested — the ones that are showing us their interest — are who we are going to work with first. I think, as we've seen, more communities continue to get excited after they see the success of what has happened in Carcross and in Dawson City with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth.

Ms. White: So, just building on that, I spent time in Keno and have said, "You have all these old mining roads. If you wanted to expand your tourism reach, look at building a mountain bike trail." Of course, it goes for others. I have been really lucky to be able to do coaching courses in almost every community in the territory to go and ride bikes with kids and just to give people that sense of ownership. But, to be honest, mountain bikers are a strange bunch. They will go. You build a trail in Ross River and they will go just for fun because then they can say that they were there.

There is also, I think, a real opportunity to look at expanding winter tourism when it comes to biking. As it stands, the mountain bike community has started to groom single-track trails in the winter. In 2009, I was probably one of 11 or so people with a fat bike and now there are hundreds. There is almost no shoulder season for mountain biking in the territory anymore. I think there is real potential there for investment and promotion and I look forward to that.

I'm going to just really veer. I want to go toward archives. In some of the information that we were given during the budget briefing, it says that the Yukon Archives elevator is not functioning still, and it says from September 2018 to present. Can the minister maybe share with us what the problem is at Yukon Archives with the elevator and why it hasn't been able to be repaired in four years?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Our elevator is now fixed.

Ms. White: That's fantastic news. Is there a reason why it took so long to be repaired? Again, in the budget document that we were handed, when the budget was tabled, it said 2018 to present. Is there a reason why it took just about four years to be repaired?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'll endeavour to find out. My experience in working in the private sector overseeing buildings has been two or three different issues when it comes to elevators in the Yukon.

One is having the proper technical expertise depending on the type that you've used. Sometimes, they have subcontractors that work within the territory that are readily available to fix. Sometimes, depending on which company you bought your elevator from, you have to fly individuals in. That's one piece.

Secondly, sometimes — even pre-COVID — there are supply chain issues on particular pieces. I know that some of the buildings that we know that are used by private companies here — we had, in my previous work, lots of challenges. That has been the case in the past, but I will endeavour to find out exactly — it's usually technical expertise from time to time or a particular issue or item. I know that time frame is just not appropriate — I agree — but let me get back about whether there is anything I have missed there. There has to be something for that length of time that I can share with you, but I will find out. Maybe we can bring it back when we have the Department of Highways and Public Works back here later on this spring.

Ms. White: Although I appreciate the answer, between September 2018 and, let's say, March 2020, that was before the pandemic shut everything down. We could even say February 2020. That is a long time to have an elevator — again, it is a Yukon government building and it is listed as an item in the Tourism and Culture budget. I can bring it up in Highways and Public Works, but it is listed here.

Something that has been an interesting conversation in the last number of years is — this is one of those things where it is going to be the responsibility of multiple departments, but because we're told that this government doesn't have a silo approach and that everyone works together, I am going to raise it here because I think that it is a Tourism and Culture issue, and that is the lack of outhouse resources. For example, on the Takhini River, everyone knows the route where you put into the Takhini River. You go through the jaws of death or, as some of my friends like to say, the gums of despair. There isn't an outhouse on either the put-in or take-out side, which means that the woods around that area are less than pleasant.

What kind of work does the Department of Tourism and Culture do with Highways and Public Works as far as identifying areas that need outhouses?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I alluded to it earlier, but we have a working group that is departmental on this topic. It is at the ADM level and has multiple departments that have to be brought in. The member opposite is absolutely correct that it is everything from Tourism to Highways and Public Works to Community Services at that table.

There is a number of things. Sometimes we have high visitation areas that we have to focus on. That might be where we already have infrastructure that is owned or managed by the territory where we have to look at these particular items and we have to prioritize.

I can tell you that in the last two years, one of the positive things that did occur during COVID was that we had Yukoners getting out there more than ever in their own backyard, and that led to, as well, private sector entities that do particular types of guiding. They go out and they do canoe trips or they do canoe lessons. They were reaching out to us, saying: "We are putting in here on this particular river and you need to have infrastructure in place here." That is a challenge for us. We worked very quickly across departments, and in some cases, we put in temporary porta potties so that we could deal with the situation. But, as folks know, I don't think that it is unfair to say that it takes a little bit of time and sometimes multiple fiscal

years to be able to identify, permit, budget, execute on some of this type of infrastructure. There are a number of different things that we look at.

