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Tuesday, April 5, 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
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

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

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Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
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Speaker: I will now call the House to order.
 We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 376, notice of which was given yesterday by the Leader of the Third Party, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as it is out of order.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would ask my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to help welcome a number of folks who are here from Autism Yukon and some others. We have with us today Karen Macklon, who is the president of Autism Yukon; we have Courtney Macleod, the acting director; we have Kristine Carruthers, who is a board member of Autism Yukon; we have May Blysak, who is here as a grandma; and Heather Hierlihy. Thank you so much for all being here.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today to recognize Autism Awareness Month, which is observed around the world every April. World Autism Awareness Day was officially designated by the United Nations 15 years ago in 2007. This day encourages us all to raise awareness of autism in all levels of society. What began as a single day has grown into an entire month of awareness committed to creating a more inclusive world for autistic people.

Autism Canada and other organizations have started to refer to April as "autism acceptance month". We need to move past the idea of just being aware of autism, which affects one out of every 66 people. The time has come for our society to fully accept autism by truly embracing our autistic community members and moving toward a society that is equal, open, and inclusive. We need to strengthen our efforts to make autistic people feel welcome in the world, in our schools, in our work places, and wherever barriers currently exist.

This change reminds us that language is critically important. Words matter. There is a shift toward saying "autistic people" and not "people with autism" or "people living with autism". This shift is known as "identity first" language. It acknowledges that autism is not a burden to be

lived with; it is an integral part of a person's identity, their personality, and their true selves. This shift in language identifies distinct communities of people who want simply to be accepted for who they are.

Today is a wonderful opportunity to recognize Autism Yukon as they mark their 15th year. Since 2007, Autism Yukon has been working to improve the lives of autistic people and to provide supports and resources to them and their families.

On April 4 and 5, the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance is hosting the Canadian Autism Leadership Summit.

This event is a yearly gathering for autistic self-advocates, service providers, and policy-makers. This year's summit will have satellite sites in eight cities across Canada. These locally run, in-person events are being held in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Québec, and here in the Yukon.

Members of our autistic community will no doubt be excited to have this opportunity to connect with people across the country and to share and to have their voices heard. Congratulations and thanks to the staff and members of Autism Yukon and to all of the other professionals, volunteers, and caregivers who dedicate themselves to enhancing the quality of life for autistic people and their families.

It is important to recognize Autism Awareness Month, but we must remember that every day is a day to be accepting, inclusive, and kind.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize April as national Autism Awareness Month and this past Saturday, April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day.

We rise today in recognition of the millions of people living with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis to raise awareness and hopefully help to address key knowledge gaps in our understanding of the disorder across Canada. Autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, is mainly diagnosed in children at an early age. It is often found in the absence of a range of developmental markers, such as eye contact, speech, and communication, and a range of unexpected sensory reactions.

According to a 2018 report on the national autism spectrum disorder surveillance system, approximately one in 66 children and youth are diagnosed with ASD in Canada. Each case of ASD is unique and it affects every individual differently. As such, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to either a diagnosis or therapy.

Parents and family members will agree that ASD also has a range of effects on families and caregivers. It is stressful, challenging, and emotional, and it is okay to ask for support from family, friends, and the community.

To all Yukoners, being understanding, accommodating, and compassionate goes a long way for people with ASD and their families. There is also great power in neurodiversity and some incredible attributes and skills that come with having distinct ways of thinking and doing things.

Attention to detail, deep focus, increased observational skills, deep concentration, knowledge retention, creativity, determination, and resilience — these are just some of the

incredible features of the neurodiverse mind that result from different ways of thinking and doing.

We would like to thank Autism Yukon and the staff and professionals at the Child Development Centre for the work they do with children and families. Having resources such as these in our community is critical, and their dedication to Yukoners means so much.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

In recognition of Autism Acceptance Month

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Autism Acceptance Month. I choose those words deliberately. Autism Acceptance Month was created by and for autistic people to change the conversation about autism. Rather than seeing autism as a threat, they wanted to talk about support, inclusion, and celebration of autistic people with their voices at the centre.

So, today, I would like to do that by quoting from a statement by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network about Autism Acceptance Month: “Autism acceptance means respecting the rights and humanity of all autistic people. It means centering the perspectives and needs of autistic people with intellectual disabilities, nonspeaking autistic people, and autistic people with the highest support needs — not by speaking over them, but by listening and looking to them as leaders. It means fighting to ensure that the universal human rights of all autistic people are respected, including and especially the rights of those autistic people with the most significant disabilities. And autism acceptance means recognizing the ways ableism and racism interact in our society, following the leadership of autistic people of color, and making anti-racism a core part of our work.”

This month is a time to celebrate the autistic people in our society and for us all to commit to building a more accepting world.

Applause

In recognition of Celebration of Swans festival

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Happy spring, Mr. Speaker. Joyeux printemps.

As I have said before, spring is one of the top of the four seasons here in the Yukon. As such, it is definitely worth celebrating. For Yukoners, there is one iconic species that helps us to mark spring. I rise today to pay tribute to the return of our largest migratory species making their way to Alaska — the majestic honking RVs; just kidding, Mr. Speaker. It’s swans. Yesterday marked the launch of our beloved Celebration of Swans festival. Each April, beavies of swans, rafts of ducks, and gaggles of geese rest and feed on M’Clintock Bay as a stopover on their long migration to northern nesting grounds. Many will fly several thousand kilometres in wedges. For some, Swan Haven is only halfway on their journey north.

Yukoners and visitors can enjoy this spring wonder at Swan Haven on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün and Carcross/Tagish First Nations. The Swan Haven Interpretive Centre opened nearly 30 years ago, and every year

it helps to educate, animate, and inspire us with the beauty of our natural world springing forward.

The centre hosts approximately 4,000 visitors every year, and those are human visitors. There are way more swans every year. The Swan Haven Interpretive Centre is open daily from April 1 through May 1, and it offers indoor and outdoor exhibits, learning activities for all ages, an on-site guide to answer questions, daily swan counts, and an amazing shoreline trail with spectacular views of the birds and the Yukon spring.

In celebration of spring and getting outdoors in the fresh air and the awesome, incredible amazingness of nature, here is a snippet of one of my favourite songs from the band Mes Aïeux:

Elles arrivent au printemps
Sur les ailes du vent,
Par les routes de l’air

Drôle de géométrie
C’est un fil qui les lie,
Dans leur vol angulaire...

Quelle belle leçon
Que ces oiseaux nous font
Obstinés et fidèles.

Faudra qu’on se console
Et qu’ensemble on s’envole...
Dans les draps bleus du ciel

This translates very roughly to: They come in the spring, on the wings of the wind, by routes in the air, their strange geometry is a thread that binds them in their flight angular. What a great lesson — what these birds show us, stubborn and loyal, we console ourselves that together we fly away in the sky of blue royal.

Happy spring, Mr. Speaker. Joyeux printemps.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize Swan Haven and the Celebration of Swans. Yukoners look forward to April of each year. With April comes the promise of swans, and with the swans comes the promise of beautiful days to come.

Most are familiar with Swan Haven, located on M’Clintock Bay. Swan Haven offers access to the shoreline for those who wish to venture close to the swans or have guided and informative tours by local swan experts. For those less inclined to view the swans up close, there is an incredible lookout, complete with binoculars.

If anyone is interested in the running tally of the birds, of all the species to visit M’Clintock Bay, there is a link to the Celebration of Swans page on the Yukon government website. It’s pretty spectacular, with tallies populated by all the observers. As of yesterday’s update, there were 338 trumpeter swans observed in the bay. That number will steadily climb, already more than doubling in a day.

I encourage Yukoners to check out the activities and events planned this year for the Celebration of Swans. It is guaranteed that there will be an activity for every age and activity level.

I would also like to mention that McClintock Bay Adventures, right next door to Swan Haven, offers additional amenities to visitors, such as parking, shoreline access, and the convenience store for snacks. They will be open through the summer for camping, cabins, canoe and kayak rentals, and more. A lot of work has been put into this wonderful business, and it's definitely worth a visit this spring and summer.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention my Kluane constituents. On May 15, there will be a swan walk in Kluane country. This walk is free for all. Meet at noon at the Kluane Museum of History in Burwash to learn about the swans and join on a guided walk by a Kluane First Nation elder. Be sure to bring your lunch and some rubber boots and go check this out.

Thank you to the Environment staff — especially Swan Haven staff — and the experts for the work that they do to give the swans a warm welcome every year.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to welcome the swans back to the Yukon. A sure sign of spring in the Yukon is the arrival of the swans at the conjunction of the M'Clintock River and Marsh Lake. The open water and access to food at the bottom is an invitation to thousands of trumpeter and tundra swans, along with many other types of waterfowl, to rest on their long journey north. Yukoners enjoy this opportunity to go and welcome spring and swans in this yearly ritual. Regardless of the snow still heaped in our yards and our gardens still buried under many feet of snow, the swans loudly proclaim the arrival of spring. Even throughout the night, you hear them at Swan Haven, gathering together, exchanging greetings, and catching up on their winter away from each other. It is truly a magical experience.

A big thanks to all of the staff and volunteers who make Swan Haven a welcoming place, not just for the swans and waterfowl, but for the Yukoners of all ages who flock there to welcome spring back to the Yukon.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today a media briefing, dated April 5, entitled "Conservative Yukon Party Leader unconditionally supports Carbon Pricing system through his 2021 platform commitment to build a Made-In-Yukon-Party-Headquarters pricing system."

Ms. Tredger: I have for tabling a letter from All Genders Yukon Society, dated March 31, 2022, confirming their endorsement of Bill No. 304.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Mr. Streicker, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I just heard one of the members opposite refer to my colleague tabling documents as "a joke". I think that it is not appropriate for this House.

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

Mr. Cathers: The minister did not cite a point of order and he seems to be making up points of order to call here. It would seem to me that the minister is off-track yet again.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. It is a dispute between members. We will continue.

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 11 — response

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise today to respond to a petition presented to this House on March 23, 2022, which urges the Government of Yukon to have a public forum regarding the rationale behind the pandemic policies of the past two years.

In responding to this petition, it is important to highlight the proactive, open, and transparent approach that our government has taken since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Throughout the pandemic, the Government of Yukon has worked closely with the office of the chief medical officer of health to keep Yukoners informed and has provided essential public health information as the territory's situation evolved.

More specifically, since the beginning of the pandemic, our government has taken a number of steps to directly reach Yukoners, including: 122 COVID-19 livestreams with the office of the chief medical officer of health to provide updates on the status of COVID-19 in the territory and government support programs — and this will soon be 123 as I will be joining the acting chief medical officer of health for another update tomorrow; over 540 COVID-19-related news releases issued to keep Yukoners informed; staff working seven days a week to answer e-mails and phone calls coming in through the COVID-19 information line, with over 49,228 COVID-19-related phone calls being answered to date; over 370 letters responded to by the Cabinet Office on behalf of 13 different departments to address Yukoners' concerns and questions about the pandemic; hundreds of yukon.ca webpages updated regularly to ensure that Yukoners have access to the most up-to-date information online; the launching of the COVID-19 dashboard in February 2022 to share data on vaccination rates, case counts, testing, hospitalizations, with the addition of interactive graphs, maps, and detailed summaries of data over time; and nearly 90,000 first, second, and booster COVID-19 vaccinations given out to the territory.

The government continues to meet with Yukon First Nation leadership as well as community and municipal leaders to discuss and coordinate the territory's ongoing response to the pandemic and its impacts on Yukoners. Furthermore, our government has launched, and continues to support, several

initiatives and programs to support Yukon businesses. This approach by our government to protect the health and well-being of Yukoners, all while supporting our businesses and industries, is in contrast to the approach that the Yukon Party, which tabled this petition, would have taken if they were in government.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Yukon Party has openly attacked the chief medical officer of health and undermined and ignored the professional public health advice provided by the office. They have urged the Yukon to keep our borders open with British Columbia and Alberta for non-essential travel early on, which would have allowed the virus to enter the territory more frequently, and they have undermined the confidence in public health measures, mask use, and other measures that have effectively mitigated the spread of COVID-19 in our territory.

This past fall, the Yukon Party also presented another petition urging our government to immediately rescind all vaccine requirements. These measures were taken to promote the health and the safety of Yukoners, and they have been effective in preventing the most severe impacts of COVID-19.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, this Yukon Liberal government followed the science and prioritized the health of Yukoners, all while protecting the livelihoods of those across the territory. We have taken significant steps to keep Yukoners informed throughout the pandemic, and we are also in the process of reviewing the *Civil Emergency Measures Act* and the *Public Health and Safety Act*, which will modernize and strengthen the Yukon's approach to emergency management so as to ensure that the Yukon can be better prepared to address future emergencies as they come.

