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Wednesday, April 13, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2022 Spring Sitting

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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

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
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THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, April 13, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to welcome Mr. Jeff Hunston to the gallery today, and I ask my colleagues to welcome him. He is here for our tribute to the 25th anniversary of the Beringia Centre. He was a long-time leader in the Department of Tourism and Culture. I also just want to note that he is also a big contributor to our community, volunteering with sports organizations, such as Whitehorse Oldtimers Hockey. I had the opportunity and pleasure to sit with him on the Elijah Smith Elementary School Council where he spent many, many terms contributing to the school community there. Thank you for coming today.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day of Pink

Hon. Ms. McLean: I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the International Day of Pink, which is recognized each year on April 13.

This year's theme is "Represent". This bold statement should make you think about what the Day of Pink represents and what we all represent when we participate in the day. We believe that, when we wear pink on April 13, we represent equality, diversity, inclusivity, solidarity, kindness, courage, acceptance, and much more.

Discrimination is everywhere and takes many forms. The LGBTQ2S+ community is not unfamiliar with bullying and the violence that stems from hateful beliefs. While progress has been made toward removing those social barriers from our society, we must still come together to raise awareness around all forms of bullying.

In Canada, the pink shirt movement began in 2007 after a high school student in Nova Scotia was bullied for wearing a pink shirt. The entire school took a stand and began working together to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying. Our education system is on a journey to reimagine inclusion, to move from tolerating indifference to seeing our diversity as a core value, and days like today are a reminder for all of us to examine how we personally and systemically are actively including everyone's uniqueness.

In Yukon schools, bullying awareness and discussions about gender and diversity are integrated into activities, classroom lessons, and events throughout the school year. Our high schools are all showing leadership and courage through gender and sexuality alliances and other social justice groups. These groups work each day to shift the school culture to be more inclusive and intolerant of bullying. In fact, I witnessed incredible leadership just this morning when I met with students from the gender and sexuality alliances of Porter Creek Secondary School, Vanier Catholic Secondary School, CSSC Mercier, and the Aurora Virtual School. These students, through their respectful dialogue with me and their compassion for one another, truly captured the spirit of International Day of Pink.

Today is a day when we demonstrate the celebration of diversity by wearing pink, of course, but by acknowledging how small actions can make a big difference. Let us continue this work to create a Yukon where we can all feel safe, valued, and supported to attend school, pursue our livelihoods, build healthy relationships, and connect to our community.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: Salamat, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the International Day of Pink. Today, we unite in pink in celebration of diversity and to raise awareness against all forms of bullying.

In 2007, a child in Nova Scotia was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to his first day of the ninth grade. Thanks to the actions of a couple of the young man's classmates, an international movement began. It started small, with the purchase of 50 shirts for classmates to wear in protest to the discrimination that their friend was subjected to. Their message was that anyone can bully and can be victimized by bullying, but together we can work to stop it.

Today, we wear pink around the world in protest of that same discrimination and harassment. Governments, organizations, schools, and individuals around the world wear shades of pink in solidarity against bullying, homophobia, transphobia, and all forms of discrimination. We celebrate diversity, tolerance, and openness and work to be a society that models inclusion.

When my son was in elementary school, he wasn't sure if he could wear pink. After that story about the pink shirt broke, he was leading the pink fashion in high school. It is truly important to be reminded: Boys can wear pink, and we all have the power to be kind.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the International Day of Pink. Today, millions of people worldwide are standing together against discrimination and bullying, whether it's based on race, age, disability, gender, or sexuality. Today, we celebrate our rich human diversity by wearing pink. Often, it is a small act of resistance that starts a revolution. As we have heard, that is exactly how pink shirt day was born. A movement in Nova Scotia that was started with an

act of resistance has since inspired millions of participants in more than 25 countries to stand up against discrimination and bullying.

Right here at home, we only need to look at our local high schools to see what inclusion and kindness look like in action through the work of the GSAs. Gender and sexuality alliances support all kids in a school by having a safe space for LGBTQ2S+ students and their classmates. These spaces radiate kindness, and that kindness permeates the very fabric of a school community. It was students who told us that they wanted their peers to feel safe and be able to participate in a GSA no matter what school they attended, so it's up to us as leaders to honour their calls to action. That's why it is so important to ensure that every kid, no matter what school they attend, feels safe, accepted, and supported through activities or groups like a GSA. We in the Yukon are on the cusp of making this a reality with Bill No. 304.

Pink shirt day reminds us today and every day to lead with kindness.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre 25th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre celebrating its 25th anniversary on May 29.

The centre, with its prominent woolly mammoths and unique architectural design, is an iconic site along the Alaska Highway, but it is more than just a display of ice age mammals and amazing fossil finds. It is a showcase in celebration of Yukon's significant role in global ice age research and a place to learn about the territory's ice age past.

The feature exhibit at the Beringia Centre is the reconstruction of the Bluefish Caves, an archaeological site located south of Old Crow within the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Bones and stone artifacts discovered at Bluefish Caves are some of the earliest evidence of the first people in North America. Research suggests that people visited the Bluefish Caves as early as 24,000 years ago.

Another highlight that we are proud to display are the three mummified ice age animals recovered from the Klondike gold fields in the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in: a caribou calf, a Yukon horse, and Zhùr, the wolf pup that made headlines around the world. For all the Zhùr fans out there, a limited edition print of two Zhùr posters illustrated by Canadian paleontological illustrator Julius Csotonyi will be available this summer.

In addition, there will be a new Beringia Centre introductory film showing to welcome visitors. This film, entitled *Crossroads of the Continents*, was produced and directed entirely by Yukon filmmakers, and it includes new and exciting archaeological and paleontological research and showcases the important work in collaboration between First Nation governments, placer miners, and the Yukon government.

When the Beringia Centre opened in 1997, its focus was to provide visitors with a window into Yukon's ice age past. The

centre's outreach program is evolving with modern formats boasting an active online and social media presence, including the popular Beringia Centre Science Talks series.

The centre has expanded its educational focus, developed on-site and take-home programming for children, school groups, and families, and is amplifying Yukon Beringian research to the world.

The last 25 years have been filled with much accomplishment, and I'm excited to see what the future will hold. This would not be possible without the amazing team at the Beringia Centre. Their hard work and passion in sharing the Yukon's ice age history is commendable.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 25th anniversary of the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre.

The centre, located on the Alaska Highway near the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport, was originally built in 1992 as a visitor reception centre, or VRC. However, at the time, it became a sore spot as it was felt that visitors would never come into the downtown area and would just continue along the highway without visiting our capital city, Whitehorse. The new VRC, along with government offices, was built next to the Yukon government main administration building. On May 29, 1997, the highway facility officially became the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre.

This interpretive centre's focus is on the ice age history and the land bridge that linked Yukon to Siberia — a vast subcontinent called Beringia. It is the window into Yukon's past. It presents and preserves the First Nation and scientific views of an amazing story. The story is fascinating and well-told. The staff offers tours, and one can also self-guide through the well-marked exhibits.

Programs and events are held there throughout the year with scientific presentations and films among many other things. The facility can also be rented for local events and is a lovely place to gather. School classes are always welcome to come and engage with the staff to learn about this exciting time in history — the myths, the legends, the findings, and the amazing facts all under one roof.

The most recent find in Yukon, the Bluefish Caves, located just 35 kilometres southwest of Old Crow, is an important and incredible link to this period. For all the archaeologists and paleontologists who thrive on ancient history, it is hard to imagine their joy and excitement.

We know and often see news coverage of finds or unearthing of mammoths, horses, and other animals in the gold fields. To be able to study these creatures that no longer exist and share the knowledge with the world is invaluable — the megafauna, the woolly mammoths, horses, six-foot beavers, giant bears, and more — a menagerie of large beasts that have been recreated in pictures for us to ponder.

To all the staff, innovators, artists, and leaders, past and present, who have made this a world-class facility, thank you, and we wish you continued success in your development and growth. Thank you to the museum and heritage arms of the

Department of Tourism and Culture for keeping this facility updated and relevant as new exhibits are refreshed. If you have not done so, get out and visit this local treasure.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the 25th anniversary of the Beringia Centre. As a child, visiting the Beringia Centre was an absolute delight, whether it was during a school trip or on a holiday with my family. What could be more fun than giant replicas of woolly mammoths and learning that they once made their home in the Yukon? As an adult, I still adore the mix of science and history. It highlights so much of the great research that is done in the territory. It's amazing that Zhùr, the 50,000-year-old mummified wolf pup, lives right here in Whitehorse.

I have also come to appreciate the support the Beringia Centre gives our community as an event space. It makes so many events possible, from festivals, to speaker series, to interactive activities. I also know that a space that is well-run does not happen by accident, so thank you to the Beringia team that keeps it running so smoothly. Thanks to your hard work, we all enjoy learning about the Yukon, both past and present.