I would say to the member opposite that I try to be as prepared as possible. Come today, I may not have specifics on some of these sites, but we will make a note of the Takhini site and I can have that opportunity to find out what's happening there with either enhanced or new infrastructure or if it is on our priority list at this particular time. Again, it is that discussion back and forth with the private sector. It's amazing that you have this beautiful backyard that we all have and they are providing a service and there is commerce being done and sometimes we are not aware of that until they flag a need for us.

Ms. White: It is always so mortifying in here when we forget to hit "mute".

Another question that I want to go toward is to the Whitehorse trolley, actually. Can the minister just confirm who owns the roundhouse station and the Whitehorse trolley?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: This is an odd one because people would think it is Tourism. Highways and Public Works controls the roundhouse in the sense that they look after the piece infrastructure. I think that it is on a multiple-year lease at this particular time — I think that it is three years — and it is leased to MacBride Museum. That is what I am aware of at this time, but it is probably a good question for Highways and Public Works, and we can flag that so that information is available when they are in for general debate.

Ms. White: I do. I would appreciate that flagged. It was under this government in, I believe, 2019 where the funding stopped for that. Of course, there was a recent arson — well, recent, I guess, is relative — on that railcar, which is a real disappointment. I'm just wondering who was responsible for that piece of infrastructure. Then just highlighting that it's a loss. It was a loss when the trolley service shut down, but having that engine itself be set on fire was a loss.

So, with that, I'm sure I could ask a lot more questions about a lot of more varied things, but right now, I guess what I'll do is urge the Minister of Tourism and Culture to work with his counterparts, identify high-usage areas even for locals where outhouses would be an asset in all ways, and look at installing those, please.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Again, we'll flag some of these items that fall under Highways and Public Works, but I will share with the member opposite that Highways and Public Works is nearing completion of their rest area assessment for outhouses. I think there will be key information on prioritization of that infrastructure coming in the near future.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture?

Seeing none, we'll proceed to line-by-line debate.

Mr. Dixon: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Copperbelt North has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$32,510,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$3,660,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$36,170,000 agreed to

Department of Tourism and Culture agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 204: First Appropriation Act 2022-23 — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Department of Community Services — continued

Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Deputy Chair, and thanks to the minister for the opportunity to address the Community Services budget.

I would like to start today on the topic of the Canada Games and the bid for the 2027 games. Can the minister provide, to begin with, a brief overview of where we are in the bid process — what we have at this stage? Based on public information, the territory has submitted a bid document to the committee and it's currently being reviewed.

Can the minister update us on that process, where it's at, and what has been submitted so far?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. I can say that Piers McDonald is the

chair of the 2027 Canada Winter Games Bid Committee. In addition to that position, the bid committee includes representatives from the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government, as well as a number of key leaders who represent the Yukon and who can provide a strong vision, strategic management, and diverse perspectives. We have started the bid process. We have submitted our technical information. That is now in progress and the full bid will be due in October. In November 2022, we will find out who the bid winner is.

So, basically, we have submitted our technical bid. There was a group who came up this week to have a look at our city. From what I have heard, they were really impressed with our facilities and our ability to host. It's looking good, but we have some more hurdles to go through over the coming months as we refine our bid for the final bid submission.

Mr. Dixon: The document that has been submitted so far is the technical information package — the plan for the territory to have the infrastructure in place to host the games. That is what the committee will be reviewing. Is the minister able to share the technical package that was submitted to the committee?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a 270-page report and it has a few key elements. There is a summary of the proposed approach to the games, a list of challenges, a venues map, and a venue standards and descriptions. Those are basically what it is. It is a summary, a list of challenges, a venues map, and a venue standards and descriptions contained in the 270-page document. This is the bid committee's report. It has been submitted to the Canada Games. I am not sure about the ability to release that publicly. I will endeavour to find out whether I can for the member opposite.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's commitment to look into whether or not that can be released. I would assume, given that it is a public document and that it has been submitted by the Yukon government, at least as a partner in this, that it would be ATIPP-able, but I think that it would be a lot easier for all of us if the minister was simply able to share the document so that we could see it.