We will continue to work in collaboration with our partners so that Yukoners across the territory have the health information that they need to make the best decisions possible for themselves, for their families, and for their communities.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to create a refundable tax credit to subsidize the cost of certain fertility treatments provided by medical practitioners or in fertility treatment clinics and for surrogacy-related medical expenses.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to announce their plans for implementing the advice of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization to prepare for the rapid deployment of a second COVID-19 vaccine booster dose program for adults 70 years and older living in the

community and residents of long-term care and congregate living facilities for seniors.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make available second COVID-19 booster shots for adults aged 70 and older in accordance with the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to congratulate the Staten Island warehouse workers who organized, voted, and formed the first Amazon workers' union in the United States on Friday, April 1, 2022.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Housing initiatives fund

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall, I announced the launch of the fifth intake of the housing initiatives fund. Today I can share with you how this year's successful applicants are increasing the availability of affordable homes across the territory.

The housing initiatives fund provides capital grants to First Nation governments, First Nation development corporations, developers, contractors, community organizations, and individuals to create affordable housing throughout the Yukon. The fifth intake generated 29 applications, including project concepts and shovel-ready projects, and 13 of those projects have been approved.

Eleven shovel-ready projects will create hundreds of new affordable homes in Carmacks, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. These projects include: \$640,000 for eight new homes in Mayo in partnership with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun; \$1 million for 10 new homes in Haines Junction in partnership with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; \$1 million for 15 new homes in Watson Lake in partnership with Liard First Nation; \$1 million to further support the conversion of the High Country Inn to create 55 new affordable homes in Whitehorse; again, \$1 million for 50 new homes in Whitehorse in partnership with HTTVB Real Property; \$1 million for 32 homes in Whitehorse in partnership with the Northern Community Land Trust; \$1 million for 13 new homes in Whitehorse in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation; and a combination of \$560,000 for four new homes in Whitehorse, two new homes in the Mendenhall area, and one new home in Dawson City, put together, again, with individual Yukoners.

This year, our government increased the available funds from \$60,000 per home in Whitehorse and \$90,000 for rural Yukon to a maximum of \$100,000 per home, or \$1 million per project across the territory.

Since 2018, the housing initiatives fund has allocated over \$20 million while leveraging millions more in private sector partnership funds toward the creation of affordable housing projects across the Yukon. The five program intakes are

successfully supporting over 50 projects, of which 14 are now completed and 19 are under construction. The agreements for the remaining projects are still being finalized. These projects together are contributing to the anticipated construction of over 590 new homes across the territory, with about 480 meeting the definition, again, of “affordable home”.

The next intake for the housing initiatives fund will be in November 2022. Again, I look forward to seeing more affordable homes being built through the innovative program, and I want to thank all of our community partners in helping to ensure that every Yukoner has a safe and affordable place that they can call home.

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

As has been stated in this Assembly many times, housing is a huge issue for Yukoners. All three parties can agree that more needs to be done to get affordable and attainable housing on the market. That is why we support initiatives to create housing, and an increase of \$2.1 million in this year’s budget for the housing initiatives fund is certainly nothing to sneeze at. We are pleased to hear the minister’s announcement today that 13 new projects have been approved under this fund. We are happy to see projects not only in Whitehorse, but also in the communities. I know that residents in Mendenhall, Mayo, Haines Junction, Watson Lake, and Dawson City will be pleased about the projects for their community.

We were already aware of projects under this fund, including Boreal Commons, the High Country Inn Safe at Home project, and the Cornerstone building. When the minister is on his feet, I am wondering if he can provide an update on the Safe at Home project.

The minister says today that an additional \$1 million will be going toward this project. Does this mean that the project is already overbudget?

I’m also wondering if this project will indeed be ready by the fall, as stated in the January press release. Also, we are wondering if operating models for those three previous projects have been worked out.

We know that the need is there for affordable and high-density housing situations. We hope that current and future projects are not bogged down in red tape and become a reality so that new and long-time Yukoners can find the proper home to suit their needs and enjoy all that the Yukon has to offer.

Ms. Tredger: This is a welcome announcement, and the Yukon NDP would like to congratulate all the successful applicants and to thank them for the work they are doing to tackle the housing crisis. We’re particularly happy to see the emphasis for this fund this year on seniors, low-income tenants, people who are homeless, and youth. This is an important shift toward making sure that new housing doesn’t just benefit Yukoners who can afford the ever-rising rents or who are able to save up for the huge sums required for a down payment.

I do worry about handing over big envelopes of cash to private sector developers instead of using low- or no-interest loans. I don’t think it’s the government’s role to dole out money to an industry that’s already very profitable and facing high

demand for their products. I’m glad that, in this year, the majority of this fund is going to municipalities, First Nations and their development corporations, and community housing providers like the Safe at Home Society.

I’m particularly excited to see the Northern Community Land Trust receive funding in this fund. This is a crucial piece of ensuring that the housing stock we build is not affordable just today, but in the long term too. The Yukon NDP proposed a very similar idea in our platform, and we’re very happy to see it becoming a reality.

Projects like this are critical because we have an enormous housing affordability problem in the Yukon. When the government makes decisions about which projects get funded, it needs to consider the question: Who will be able to afford these homes? It appears that the housing initiatives fund is taking steps in this direction, and I hope to see that trend continue.

I do wonder about the 16 applications that did not get funded. I’m hoping the minister can tell us if these projects were denied on the basis of their applications, or was there simply not enough money budgeted for all the potential projects? It would certainly be a shame to have turned down partnerships that could have helped to ease the housing crisis because this government failed to budget for them. I look forward to more information from the minister about that.

Again, thank you to all of the partners who are making these projects happen.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you to both of the opposition members for their comments.

Again, I’ll just quickly go through some of the questions that were asked concerning Safe at Home. The \$1 million allocation was part of what we looked at for the existing budget for that.

Certainly, we can get into a longer dialogue. We haven’t had a debate yet in Committee of the Whole on our housing budget for this year, and I think that will be a really good opportunity to answer more of the detailed questions that have been posed today concerning things such as operating models that I just won’t have time in the next couple of minutes to get into.

I absolutely agree; I think that red tape is something that I don’t want to be dealing with, and when you see red tape come into play to stop projects, that’s something that we need to deal with. I appreciate the comment from the member opposite.

As well, the 16 applications — I think when we get into debate we’ll have an opportunity to go through, because I’ll get some more detail, if those projects or applications needed more detail, if they wanted to hold off — there is usually a number of different things that come into play on those decisions.

We’ve highlighted several of the approved shovel-ready projects in my opening statement. These projects will create a total of 44 homes in rural communities and a total of 138 homes in Whitehorse. We have also approved project concepts developed by community organizations Connective and Grey Mountain Housing Society that would create another 80 homes.

The development of a total of 262 new homes are receiving funding through this fifth intake of the housing initiatives fund. This fund continues to incentivize the development of long-term affordable housing across the Yukon. It requires that homes are energy efficient as well and that 20 percent of the homes in a multi-unit building are accessible. Additional consideration is given for projects that directly support needs along the Yukon's housing continuum, prioritize the needs of seniors, lower income tenants, people experiencing homelessness, youth aged 18 to 25, full housing solutions for First Nations, and support staffing strategies for local businesses and all levels of government.

Some of the larger projects that have previously received funding we touched on today — the Boreal Commons project, as well as the Cornerstone building. I think we can talk a bit more about the operating when we get into budget debate.

It's great to see some of these long-standing housing gaps in the territory being filled through partnerships and innovative projects. I do believe in the work that we're doing here. There might be a difference on the funding model or the financing model, but I think it shows that it's working here.

Over the last four years, there have been more than 1,000 new homes built in Whitehorse. That's a 60-percent increase over the previous four-year period. I think we have something that's working very well here.

In the last two years alone, the municipalities across the territory have issued almost 1,300 permits for residential construction — significantly higher than the historic average. In 2021, residential construction investment in the territory hit a record high with \$267 million being invested to build homes in the territory, shattering the 2020 record of nearly \$200 million.

Again, in this year's budget, we've included \$60 million for housing initiatives across the Yukon and \$255 million in capital alone over the next five years to support access to stable, affordable housing to allow for future development.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Financial support for fertility treatment and surrogacy-related expenses

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker.

For Yukon families who struggle with fertility, the idea of starting a family is complicated and difficult. Not only are infertility challenges extraordinarily stressful, but the cost of fertility treatments and surrogacy-related medical expenses are significant barriers. One way that government can help with this is by providing financial support to hopeful parents who struggle with infertility.

Will the Government of Yukon help Yukon families who face challenges starting a family by creating a new program to provide financial support for fertility treatments and surrogacy-related expenses and travel?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm pleased that the members opposite have been reading our platform from back in 2021. Of course, this was included in the platform for the Liberal Party

and for all those who ran as members of the Liberal Party. It is an important issue. Our Department of Health and Social Services has begun looking at this issue to determine, first of all, cross-jurisdictionally, how it can be done in other jurisdictions and how we might make it available here to Yukon families. I appreciate that I have the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to Yukon families who are struggling with fertility and the opportunity to speak about the good work of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ms. Clarke: Salamat.

One of the most common fertility treatments is in vitro fertilization, or IVF. A single round of IVF can cost as much as \$25,000 to \$30,000 and requires a trip down to a larger city like Vancouver for as much as a week. And that's just one round.

Currently, most Yukoners are required to pay this out of pocket.

Will the Yukon government consider developing a new program to help defray some of the significant costs faced by Yukoners who face fertility challenges?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think I just said that, of course, we will be doing that. We are developing a program to support Yukon families who are struggling with prenatal or fertility issues. I should note that we do support Yukon families already in many ways for portions of this particular issue and the medical care that is required.

Our government is ensuring that families have access to the services that they require in their home communities, as much as we can, by continuing to enhance services. A newly formed working group explores prenatal supports for at-risk expectant individuals and is working with communities. We continue to support — as I have said, in our platform, was a commitment made publicly during the election and also made publicly by the Department of Health and Social Services since then. We will continue to support this important service for Yukon families.

Ms. Clarke: Salamat. For those struggling with fertility and for those who need to access fertility services in order to have a baby, there is a significant negative impact on their mental health. These impacts are compounded by the significant financial costs that come with the already stressful situation. Other jurisdictions have various supports in place, but there is very little support here in the Yukon.

When will the government launch a program to provide financial support to Yukoners who are unable to have babies and who need to access fertility treatments or surrogacy-related costs?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Our government has committed — as I have said here, as well as in our platform — to supporting Yukoners in creating reproductive care plans. As part of this process, we are looking to subsidize the cost of fertility treatments and the related medical travel. Additionally, we are also looking at supporting Yukoners who might need birth control or period products. We recognize that nearly one-quarter of women here in Canada struggle to afford menstrual products, and that is completely and utterly unacceptable.

I should note that there is coverage for birth control for youth enrolled in the children's drug and optical program, which is coverage that we have. Services and funding are also provided to the Yukon Sexual Health Clinic to support clients who receive birth control if they're in financial need. Yukon health care insurance plan provides coverage for a consultation for initial fertility testing, including certain follow-up tests, such as ultrasounds, examinations, and some types of pregnancy tests. We are committed to supporting Yukon families.

At this time, just as a note, it might be of interest — Ontario is the only Canadian jurisdiction that provides some insured coverage for in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, or intrauterine insemination, but we are looking at this issue to help Yukon families.

Question re: Magnetic resonance imaging program

Mr. Cathers: Last week, the Minister of Health and Social Services revealed that the wait-list for non-urgent MRIs is around 1,000 people and wait times are as much as 20 months.

Following that, the minister told the *Yukon News*: "... medical professionals have the option to send patients down to Vancouver if an urgent need can't be accommodated in the Yukon."

That costs a lot more per MRI, and it's not an efficient way to provide service to 1,000 people on the MRI wait-list. In November, the CEO of Yukon Hospital Corporation told this House that they have a plan to improve wait times, which includes two things: looking for temporary resources to address the backlog and adding permanent staff to run extended service hours for the MRI on a more sustainable basis.

Has the minister included any money in this budget to help the hospital specifically address the MRI wait time backlog, and if not, why not?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm very pleased to rise to respond to a preamble and a question of which I agree with almost all of what was been said by the opposite party. I don't often have that opportunity.

Certainly, the MRI wait times are considered to be unacceptable for us. The Yukon Hospital Corporation, which has the responsibility of providing the service through their funding to them — through the funding from the government — is working on the issue.

I guess I want to make sure we emphasize and remind that currently wait times for patients who require an urgent MRI here in the territory are less than seven days. The Whitehorse General Hospital endeavours to support semi-urgent cases to access MRI services as close to 30 days as possible, and in February, which is the last statistic I have — from February 2022 — semi-urgent cases were being completed within 44 days. For non-urgent cases, as noted, the wait time is past that, of course.