Thank you, and I look forward to the continued evolution of this great local attraction.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENT

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling today four important documents. The first is a CBC article, dated March 19, 2015, entitled "Yukon Zinc granted creditor protection after mine closure"; another CBC article, dated January 28, 2015, entitled "Yukon Zinc owes \$3M in security payments for Wolverine Mine"; an article from the *Whitehorse Star*, dated March 19, 2015, entitled "Fifty-two Yukon firms are owed \$4.3 million"; and finally, a *National Post* article, dated December 25, 2016, entitled "Over \$350-million spent to clean up abandoned mine in Yukon and not an inch has been remediated".

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT it is the opinion of this House that licensed firearms owners should not be subjected to forced confiscation of their lawfully acquired personal private property without just cause.

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

THAT this House urges the federal government to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners by repealing their May 1, 2020 regulation that reclassified thousands of legally purchased rifles and other unrestricted firearms as prohibited weapons.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon Parks Strategy

Hon. Mr. Clarke: As Yukoners, we are proud of our beautiful, vast backyard. As we see warmer — or at least, truth be told, sunnier — days every day, we all look forward to the camping season just around the corner. Today, I would like to speak about our work under the new *Yukon Parks Strategy*, which sets out a long-term direction for the Yukon's territorial parks system for the next 10 years.

In 2022-23, we will work on a number of important infrastructure improvements to Yukon parks across the territory. This year, our government will invest \$1.5 million to upgrade, maintain, and replace boat launches and docks at a number of Yukon campgrounds, including Aishihik Lake, Ethel Lake, Frenchman Lake, Lake Laberge, Nunatuk, Otter Falls, Quiet Lake south, Quiet Lake north, Tagish bridge, Teslin Ten Mile, and Twin Lakes. This is a great initiative for tourists and Yukoners alike who enjoy being out on the water.

We will also invest over \$1 million toward facility upgrades, kiosk installations, hazardous tree removal, and campsite rejuvenation at a number of campgrounds, as well as playground replacements at the Pine Lake and Yukon River campgrounds. In addition, we will invest \$290,000 to add campsites at existing campgrounds, and we are piloting green operations, such as installing recycling stations at sites, as well as expanding and enhancing trails and day-use areas where possible.

Yukon parks now have two Cybertech compacting garbage systems, one at Wolf Creek and one at Marsh Lake. They each hold 300 litres of garbage — the weight of the garbage compacts. It is part of the greening operations strategy.

This system has more capacity, is bear- and fire-proof, and efficient. In the past, in the Wolf Creek Campground alone, the Department of Environment did two trips per week with garbage to the dump. Now it will be once every two weeks — of course, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A big piece of the success of Yukon Parks is our continued partnership with Yukon First Nations, and this year, we have partnered with the Dane Nan Yé Dāh Network and the Kaska Land Guardians program to help with park monitoring and the trail development in the Watson Lake area. We are also working with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and the Singletrack to Success trail crews to develop a new hiking trail in the Conrad Campground area.

In addition, our government is currently working with the six affected First Nations to identify a suitable location for a new campground close to Whitehorse that would not be more than a two-hour drive from the city.

Yukoners love camping, and we found that this love does not dissipate in the winter. That is why, this year, we piloted an enhanced winter recreation service at six parks and have received very positive feedback. We look forward to building on this success next winter, and we strive to help more Yukoners enjoy camping year-round.

Our government will continue to actively support Yukon Parks to help ensure that Yukoners can safely enjoy our territory and see all that it has to offer. As we approach this camping season, I want to remind Yukoners to be safe while camping, carry bear spray, let friends and family know where you are camping, when you expect to be home, and make sure that you plan ahead and bring all the necessary safety items you need.

Mr. Istchenko: I would like to thank the minister for the update on the *Yukon Parks Strategy* and parks infrastructure, as well as for the opportunity to respond here today.

So, we do have a number of questions about the *Yukon Parks Strategy* that have not yet been answered. The most obvious question that many Yukoners are wondering is where the next territorial campground will be located. In the press release announcing the release of the parks strategy, the commitment was clear. Major action included — and I quote: “... building a new campground near Whitehorse with up to 150 campsites...” Since then, the minister has told us that the government has been targeting a location within a two-hour drive of Whitehorse and that it would have easy access to a body of water.

In Question Period last week, the minister said — and I quote: “The final decision has not been made, but I can advise that, as indicated, the proposed campground could be larger than 150 campsites.”

Mr. Speaker, for context, this would make the proposed new campground, by far, the biggest one in the Yukon. However, the minister also said that he has been told by the department — and I quote: “... there is a possibility of this plan being divided into separate and discrete but smaller sites that may be identified...”

Of course, many Yukoners are very interested in learning more about which option the government is going to choose and what locations are currently under consideration by the minister. I hope he can use his response today to address this.

Additionally, many Yukoners are eager to hear what the minister has in store for campground reservations. The parks strategy says that the government will test online reservation options to improve fair access to some campsites in some road-accessible campgrounds and that they will be doing a pilot project on this. Can the minister tell us if this pilot project has been completed, which campground was tested, and what the results were of that project?

The parks strategy also contemplates making certain campgrounds more available year-round. As well, the strategy says that there is a need for a modest level of service in the off-season to deal with garbage and visitor safety. Can the minister tell us which campgrounds are available year-round and which

campgrounds have had this new, modest level of service added in the off-season?

I would also like to hear from the minister about other commitments in the parks strategy — specifically, commitment 4.2 on page 15. It says that the department will develop a Yukon territorial parks system plan to guide the development of existing and emerging parks and the establishment of future parks. We would like the minister to explain what work has been done on that commitment and when we might be able to see the new parks plan.

While I am happy to hear the updates from the minister, I sure hope he can also provide further information, when he gets on his feet again, about the questions I have asked here today.

Ms. Tredger: Like many Yukoners, I am eagerly awaiting the start of camping season, and thank you to those parks crews who are plowing snow out of many sites so that we can get an early start.

I was glad to hear in debate recently that, for the new campground, the government is considering multiple, smaller campgrounds, rather than one mega campground. As the minister mentioned, this may reduce the environmental impact of the campground and I would suggest might give it a more secluded and quieter feel as well.

I do have a question about the new campground. I notice that the parks strategy makes only a passing reference to accessibility, so I am curious to know: At these new campgrounds, will there be accessible sites and accessible outhouses? Many YG campgrounds have been getting makeovers with accessible sites, outhouses, and playgrounds, and we hope that this will be the standard going forward.

We were disappointed that the government has pushed ahead with raising camping fees for Yukoners. I wonder: What other options has the government considered? Have they considered increasing fees for tourists but not for Yukoners? Or have they considered opportunities for revenue elsewhere? One comparison the Yukon NDP has made before is how much the government charges for campground use compared to other Yukon resources. For example, there's Yukon mining royalties, which haven't gone up for gold since 1906. Campground permit revenue in a typical year is already more than half a million dollars, whereas placer mining fees, with nearly \$100 million worth of production, brought in less, at \$385,000.

Raising the campground fees is missing an opportunity to keep campgrounds accessible for all Yukoners. So, we look forward to the new investment and hope to see consideration of physical accessibility and financial accessibility as a priority in campground planning.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: In total, the 10-year *Yukon Parks Strategy* was created with input from more than 1,500 Yukoners, 10 First Nations, and 28 local organizations. As we implement the strategy to strengthen our parks and help get more Yukoners and visitors out in our beautiful backyard, we will continue to involve the voices of Yukoners and Yukon First Nations to help enhance the camping experiences the Yukon has to offer.

Through our work to plan the next location of Yukon's newest campground close to Whitehorse, the government invited all six Yukon First Nations with traditional territories within two hours' drive of Whitehorse to discuss possible locations and partnership opportunities. As both the Member for Kluane and the Member for Whitehorse Centre have indicated, there is more news to come on that front, as we go forward with that consultation.

As of now, the Yukon government maintains 42 campgrounds with more than 1,000 campsites, hundreds of outhouses, 12 recreation sites, and 57 territorial parks. Mr. Speaker, in 2021, we hosted over 52,000 people from over 48,000 campsite nights at our road-accessible campgrounds, including nearly 3,600 nights during our extended season in early May and in late September.

The Yukon government collects about one-half million dollars of revenue from the sale of camping permits, which accounts for a small percentage of the costs associated with maintaining our parks. Yukon camping fees have not changed for 20 years, and still today, our camping fees remain some of the lowest in Canada, and our parks have no fees for entry, day use, parking, boat launch, and they include free firewood. We are the only jurisdiction in Canada to provide all these amenities at no additional cost.

Mr. Speaker, we also offer a 50-percent discount for Yukon seniors, which is also one of the biggest discounts for camping fees for seniors in the country.

Yukoners will also soon see more improvements coming to Yukon parks, including a new online payment system to pay nightly camping fees at a discounted rate, which will launch next month. They will also soon see more year-round recreational opportunities and accessible wilderness experiences, such as paddle-in and hike-in sites.