The reason why, of course, many are interested is because it will include the early plans for what infrastructure is needed in the Yukon to host the games. There is a range of infrastructure that is required for games of this nature. While there is a range, there are a few big-ticket items that stand out as being needed. We know, for instance, from recent interviews that the committee is looking for a new hockey arena in Whitehorse and that it will, I believe, require seating of about 3,500 spectators. That is a not insignificant capital expenditure for the games. So, obviously that is eye-catching. There is obviously the athletes' village as well. Those are the kinds of things that the Yukon government will be needing to think about from a budgetary perspective in the next year or two.

What I would like is if the minister can provide some sense of what the big-ticket items in that package include and how they would be funded.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There are actually a few issues — the member is absolutely correct — and I thank him for his questions this afternoon.

So, we are looking right now — it is actually the City of Whitehorse — well, in order to host the games, we need four ice sheets. In 2007, we had four ice sheets in the City of Whitehorse. Since then, one of our ice sheets has been demolished and so we are now down to three. In order to host the games, we need four. The City of Whitehorse has also identified a fourth ice sheet as an important project for it, in terms of future growth of the city. So, yes, a fourth ice sheet is needed in the City of Whitehorse. The 3,500 seating capacity is what the bid committee has hit on as the need for this facility. That will also allow it to host the opening and closing ceremonies. Otherwise, we will have to find some place to host the opening and closing ceremonies. In the past, I think that has been done in a tent. So, we're looking to perhaps avoid that by having a proper arena with the capacity that would be able to host that facility.

The member opposite is absolutely correct. There is an athletes' village required. We're looking at that. Those are the two biggest ticket items. There is also a host-choice sports. We have an opportunity to choose two host-choice sports from a list in addition to the mandatory sports. We're looking at that. That's another part of this component.

The last piece is the long-track speed skating. We're asking the Canada Games Society to actually consider letting us use Fort St. John. Fort St. John has an absolutely world-class long-track speed skating facility. It's one of very few in North America. Long-track speed skaters have been habitually disappointed in Whitehorse. When we did it, it was so cold and then we had other times when the ice didn't set properly. So, we want to make sure that long-track speed skating, which is of course an integral sport within the games, be allowed to be hosted down in Fort St. John at this amazing facility. We'll see what they have to say about that. That will save us quite a bit of money on the bid as well. We won't have to actually build some sort of long-track speed skating oval somewhere in the city. There's a savings to us and also an efficiency with this absolutely spectacular facility in Fort St. John.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's overview there — very useful.

Earlier this week or last week, the minister was quoted in the *Whitehorse Star* suggesting that the overall budget for the games would be \$100 million or more. Can the minister provide some explanation for where that number comes from and how that estimate has been determined?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I was pressed several times for an estimated cost for the games. I said it may cost as much as \$100 million. That is a figure that has been bandied about, but at this stage, it's so early, we really don't know. If you look at 2007, we had the Canada Games facility. It was \$45 million. We built an athletes' village back then. It was about \$35 million. You're up to \$80 million in 2007. It seemed like, with inflation, \$100 million was in the pocket. But quite frankly, it's a "may". We have no idea really what are the cost of the games. It may be \$50 million; it may be \$150 million; I'm not sure. \$100 million seemed like a reasonable estimate to answer a reporter's question, but as I said, I did put a caveat in there that this is purely an estimate and we will see what

happens when we actually get into the more detailed planning of these games to actually see what the cost of these facilities and the cost of actually running the games are.

As far as raising money, we are currently looking to raise money with corporate sponsors across the country. We have done this before fairly successfully. We'll be turning to our local business community, we'll be turning to the federal government, and we will be looking at other sources of funding as they become available.

Mr. Dixon: So, I'll start then with the new ice rink. Does the technical package contemplate a new stand-alone arena? Or is it an addition of a second sheet to Takhini Arena?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: They're looking at several options. I haven't actually seen the full options paper. I think there is more work being done to refine these.

What we have said in this technical package is that we need a fourth ice sheet. The City of Whitehorse, YG officials, and the bid committee are looking at scoping out what exactly that will look like. We don't know yet.

Mr. Dixon: With regard to the athletes' village, as far as the minister is concerned, what sort of discussions have been had around what the athletes' village would look like? Would they be hosted in a hotel? Would it be a new free-standing building? Would it be a temporary facility?

Previously, there was the construction of — in terms of residences, there was a construction of units at what was then Yukon College, now Yukon University. What sort of facilities are needed for the athletes' village and dormitory?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Well, similar to 2007, we need a village that will host up to 2,000 people. We need access to a proper kitchen and some recreational facilities so that the children, when they come up, will have an opportunity to actually enjoy some downtime together.