The work at the Hospital Corporation is currently using a combination of locum and casual technologists to ensure acute care in time-sensitive cases.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, the CEO of the hospital said wait times for MRIs are too long, but they need the resources of government to act on that. The simple fact is that the quickest way to reduce the wait-list and wait times for MRIs is for the government to finally provide more resources to the Yukon Hospital Corporation. The minister has already acknowledged that the current capacity is insufficient. Will the minister now agree to finally provide the Yukon Hospital Corporation with additional resources so they can hire more staff and the wait-list and wait times for MRIs can be reduced?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: By investing in the territory's healthcare system, our government is increasing access to medical services while reducing wait times and the need for out-of-territory medical travel; we agree on that. A total of \$88 million will support the Yukon Hospital Corporation to continue providing Yukoners the best possible care and services. We have, once again, increased the Hospital Corporation operation and maintenance budget, as we have in each of the last five years, to ensure that Yukoners receive the standard of care that they deserve.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, what the minister is glossing over is that there has been chronic underfunding by this Liberal government to the hospital, including some years with their increase being less than the rate of inflation. When the hospital appeared before the Legislature last fall, they told us that current MRI wait times are well beyond what they would like them to be. The CEO said — quote: "Semi-urgent wait times, which should be 30 days or less, are approximately 54 days, and we like to see non-urgent wait times at less than six months, but they are around an 18-month wait time."

Last week, the minister told us that things have gotten even worse and are now closer to 20 months. The CEO also told us the solution: They need new permanent staff to run an extended service for MRIs. So, will the minister agree to provide the hospital the new funding they need so that they can increase capacity and shorten MRI wait times?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the senior leadership at the Yukon Hospital Corporation for our renewed relationship between their work and the work of the Department of Health and Social Services. Of course, we meet regularly and we discuss the kinds of issues that have been brought up here because they are critically important to Yukoners.

We have invested in the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We have a total in this budget of \$88 million that will support the Yukon Hospital Corporation and continue to provide Yukoners with the best possible hospital care.

I think it's incredibly important, based on the preamble in the question, to emphasize that, once again, we have increased the operation and maintenance budget for the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as we have in the past five years — each and every year of the past five years — which is certainly more budget provided to the Yukon Hospital Corporation than was ever done by the former government.

Question re: Inclusive and special education

Ms. White: In 2009, the Auditor General released an abysmal review of our education system under the Yukon Party. The Department of Education was failing students across the board, especially indigenous and rural students and students in need of special and inclusive education.

In 2019, 10 years and two governments later, another report was released, and not much had changed. Education was continuing to fail Yukon children. The Liberal government has said that they're committed to fixing inclusive education in the territory, but they have failed to deliver.

Can the minister tell Yukoners why, after nearly six years of promises from this government, the education system is still leaving children behind?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I had opportunity to speak about this already this week. It's a really important question, and I thank the member opposite for bringing this to the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

Yes, in 2019, we received an Auditor General's report that was not much different from the 2009 report. I want to really focus Yukoners' attention on the fact that the 2019 report really does reflect on the Yukon Party's performance. Ten years is a long time, and the Auditor General's report of 2019 clearly says that there wasn't enough action, if any, in really key areas.

What I want to say to Yukoners is that we are focused on true action. The Yukon Party left our children behind. We have a generation of children who did not benefit from the changes that were recommended by the Auditor General of Canada. We take those reports very seriously.

The difference between 2019 and 2009 is our response, and I'm happy to continue to build on my answer.

Ms. White: It's nearly six years — four and a half years of those as a majority government — and I would think that if this government actually cared about children, something would have been done by now, instead of blaming the previous government.

After a shocking pre-election announcement that the government had unilaterally decided to cut individualized education plans, they backed down — not willingly, of course. We all know that the Yukon NPD and public pressure forced them into reinstating IEPs.

While Yukoners are happy to see IEPs reinstated, we keep hearing from parents because their children are not receiving the supports that they are entitled to. As Autism Yukon states in the letter that we tabled yesterday, IEPs are not just a piece of paper to be filed in a filing cabinet; supports actually need to be in place for these students.

Will the minister tell parents when their children can expect to start receiving the supports that they are entitled to, as directed in their IEPs?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I do have to continue building on the answer around what we have done as a government since the 2019 Auditor General's report. We take our responsibilities very seriously. Despite the fact that we entered in quickly to a global pandemic in 2020, we launched a review of inclusive and special education. We felt that we needed to respond — the former minister needed to respond to the important

recommendations that were brought forward. We launched our universal childcare model. We enhanced early kindergarten in rural communities. We established the Yukon First Nation School Board. We advanced, again, the review of inclusive and special education. We created a data-sharing MOU with First Nations, and recently, we announced the work to develop a student outcome strategy, which is underway.

So, we have taken very, very clear steps. In terms of inclusive and special education, we have launched a number of working groups to dig deeper into all of the areas that need to be addressed that were pointed out in Nikki Yee's report. I will continue to build on my question and move on —

Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. White: So, in response to the 2019 Auditor General's report on education, the government made great promises to collaborate with stakeholders in an effort to move forward. However, in what seems to be this government's signature move, they called a summit — a summit that, according to education partners, ended up being a simple online workshop for Department of Education staff with an option to join committees.

Autism Yukon's letter to the Public Accounts Committee states — and I quote: “The urgency of these suggestions is currently being lost in the development of committees ... these very concrete suggestions do not need any more discussion. They simply need action.”

So, Mr. Speaker, when will this minister start listening to experts and start taking concrete actions?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I think that I have been really clear in terms of our commitment to work with partners, including Autism Yukon, the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and many others, all of whom are represented in one way or another on really key committees that we work with — Yukon First Nations Education Commission and our advisory committee on education.

In terms of the work that has been done, yes, we do have communities of inquiry. We need to bring everyone along with us. Making top-down, unilateral types of decisions, I think, would not be acceptable to Yukoners. To realize the change that we're seeking, we need to help people to trust in our intentions and do the hard work to create the change that needs to happen — again, a long time in the making.

I know that there is an inherent tension between getting to action and swift response and taking the time needed to build trusting relationships. That is what we're committed to doing.

I'm happy to continue answering questions about this and working with all of our partners.

Question re: Finlayson caribou herd

Mr. Istchenko: In November of last year, I asked the Minister of Environment for an update on the efforts taken to help recover the Finlayson caribou herd. At that time, the minister said he was not in a position to answer. We're hoping that he has now been briefed.

In 2018, the former minister announced the closure of the hunting opportunities for both licensed hunters and outfitters. Since then, the hunting community has been looking to see that the department takes real steps to help the herd to recover.

So, other than just closing hunting, what steps has the department taken to help the herd to recover?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for the question from the member opposite.

The size of the Finlayson caribou herd peaked in 1990. Since then, the department has monitored a declining trend in the size of the herd.

We continue our efforts to work with Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council to stabilize the number of Finlayson caribou, including addressing harvest levels.

In order to address our shared concerns for the herd, as indicated by the member opposite, no resident hunting permits have been issued for the Finlayson caribou since the 2018-19 hunting season. Outfitter quotas have been set at zero for this herd. This was a commitment we made in 2018, and that continues to today's date.

Since the closure of the licensed harvest of Finlayson caribou, we have continued to monitor the herd with annual composition surveys. Composition surveys provide estimates of adult sex ratios and calf recruitment and allow us to monitor long-term population trends. We plan to conduct a population survey of the Finlayson herd in 2022 — this year — and we will share those results on yukon.ca.

Mr. Istchenko: I asked what steps have been taken to recover this herd. It has been since 2018. It sounds like the minister, like his response when I asked him before, just says that they are working on it.

As we pointed out previously, we have concerns that the Liberal government has been too quick to shut things down, but too slow, like I said previously, to take action to help wildlife populations recover. In 2018, the minister said that while they were closing down hunting of the Finlayson herd, they would have what she called a “collective management plan” within six months. That is a long time ago.

Can the minister tell us the status of that management plan that the former minister said would be ready in six months back in 2018?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: We have invited the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation to participate in the upcoming population survey with respect to the Finlayson herd. We will review the survey results of the Finlayson caribou herd with the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation during our management discussions. Any future licensed harvests of this herd would require an agreement of all three parties.

The department introduced a permit hunt authorization for the Finlayson caribou herd in 1998, issuing 30 permits annually until 2018. Between 2012 and 2016, the licensed harvest of the Finlayson caribou herd, including outfitter guests, averaged fewer than 10 bulls per year. The population estimate in 1996 was 4,537 animals, which had declined to an estimated 2,712 animals in 2017.

Question re: Canada Winter Games infrastructure

Ms. McLeod: Last Monday, the Minister of Community Services told reporters that it would cost \$100 million to host the 2027 Canada Winter Games. Then on Thursday when we asked him to confirm that cost estimate, the minister said — and I quote: “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.” The minister appears to be pulling estimates out of thin air. Yukoners are looking for cost certainty, and this minister’s estimates are unreliable at best.

Can the minister explain why he told Yukoners that the Canada Winter Games will cost \$100 million when he later admitted that he had no idea of the cost?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I’m really happy this afternoon to talk about the exciting initiative that we have before us: the 2027 Canada Winter Games.

The Yukon government, of course, is excited to once again have the opportunity to host such an event. We’re working very closely with the City of Whitehorse to refine what facilities we need and how much they cost.

We do know — I was asked for an estimate of the cost of the games by a local media outlet, and I said that it may cost up to \$100 million. I base that estimate on some of the very, very rough cost estimates that we have right now, but, Mr. Speaker, if you look around the world right now — and I don’t know if the members opposite are reading the media — it is a very, very challenging environment to make any predictions these days. We still have COVID-19. We are sitting here with a land war in Europe that is hurting our supply chains around the world. So, really, at this time, it’s very, very difficult to say anything except that the games are going to cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$100 million. As I said on Monday, it may be more; it may be less.

We are going to work very hard to put on the very best games that we can for the people of the territory and the people of Canada. I look forward to continuing this line of questioning in a few moments.

Question re: Physician recruitment and retention

Mr. Cathers: The Liberal government’s lack of action on physician recruitment and retention has created the unfortunate situation where thousands of Yukoners — over one-fifth in fact — do not have a family doctor.

This has meant that the Yukon Medical Association has had to fill the gap on its own. On their own initiative and with their own funds, the YMA hired a physician recruiter. This has been done with zero support from the government.

Will the Yukon government finally take some action and actually work with the YMA on physician recruitment by, as a first step, financially supporting their efforts to attract more doctors to the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Once again, the members opposite have proven to be unreliable here in the Legislative Assembly, providing information to Yukoners that is simply not the case.

The transfer payment agreement between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Medical Association clearly states that there are funds available for a

recruitment officer — recruitment activities. They have chosen to hire a recruitment officer, which we are very pleased about. We are working closely with the Yukon Medical Association in order to work on having additional physicians come here to the territory.

One of our best resources in that way is Yukon physicians who can describe to their colleagues the great working relationship, the great working conditions, and the opportunities here in the Yukon that do not exist, I would say, anywhere else in Canada. We're working closely with our physicians here to obtain more physicians for our community.

Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, again, the Minister of Health and Social Services is an unreliable source of information. Over one-fifth of Yukoners —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order, please.

The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Under 19(i), the Standing Orders state that we won't use abusive or insulting language and that we won't personalize debate. I believe that the debate was just personalized by the Member for Lake Laberge.

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

Mr. Cathers: In the minister's response, she accused us of being an unreliable source of information. I'm merely returning the favour in response, but apparently the Government House Leader thinks it's a point of order when the same criticisms they direct at us are directed at them.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: There is no point of order. It is a dispute between members.

Please continue.

Mr. Cathers: One important aspect of recruitment that often gets overlooked is the need for the physician community to recruit locums to fill in for doctors who have to go on leave for both short and long periods of time. One common reason doctors need to take leave is for maternity. We have heard that as many as five family doctors are about to go on leave over the next few weeks for this reason. We've heard that almost none have been able to find sufficient locum coverage.

What is the government doing to help family doctors recruit locums to provide coverage when they need to go on leave for maternity or other reasons?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I should note that the physicians here in the territory and the Yukon Medical Association have contracted a physician recruiter and that physician recruiter is now working with support from the Yukon government. We should note that the physician recruiter has to determine how to recruit physicians to small, rural, remote, and northern contexts — in those contexts — which have historically been a challenge.

I can also note that the majority of medical clinics here in Whitehorse are physician-led private businesses that oversee

their own recruitment and locum coverage. I can indicate there are funds in the agreement that provides funding to the Yukon Medical Association for locum recruitment activities and that is supported in the funding that we provide to the Yukon Medical Association.

Again, it is not just about providing funding; it is about having a great relationship with the physicians here in the territory, and we can work in partnership to solve these issues.

Mr. Cathers: We hear a rosy portrayal from the minister; we hear something very different from physicians, and I would encourage her to double-check her claims on funding.

There is already a massive shortage of doctors in the Yukon, with thousands of Yukoners, over one-fifth, without a family doctor. We have heard that the problem will get even worse as, as many as five local family doctors are expected to go on maternity leave. We have heard that the difficulty in finding locum coverage could create a massive service disruption in primary care over the next year.

Has the government taken any action at all to prepare for the service disruption, and what steps has the government taken to help family doctors, who will be taking maternity leave, to help find the necessary locum coverage?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that I have just answered that by talking about the funding for locum recruitment and services that is provided to the Yukon Medical Association.