Mr. Speaker, the *Yukon Parks Strategy* is guiding development of our parks, which will benefit Yukoners and those visiting our territory for generations to come. It is helping to improve camping experiences for everyone, ensuring that campsites are maintained, amenities can be offered, and our campground networks can continue to expand.

I look forward to continuing to see the exciting work unfold under the new *Yukon Parks Strategy* and thank all our First Nation partners and Yukoners for helping ensure that we offer some of the most beautiful and most memorable camping experiences in the country.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Diabetes programs for children

Mr. Kent: In a January 2022 letter, the Yukon type 1 diabetes, or T1D, support network raised concerns about the Department of Education's response to the Auditor General's 2019 report. In that letter, they say — and I quote: "... the Network believes that the Department of Education's response to the Auditor General's recommendation that there be a full review of the services and supports for inclusive education is

inadequate as it fails to incorporate the needs and perspectives of children with disease."

Has the Minister of Education taken any action to address the serious concerns raised by the Yukon T1D Support Network?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the question. In terms of health, safety, and well-being of our students that is always at the heart and centre of the work that we do and strive to do in our schools, the health and safety of students and staff is our first priority.

School staff definitely have a duty to students who are at risk from severe medical conditions, such as diabetes and other serious illness, and who may require medication and other care while they're under school supervision. These students require and receive planned care.

We do have an Administration of Medication to Students policy that's followed very closely and carefully. We certainly welcome the opportunity to have further dialogue and meetings with the T1D Support Network to review the extensive policy — our existing policy — and then identify any gaps.

All Yukon schools follow, as I have mentioned, the Administration of Medication to Students policy, which requires planned care and support for students with various medical conditions, including diabetes.

I look forward to further questions.

Mr. Kent: That response leads into this second question that I have.

At the Public Accounts hearing in January with the Department of Education, the deputy minister was asked about T1D's request for a diabetes policy in education. She said at the time that — and I quote: "I think that we would determine that next step after we review the existing policy and then identify where there are any gaps..."

Can the minister tell us what specific work has been done on reviewing the existing policy, and has the minister reached out to the T1D Support Network to ask for their input on this policy review?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you very much for the follow-up question. I think that this is really important and vital. As always, we take the health and well-being of our students very seriously, and we always look to work with our partners in education. We certainly value the work that the T1D Support Network does and we are always interested in working with groups, especially those with specific expertise. Our department is willing and wants to work with the T1D Support Network and have their input to work on the review of the existing policy and to identify any gaps. We are always interested in ensuring that our policies are strong. If there are areas in which we can improve on them, we certainly will.

Again, we do have a policy in our schools that is followed — the Administration of Medication to Students policy, which is taken very seriously by our education professionals.

Mr. Kent: So, that letter from the T1D Support Network also says — and I quote again: "That the Department of Education has thus far failed to incorporate their needs into broader improvement considerations shows either a calculated dismissal of these needs or an erroneous omission." So, it is

clear that a new approach is needed to address the needs of children with disease in our education system.

Will the minister agree to develop a stand-alone policy to address these needs in our K to 12 schools? Will she also agree to work with the T1D Support Network to develop this policy?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I think that I have already said that we will work with the T1D Support Network to look at the existing policy and identify any gaps.

It's important and vital, of course, that we are ensuring that our policies are the best that they can be and that is our interest — to ensure that Yukon schools have good policies in place. Schools are required to follow our Administration of Medication to Students policy, which includes processes for documentation of chronic medical conditions and any other required supports from adults while children are in school.

I also note that not only are we committed — the Department of Education — to working with the organization, the Department of Health and Social Services is working with the T1D Support Network on how best to implement a territory-wide type 1 diabetes strategy, which, of course, will include work that we need to do in our schools if it is to be a Yukon-wide strategy.

Question re: Whistle Bend development

Mr. Hassard: So, the housing crisis has gotten exponentially worse under the Liberals. This is in large part because the demand for lots is much higher than the supply provided by the government. The government's own budget documents make it very clear that, for the five and a half years of Liberal government, they have completely failed to keep up with the demand for lots. To quote directly from the budget: "The increase in prices have made owning a single detached home out of reach for many Yukoners."

That's why Yukoners were surprised when the Liberals abruptly cancelled the construction tender of Whistle Bend phase 7 last year, essentially delaying the release of at least 90 residential lots by a year.

So, Mr. Speaker, why did the Liberals delay Whistle Bend phase 7?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to rise on my feet this afternoon to talk about all the land development that our government is doing to help Yukoners.

I take exception to the preamble by the member opposite; I don't think that's any surprise.

Frankly, the reason why the territory is going through the lot squeeze that we are is because, frankly, they didn't develop a lot of lots and, under our mandate, the growth in the territory's economy is really extraordinary and is bringing a lot of people to the territory who are looking for housing. So, I know the member opposite failed to mention that, but that's a key reason why we're looking at developing more lots. We are actually doing that. We are working to get as many lots as we can out the door.

Now, we continue to advance Whistle Bend as quickly as possible in phases. We work closely with local contractors who carry out the construction and supply the materials needed to get the job done.

We ensure progress every year, releasing lots by way of lottery for private citizens and contractors in advance of the spring start to the construction season. Once Whistle Bend is complete, it will include 16 phases — 2,173 lots. I am happy to talk on this subject in future questions.

Mr. Hassard: Five and a half years — and the government is still blaming the previous governments, but I guess I'm not surprised.

To quote the Minister of Community Services from last spring: "The phase 7 construction tender just closed. It will supply another 90 residential lots targeted for release in the fall of 2022." But then the Liberals, as I said, cancelled that tender, resulting in the delay of more housing and making housing less affordable for everyone.

The Official Opposition has obtained a confidential briefing note indicating that part of the reason the Liberals delayed phase 7 was so they could redesign the tender to conform with the First Nation procurement policy.

Can the minister confirm if this is actually the case? Did the Liberals delay the release of residential lots by at least a year because of the First Nation procurement policy?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Wow, Mr. Speaker — that's a heck of a preamble. I am going to dig into this one a little bit because, frankly, we are being berated by the members opposite for actually making our briefing notes public.

The members opposite suspended the distribution of briefing notes. They were public because, in my former role as a journalist, I asked for them. When I did that, they shut it down. They actually made it so that we could not obtain the briefing notes from the government that were public information. These briefing notes are here to read into the record. How can that be confidential? This is a record that I am supposed to tell the public about. I am glad they have them in their hands, because that is the action that this government took through this rewritten ATIPP act — to put it back in the public's hands after it was revoked by the previous government. I'm not going to take any lessons from that.

As far as the lots and the First Nation procurement policy, I would love to know if the members opposite support the First Nation procurement policy. I'm getting the sense that they don't from preambles yesterday and today. I don't know where they stand on this, so I would love to hear, in his next question, whether or not the member opposite supports the First Nation procurement policy.

Mr. Hassard: It's unfortunate that, after five and a half years, the minister still doesn't understand how Question Period works either, but I'm not surprised about that. What is clear is that the Liberals have completely failed to keep up with the demand for lots over the last five years. Their own budget documents show that their delays in getting lots to market have contributed to this crisis.

Now, this briefing note confirms that the Liberals have made the political decision to delay the release of at least 90 lots. The newly issued tender for phase 7 closed on February 23. The government website indicates that the contract has still not been awarded — so more delays. Will the

minister tell us when the contract will be awarded, and when will phase 7 finally be completed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can share with the House today is that the direction that we have given, at all times, to the Department of Community Services and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is to redouble efforts to get as many lots out as quickly as possible, using our new procurement policy.

I disagree with the members opposite. I think that they have been unreliable on this issue. Under the Yukon Party, four years — \$24 million in total on land development. This year alone with the Yukon Liberal government, \$26 million — that's four times the rate at which we are investing — \$13 million in Whitehorse, \$13 million in our communities. We are working to develop as many lots for Yukoners as quickly as possible. We just had a lottery recently — 78 lots, I believe. There is more work to come, and I would like to thank the Department of Community Services for all the work that they do to develop lots as quickly as possible for Yukoners.

Question re: Universal paid sick leave

Ms. Tredger: In January of this year, the Making Work Safe Panel presented a report on paid sick leave. It recommended implementing a universal paid sick leave program that would make sure that all Yukon employees have access to 10 paid days of sick leave each year. Since then, the government has neither responded to nor accepted the recommendations. The hundreds of Yukoners who were consulted in the making of this report are still waiting for answers.

Will the Liberal government commit to implementing these recommendations so that Yukoners have access to 10 days of paid sick leave each year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. It's a real pleasure working with her and the panel on the recommendations for a paid sick leave program in the territory. We did do the engagement, and it went very well.