The bid committee has ranked Yukon University as the most favourable site for the athletes' village and is working with the university board on the details and requirements. But there have been other sites that have been identified. We're working through with our primary site. It was used before and may be suitable to use again.

Again, this is in the bid committee's hands. I will take the final recommendations as they come to me. I haven't seen them yet.

Mr. Dixon: How will the choice sports be determined — the two additional sports that are chosen that are unique to a games? How will those be chosen and does the minister have any indication about what those sports will be at this point?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The host society has the opportunity to choose two choice sports from a list in addition to the mandatory sports that have been long-established. Based on local interest and sport governing bodies, as well as facilities, the bid committee has chosen freestyle skiing and sport climbing. Discussions are ongoing about how to integrate some Arctic sports and Dene games into the mix.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that answer. With regard to the long-track speed skating and the intent to include that sport hosted in Fort St. John, would athletes then be required to come

to the Yukon for opening and closing ceremonies or would they be hosted remotely?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is very important that our athletes be part of the actual games experience, so we will incorporate them into the games experience here in Whitehorse. We will then take them down to the Fort St. John facility. They will do their competitions there and then come back to be reintegrated into the community that is the Canada Games.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the answer from the minister. Just to close the loop then on the timing, the Canada Games society has received their technical information. They have visited the territory and presumably toured some of the infrastructure. What does the timeline from here until October look like? I will start with that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Sorry, could I ask the member to please repeat the question? I missed some details as I was getting this note.

Mr. Dixon: My question is about the timeline now. We are at the stage where the technical information package has been submitted. The Canada Games society — well, there's a question for the minister: Who came to Whitehorse this week or last week to tour the territory and our infrastructure? What steps need to occur between now and October in the process?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Canada Games Council was up here this week reviewing our town and the facilities that are existing in Whitehorse. The final bid details and all the details on the facilities and the sports are due in September. Then it will be evaluated and reviewed. The final decision to make an award or not will be made by November. That is the current timeline.

Mr. Dixon: Just to reiterate, to make sure that I heard that correctly: The final bid is due in September and a decision to award it will be made in November. The minister is indicating that this is correct.

Is the minister aware of any other community or province that is also bidding?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As far as I know, it is ours to lose.

Mr. Dixon: Thanks to the minister for that.

What would happen if, in September, the council determined that our bid was insufficient?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Right now, that is really the process that we are going through right now, so it is to get the technical bid together. They are going to review it and provide us full feedback and see if there are any gaps that need to be filled in and things that need to be addressed. Provided that passes muster, we will have a good sense about what is needed or not; maybe we're already golden with the commitment to build a fourth ice sheet.

That's what we're waiting for. If we didn't meet muster, then the Canada Games would have to try to find another host city willing to take on the games.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's answer.

What is the financial expectation for the City of Whitehorse between now and 2027? Will they be required to invest in the physical infrastructure? Will they be expected to put up the cost of operations for the games? What is the overall

picture in terms of what the City of Whitehorse can anticipate being asked to provide financially?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Canada Games has a cost-sharing model that they worked out over the years. The estimated cost to host the games — that would be like the cost of putting it on, the marketing, and all the rest of it — is about \$35 million — round figure. The City of Whitehorse would be expected to chip in about \$3 million in in-kind donations toward the capital. That would be bleachers, beds, that type of thing — so the material needed to run the games.

Then of course there's the capital cost outside of that and that will be for the fourth ice sheet, et cetera. There would be some expectation that they might contribute to that. We haven't finished the negotiations on that part yet.

Mr. Dixon: So, presumably, the City of Whitehorse will be left owning the physical assets that are constructed, for instance, the fourth ice sheet. First of all, is that correct? Is the government anticipating that the City of Whitehorse will end up owning the fourth ice sheet? Will it not belong to the Yukon government?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, absolutely. The City of Whitehorse has expressed not only an interest in this facility, but they would be responsible for running and paying for the cost of running it, much as they do the Canada Games Centre right now.

Seeing the time, Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: 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. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following documents were filed March 31, 2022:

35-1-61

Motion No. 320, letter re (dated March 31, 2022) from Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education, to Brad Cathers, Member for Lake Laberge (McLean)

35-1-62

Investigations at Jack Hulland Elementary School, letter re (dated March 31, 2022) from Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education, to Annette King, Child and Youth Advocate (McLean)