I just want to correct the record for Yukoners. It is important for them to know that the Canadian Institute for Health Information — which is often quoted by the member opposite — and the National Physician Database here in Canada indicates that there is an average of 173 resident physicians per 100,000 people in the fiscal year 2019-20, but comparatively, in the Yukon, there were 221 resident physicians per 100,000 people during that period of time. In addition, we have numerous specialists and service providers who arrive here in the territory to help Yukoners with their health care. We are also working to launch a talent acquisition website in the spring of this year, which will be a dedicated recruitment site for Health and Social Services staff, including nurses, and which will be focused on rural recruitment and retention — working constantly on this important issue for Yukoners.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. Tredger: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. They are Bill No. 304, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 114, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called for debate on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. It is Motion No. 378, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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.

Motion re appearance of witnesses

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 6

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, Lesley Brown, president and vice chancellor of Yukon University, and David Morrison, chair of the Yukon University Board of Governors, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions relating to Yukon University.

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

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, Lesley Brown, president and vice chancellor of Yukon University, and David Morrison, chair of the Yukon University Board of Governors, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to answer questions relating to Yukon University.

Is there any debate?

Mr. Cathers: I would just note that, as we indicated at House Leaders', our priority for this Sitting is budget debate. The witnesses were here last fall, and as we indicated to the government, we believe that the House's time would be best spent this spring focusing on the budget, noting in fact that spring 2019 was the last time there was a full Spring Sitting to debate the budget.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just note for everyone that we are working as a government to move back on to a regular schedule of witnesses. We were seeking to bring in the university this spring as we have in the past. I appreciate that the Official Opposition, I've heard, doesn't have questions for the university. That's fine. We will work to get back on to our regular schedule with witnesses this Sitting and for the coming Sittings.

Deputy Chair: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Count.

Count

Deputy Chair: A count has been called.

Bells

Deputy Chair: All those in favour, please rise.
Members rise

Deputy Chair: All those opposed, please rise.
Members rise

Deputy Chair: The results are seven yea, eight nay. I declare the motion defeated.

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 6 negatived

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing 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 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 before the Committee is continuing 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*

Ms. White: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I welcome back the officials. It's a delight to have them here. I thank the minister for continuing the conversation that we left off yesterday.

So, the very last thing we were talking about yesterday was about the four transfer stations that are being shut down. The last thing I left on — and I'll just replay it — was highlighting the amount of responsibility that we share with volunteers in unincorporated communities at this point. So, we talked about EMS crews, volunteer fire crews, and others. I said that it seems to me that it's odd that we never once looked at running these facilities on a volunteer basis and having, for example, designated drop-off days.

Can the minister share with us if the conversation was ever had in those unincorporated communities about running the transfer stations with volunteer people-power and designated drop-off days?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the House for its patience this afternoon as I do this. I have been thinking about the cliff-hanger finale that we had yesterday all evening, so it has been on my mind. I thank the member opposite for the question.

The transfer station issue has been a live conversation in the territory for years now — I think probably since the ministerial report came out. I know that my colleague has done an awful lot of work with the communities. I know that I have

heard from many people on this issue, and I understand that change is very difficult. It is difficult for people, and we are asking people surrounding four of the smallest transfer stations to change their behaviour in the way that they deal with waste. I know that it will be an inconvenience and it will be a hardship on some. It will certainly be a change and will require a change in behaviour, and I know that is not easy.

I know, as well, that the Department of Community Services has also been listening and working with both my predecessor and me to come up with ways to ease the transition as we move to a new waste management regime in the territory. So, we are looking at providing bear-proof garbage bins for cabins and residences because we heard that it was an issue. We are looking at electric fencing for some people because they realize that they have bears and they are worried about that. They want to make sure that the bears are protected because there is a lot of love for those animals in the territory. We have also heard about a trailer — perhaps they need help getting the garbage to one of the major regional landfills. So, a trailer perhaps gifted to the community association to make it easier to organize and haul waste or compost bins to reduce waste — these are all things that we're exploring. We will continue to work with these communities to help bring down their waste.

Currently in the territory, we're generating about 900 kilograms of waste per individual in the territory — 900 kilograms — and it's going up. It's going up across North America, but here in the territory, we're creating an awful lot of waste and we have to do better. So, putting a cost on the waste that we generate, making it a little more inconvenient — we've certainly made it inconvenient for the citizens of Whitehorse. We are going to do it for other areas just because we have to do better. This is where the municipalities came to us and said that we have to deal with this. There are liabilities involved in the landfills that we have, and we have to make sure that those liabilities go away.

The four transfer stations that we've been talking about — at Keno, Braeburn, Johnsons Crossing, and Silver City — currently cost the territory \$500,000 to operate every year, and that savings will accrue to all citizens of the territory once it comes around.

It will also put some pressures — this whole initiative has to make us think more about our waste and bring down our waste management. It's about the environment in the end. It's about greenhouse gas emissions at our landfills. It's about making sure that we look after our environment. To do that, we have to reduce the amount of waste we're producing, and that's what we're striving to do, that's what municipalities asked us to do, and that's what we're working on.

So, all of this is to say that we did — and my predecessor did and so did I — look at whether or not volunteers or other options — of course, we explored other options for this initiative, but it still comes down to a liability issue at these landfills that has to be addressed. It has to do with an area that will not be as well-supervised as some of these other landfills, and that's creating another environmental hazard in the territory that will need to be eventually remediated.

It also comes down to training and actually having the human resources in the neighbourhood to be able to manage this, and it's just not feasible. So, the very short answer to the member opposite is that, yes, it was considered, and, no, it is deemed not feasible to have these transfer stations run on a volunteer basis.

Ms. White: So, the minister just referred to the inconvenience for our residents of Whitehorse in comparison to those unincorporated communities where the transfer facilities are being closed.

Can the minister help me understand what the inconvenience is for me in Whitehorse to get to the waste management facility compared to, say, a resident of Keno getting to the waste management facility in Mayo?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: My dad told me when I was a young man that comparisons are odious, and I was not making a comparison between rural Yukon and Whitehorse. I simply said that the new rules that we have in place have made going to the landfill more inconvenient for Yukon residents in the fact that they now have to pay a tipping fee, which they never had to pay before. Is it equal? No, it's not equal. It is not equitable. There will be more inconvenience to some people who are living on the fringes of our society; there's no two ways about it.

I am not trying to draw a comparison; I never was trying to draw a comparison. I was just saying that we generate an awful lot of waste in the territory, and we have to do better. We have to have fewer conduits for the storage of that waste in the territory. The cost of the storage spaces that we have is a lot. Municipalities have come to us and said: "Please, you have to do something", so we are doing something. We are closing some of the areas that are less supervised and we are moving people to go to regional landfills, which we're better able to manage. They have the capacity and they have the volume of garbage going into them that makes it a lot more efficient to run. That is the model that's used in most places in the country, if not all, and that is the model we are going to here in the territory.

Just to correct any misconceptions, I never meant to compare rural Yukon to Whitehorse. I am just saying that, in order to better manage our waste in the territory and bring down the volume of waste — and it's massive — that each individual, me included, are generating in the territory, we have to do better. We have to put a cost on that. There has to be a cost. The cost is sometimes time and sometimes it's money, and that's what we're trying to do.

Ms. White: I do thank the minister for that clarification.

Can he let me know what he means when he says those "living on the fringes of our society"?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Really, what I was referring to in my previous answer was the catchment basin for landfills. There are people who will be closer to a regional landfill, and there will be those on the edge of the catchment basin for that. That is true of all communities. There are people in Whitehorse who live farther from the dump than others and have to travel more. So, there will always be an increase. What I was trying to convey is that there will always be an inconvenience for those

who are living farther away from a centralized facility than there is for those who live right next to it.

Another point that needs to be made, I think, is that the cost that individuals are actually paying in tipping fees, for example, is about one-fifth of the cost. What we're trying to do through this process — through this new waste management system that we were asked to bring on from municipalities — is that the Yukon government pays the lion's share of the cost of these regional landfills, and individuals are paying a portion of that cost. Through that portion, there is actually an equalization between all communities to what people pay. So, we're asking people to pay the same in every community, and the Yukon government will pick up the difference between what the residents pay on a universal charge to use our landfills and those living farther out — some of those landfills cost a lot more to run, but the residents are still only going to pay a flat fee that would be equal to that in Whitehorse.

Ms. White: I appreciate that clarification from the minister. I'm just letting him know that folks in rural communities have sent e-mails since yesterday. I just wanted to make sure that he got his clarification out there before I got the e-mail tomorrow about what he meant when he said "fringes of society".

So, I'm going through the 2017 Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste report. There are examples of the community waste survey results from communities like Faro, Whitehorse, Carmacks, Watson Lake, Teslin, Haines Junction, Mayo, and Dawson City. But the one thing that I think bears mentioning is that folks in the communities that will be affected by the closure of these four transfer stations say that there are some calculations that aren't being taken into account by government. So, while the minister said that there were discussions with his colleague who was previously responsible for Community Services about volunteer transfer stations, the interesting thing is knowing how far people in some of these communities will have to drive. I don't think that it said they're opposed to the tipping fees. What it is — imagine that you drive a Toyota Tercel hatchback and you are going to save up your garbage for a month before you drive it into town to do your grocery run. It is about putting your garbage in your car and having to drive.

In some communities, there are folks who live in these rural communities without access to vehicles. I think a lot of concern that has been highlighted is that people want to know how their neighbours are going to be supported.

So, when was the last time that the minister and his department had conversations with the communities of Silver City, Keno, Johnsons Crossing, and Braeburn about doing it on a volunteer basis — of having someone at the drop-off facility — and whether the conversation of tipping fees was ever brought forward with them?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, I thank the member opposite for the question.

In my role as minister, I have had conversations with individuals in the community about volunteerism and exploring that, as has my colleague before, so it has been considered. The cost of putting gates and properly managing these very, very

small transfer stations is very expensive. We ask an awful lot of our volunteers already. We've had lots of talks about volunteerism in the territory and the House of late. We know how difficult it can be to get those volunteers. It is the backbone of the territory for sure, but we ask an awful lot of volunteers already.

We are exploring through Community Services the avenues of volunteerism beyond actually sitting at a landfill for X number of hours a day to do this. There might be opportunities for volunteers — if we, as I said earlier, have a community association trailer or something, volunteers might be able to collectively take the garbage from the community to the landfill and back, and that would be an avenue for volunteers to perhaps get involved. Of course, there is always an opportunity for volunteerism that would help with the remediation of the garbage we produce on a daily basis and that does go beyond actually having somebody sit at a regional landfill that is not only expensive but also difficult to monitor on a regular basis.

Ms. White: A number of years ago when I started to be the critic for Community Services, one of the habits that changed in my life when I was travelling around the territory was actually to go and look at waste management facilities — so, what we used to call "dumps" or "transfer facilities" — and it is interesting that the minister has just referred to the sheer cost of having to gate off these things. Johnsons Crossing has a beautiful drop-off area. It has fences on all sides, and it actually has a gate that comes down across and has bins similar to Silver City and beyond.

Again, the challenge that I have — and I was just looking at the waste or the community waste survey results. It is interesting that, for the unincorporated communities of Silver City, Braeburn, and Johnsons Crossing, it is just an estimate on population. So, for example, the estimated population for Johnsons Crossing is 25, but I can tell you that, in conversations with residents in Johnsons Crossing, they figure that the facility is accessed by closer to 80 individuals, including people who live down the Canol as opposed to just in the area.

I guess the reason I am coming back to this is that I feel like there is a real opportunity to continue working with those communities and finding solutions. The minister has talked about whether or not a trailer gets donated to the community association and it gets towed in that way — well, then I have questions about liability, I have questions about insurance, and I have questions about a vehicle capable of driving that. The reason why this gets talked about so often is that the decision is being unilaterally made in Whitehorse — by people who may not be so far on the fringes of access — for people who have to drive quite a distance, and so, that becomes a barrier. One of the really important questions that has been asked by folks is: If the concern is environmental, who will be in charge of picking up the waste that may end up in the environment?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will keep my answer relatively brief on this one. We can get into the costs of running these regional landfills — the smaller ones. Jurisdictions across the country have launched models very similar to this. They are

closing landfills across the country. It's very similar to this proposal.

In the Yukon, we have 14 unincorporated community landfills and the five waste transfer stations. We are going to a regionalization model. It's not just about cost; it's also about the environment. There is an environmental cost to having all of these landfills and waste transfer stations in operation. The member opposite mentioned insurance, liability, and all the rest of it with the trailer. Well, those same costs apply to transfer stations and the people running and working those transfer stations. As a matter of fact, they are actually far more pronounced, because there is a liability to having a transfer station open and that liability grows every year it's open. It is just exponential. It is a financial and an environmental liability.

We have declared, as the member opposite knows, a climate emergency in the territory. We are working very hard to deal with a number of different things to get greenhouse gas emissions down. One of the things we are doing is trying to limit the amount of waste we produce, which again contributes to greenhouse gases and everything else. This is another part of that whole drive.