The report that we tabled has gone to government and it has been — they were recommendations only — and now the government has taken those recommendations, and we are breathing life into those recommendations, but there is still work to be done; there is no doubt about that. We are now engaging with local businesses and other groups to address the concerns about the panel's recommendations that we received, but we do know that having sick leave in the territory is important for Yukoners. It is important, certainly, in light of what we have learned through COVID, and we have extended our paid sick leave program — which has been delivered through Economic Development so successfully — to the fall of this year, while we actually assess the great recommendations that the Making Work Safe Panel has made to government.

Ms. Tredger: I appreciate that it takes policy work, but the clock is ticking. The temporary paid sick leave program expires on September 30. That is less than six months away. By the time the next session of the Legislature starts, the sick leave

program that the minister is counting on will already have expired, leaving many Yukoners forced to choose between going to work sick or losing their wages.

Health professionals have spent the last two years begging people to stay home when they are sick. Overwhelming evidence from around the world shows that paid sick leave helps keep people safe and healthy. Leaving Yukoners without paid sick leave is an unacceptable public health risk.

So, will this government commit to bringing forward changes to the *Employment Standards Act* in the next Sitting, and if not, what is their plan to keep Yukoners safe after September 30?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. We know that there is value in providing a paid sick leave program for Yukoners; that is why we have done it throughout the pandemic; that is why we have extended that program until September of this year. We also know that employers have concerns about how a program would be introduced and managed within the Yukon. We also know that the engagement that we conducted together showed that there is support for a paid sick leave program in the territory, but it also left unanswered how that program would be implemented or paid for. That policy work is going on right now, through the Department of Community Services. We are working on that policy work right now. We are then going to have Cabinet discussions about how to proceed, once we get the information gathered together and have the answers to some of these questions before us.

We also have to work with the local business community and Yukoners in general, once we have those ideas, on how to actually implement this. So, there is a lot of work yet to be done. We are working on that work right now and we hope to have answers as soon as possible for Yukoners, because we know how important this matter is for them.

Ms. Tredger: The minister said this is important; the minister said this has value, but I still haven't heard a clear answer about whether we're going to get paid sick leave or not. The Making Work Safe Panel did a thorough public engagement. Yukoners' support for a universal paid sick leave program was overwhelming. Hundreds of Yukoners shared their thoughts and stories — stories of people who had to sell their possessions to cover their rent if they missed even one day of work, stories of parents who struggled every time their kids had the flu and couldn't go to daycare because they couldn't afford to stay home.

Yukoners have spoken, and they deserve a clear answer from this government. Is this government going to implement universal paid sick leave — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have said on the floor — you know, as part of this whole panel process, I heard those same stories. I know how important this matter is to Yukoners. I know the benefits that it can bring to a society when it's implemented. As a matter of fact, our government is learning that first-hand, because we actually have a policy in place that is actually helping Yukoners at this very moment, and we have extended that program until September. That buys us needed time while we continue to assess and consult on this very, very important

matter for Yukoners. I have committed to doing that work. We're going to continue to do that work.

Question re: Carmacks arena

Ms. Van Bibber: Last year, the minister told us that the Carmacks arena is slated to be completed in the fall of 2022. A press release last year indicated that the original budget for the project was just over \$16 million. Can the minister confirm that the project is on track to be completed this fall? Can he tell us the new total budget for that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to rise to my feet again and get some questions. It has been a while, so I really do cherish this moment.

We are building infrastructure across the territory. We are building arenas; we are working very hard to provide the recreational opportunities that Yukoners have demanded for so very long. These investments are critical to our community, and we know that there were some issues with the Carmacks arena. We lost — the key contractor actually pulled out of the job and left us in a pickle. We are actually working to get that project back on track.

I have said before in this House that the project is on track. We fully expect it to be finished in the next few months.

We also are working very hard to recoup costs from the former contractor on this job. I know how important recreation is to the community of Carmacks. I know they're expecting this rink, and I'm really excited — I will be very excited to see it open in the next few months.

Question re: Recycling diversion credit program

Ms. McLeod: Currently, the Yukon government pays recycling processors to accept non-refundable recyclables, such as cardboard, paper, and plastic, by providing them with diversion credits. The vast majority of these products come from the City of Whitehorse. The City of Whitehorse caps the amount of diversion credits paid out at \$150,000 total. This means that there is less financial incentive for processors to accept materials beyond that cap.

Will the Yukon government provide additional funding to the City of Whitehorse to remove the cap on diversion credits?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It was a rich preamble from the member opposite. We are working very, very closely with the City of Whitehorse on a number of different issues. I have regular communication with the administration and with the mayor of Whitehorse. This is not an issue that the mayor of Whitehorse has brought to my attention lately, but I am certainly willing to entertain the request when it comes my way to see how we can help, because that is what we have been doing so much.

What is at the root of the question this afternoon, though? Is it the amount of garbage and waste that we are producing as a society? We know that we are taking great steps to reduce and make the people producing that waste pay for the waste they are producing. We have to do this because we, as a society, are producing way, way, way too much garbage. So, we have to take steps. When we came into office, we had municipalities coming to us and saying, "Please, you have to help us with our

waste management." My colleague, the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, stepped up and actually took steps to address the amount of waste we are producing in this territory. We are going to continue that effort into the future.

I have more to say on this. I hope I get the opportunity.

Ms. McLeod: The 2018 Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste recommended that the diversion credit program only be continued for a few years, while the 2018 changes to the designated materials regulations were implemented. It has now been four years since that happened.

What is the minister's plan for ending the diversion credit program, as was recommended by the ministerial committee in 2018?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say that we continue to work to implement a user-pay and managed regional model for solid waste in the territory throughout the territory, as a matter of fact, based on the recommendations from the Ministerial Committee on Solid Waste management, represented by the municipal Association of Yukon Communities and Yukon government officials. Work underway will set conditions for a more sustainable and efficient system and requires us to address long-standing land tenure issues, develop regional agreements, plan for future environmental mitigations, and plan for future liabilities related to site closures and decommissioning. We continue to make progress on this.

It's all part of extended producer liability — we have to do better, Mr. Speaker. Let's just say that we have to do better in this territory in managing the waste that we produce. We are going to have to pay for the waste. We are going to have to make the people who are producing waste pay more to do that. That is part of the method with which we will reduce waste in the territory and better manage our waste sites.

Question re: Stevens Quarry development

Mr. Cathers: On April 7, 2021, the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources signed a letter to the constituents of my riding, making a very clear promise about the proposed development of the Stevens Quarry. The letter said — and I quote: A re-elected Liberal government "... will maintain the administrative hold that is currently in place on Stevens Quarry ... It will not be developed..." over the next mandate. Recently, I asked the current minister if he is planning on honouring this promise made by his colleague. His answer was unclear about whether or not he would be honouring the promise made by his colleague, so I would like to give him another chance to answer.

Will the current minister commit to upholding the promise the former minister made to my constituents about the Stevens Quarry?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Earlier, we had a question about the importance of lot development, and my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, and I stood up, and we talked about how important lot development is here in the Yukon, including Whitehorse. We have seen record growth in Whitehorse and record growth across the country, so there is a lot of pressure. All of that development requires gravel.

How I responded previously, and how I will respond again today, is that I asked the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to work closely with the City of Whitehorse to identify what the demand is for gravel and to identify where potential supplies are. We are working on a number of creative solutions. I am well aware of Stevens Quarry. I recognize that it has a lot of potential, but I also recognize that, when YESAB reviewed it previously, there would be a lot of steps that would need to be taken if we were to develop Stevens Quarry.

What I've said before and what I'll say again today is that it's very important that we have gravel here in the city to make sure that we continue to facilitate lot development, and I will continue to do that work with the City of Whitehorse.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister dodged the question. When the former minister wrote the letter to my constituents last year, he was clear and unequivocal. He said that Stevens Quarry would not be developed over the next mandate. Yet now it sounds like the current minister is backing away from that commitment. Last time I asked about this, the current minister said that one of the areas he's looking to develop for gravel supply is Stevens Quarry.

So, the question is simple: Is he going to keep the clear promise made by his colleague last April, or is he going to break it?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I hope this is clear, Mr. Speaker. Gravel is important for the City of Whitehorse. I've met several times with the City of Whitehorse. I tell you what —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order, please.

The member has the floor. I'm having a hard time hearing him speak.

Please continue.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to gravel — I'm surprised that the members opposite would pick Stevens Quarry over lots. Now, I'm not saying that we're going to develop Stevens Quarry; what I am saying is that lot development is what our priority is. In order to have lot development, we will need gravel. So, we are working right now to identify where the demand is for gravel here in the City of Whitehorse and where potential supply is. We will work on creative solutions with the City of Whitehorse and the industry — where there is gravel supply.

But I am surprised that the Yukon Party would pick Stevens Quarry over lot development; that surprises me.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I have to remind the member that we're asking about a clear commitment made by his colleague on Liberal Party letterhead last year. This may come as a surprise to the minister, but there were people in my riding who believed, when the former minister wrote a public pledge during the election not to develop Stevens Quarry during the next mandate, that he actually meant it.