There is a myriad of — it's very nuanced and there are a lot of factors that go into these decisions. We have looked at these. We have had lots of conversations with our rural residents about this. Like the rest of the country, after weighing all of the options, we have made a decision to close these transfer stations, which are the very smallest waste facilities in the territory. Like the other ones, they have a financial and environmental liability that grows every single year that they are open.

I know it's not an easy decision. It certainly is a decision that impacts the people who live in the neighbourhoods — the small communities surrounding these transfer stations — but in the end, the regionalization model is one that has been used and is being used across the country, and it's one that again, for the reasons that I've explained today, we made that decision.

Ms. White: It's interesting, because when I go back to the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste report, it talks about the solid-waste operational costs to Yukon government in fiscal year 2017-18. It's interesting, because for example, the community of Keno was not in red, so it's not an estimate. It says "20", and it's interesting, because yesterday, the minister talked about the 24 or so residents. So, we also see in our small unincorporated communities that they are also growing in population.

Yesterday, I received an e-mail from a resident of Keno. The one thing that they really wanted to be a part of this conversation is they said they don't feel that some factors are being taken into account. For example, the seasonal population swings that aren't accounted for, visitor-produced garbage is not accounted for, and in the case of Keno, it says that "we're busy enough in our busy season to require monthly hauling". So, they've underestimated the true number of users. Again, it goes on to say that there are very long distances to travel to access the service.

So, we have heard these different community concerns, for example, like the tourism effect. If you're visiting Keno, folks

are doing that. We want to get them out to communities; we want them to visit; we want those dollars to go out. Someone takes in groceries for a week of camping — not everyone is going to pack it up in the car to take it away. So, it's going to be left to the citizens of Keno to deal with.

I'm talking in circles at this point; the minister and I are talking in circles. I say we should keep them open, and he says we're going to close them, but I think there are a lot more factors involved. So, I would urge the department to continue having those conversations and looking toward that.

Again, we have members in unincorporated communities act as EMS; we have them act as fire crews; we have them doing all these volunteer positions. I mean, the suggestion in Keno when I was there — they were saying to put a gate and a lock on it; make sure only residents have access to it.

Again, Johnsons Crossing — it's surrounded by chain-link fencing. I think there are opportunities. I can tell you straight up here that, as an individual who lives in Whitehorse and who plans to go to the waste transfer facility in the city, if it was only open on Saturdays or if it was only open on Wednesday afternoons, I would change my schedule accordingly; I would go when it was open.

So, it's not that it needs to be open seven days a week for multiple hours at a time. I think the communities are definitely in a position to be able to work that out among themselves — "We're going to be open this many hours on this day and this many hours on that day", and people will change their habits.

Going through the different liabilities on that in this report from 2017, I guess it begs the question: Has it been updated? Do we know what the current numbers are? Are we still just relying on these numbers from 2017-18, or are we talking about more current numbers?

I'm going to stop talking about transfer facilities, because I don't feel like we're getting anywhere, but I do think it's always important to bring up, because until it is a fait accompli and it's a done deal, people in these communities want us to talk about them.

Yesterday, the minister said one of the ways that people in unincorporated communities could get their voices heard or their opinions brought forward was through MLAs. Like I highlighted yesterday, there are three MLAs in this House who have talked about transfer facilities on multiple occasions. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be going anywhere.

Yesterday, also — and part of the reason why I suggested that the minister clarify what he meant when he said "fringes of society" is that I did hear from Keno. They just wanted to correct the minister who said — and I'm quoting him from yesterday: "We have continued to meet regularly with the 24 or so residents of Keno. We met in January. We met again. I know the new acting fire marshal met with Keno residents recently — sometime near the end of the month. We're in the process of recruiting two fire champions in that community."

So, the resident of Keno wanted to make sure that the minister knew that they had a Zoom call in December and one last month, that two residents put their names forward as community safety champions. She said that hasn't gone live yet. They have not had an on-site visit from the fire marshal. It

hasn't occurred yet, and the visit has been twice postponed due to COVID within the Fire Marshal's Office. So, that's where they're at. They're interested in having those conversations, but they haven't gone quite so far as was alluded to yesterday.

But, again, it goes back to — this is something that's really important. It's important to protect people's property and their investments.

Again, yesterday the minister couldn't give me a timeline for when we're going to see fire response ability available in, for example, Destruction Bay where, in that same e-mail, I was told that there have been no discussions on fire protection with residents of Destruction Bay. But I think people are really interested in timelines.

So, what needs to happen in order for that to happen is important, and then I am going to move on because we don't want to talk about waste transfer facilities anymore — at least I don't.

We have heard — I think that recycling is a really important thing. The minister and I talk — well, I have talked with different ministers and this minister now for a while — about the importance of recycling. What that comes down to is also the importance of recycling centres. We know that the recycling centre in Dawson City is — if it's not shut down now, it is on life support. So, have there been any conversations between the minister and his department and the not-for-profit that manages the recycling centre in Dawson City?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say that the recycling centre in Dawson City is indeed a municipal project run by the City of Dawson — procured by the City of Dawson. They did have a plan to build it. When they got the plans, it was larger — we are working with the City of Dawson and funding a consultant to help the municipality come up with a recycling facility in the town that meets its needs, and that is where it stands right now.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I do appreciate that it's in conjunction with the municipality or with Dawson City itself. One of the concerns that I would highlight for government is that, if one of these centres shut down, it means that goods that could be recycled and repurposed into other things then become part of the waste stream.

If the minister believes, as he has said, that we want to reduce the amount of waste that we put into landfills and such things, making sure that recycling centres are viable — well, not even viable. Let's be honest; recycling is a public good. Making sure that this service is available in communities is really important.

We have been talking a fair amount about recreation opportunities in rural communities and recreation centres. We know that we have had a ministerial response to a centre being built on the traditional territory of the White River First Nation. I wanted to know if the minister has other communities that are in line for recreation centres or complexes in the near future.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to refer the member opposite to the Budget Address 2022-23 and to pages 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. There are a number of pages there that go into all the community infrastructure projects that we have planned for the next five years. Some of the highlights include: Mayo arena upgrades; the Dawson City rec centre; some

improvements to the Mount Sima ski hill; the Mountain View Golf Course; and the Pelly Crossing pool facility. There is a youth centre going into Dawson; there's the White River Community Centre that the member opposite talked about; and there's a gymnastics and climbing facility in Whitehorse. There are a number of projects — and not only just recreation centres, but a lot of other things going in, too, from public works, fire hall upgrades, and other things throughout the territory. They are highlighted in quite a bit of detail on pages 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 in the Budget Address.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for the reference toward the Budget Address, but I'm asking him as the Minister of Community Services. If he wants to expand on that, I would appreciate it. If he doesn't, I guess I can let people know that they can refer to the Budget Address.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would love to expound on all the great work we're doing. We do have a number of projects being done throughout the territory, much of it funded through ICIP funding — the Investing in Canada infrastructure program. There are an awful lot of programs in there, and I could expound on them, but it would take much longer than we have this afternoon and probably into next week, so I will leave that because I know that there are a lot of important issues that people want to deal with this afternoon.

Ms. White: One of the things that was asked of all three political parties during the 2021 election campaign was a request by the Polarettes Gymnastics Club and the Climb Yukon Association about building a new facility. Can the minister walk us through the Liberal response to that request?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We supported such a facility. Planning work continues on the gymnastics and climbing facility. A tender for design of the project will be issued this spring, with a construction tender expected in the fall of 2022.

Ms. White: Will that be funded through the Department of Community Services?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, it will be. It's one of the Investing in Canada infrastructure projects that is being pushed through that stream.

Ms. White: Is the Yukon government putting forward a portion of any of that money?

Sorry, Deputy Chair, I wasn't speaking into the microphone.

Is the Yukon government putting any of its money toward that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We will be putting our own money into that project.

Ms. White: We are in budget debate, so could the minister tell me how much of Yukon's money will go toward that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I know the member opposite is anxiously waiting for me to give a number. I'm not going to give a number on the floor of the Legislature today. As I said, a tender is about to go out, and I really don't want to interfere in the tender process and give people any indication about what the Yukon government might be willing to spend on this project.

Ms. White: I guess I will wait for the ministerial response or statement that will come forward; then I will have the pleasure of responding.

Where are we with the completion of the Carmacks arena?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We expect it to be completed by the fall of 2022.

Ms. White: At this point in time — so, understanding that the project needed to be retendered in March 2021 after the Yukon government terminated the right of the original contractor to continue on the work of the project on December 15, 2020 due to performance issues, where are we as far as — I mean, we've obviously blown through the timelines, so it's not about being on time. Where are we in the budget of that? How much has that project cost to date? How much do we expect to spend before its completion?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The current estimated cost of the Carmacks arena replacement is \$16 million. Because of the history that the member opposite touched on, there is a claim against the builders and we'll see how that resolves. The Yukon government is endeavouring to get money back from the original builder of this project.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that one of the things that we've highlighted in the past is — and this is a conversation that can be held again with the Minister of Highways and Public Works — but if the government is in the process of — is in the middle of having a claim against the builder, is there any mechanism in place so that builder is unable to bid on future government buildings?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would encourage the member opposite to talk with my good colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, about that issue. I know that — I'll just leave it there, actually. I know my good colleague is probably the best person to answer those questions.

Ms. White: Although the answer is not unexpected, I always hope that, when we talk about a one-government approach, we can have these conversations across departments.

So, the minister just referenced a youth centre in Dawson City when I asked about recreational opportunities. I wanted to know if he was referring — is there a second youth centre going into Dawson City? Of course, the new Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth centre in Dawson is open now. When he mentioned "youth centre in Dawson City", is he referencing a second youth centre?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: No, it's the same youth centre — the one that we talked about earlier in this Sitting. I believe there was a ministerial statement on that.

Ms. White: Thank you for that, Deputy Chair. I thank the minister for that answer — which is interesting, because I was told to reference the budget speech to find out projects, and so I just wanted the clarification from the minister.

Has he been having any conversations with youth in Carcross? I can say that I've personally heard multiple times that youth in that community would like a youth centre. Has there been any conversations with youth in Carcross or the Carcross/Tagish First Nation about supporting a youth centre in that community?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Not a youth centre per se in the Carcross area, but basically a community centre of some design. We just recently got some representation from the LAC and the community club for that, and I have responded in writing to them to put that on the priority list for the community.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I had a walkaround as well during the 2021 election campaign about the community club and the hopes for its revitalization or its exchange, so I'm glad to hear that the minister is encouraging them to move that up the list.

A question that I have asked recently — actually, in the Assembly during Question Period — was about community transportation — so, transportation between communities. It is critical for a whole bunch of reasons. Today, as a matter of fact, I was talking to a person who highlighted that when you leave treatment — so if you come into the Mental Wellness and Substance Use office here and go to a treatment program, when you get released from that treatment program, there is no ability or support to get back to your home community.

There was a report that was paid for in part by the Department of Economic Development, but I would imagine that community connectivity would fall under the guise of Community Services. Is the minister working with communities to look at transportation and connectivity between communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is a very interesting subject. When Greyhound pulled out of the territory, when in my previous role as Highways and Public Works minister, we did have discussions of this at the national level, but in my role — in this role as Community Services minister — inter-city transportation is not something that the Yukon government currently offers. If we do — we deal with municipalities in funding their inter-municipal transit services. We certainly are working with the City of Whitehorse to improve its intracity transportation, and that is really where our focus has been.

In my travels throughout the territory, I have not heard a lot of communities asking me about intra-territorial transit services in any way, shape, or form. It would require an enormous — a lot of consideration from a policy and actual execution, because it is not something that we currently do.

We do have private companies, and some First Nations are actually providing that service for their citizens. But as far as the Yukon government, it's not a field that we're currently in. We would have to require a lot of planning to actually execute on such a thing if it was something that we were contemplating getting into.

Ms. White: Has the minister had an opportunity to read the report that was paid for in part by the Yukon government called the *Yukon Community Travel Project Final Report*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have.

Ms. White: Well, that's fantastic news because that gives us a spot to start. Within that document, it recommends that community transportation actually be looked at and moved forward. Again, we have a government that talks about issues of affordability, access, and inclusion. When you live in a community like Beaver Creek and the nearest groceries in

Canada at any significantly sized store are in Whitehorse, you are talking about more than a 10-hour roundtrip.

I'll just ask the minister again: Through Community Services, is he having these conversations with municipalities about connectivity between Yukon communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my last answer, it has not organically come up from any of the municipalities that I have met with in the last year or so.

Ms. White: I probably wouldn't guess that the conversation would have organically come up in Keno that they wanted their transfer facility closed, so I'm asking the minister: Is he going to have these conversations with communities about community connectivity, as recommended in that report?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to have conversations about any manner of services that municipalities and citizens across the territory would require. As I said before, the territory is currently not in the inter-city transit system business, and I have not had those entreaties from municipalities. If they came to my attention on my community tour, I would be happy to have the conversation and start to explore it in more detail.

I have read the report of the committee that met, but those types of conversations did not come to my attention when I was on my community tour last year.