Now the current minister is giving us the sense that the commitment is not worth the paper it was written on. This has unfortunately become the trend with this government and this

minister. He's quick to promise whatever he thinks will help him in the short term, but then fails to back it up with any action at all. We've known this for a while, but now my constituents are getting a clear example.

Why would the former minister make this promise for my constituents in writing if the Liberals never had any intention of living up to the promise they made to my constituents?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Each time I have stood to speak to this issue, I have never said that we are developing Stevens Quarry. What I have said is that I have asked my department, in a request from the City of Whitehorse, to work closely with them to identify sources of gravel and to compare the supply that is possible against the demand that is needed. I am very hopeful that we will find solutions that don't deal with Stevens Quarry — that would be terrific. But I am also saying that if we do not, then we will look at Stevens Quarry. Stevens Quarry would require many steps to get to development because, under the YESAB review, it was identified that there would need to be planning work.

So, I am happy to come out and talk to the constituents of the Member for Lake Laberge, but what I am trying to say clearly in this Legislature is: We, as a government, support working with our municipalities, we, as a government, support lot development, and we, as a government, will do our best to make sure that the lot development can proceed and we hold it as a high priority.

Apparently, the Yukon Party does not hold it as a high priority.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. 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): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 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 general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin by welcoming two of Energy, Mines and Resources' assistant deputy ministers. To my left, Samantha Paterson, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Services, and to my right is Stephen Mead, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Geoscience Services.

Recently, I got to sit down with the department staff. I went through the work that they were doing across the board. It's quite something — the range of work that happens — whether that is in developing more land and increasing the amount of opportunities we have for agriculture, whether that is all of our work through the Energy Solutions Centre on shifting the energy economy, whether that is our folks who make sure that our mines are working well and do the inspections, whether that is managing the lands we have with the work we have now on the *Lands Act*, land use planning for Dawson and other areas, everything around forestry, mining — there is a lot.

I just want to begin by thanking the department for all of the work that they have been doing to get us here today. I look forward to debate.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for his opening comments and I also welcome his officials here today to provide support to him during Committee of the Whole for the afternoon.

I wanted to start out asking the minister about forestry and fuel wood issues. Obviously, this last winter, there were a number of stories and concerns with the lack of fuel wood for commercial cutters. We heard stories of firewood being shipped in from as far away as Fort Nelson through the winter months.

Where I will start with the minister, though, is with respect to a news story that just popped up this afternoon talking about a local sawmill — Creekside Wood Supply sawmill. Mr. Doug Kerley is the mill's owner and he's a constituent of mine. He will be shuttering his sawmill after the Easter long weekend. In this story, he attributes the shortage of timber to a variety of things but maintains that the government's policy around opening areas to timber harvest is the main culprit. I know that the minister has been back and forth, as his predecessor was, with Mr. Kerley, trying to find solutions.

I guess the question for the minister would be: Why does the minister believe it came to this situation where this individual had to close down his sawmill, rather than being able to find timber for him in some of the latest resource

management plans, such as the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes one?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will begin by saying that I think that this is not really about a fuel wood issue, but this is about a saw log issue. I have worked closely with Mr. Kerley, as has the Forest Management branch. The challenges began when there was an attempt to open up some area for saw logs — there would have been firewood there, as well — around Johnsons Crossing — that was not approved through YESAB. So, on that front, when that was not approved, I sat down with the Teslin Tlingit Council to talk to them about ways that we could work together as governments, and what I heard from them was that they were interested in seeing areas developed, so the direction that I gave to the department was to please work with Teslin Tlingit Council to look for other opportunities, but of course, those sorts of things will take some time.

We also worked with Mr. Kerley around trying to use our response to climate change and to make our communities safer, through Wildland Fire, where we are creating areas where we are reducing fire risk and, in particular, around the member opposite's riding. So, we looked for opportunities there; there were some. I got into a conversation with Mr. Kerley about the possibility of him expanding his operations to include a kiln to dry wood, and he was working with the Department of Economic Development on that front.

Mr. Kerley took me around to some of the sites, where we looked to see what was happening, and then there was another challenge, where he wanted to do some processing of wood off-site, and we had arranged for some wood storage in unused gravel pits, but unfortunately, we weren't able to use those same storage pits — or previous gravel pits — to do wood processing, and it would take either a regulatory change or a legislative change.

We continue to work — when I last spoke with Mr. Kerley, he indicated to me that he was going to do other work this summer and not operate his sawmill, and we agreed that we would stay in touch, and if we were able to find further solutions through the Forest Management branch, they would be well-received.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Kerley indicated in this news article that there simply isn't enough wood to keep his employees working and the business viable. It goes on to say that, in peak season — it's a small mill, but it still provides employment for four people. They are now cutting what timber they have left in order to get one more shipment out to his primary local customers.

With respect to the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan, which was signed off within the last couple of years, when can we expect some sort of a commercial timber supply analysis and some of the timber harvest permits to be let — not only for potential fuel wood or fire abatement opportunities, but more specific to what Mr. Kerley would need for Creekside Wood Supply, if he is willing and able to take that risk to restart?

When can we expect some timber supply analysis and timber harvest options to come out in the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan? Because

I don't believe that there are any economic opportunities for saw logs in that plan, as it is written.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I can say, with respect to the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan, that our government and the Forest Management branch are working with the three affected First Nations — the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än' Council, and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Terms of reference have been signed that will help guide the work of the implementation team. I understand that planning is being done now, in collaboration with that implementation team. I don't have a note at the moment about what the anticipated timelines are, but I can indicate that the group is working on it now.

Mr. Kent: So, there's no timeline with respect to when that would be ready.

I know that the minister was in attendance — as was I and as was the Member for Whitehorse Centre — at the Yukon Wood Products Association meeting last June where some concerns were identified with the thresholds in YESAA as far as which projects would have to go to executive committee screening rather than a designated office evaluation under that environmental assessment legislation.

So, has any work been done with respect to either adjusting those thresholds as far as what level of screening has to take place for specific forestry projects since that time?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, first of all, I will say a few things. One of the things that was talked about at the June meeting with the Yukon Wood Products Association was pressure on wood supply. One of the main points of pressure was Quill Creek, which was at that time with YESAB. Subsequent to that, we worked with YESAB to identify to them that there was pressure on the wood supply — firewood supply for Yukoners — and they worked to get that plan released. Then the Forest Management branch worked to get it permitted, and that got out. Now I can say that this area, which is near Haines Junction, is being developed, so that was good news.

There was another challenge that was not YESAA-related but was related with one of our main wood producers down in Watson Lake. He was harvesting down the Stewart-Cassiar Highway just across the border and there were challenges with some of his blocks with the Government of British Columbia. We worked to try to support him through that, and he was ultimately successful in getting those cut blocks. So, that was another way in which we helped.

With respect to YESAA, what we're talking about are things that are in the act and set as thresholds. So, if we're talking about how that will be addressed, that would be with the YESAA reset oversight group. I believe the Premier spoke about this yesterday here in the Legislature. I know that we've been working through the Yukon Forum with First Nations to talk about this work.

The Premier indicated that this all began when there were amendments made to YESAA previously with the Yukon Party government, which did not work with First Nations as those amendment came in. That is what led to this challenge. Thankfully, the current federal government took those

amendments back out and now we are working with that oversight group.

It's not unique to forestry; this is the broader question of YESAA. The Premier is leading that work through the Yukon Forum and working with the federal government.

Mr. Kent: I am glad that the minister mentioned the YESAA reset oversight group because that then gives us an opportunity to talk about that a little bit later on under some of the mining questions that I have. We did ask some questions yesterday in Question Period, but the Premier was unable to provide any definitive responses to those questions that I asked. We will touch on that a little bit later on here this afternoon.

I want to talk about wood supply, and this is more on the fuel-wood supply side of things. I know that my colleague, the MLA for Kluane, spoke to one of his constituents a couple of weeks ago about Quill Creek. This individual is the main harvester in the Quill Creek area. This morning, the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin and I, as well as the Leader of the Official Opposition, spoke to the main harvester in the southeast Yukon — harvesting, of course, in northern British Columbia, down the Stewart-Cassiar Highway, and shipping the wood into the territory. With the delays in getting the Quill Creek cut area out, the individual who lives in Watson Lake was the main supplier of firewood this past winter to the Yukon.

In the confidential session briefing notes that we have from last fall, it does mention that there was enough wood to meet the Yukon's demand this winter, so I'm curious, as we head out of the winter, if the minister still stands by that response that there was enough wood to meet the Yukon's demand over this past winter.

Then, of course, there was wood imported from British Columbia — much of it from down the Stewart-Cassiar Highway just south of Junction 37 with the Alaska Highway, but also some from Fort Nelson, so I am curious if the minister has done any analysis of how much of the firewood that was burned in the Yukon had to come that 12- to 14-hour drive from Fort Nelson over the winter.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think that I already partly answered this in my previous responses. I am happy to do so again.

I will just say — and I will share with Yukoners — that when we amended the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* — the ATIPP act — we made our briefing binders available for members opposite. I know that they continue to call these things “confidential”, but that was the change in the act that we made.

The member asked me: Did we have enough firewood this winter? It was close, for sure, and I have asked that some analysis be done. I asked someone who works in the industry outside of government to be brought in to try to do some assessment. I understand that this work is underway right now.

I was glad to see that we got Quill Creek online and that it was being developed. The situation in the southeast of the Yukon, where there are folks who go down to Cassiar — that is a pretty standard thing that happens, and so I don't think that it is very far away. I was very concerned when I heard that there was some wood being shipped from much farther afield, as the

member noted. That was when we were in that crunch — before we got Quill Creek going and before the harvester from southeast Yukon, Mr. Whimp — well, he had some challenges with his permits on the BC side — so both of those were not on stream at the time and that is when some of the suppliers brought wood in from farther afield.

That has been corrected. I think that was resolved, starting in November and December. I think it's important that we make sure that there is some supply on hand. We saw that when supply got low, prices went up significantly. I just want to say thanks to the Forest Management branch. They hustled pretty hard to try to make sure that there was wood for Yukoners. I think, ultimately, that is correct: We did get enough wood, but it was touch and go.

I can also say that I asked to have a review of woodlots across the territory — in other words, what areas the government makes available for woodcutters, whether it be personal or commercial, and also to look at the system overall. I have asked for that assessment to be done.

Mr. Kent: I am just curious if the minister is aware of problems that are going on in the Quill Creek harvest area. Right now, I understand the operator has been shut down since the end of March. The operator, who lives in Watson Lake and is harvesting down the Stewart-Cassiar Highway, is waiting on permits from the Government of British Columbia, which has been going on eight weeks, from my understanding. I am just curious if the minister is aware of that, and if so, what are his thoughts with respect to those challenges?

Obviously, we heard a lot last fall about Quill Creek and how this was going to give us that long-term supply, albeit it's focused in only one area of the Yukon. I will leave it at that.

What is the minister's understanding of what is happening in Quill Creek with the harvester being shut down since the end of March, and does he have any understanding of what's happening with those permits down Highway 37 in British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will reach back into the department to find out what the status is on the BC side and Quill Creek. What I can say, with Quill Creek, is that when we got it through YESAB and started the permit process — it's like a 10- to 20-year supply of wood. There is a lot of wood there. I am happy to check to see if there are any concerns at the moment, but it's a longer term supply of wood.

Up in the Dawson region, I think things were generally good. We had supply provided north of Whitehorse — sort of between here and Carmacks with several areas. So, I will ask the department to give me an update on what's happening. It would be separate issues — if there are things going on with Quill Creek and if there are also issues going on with Mr. Whimp's work down on the BC side on the Cassiar. What I can say is that, with both folks, I know that we have worked with them in the past six months to try to assist. I'm sure we will continue to do so.

Mr. Kent: So, those concerns were relayed to us directly from both of those harvesters. As I said, my colleague from Kluane heard from his constituent, and then we spoke to the harvester out of Watson Lake this morning about his concerns.

I'm also curious if the minister is aware of any of the quality problems with the wood supply out of Quill Creek. I heard — obviously that wood has sat there for quite some time, and the butts of the wood are rotten, so it's not a very good quality product that is coming out of there. Has the minister been made aware of any of the quality concerns with what's coming out of the Quill Creek area that may shorten the "10- to 20-year" time horizon in his words that he said?

Just before I sit down — and I know that on the floor of this Legislature, we have back-and-forth in Question Period; we have been accused of bringing unreliable information. When we say that these were confidential session briefing notes, it's because right on the top of these briefing notes that we obtained it says "confidential". If the minister is concerned about that, then perhaps he would direct his officials, or the government as a whole would direct all officials, to remove the word "confidential" from these session briefing notes. But in order to provide accurate information, we'll continue to refer to them as "confidential" as long as we're reading from them.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks for the suggestion to remove the word "confidential" — thank you.

With respect to Quill Creek, whenever we develop an area, there is always going to be some way to estimate the amount of wood in there or the size of the resource. I am sure that there are always differences and you refine that understanding over time. If there are some challenges with some of the butts of wood, that's okay; we can go back, but still, I will say that this was a significant supply.

When I asked the department, as we were coming up to the winter, to share with me the number of areas that they had made available for permit — and you compare that against how much wood is typically burned in a year in the territory, and it is several times more than is available through permit. If you are a commercial harvester, in particular, you have to develop roads in, and you have to make sure that supply chains are working well. For example, I know that when Quill Creek was starting to be developed, it had a challenge. There was an issue with, I think, a trailer or something really specific. It was right in the middle of a cold snap, so there are times when things have hiccups, for sure. What I will say is that the amount of wood that we had available through permit is typically many times more than the amount of wood that we use. I think that is the way it needs to be.

I am not sure about a reassessment of the overall supply, but I think that it is important that we work with contractors and have some back-and-forth with them. I think that is how the Forest Management branch works at all times.

We will update those numbers to assess the resource, but this was the first year of a many-year project around Quill Creek. It still will be supplying wood for many years to come. Whether that number goes up or down — I'm sure we will judge as we get further along with it. I appreciate the feedback.

Mr. Kent: A lot of these remarks and concerns have been relayed to us directly from the individuals on the ground doing the harvesting. If the minister hasn't done so for a while, I would encourage him to reach out to those individual harvesters and get a sense for what their concerns are and what

it's looking like for this upcoming winter — although we don't seem to be out of the current winter. But next winter is — my understanding, from some of the commercial suppliers who operate in my riding, is that it could be another year of tight supply, increasing costs, and hauling from places as far away as Fort Nelson if we don't address this as soon as possible with the concerns that they are raising.

When I went through the Yukon Liberal Party's election platform from last year, I couldn't — outside of a mention of biomass — really find anything specific to forestry. Then, going through the minister's mandate letter of July 5, 2021, the only mention that I could find was with respect to identifying regulatory and program improvements that could support the growth of Yukon's biomass energy industry, including the use of waste products. Obviously, that raised a concern for us because I know that in 2016 there was a commitment from the Liberal government to review — or implement, I think it was — I don't have the exact wording — a forest management plan in southeast Yukon. That's the question that I have for the minister.

Again, according to the confidential session briefing note from last fall — the southeast Yukon — it says: "In December 2020, Liard First Nation entered into a funding agreement with the Government of Yukon to establish a forestry table to address forestry concerns at a government-to-government level, support their participation in forestry initiatives and move forward with forest resources management planning. The proposed planning boundary for Southeast Yukon may include all of the Kaska Nations, both settled and non-settled Yukon First Nations, and transboundary Aboriginal groups." So, those are the two paragraphs in the briefing note about southeast Yukon.

Can the minister give us a sense of where we have come in the last year and a half or so since December 2020 when that funding agreement was entered into and if there are any updates from that forestry table that was established to address the forestry concerns at a government-to-government level?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I am told is that the department is expecting a report back in the next month or so, so that is where the work has led to.

Mr. Kent: Will that be a final report that will address all of these concerns that I listed in the southeast Yukon, such as support for their participation in forestry initiatives and moving forward with forest resources management planning? Can we expect — I don't want to speculate, but I will just ask the minister to perhaps provide a little bit more detail on what we can expect in that report in the next month or so.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have not seen a draft of the report yet, so I am not sure that I can provide too much. I will ask the department for more information, and if I get any, I will provide it.

Mr. Kent: I look forward to getting some more information. I am sure that the Member for Watson Lake will as well. Many who have lived in Watson Lake for a while remember the days when there were a number of active sawmills and operations down there, and they are anxious to see some sort of forest management planning down there so that

a timber supply analysis and timber harvest agreements and permits can be put out that would potentially see some of those operations kickstarted again.

The other question that I have on forestry is with respect to the *Forest Resources Act* review. These notes from last fall said that the *Forest Resources Act* is currently under review and that there have been some meetings with a number of First Nations. I won't list them all here today, but they've been meeting since 2019 and are developing recommendations regarding proposed updates to the act. Those meetings obviously started three years ago, so can the minister provide us with any update on where we're at with proposed updates to the *Forest Resources Act*?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know, for example, that this is part of the suite of successor legislation. Most times when people hear "successor legislation", they are thinking about our mining acts — our quartz and placer mining acts — but it actually also includes forestry and our *Lands Act* as well.

I know that there has been review work ongoing, and I know that they are looking at the timeline for when that would lead to us being back here in the Legislature. I think the earliest that we anticipate is 2023, but I understand that there is still quite a bit of work underway. When I get the information about what's happening around forest resources, I can check in to see more detail on what's happening. I have had a few sit-downs with the assistant deputy minister and also the Department of Justice as we talk about our legislative agenda, but I haven't had a brief recently on how the conversation is going with First Nations on those potential amendments. I will get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: This note that I am reading off of was last updated on September 23, 2021, and it says that First Nation consultation and public engagement is expected to occur in the spring of 2022. Afterwards, the working group will make their final recommendations to the Government of Yukon.