Ms. White: I just hope that the pathway to communication is open.

Something that we talk about — or that I talk about often in this Chamber — is the discrepancy between community librarian wages and those of folks who work in the library here. As we know, we have had ministers across the way wax lyrical about the importance of libraries and the important role of librarians.

I have just a question to the Minister of Community Services: When is the department going to look at the wages that are paid to community librarians, and when will we see that wage be reflective of the work that they do in rural communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We as the Department of Community Services — Yukon Public Libraries is currently looking into the possible options for assessing and evaluating salary dollars for community libraries. That work is being done as we speak.

Ms. White: That is the first time in 10 years of asking that question that I have a response that I am jazzed with. There's real hope here for community librarians and I appreciate that. I really hope to see that work. I have to say that I am almost at a loss for words. I have asked that question so many times and not had a response that I liked, but I'm going to move on. I didn't even know that I would be able to move on after one question; that's so exciting.

The *Societies Act* is a piece of legislation that falls under the purview of Community Services. First of all, has the minister heard from anyone about the *Societies Act* or their concerns around the *Societies Act*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, I have heard some concerns from societies about the new *Societies Act*. We are in a transition period and I have listened to, logged the concerns, and actually connected the individuals with the Department of

Community Services who are working individually with those groups who require assistance. That is the tack that we are taking within Community Services.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that the minister has acknowledged that he has heard from folks with concerns, which is good, because I am looking at a letter that was sent to us on Monday, February 7, 2022, where it says — quote: "I am writing to you this morning to see how you can help solve a constant problem that we, as small non-profit organisations, are facing when we ask the Yukon Government staff at the Corporate Affairs to clarify questions about the New Societies Act. When YG announced the change to this new act, it mentioned that there would be videos and material to support its clients, being us the NGOs, to facilitate the transition. However, beside the information on the web and the webinar that VBY has produced, I have not seen anything else. Most of the time we ask a question to the Corporate Affairs office for clarification on the new Act, we get the reply I got this morning", and that reply was to consult a lawyer.

So, is the department planning on creating more material to support folks who sit on boards to better understand the *Societies Act*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As the member opposite noted, it was a letter that we both received. I immediately reached out to the department and inquired about the letter that I had received. I am told by my deputy, Matt King, that the department has reached out to those individuals and is working with them on that.

In terms of getting materials and helping groups with the transition, I committed just moments ago to help groups with that transition. We have come through a pandemic in the last two years with this new legislation. The department has done quite a number of things to help with this transition. Obviously, more needs to be done. I have asked the department to help to provide the service that Yukoners need to make the transition to this new piece of legislation, and I have every confidence that the department will do so.

Ms. White: I guess the concern I have is that when questions are asked — and so, for example, new legislation passes this House and is quite complicated — this is not a criticism to folks on the ground; I can't imagine trying to navigate through this without having the supports in place — my concern is there's a one-off approach of answering questions to people, as opposed to making the information more systemically available. I don't disagree that we are indeed in a pandemic. That is true, but things continued on. I am sure that policy papers were written at different desks or kitchen tables around the territory as things went on, because work still continued.

So, are there plans from the department to make sure that there is material available to NGOs across the spectrum when they have questions as they try to navigate the new *Societies Act*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Department of Community Services is doing a lot to help Yukoners transition to the new *Societies Act*. There are always going to be more concerns. We are talking about a letter that was received. I certainly know that

the folks in Community Services have reached out and are working on that issue.

I will go through some of the things they've done. They have provided a public presentation on the new societies legislation on October 27, 2020. They developed training materials, modeled bylaws, and frequently asked questions and answers on the new legislation and made all of those available on the societies website for the launch of the new legislation on April 1, 2021 — about a year ago. They updated web materials and update them on a regular basis. They held public webinars on the new legislation, transition, and the new processes on October 9 and 10, 2021. They wrote and mailed the newsletter to all societies, clarifying the regulatory position regarding concerns expressed regarding the new legislation.

They provided a public presentation to societies on September 8, 2021. The meeting was facilitated by the Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon society on the new legislation transition processes and provided a public presentation to societies on September 8, 2021. The meeting was facilitated by, again, the same volunteer society regarding the required bylaws, directors, duties and responsibilities, and a transition checklist. They developed multiple online resources, including presentation materials, step-by-step video tutorials, et cetera, and made all those available on the branch's website.

We do know that despite all this great work — and it's a tremendous amount of work that a very small branch has done — that there are still going to be problems. Some people are not going to be able to get all the answers they need. I have asked the department to reach out and work with those groups, and they will continue to do so.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer, but if it's possible, instead of rushing through it, if he could read it maybe at half that speed just so someone like myself could take notes as we go forward and be able to actually fully hear the conversation, I would appreciate it.

Again, one of the concerns is that some of the advice people are being given when they contact Corporate Affairs is they're being told to contact a lawyer for clarification. Although it's true that there has been a lot of work done and, based on the timelines that the minister said, even in the middle of a pandemic — so within that two-year span — but there are still questions that exist. It's not a criticism to what has been done; it's just asking if more will be done and more information will be available to help people.

Again, societies — NGOs in many cases — fill a lot of the gaps left by government, and we certainly don't want to discourage people from participating on those boards that do all that work because they're having a hard time navigating the legislation that's supposed to rule them.

So, it's just asking that more be done so that we don't send people, for example, asking for legal advice on how to decipher that legislation.

I'm going to move on, actually, to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. Some of the stuff that you can get from online is supplementary information about the department. One thing that I thought was really interesting is that there's an entire section under Regulatory and Consumer Services entitled

“Residential Tenancies”, and it talks about the number of dispute resolutions that occurred between landlords and tenants. The actual number between 2020 and 2021 was 111. The estimate for 2021 to 2022 was 120. The estimate for 2022 to 2023 is 160.

One of the questions that we often have when we talk about the dispute resolution process — and I'm going to talk about trailer parks because mobile home parks are something that are near and dear to me. When a person files a dispute resolution — when they go into this process — and it goes in front of the board, it is a binding legal resolution that happens there, but sometimes there's a direction given. I want to know: How does the residential tenancies office follow up on those directions?

For example, if a landlord or tenant is told to do something, how does the office follow up to make sure that action has been taken?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Before I move on to the residential tenancies office, I am going to go back to the *Societies Act* and just let the member opposite know that Corporate Affairs staff are prevented from giving legal advice. They can't give legal advice. They are not lawyers in that office, in many cases.

When model bylaws are used, such as the ones we put on the website for societies to actually model their bylaws on, it makes it a lot simpler for the staff to guide societies through the process. When societies customize bylaws — come up with their own — they will probably need legal advice to ensure compliance with the *Societies Act*, so we are trying to make things as clean as possible. Some societies are older and have customized their bylaws, and it's very difficult for staff to wade through those problems.

I have asked the staff to do their very utmost to provide top-tier service to the clients who are Yukon citizens and are seeking advice, and I have no doubt that they will do so. I just wanted to clarify that one piece. When you get into societies and bylaws, that realm can become very tricky for a public servant to make a judgment on how a bylaw can be interpreted in a particular case, especially if they are not sort of boilerplate templates that the department has provided — so just that clarity.

As far as the residential tenancies office, the residential tenancies office does follow up on orders and rulings that it makes, especially when those rulings include a date by which a landlord or tenant must do something. If it's just an open ruling that they have made, then it's generally complaint-driven. That is, if the landlord does not comply with an order that has been given by the office, then it relies, in some cases, on the tenants to come forward and say that they are not doing what you asked them to do, and then they will follow up at that point. But if there's a date involved, they will often follow up themselves and make sure that the landlord has taken the action that they ordered them to take.

Ms. White: I do appreciate both of those mentions from the minister, especially around Corporate Affairs. Folks at that office do a lot of work, but it seems to me that if the *Societies Act* is pushing non-profit organizations toward having to ask for legal advice, then the next question becomes: How does

government support that office to make sure that societies, as they try to follow this new *Societies Act*, are supported?

I know that it's complicated and that the issue is probably one that has been thought about before, but again, how do we support individuals who are doing that?

The minister just mentioned the residential tenancies office and how they will follow up. One of my concerns is that, if we have, for example, a multi-unit building that has had a fine or there has been a decision — when the onus of responsibility falls on tenants within either that one building or a park to follow up to make sure that the park or the multi-unit building has done what it said it would do, it really puts people in a vulnerable position.

As we know, one shortcoming of the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* is evictions without cause. We're one of the only jurisdictions in the country with that, and so, can the minister expand on how he thinks that tenants who have already fought the process the first time should follow up to make sure that the direction has been followed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: If a tenant believes that they have been wronged, they should contact the office. I guess that is the first thing. If they feel that their rent has been increased inappropriately, they should definitely contact the office and bring it up with the officers there.

I will also say that a landlord cannot take retaliatory action against a tenant who raises a concern with the office. If a landlord does retaliate against a tenant for doing so, they should contact the office. That does fall within the office's jurisdiction to investigate and levy penalties.

Ms. White: Again, although I appreciate the minister's response, I know, going through previous decisions from that office, that, for example, when the office issued the direction that a new correction letter must clearly indicate that it replaces the earlier letter — and it goes on to say that the \$100-discount still stands — that letter never went out to that mobile home park.

The minister said here in the House last year, I believe, that he had seen the letter. I asked if he could show me the letter, and he never did. So, this is very specifically about a mobile home park.

Again, is the expectation that, when the office makes a decision that affects a multi-tenant situation, it is up to a resident to come back and say that this hasn't happened?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, first of all, let me begin. The process used by the residential tenancies office is the same used by the courts. It is a quasi-judicial process that has been set up within the office. As in court, if one party is ordered to do something, the aggrieved party must follow up. It mirrors the court system — the system used by the residential tenancies office.

The second piece has to do with the letter within the trailer park. So, the office did follow up, did actually confirm, and did get a copy of the correction letter dated June 17, 2021 to the residential tenancies office. The review by the tenancies office confirmed that the letter complies with the order. Further, the landlord confirmed that they hand-delivered this letter to all residents.

That was confirmed by the tenancies office. If a resident did not receive the letter, or misplaced it, the tenant may request another copy from the landlord directly.

So, that letter did go out following the order that was made. We did investigate and we did follow up the letter to the officials — they did follow up, did see the letter, and did confirm that it had been hand-delivered to every resident at the trailer park.

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 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. White: I just want to thank the minister for that assertion and for the confirmation that the residential tenancies office has followed up. I do appreciate that, so thanks to them and thanks to the minister for answering that question in that way. I will follow up with folks there particularly. I do appreciate that answer and I do appreciate that assertion, and I thank the folks in that office because I know that it is not easy. I thank the minister for that answer.

Following up on that piece of legislation, the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* was debated here in 2012, and I can say that it was me who did that debate, and we recognized some of the faults in 2012, but it was substantially better than what existed before.

I mentioned today that having evictions without cause is definitely a loophole that I recognize. Is there an intention from this minister to review this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much to the member opposite, the Leader of the Third Party, for bringing up the letter and the mobile home park. It is an important issue; it really and truly is. No tenant wants to deal with these things, and so I really do appreciate her advocacy. I want her to know that it is a matter that I take very seriously as well.

I know that the residential tenancies office works very, very hard on these things. They don't have a large staff, and they are working very hard to provide the very best service under the law that they possibly can to both landlords and tenants, but it is usually the tenants who have the heart-rending cases.

Whether or not we are going to take a look at the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* is a good question. We are going to have to review it at some time. It currently is not on our legislative agenda, but it is a piece of legislation that I have asked many questions about within the Department of Community Services to get acquainted with it and to find out its strengths and weaknesses. I think that at this point, though, it is not on our legislative agenda for review.

The Department of Community Services is responsible for one-third of all the legislation in the territory, so it's a very legislation-heavy department. We are currently undertaking the CEMA review as well as looking at the *Health Professions Act*, so we have a lot of legislation to oversee. We have a lot of legislation to improve. That is not to say that this piece of legislation is not important and it is not to say that this piece of legislation does not deserve a second look, especially given the current housing climate. But at this moment, I will tell the member quite plainly that it is not on our legislative agenda at this time.

Ms. White: I do thank the minister for his honesty there and would urge him to move up the review of that legislation, just due to the sheer importance of what it means to people who are tenants and landlords in the territory because there are a fair number of them and that affects people. That's a piece of legislation that essentially governs their ability to access housing. So, I would encourage him to move that up, knowing that the review for CEMA and the *Public Health and Safety Act* was in his mandate letter — that this was something to go above and beyond.

Another thing that was in the mandate letter — it says: "Begin work to revise the *Health Professions Act* to improve how we regulate healthcare service professionals." It also says that it "... will be led by the Department of Community Services with support from the Department of Health and Social Services."

So, can the minister update us to how the work is going on revising the *Health Professions Act*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This is a task that I take very seriously. I have had lots of discussions with people about this. We've had discussions on the floor of the Legislative Assembly about this issue. It's currently focused around psychologists, but it applies to so many others — to physiotherapists, to optometrists. You could go through any of the professions, and this is a piece of legislation that really does need to be modernized and brought into true.