I guess my question for the minister is: Are we on track to have the First Nation consultation and public engagement completed this spring?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think where we are in process with the *Forest Resources Act* is — the working group is comprised of First Nations and the territorial government. There are some recommendations. They will move into Cabinet first for a review, and then they will move out to public engagement after that.

As the member opposite will know, that timing is always dependent on Cabinet's review first, so that is the next step in the process.

Mr. Kent: Again, just going back to this note, it does say that the review was initiated in 2017, so we are five years into the review. It does say under the background piece — and again, this briefing note looks like it's about six months old or so or maybe even a little bit more than that. It does have some examples of changes that the working group is likely to recommend, so I'm curious if the minister — it looks like there are six that I have here — would be able to share an updated version of what some examples of those changes might be.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would be happy to share those after they get through Cabinet. So, I think that's the process that

we have. What I can say is that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is working on many pieces of legislation and in particular around successor legislation — the *Quartz Mining Act*, the *Placer Mining Act* — which are a century old. Our *Lands Act* — which is going to be important for almost everyone I'm sure — this act was part of successor legislation and this is the review process. A next step is to take those recommendations to Cabinet. Once that has happened, then we will go out to the public, and I would be very happy to share it with the member opposite and all Yukoners at that time.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that and I look forward to getting that information from the minister.

I did want to move on to some other topics now under land management. The first one is the resource roads regulation. Of course, the minister knows that we passed the act last fall which would enable the development of the regulations. At the time, he mentioned that they would be ready this spring. I'm just hoping the minister can provide us with an update and let us know if they're still on track to be ready this spring.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that the work is underway and I don't have a note on any adjustment to the timeline. I am just checking in with the department to ask them to give me their best sense about timing — whether they are still on track. I will hopefully get back up to my feet when I have a note on that, but I do know that we were keen on this regulation and that was why we brought the bill in, in the fall. I look forward — thank you to the world. The department indicates to me that it is on target — one moment, Deputy Chair. I will get back to you as soon as I hear.

Mr. Kent: So, during the mineral Roundup, my colleagues and I held a number of Zoom meetings with mining companies that are active in the Yukon — mostly, obviously, out of the Vancouver area — and what we had noticed with the YESAA process was that there was a delay in issuing a number of decision documents. What we heard from some of these individual companies was that some of those delays were a direct result of waiting for this resource road regulation to be developed. So, I am looking for the minister to comment on that. If delays in issuing decision documents — and these aren't the bigger ones. These aren't the larger projects; these are ones that are done at the designated office evaluation level. They are class 3 and class 4 mining permits — those types of things — but again, they are waiting on decision documents and some of them have been delayed for months.

So, I am curious if the minister has heard similar things from industry and what his thoughts are to advance this regulation so that backlog in issuing decision documents can be alleviated.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Definitely when I've had conversations with industry or with the various tables, like the Chamber of Mines or other groups, there is always conversation around YESAA and also the department and our permitting processes and our need to work to achieve timelines. There is always a balance between fulfilling our responsibility with respect to consultation of First Nations around that.

There are challenges, for sure, but what I can say is that the minerals branch is always working to support industry to move

ahead — I want to find a word that means “as quickly as possible while meeting all responsibilities”.

I agree that there is interest in the resource roads regulation. That is why we brought the amendment to the legislation this past fall. That's why we've been keeping it as a priority.

I can also say that, if there are times in which a YESAA process has taken longer than possible, I know that the folks at the branch do their best to try to expedite work at our end so that — they're conscientious of the challenges that industry faces with respect to timelines. They always do their best to try to make up that time, if it is possible.

Mr. Kent: For the minister, some of the recommendations were sent from YESAB last summer, and some of those decision documents were still outstanding as of January. That's not a reasonable thing for industry to have to deal with, as far as the certainty of the permitting system goes. That may have changed; I am hopeful that it changed, but I will have to go back and check the YESAB registry to see if those decision documents are still outstanding for some of those projects that we heard about.

I do want to move on to another topic, which is the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area. I know Environment is the lead, but I believe that Energy, Mines and Resources does have a role in this. Obviously, the minister will be well aware of this, as this area is part of his riding of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I am curious if he has any update for us on the Tagish River HPA. My understanding, from individuals I have talked to, is that the draft plan was consulted on; then that plan was finalized. There are three parties who have to agree to it: Canada, Yukon, and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. I am curious if the minister can provide any update on the status of that. Then, of course, one of the more contentious issues for those who live and have homes or recreational properties along the Tagish River is the dock usage. If the minister has any updates on that, I would appreciate those as well. Otherwise, we can redirect to the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just moving back to the resource regulations, what I understand is that we will be working shortly with First Nations on the draft regulations. There still is process to follow after that, so I don't think we will make this spring of this year. I don't have a firm timeline at this point, but I understand that our next step will be working with First Nations on those regulations.

With respect to the Tagish River Habitat Protection Area, it is a tripartite agreement. My understanding is that all of the parties are there in principle. We are just working together now to finalize a timeline for the agreement. I know that there was some conversation between departments and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to work with them to identify when we would finalize that and bring it forward to the public. I think that this habitat protection area agreement is close. I have always known, as the member opposite notes, that there are concerns about how existing docks along the Six Mile River would be handled. I think that was there directly within that agreement to talk about constructive ways to address that

situation. It is there in the draft language and just waiting until we get to that finalized state.

Mr. Kent: As I mentioned, there was consultation on the draft recommended plan, but my understanding — and the minister can correct me if I'm wrong — is that there will not be consultation on the final recommended plan. I am curious why there will not be consultation on the final recommended plan. My understanding is that it will move right into implementation once the parties sign off on it.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We may be getting into a question that would be better suited for my colleague, the Minister of Environment. I attended many of those meetings in the community around the plan itself. I don't know how many, but it was a handful, anyway. This was always one of the main points of conversation, but I will have to defer to my colleague, the Minister of Environment, with respect to the question from the Member for Copperbelt South.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. We will redirect those questions to the Minister of Environment.

I wanted to talk about some climate change and energy initiatives that the government has underway, specifically, the mining intensity targets.

Again, when it comes to the confidential notes that we received from last fall, this one was last updated on September 23, 2021. Under "Mining Intensity Targets", it says that emissions for mining vary year to year, making it difficult to set target levels. Government of Yukon is working with industry to set mining intensity targets for quartz and placer mining by 2022. As committed in *Our Clean Future*, PricewaterhouseCoopers is contracted to develop a mining intensity target.

I know when we asked about this earlier in this Spring Sitting, the minister mentioned something about a panel that he was on during the virtual Geoscience Forum in January, but not much more on what consultation has started. Obviously, this is an ambitious undertaking if we're into April and consultation hasn't started. When we asked that question, I shared it with a number of mining executives. Some of them got back to us and said that there had been no consultation initiated yet on this. So, I'm curious if the minister can give us an update on what's happening with respect to this, and does he anticipate there being enough time left in 2022 to get these targets in place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Let me clarify a bit. The panel discussion that I was on was on February 9, and it was hosted by the Yukon Chamber of Mines with the mining industry. The whole topic of the panel was to discuss mining intensity targets. There were several industry folks there and we had a conversation — a public conversation about this issue.

I'll share one anecdote from the end of that panel discussion. Based on the questions from the Member for Kluane, I did try to see if there was a transcript available; unfortunately, there is not. There is a video recording of the panel discussion, and I will make that available through a legislative return as per the question from the Member for Kluane.

Over the past year, since taking on the role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, I have had many conversations

about this topic, but I would not call them our "formal consultation period" as of yet. I can remember my first meeting with the Yukon Chamber of Mines. I can remember sitting down with the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. I have had several conversations about this issue, but I would not call them the formal piece.

What I understand is that we are working now to develop options for mining emission targets for both quartz and placer mining, as we committed in *Our Clean Future*, and we will work with industry to establish those targets. It will be based on some of the conversations that we have had initially and understanding *Our Clean Future*. As we have stated all along, it will take into account the variability and type of mines operating in the Yukon and, overall, our goal to get to net zero by 2050.

One of the things that I will say is that, when I have talked with industry — either mines or mine planners or industry representatives — there is an understanding that we all need to shift the energy economy, and that includes mines. In fact, we signed on to the critical minerals strategy, which I just saw emphasized quite heavily under the federal budget, and the point of that is that we will need minerals to help make the energy transition from fossil fuels, whether that is copper for transmission lines or zinc or other metals that we will need for batteries and solar panels.

The one anecdote that I wanted to share was that, at the end of the panel discussion hosted by the Yukon Chamber of Mines with industry on mining intensity targets, each of the panelists was asked: What is something that excites us? The thing that I said that excites me is that, in the past, we weren't there in conversation with industry, and here was industry leading this conversation about getting to zero emissions.