That is no easy task. It touches on a number of different bodies that all govern themselves differently. We have a very small territory. When you are trying to regulate these industries, you often have conflicts of interest. It has to be explored. There are a lot of policy questions. We're currently scoping those out and scoping out how this interacts with all of the policies within government. I wish it were easy. I know that we've explored the psychologists working with some of the other schools of medicine, like in Alberta or BC — partnering with these groups and trying to bring them in so we have some oversight and to bring some view to these professions so that the public can have confidence in them. I've heard from psychologists about how they feel an erosion in confidence in their profession because, quite frankly, they feel that anybody can come up here and throw a sign on their door and start practising that type of work. They know that this is not — it's definitely not healthy. It doesn't help Yukoners. It opens them up to all sorts of — they potentially could be taken advantage of and not get the service they need or, worse, be taken advantage of.

So, we understand that. I understand that. I take this very seriously. I know my colleague, the predecessor in this role, also took and takes this seriously. We are working on this file.

We have had meetings on this just prior to this session starting. We have sought legal advice to see what we could do to sort of streamline this and expedite it. We have staff dedicated to this review. It is going on.

The question is — we have to have some discussions internally, but what direction we're going to go — whether we're going to take the hard, longer route or whether we're going to take a more expedited route, which may not get the results we need. So, those are the questions we're grappling with internally right now.

I guess I'll leave it there at the moment. I understand this is a priority, because these professions have been woefully neglected for quite a long period of time, and unravelling this issue with medical professions in the territory and regular health professions, rather, and regulating them properly and bringing them into a modern regulatory environment is a big task.

I guess I'll leave it right there, Deputy Chair.

Ms. White: So, although I appreciate the points that the minister made there, the mandate letter says: "Begin work to revise the *Health Professions Act*..." So, my question was: Has work begun to revise the *Health Professions Act*?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes.

Ms. White: Excellent. Thank you, Deputy Chair. I thank the minister for that.

He did just mention psychologists. I appreciate that, when he met with them, they highlighted their concern. I'm sure it's the concerns that were echoed both to me and the Yukon Party as well. Specifically, in Question Period, there isn't much opportunity for an exchange on what's going on with that.

The minister mentioned reaching out to schools in both Alberta and British Columbia, as far as partnering. We know in Northwest Territories, they work with the school of psychology in Alberta. In Question Period, he said that there were barriers that existed for Yukon. If he could maybe expand on that, that would be helpful.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I do appreciate the opportunity that the member opposite is affording me to delve into this issue a little bit more, because it is complicated. Of course, Question Period is, at the very least, a short story, if not a précis to other issues.

So, when I met, and I am sure — the briefing that I had from the association, I'm sure, was mirrored with the other parties. I heard a strong interest in being regulated through a memorandum of understanding with the College of Alberta Psychologists or another school. The Alberta college has confirmed with us that it currently has memoranda with the Government of Nunavut and the Government of the Northwest Territories to support them in regulating their profession.

Both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, however, have legislation and/or regulations in place requiring that psychologists be licensed by the territorial government to practise. The Yukon does not, and that is causing a major problem for us here in doing this. So, the Alberta college

supports both governments in regulating the profession by assessing the credentials for entry into practice, helping to develop standards of practice, and managing complaints and disciplinary processes under contract.

We are working with the Department of Justice on this — trying to find a way forward to find a way to put in a stopgap for psychologists who are willing to see themselves governed by another school of medicine in one of the other provinces. We want to make sure that we do that. I would be very happy to do that, but we also — so, we are exploring that opportunity. We also want to fit it into the actual regulation of health professions so that we don't have a one-off that then complicates the regulation of health professions as a whole, as we go forward.

We have two streams right now. We have this one profession that we're looking to accommodate. We're trying to find ways within our existing legal frameworks to do that. We are exploring those options, but we also have the bigger package, which is trying to find a way to properly regulate a number of other professions. There are many. There are chiropractors, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dentists, denturists — it goes on and on. There is a very long list of people who are looking for a modernization. As we look to do that in an elegant way that makes sense for the territory and doesn't perpetuate red tape and make things really unwieldy, we want to do this right.

We are looking at all of these options. We are working very hard. We do have people dedicated to this role and we are trying to find a solution to properly regulate these professions.

Ms. White: I appreciate that answer from the minister.

I guess one of the concerns I have, especially after having conversations with the Psychological Society of the Yukon, is just the real seriousness of the work that gets done and that there can be real harm done. Although the minister wasn't here in 2011-12, there was a tragic loss of life, and that was when oil-fired burner mechanics weren't required to be registered in the territory. It was that lack of registration that caused the death of five people.

My understanding in having the psychologists reach out is that they are really trying to prevent a tragedy in the future. I would hope that this issue wouldn't require a tragedy for the Yukon government to move fast on it. I was there for that time. I sat through the coroner's inquest at the time and heard how many times that tragedy could have been prevented. Knowing that these professionals have signalled that they are concerned about the risk that can be caused by unlicensed and unregulated folks practising in their profession, I would urge the minister to continue on and be the champion around the Cabinet table for this legislation to be developed, because I think that it is critical.

I do thank him for the clarification as to why it is not as easy as it appears in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut — that they both have legislation, which I did find online — but I just hope that it doesn't take the same kind of tragedy we saw with the oil-fired burner mechanics before those folks were required to be licensed in the territory.

I'm just going to leave that there. I thank the minister for the acknowledgement that it's important. I would just

encourage him to be the champion of that issue around the Cabinet table.

So, going back to the minister's mandate letter, there's a bullet point that says: "Partner with the City of Whitehorse on improvements to public transit and active transportation." We have seen changes recently to public transit, but I want to know what the minister is doing and what his department is doing to support the City of Whitehorse on improvements to active transportation.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the member opposite for her remarks on the psychologists and the health professions modernization.

She mentioned the tragedy that happened in early 2011-12 with the loss of life. I had a different perspective on it. I was aware of and working on the same file from a different angle. It is tragic; we have to do better. I could say to the member opposite that if there's anything that keeps me up at night in this job, it's that type of tragedy, so I am working on this job and trying to. It's an easy sell for my colleagues in Cabinet. They are fully behind us. We are working very, very hard to sort this out. We know it's important. We are, as a group, aligned on the need for this modernization.

So, active transportation is a subject that is near and dear to my heart. I know it is for my good colleague across the way, as well, although I will confess that this has been a terrible year for me on the active transportation side. I'm hoping, in the next couple of weeks, to resume my use of our active transportation network here in the City of Whitehorse.

One of the — probably the primary way that I help and facilitate active transportation in the City of Whitehorse — because it is a municipality under the control and direction of an elected city council that actually makes the decisions on this front — is that they will bring their requests and their ideas to Community Services. We work with the City of Whitehorse — and indeed any municipality in the territory — to further their active transportation system and try very hard to connect the municipalities to the federal sources of money to help actually expand some of those networks. So, we're basically, in many cases, in a funding role — although I do meet with the City of Whitehorse on a regular basis to have these discussions.

There may be some other synergies within the sport and rec branch, but generally it's to help connect the municipalities — in this case, the City of Whitehorse — with the money they need to actually expand and build their active transportation system.

When it's done — when it's actually executed — in some cases, my good colleague in Highways and Public Works will also work with that as well, but generally, our role as Community Services is to connect and help the City of Whitehorse with their funding requests to the federal agencies.

Ms. White: I do thank the minister for that and I encourage him, when he's ready, to get back on his bike. It's a great way to get to work, although I think my near-death experiences every single day at times are enough to make me reconsider. I'm hopeful that, working between the City of Whitehorse and the territorial government, some of those really

scary incidences can be minimized, but that's for a different discussion.

There is a point in *Our Clean Future* — and I'm just going to quote from the report. It says: "Develop detailed guidelines by 2025 that can be used by the Government of Yukon and partners to develop walkable, bike-friendly and transit-oriented communities."

So, is the Department of Community Services participating in developing those detailed guidelines by 2025 to make Yukon a more walkable, bike-friendly, and transit-oriented community?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a role, of course, in this item that the member opposite has brought to us from *Our Clean Future*, and we do work with municipalities across the territory, so we will be a conduit for that information. I will reach out to my colleague in Environment, because the Department of Environment is the lead on this plan, and I will get more detail from my colleague in Environment as to where we are with this. As far as Community Services — I mean, all departments — we work with Highways and Public Works on trying to expand our active-living infrastructure. As I said earlier, we work with the City of Whitehorse as well.

But, as far as this one item in the *Our Clean Future* strategy, I will have to refer back to the Department of Environment to see where we are at with that. They are the lead on the report.

Ms. White: Then maybe I'll just put in one pitch for the minister based on that one bullet point in his mandate letter to encourage his colleague, both the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Highways and Public Works, who is responsible for what can only be described as a bike trap outside of the Yukon tourism building. It's the only wooden sidewalk along the entire Millennium Trail. It gets repainted every fall with grippy paint — it's supposed to be grippy paint — that wears off before the end of the season. It melts at different temperatures. I see cyclists go down every single time it rains and when it starts to snow and on the melt. In his efforts to partner with the City of Whitehorse on improvements to active transportation, maybe he can encourage his colleague to change the surface of that woodwork because it's dangerous. It is dangerous, so I look forward to seeing it changed.

Another point in the minister's mandate is: "Advance the government's bid to host the 2027 Canada Winter Games in partnership with the City of Whitehorse." I know my colleague from the Yukon Party was going through this conversation with the minister the other day, but it's interesting because I found an editorial that the minister had written previously in his position as an editor. He talked about — "taxpayers build white elephant" — "The Yukon government has spent, at the moment, \$31 million on the athlete's village.

"That is a pile of money."

It goes on and it actually has lots of questions about the timing — so this is an article from the *Yukon News* from April 1, 2006. Unfortunately, I don't think it was an April Fools' joke.

Can the minister tell me — he has criticism in this editorial about the amount of time that the government had to prepare

for the Canada Winter Games. I would say that it's almost the same reflected — it's 2022 now and the games are in 2027. Can the minister tell us how far along they are to advance the bid to host the 2027 Canada Winter Games?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am looking forward to this, actually. I really do appreciate the opportunity to discuss this on the floor, so I really do thank the member opposite for this.

I will start by talking about that wooden stretch of road by the tourism building. I know it well, and I have learned that it is a dangerous stretch of the Millennium Trail. I have taken a header on that stretch in the early morning. I believe it was probably about 6:45 a.m. coming into work. I, too, have skidded on that very slick piece of trail that sometimes has grippy stuff. I love the word "grippy", but it's not grippy. It wasn't grippy that morning, so I do know about it. I perhaps mentioned it to my officials in Highways and Public Works. I am not sure where the responsibility lies, but it is a good flag for me. I do remember it and I will bring it up.

At some point, if the member will indulge me — I commend the member opposite on her research skills to dredge up an editorial from 16 years ago, I think, by my math. It was a long time ago and I would love to refresh. I sometimes go over my old writing when I come across it. Sometimes, it's one of those moments where you say, "Holy smokes, that was tack-sharp" or "Oh, my goodness, what was I doing that day?" That is the beauty of daily journalism or weekly journalism, as the case may be, but I would love to refresh my reflections from 2006 with the man I am today. I would love to see what sticks and what has changed.

I will say, to the point, though, that the sentiment that the member opposite lit on from the editorial about the timing of the athletes' village and some of the challenges that were faced by politicians at the time are front and centre in my mind as I move through this Canada Winter Games bid and prepare for it.

I do know that, in the end, they ran out of time on the athletes' village and the cost of providing — and the solutions that they came up with were quite expensive. It absolutely was in my mind as we go through this, and it is continually top of mind. I think that my officials will know that I keep saying: "When does this have to be done?" and "Let's work back from that date and see when we have to have the plans done and the construction begun."

So, the member opposite is right. I don't have the particulars of that said time in my life — a lot of water under the bridge — but the sentiment that she did express, the trepidation of the cost and how it was executed is certainly part of the DNA that is Mostyn of 2022, and I am reflecting on that as I go forward with this games' bid.

Currently, the Canada Winter Games Bid Committee in Yukon government has confirmed the bid details, including — we have explored the financial commitments, the bid process, and the evaluation details. We have confirmed the bid evaluation technical committee chairs as of January. We had the host bid info session with the city in April 2021; that has been done. The board has provided the Yukon government with the final bid procedures and hosting standards document. That

happened in September. The Canada Winter Games Bid Committee and Yukon government launch of the 2027 bid process was begun in September 2021 and completed. The bid committee submitted its technical information in March. That has also been done.

Right now, we are in the next stage, which is that the bid committee submits its comprehensive information — the full bid. That is in process; that is supposed to be completed by October 2022, and then the Canada Winter Games Bid Committee and the Yukon government will jointly announce who wins the bid in November 2022.

So, right now, we are working out the specific information about our bid in preparation for the final comprehensive full bid, which is happening in October. At that time, we will have much more detail on the fourth ice sheet, the athletes' village, and some of the other pieces of infrastructure — the concrete details about what the Yukon is prepared to do in hosting the 2027 Canada Winter Games.

Ms. White: I guess I will just hold off on this, then, and we will see what happens. I guess my hope is, just to quote this document, that government doesn't jump in, dither, and, in the end, run out of time — because that was one of the things that he had written in that editorial.

He also had some great suggestions, like approaching the Canadian military about upgrading the cadet camp 20 minutes south of town for housing, but I'll keep that, because maybe it will be an interesting topic of conversation when the time arises. Similar to Hansard, it turns out that editorials also make for great fodder.

I would like to move on to paid sick days. So, the Making Work Safe Panel recommendations for permanent paid sick leave and amendments to the Yukon *Employment Standards Act* — that report was completed in January 2022. I'm actually on the Yukon Liberal caucus website right now, where that report is posted. I want to know where we're at in making those amendments to the Yukon *Employment Standards Act* to make permanent paid sick leave a reality in Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, I can report that the panel's report that was delivered on time is being reviewed by the department, which will advise on next steps, including the policy and legislative work, engagement, and other considerations regarding the best way to move forward on this matter. That's the work that the department is doing right now.

In the meantime, the Yukon government has extended the paid sick leave rebate to the fall of 2022 so that employers can apply to be reimbursed in order to support their employees who take sick leave during the ongoing pandemic.

Ms. White: Although I appreciate that the minister just referenced the program that still exists under the Department of Economic Development, what I am looking for is the commitment in this report about amendments to the Yukon *Employment Standards Act*, which does fall under the purview of the Minister of Community Services.

Can he tell me — he said that the conversation is ongoing, but can he be more specific?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At this point, I can't. The department is actually going through the necessary policy analysis to figure

out exactly how we implement it. There will be more conversations with the community as a whole to find out the appetite among the business community, labour, and Yukoners in general about some of the specific policy initiatives that will come up through the work of the Department of Community Services.

Ms. White: It is not often anymore that I have the opportunity to have the floor for the afternoon. Although I have more questions, I want to make sure that my colleague from Kluane has the opportunity to ask questions. So, I thank the minister for the exchange today, and I thank the officials who are here in support, of course, and everyone who works in the vast Department of Community Services. I do look forward to picking up my conversation where we left off the next time I get the opportunity.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to welcome the staff who is here today to aid the minister. I guess I do have a few questions. The first one I want to ask is: In this year's Budget Address book — the five-year capital concept under "Community and First Nations infrastructure projects" — it has phase 3 of infrastructure upgrades in Haines Junction. It has \$1.2 million for 2023, \$1.2 million for 2023-24, and \$1.2 million for 2024-25. I was under the understanding that, this coming year, phase 3 would be completed. The contractor was supposed to start last year. As you know, we are two or three years behind on this infrastructure upgrade.

Can the minister confirm whether this work is only going to be \$1 million to \$2 million a year for the next three years, so it will take three years to finish phase 3?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to welcome the Member for Kluane into the discussion this afternoon. It's always a pleasure to speak with him on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

I am going to take a little bit of exception to his characterization of the five-year capital plan that the Department of Highways and Public Works staff work so very hard to compile for every year. They're doing such a remarkable job, and to hear it disparaged on the floor of the Legislature is a bit hard.

I will note that, even as the member opposite disparages the five-year capital plan, he is using it to ask me questions in the House, so I'm glad he's finding some utility in the five-year capital plan that the Department of Highways and Public Works so diligently and thoughtfully pulls together every year for the benefit of all territorial citizens.

As far as the water works that are going into Kluane and that he has used the five-year capital plan to identify and to talk about, we are working very, very hard to get that done as soon as possible. My officials are currently looking into that project to get more detail. When I have it, I will endeavour to provide it to the member opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that. It was noted that it's over three years. I was under the understanding — and I'm pretty sure that the municipality was under the understanding — that it would be done next year. There's still phase 4 that needs to happen. It looks like the minister will have an answer, so I'll wait.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will report to the member opposite that our revised schedule here at Community Services shows that we're endeavouring to get phase 3 completed by the end of 2022-23.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that.

So, there has been a lot of conversation already today and over the last little while about community transfer station closures. I just have a couple of questions. I know that my colleague, the Leader of the Third Party, has done quite a good job actually of asking and bringing the concerns forward. I just have a few more.

So, in Question Period on March 21, I asked the Minister of Community Services about the transfer station closures and the lack of consultation with rural Yukoners. In his response, he said — and I quote: “People are throwing out a lot of stuff. When we came into office — my colleague has talked about this before — municipalities come to this government and said, ‘You have to do something...’”

So, can the minister confirm which municipalities asked for those four dumps to be closed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to visit this issue this afternoon on the floor of the Legislative Assembly again. I will say to the member opposite that in December 2016 — it was actually tabled in January. The report was finished in December and tabled in January. The report is dated January 2016. Association of Yukon Communities — *Solid Waste Management: Vision for a Sustainable Model for Yukon Communities* landed on the Yukon Party minister's desk at the time, I'm sure. Maybe it was read; maybe it wasn't. But that is the genesis of this whole plan. The plan then morphed when the municipalities — when we came to office, they came to us and said, “Please, we have to do something.”

So, it talked about regionalization and liability and control. That's what the genesis of the report that came to us in 2018 dealt with. It was talking about the committee's recommendations that were as follows: developing a user-fee system at Yukon government and municipal waste and management sites; exploring improved household hazardous waste and waste-oil collection programs and service levels; exploring organics diversion and composting programs in communities; exploring waste transportation and collection efficiencies; and advising the Minister of Community Services on solid waste, specifically focusing on solid-waste governance models, stewardship, and funding models and service objectives.

Through that report, as I said, it came down to regionalization — reducing the liability, regionalizing our landfills and making them more efficient, and asserting control. As we explored how to achieve those three things, we hit on the regionalization model. We're now in the middle of implementing and moving — we're in phase 2 of this plan already. Phase 2 sees the establishment of regional landfills in rural Yukon communities such as Haines Junction, Mayo, and Teslin. As we do that, we're actually closing those other sites — the small transfer stations — that continue to provide a hole in a bucket, as I've been saying, and actually provide an avenue for greater liability, greater cost, and greater environmental

pollution. That's exactly what we're trying to prevent, and we're trying to make this more efficient. So, that's the model that we're pursuing, and that's where that comes from.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister. I know he relies quite a bit on the previous minister to help him with some of this stuff and I do thank the both of them.

So, the minister also said — and I quote: “This government has been listening to Yukoners since we were elected to office and we are continuing to do this. I know that my colleague, the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, did extensive community tours — in some cases, with the Premier — to all of these communities and talked to them about the issues that matter to them, and I know that I have followed in his footsteps to do exactly the same thing.”

So, those are the words of the minister. Earlier today in the House, the minister said “... lots of conversations with our rural residents.” So, I know that the previous minister and this minister — there have been conversations with the people of Keno. But can the minister provide — and I know that the good staff at Community Services keep track of their community meetings. When we were in government, we travelled; we had staff with us. We met — a long list of to-dos. I've been to lots of those community meetings — had people holler and scream at me and all kinds of different stuff.

So, can the minister provide dates and times of public community meetings that — the one city he keeps talking about that he organized and attended with a number of attendees — basically in Destruction Bay and Burwash, where they discussed dumps? I know of one. I was there with the Leader of the Official Opposition. I'm looking for other dates and times.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said before and I will repeat again, change is difficult. There are no two ways about it. This plan is going to alter the way that Yukoners get rid of the 900 kilograms of garbage that they are producing every year — each individual. It will. It is going to make it harder for everyone, some harder than others. That's tough. It is hard. I do empathize with people who are seeing their lives changed and made a little more difficult in getting rid of the material that they consume, buy, and discard. This is something that, across North America and the world, we are struggling with — this type of change in the way we drive, transport, in the way we've had to deal with the pandemic, but we also have to deal with it in terms of our global consumption and the detrimental impact we're having on our environment, from the oceans, to the lands, and to our lakes and rivers.

If we don't, as the UN just notified us this week, we're in big trouble, and we may have already passed the threshold. Yes, life on this planet, if we are going to have the effect of perhaps sustaining the life that we have now and not have it degrade any further, is going to have to change. It is going to be inconvenient and hard in some cases.

The question we have as we stand at this point in time is: Do we act or do we not act? Do we take these tough decisions or do we cave to the convenience that we have had for decades and say, “No, we're going to continue that”? I know where I stand on that. A lot of it is outlined in *Our Clean Future*, and

we have had glimmers of it through this pandemic, which has forced us to change the way we work, change the way we interact with each other, and had a profound effect on our greenhouse gas emissions around the world. It's just a glimpse of the change that may be necessary in our lives to actually keep the planet functioning as we have grown accustomed.

To the member opposite, I say that my colleague has met with people across the territory and heard their concerns. I have heard the concerns not only of the single meeting that we both attended — it was great to see you up there — but also in other communities across the territory. We have heard the entreaties from the representative of those ridings, from the residents of those ridings; I have heard the concerns. As I said, I empathize with the change that is happening and we are working as a department to try to mitigate and answer some of the concerns we have heard from those residents. I outlined some of them earlier today, and the member is reading the Blues. I encourage him to read them again and he can get those answers and read them back to me at a future date.

The reality is that we are hearing — we have heard the concerns — and we have come up with some suggestions to perhaps mitigate some of the issues that may affect residents in rural Yukon as we adapt to the changes necessary to have an effect on, in this case, the incredible amount of garbage that we are producing in the territory and trying to manage it more efficiently in a way that ends the ongoing and growing exponential growth in the liability that we are facing. The municipalities came to his government in 2016 in January and came to our government shortly after we were elected and said: “You have got to do something.” Well, we are doing something.

It is important; I believe in it. I believe in the change. As I said, I know that some people aren't going to be happy with it. As I said, I am more than happy to meet with them as I did up in Burwash. It was a very expressive meeting, but I heard their concerns and I am happy to do it. I wasn't offended, I wasn't frightened, and I wasn't concerned. It is important. And I understand the frustration and the challenge that this change is bringing to people. I also believe that it is necessary.

As I said, I was at that meeting. My colleague was at meetings across the territory in, I believe, probably every community. The MLA has brought the concerns forward. That is another avenue for these people to do it. The AYC has heard these things. We have seen letters to the editor in the newspaper. I used to work in that industry, and it is another avenue to make your voice heard, and I have read the stories. I have heard the concerns. I will work to address what we can, but it comes down to a decision to do something or do nothing, and we are going to do something. We are going to regionalize our landfills. We are going to make them more efficient, and we are going to make them controlled.

We are going to take the ones that are large enough to be viable and we're going to put the money in there to put in the weigh scales, the electricity, the gates, and the staff to make sure that they are properly supervised so people don't go dumping noxious chemicals, waste oils, old televisions, old couches, and old fridges without any supervision. People will

bring their garbage to those sites, they will pay a tipping fee, and the tipping fee will be subsidized.

Those other sites that are unsupervised and are not viable — are not big enough to become a regional landfill — will be closed. We will work with those communities to address their concerns as much as we possibly can.

Mr. Istchenko: The reality for the minister is that we wouldn't be chatting this long and this often about dumps if the minister and the previous minister would have actually gone and had a discussion with the constituents of my riding — the residents of Silver City, Destruction Bay, Burwash, and Keno. My fellow colleagues from Lake Laberge and Pelly-Nisutlin — you know, that's the reason why you are in this trouble today. That is why constituents aren't happy. You just needed to go and consult. You probably would have found some great solutions.

The University of Calgary Arctic Institute of North America wrote the previous minister a letter. I can't even remember how far back it was, but it explained everything to him. This guy is smart. He has a university degree in exactly what the members opposite keep talking about. He had a solution for you in that letter.

So, the conversation that my colleague from the Leader of the Third Party and I had on dumps — we'll share with our constituents again. I'm sure we'll have more questions. I have to say that it's disappointing. It's disappointing that the minister will mislead people when he keeps saying that we've met and consulted —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Deputy Chair: Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, on a point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Standing Order 19(h) says: should not charge “... another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood.” The member across just said that the minister is misleading Yukoners.

Deputy Chair: Member for Kluane, on the point of order.

Mr. Istchenko: On the point of order, I would ask the minister for dates and times of meetings. He couldn't provide them, so that's why I said that he was misleading the House.

Deputy Chair's ruling

Deputy Chair: The Member for Kluane's initial comments did not suggest intentional misleading; however, his follow-up comments on the point of order did. Therefore, I would ask him to carry on without implying intentional misleading.

Mr. Istchenko: Deputy Chair, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Kluane 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. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following document was filed April 5, 2022:

35-1-63

Bill No. 304, *Act to Amend the Education Act*, letter re (dated March 31, 2022) from Tharain Botting, President, All Genders Yukon Society, to Emily Tredger, Member for Whitehorse Centre (Tredger)

The following written question was tabled April 5, 2022:

Written Question No. 15

Re: Investing in Canada infrastructure program (McLeod)