So, that's what — in the decades that I have worked on the issue of climate change, I have always worked to try to bring industry with. There are some times when that has been a difficult job, but what I think is different now is that we're all on the same page and we recognize that we need to get there. The question is not if but when and how.

Mr. Kent: Apologies to the minister — I'm not sure if he mentioned this or not, but according to *Our Clean Future*, these intensity targets are supposed to be in place this year. In fact, this confidential note says that, beginning in 2022, quartz mines will be required to project their anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify measures to reduce emissions, and report annually greenhouse gas emissions through the quartz mine licensing process.

I'm glad that the minister has acknowledged that his appearance on a panel didn't constitute consultation or the beginning of consultation with industry.

Apologies to him if he did answer this in that previous response, but when will the consultation with industry begin on developing these mining intensity targets? Especially since, as I mentioned in these notes, they're supposed to start this year to project their greenhouse gas emissions and measures to reduce them and then report annually, as part of their licensing process.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I appreciate that the member opposite is going to continue to refer to these notes as confidential, even though we've changed the law to make sure they're shared with folks across the way, because when they were given to us, they were, at that time, confidential. I again note that.

But this one happens to sit in *Our Clean Future*, which the members opposite also said they support. So, that's a pretty public document. So, you know, there's no surprise here that our goal and responsibility is to develop these targets within 2022.

The issues about having mines report — that is, I think, just a policy change; that's just a policy change. That will be there as we go through renewals of licences, so that's good. We have signalled that to the mines. I appreciate that it's not yet formal consultation, but we have, as I said, been in dialogue with mines and industry groups around shifting from fossil fuels and the importance of it.

So, it's not just about setting targets; it's also about achieving those targets and how we work to have our mines transition from fossil fuels as well. It's a big task, but I also know that industry is very innovative and has a lot of resource capabilities. They are smart folks, as I have known for many years when I worked in mines; they understand what they are doing. I think that they are onboard with our overall goal.

When will it happen? I think that the work within the department has been informed by those conversations with mines and industry. I think that it's going out later this year. I anticipate where there will be that opportunity for industry to engage with us more formally. I look forward to it happening this year.

Mr. Kent: I am going to press the minister for a little bit more detail on that, rather than just the very vague "later this year" commitment that he has made, as far as this undertaking. As I said, these sessional briefing notes that are marked "confidential" that we have obtained say that beginning this year, quartz mines will be required to "... project their anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify measures to reduce emissions, and report annually greenhouse gas emissions through the quartz mine licensing process beginning in 2022."

The minister has said that this is just a policy change, but that's a fairly significant change for them. He has referred to them as "smart folks" — I think those are the words that he used — and we agree. Of course, everybody wants to be mindful of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but in order for this to be implemented this year — I mean, we are in the middle of April. Many of these individuals will be quite busy throughout the summer months, whether it is marketing or being on site or investor tours or other things.

I am just going to ask the minister this again: When does he anticipate the formal part of the consultation to start? If they are going to implement it in 2022, as is committed to in *Our Clean Future*, then I would have thought it would have started last year, but again, here we are in April, and it doesn't sound like the consultation piece has started yet.

As I mentioned, when we asked this question earlier this Sitting — I have a large distribution group of individuals in the mining industry and we send those questions out. We did hear back that there has been no consultation as of yet. I think that was confirmed here this afternoon by the minister, but we need to know when the consultations are going to start with the mining industry so that they have an idea of what sort of reporting requirements are going to be placed into their quartz mine licences.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think there is either some confusion or some conflation of a couple of things here. First of all, we need not refer to the briefing notes which we are sharing with the opposition members. Let's refer to *Our Clean Future*. I am on page 60 of *Our Clean Future*, under the actions about reducing the carbon intensity of mining and ensuring mining projects are prepared for the impacts of climate change. I believe this document was released in the fall of 2019 — so, two and a half years ago. We have indicated to mines all along — so it is action 16: "Include new provisions in quartz mine licenses by 2022 that will ensure critical mine infrastructure is planned, designed and built to withstand current and projected impacts of climate change."

17: "Require quartz mines to project their anticipated greenhouse gas emissions, identify measures to reduce emissions, and annually report greenhouse gas emissions through the quartz mine licensing process beginning in 2022."

So, what we are doing is, as indicated over the past two and a half years to mines, is that when they obtain a new licence or a renewal of their licence from a point forward in 2022, we will ask them to report their greenhouse gas emissions. How is that done? Typically, that's done by measuring fuel usage, and different fuel types have different emission profiles, but that's how we've done it here in the territory for the rest of emissions. So, those mines are quite capable of doing that.

So, all of that part of it is pretty straightforward. The mines have known that this is coming for the past two and a half years. It is due this year.

Then with respect to mining intensity targets, that's the goal that we set ourselves, including industry, to say, "Hey, how much should we reduce our emissions over time?" If the ultimate goal is to be at zero by 2050, it doesn't matter whether that's intensity or absolute, because it's zero. So, that's the ultimate goal. Now it becomes a question of: What steps should we take to get there by 2030 or some other intermediate step? That's what we will work in dialogue with the mines.

I think that we will have work starting either this spring or summer where we present options and conversation to industry. As I have said all along, over the past year, I have been in informal conversations with mines about that. So, it's not that we're starting from a blank slate. We have been having conversation with them. The formal part of the engagement will happen later this spring or early this summer, as I understand it.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that from the minister. I will relay that to those in the industry who have been asking us about this — that the formal engagement will begin later this spring or early summer and that the minister has indicated that these will be in place in this calendar year of 2022.

I do want to ask the minister about some of the independent power production projects that are underway. Again, going back to last fall, the notes mention that there are three power production projects that have signed energy purchase agreements with their respective utilities. There is a north Klondike Highway solar project, a solar project located in Mount Sima in my riding of Copperbelt South, as well as a solar energy project in Old Crow — the proponent was the Vuntut Gwitchin government.

Is the minister able to provide us with an update on whether or not there are additional IPP projects that have signed energy purchase agreements since last fall?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I sat down with the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation yesterday, and I understand that there are lots of projects that are in planning phases. I will note that, in terms of ones that we have signed — I apologize if I missed anything that the member opposite said. I think that he referred to the north Klondike Highway project, Mount Sima, and Old Crow — the Vuntut Gwitchin solar energy project. We have one more that has been signed since last fall and that is the Klondike Development Organization's solar energy project. The Klondike Development Organization built it up in the old solid-waste dumpsite up on the Dome Road, I believe. We are advanced in our negotiations with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and the Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership for a power purchase agreement from their hydro expansion. We spoke about that earlier this week with the media, and I have spoken about it here in the House before. So, those are the ones that are signed or in advanced negotiations.

Mr. Kent: Does the minister have an update on the wind farm that was proposed for Haeckel Hill? At the start of the previous mandate in 2016, early into 2017 while the IPP policy was being finalized, I know that it was one of the projects mentioned at the time. I believe there is perhaps a different proponent now, but I'm looking for an update on that wind farm on Haeckel Hill.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will turn to the Yukon Development Corporation to get an update on this one. I have heard that it was advancing. I was told the other day about specific work that had happened, and I'm just not recalling. I will try to get an update for the members opposite.

I know that there has been development on this project in the past month, so I will see if I can't get some extra information.

Mr. Kent: My colleague just passed me a note from the project proponent who is partnered with the Chu Niikwän Development Corporation, which is the Kwanlin Dün First Nation development corporation. It does say that the project status is pre-construction and that it will be in commercial operation for 2023 — recognizing, of course, that the minister will check with Yukon Development Corporation on this. Hopefully, he gets a chance to confirm those timelines that are on the proponent's website. The website is northernenergycapital.com.

I do want to talk a little bit about some land use planning initiatives that the government has underway. The first one that

I know we have talked about every Sitting since the initial announcement is the Beaver River land use plan. I am curious if the minister can give us a status of where it is at. Of course, we know that it is coming to — or has just passed — being a couple of years late from the initial commitment of being done on March 31, 2020. Now we are two years later, and I'm not sure where we are at. We talked about this last fall, so I'm curious if the minister can provide us with an update on when he expects that plan to be finalized.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I did sit down with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and had a couple of conversations with Chief Mervyn and with his team on this. I know that our deputy minister was working directly on it. I agree with the member opposite that the timeline has stretched. I think I rose earlier — a week or so ago — here in the Legislature to talk about it. What I said was that we would remain working and respectful with First Nations — in this case, the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun — on this planning process. We are committed to completing a road access management plan with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and ATAC Resources. I believe that there have been ongoing conversations between the people doing the planning work and ATAC. I think that the timeline has pushed again, so the latest note that I have talks about early 2023.

What I can say is that, having seen this process stretch out, I have been asking that there be regular reports back to me about the process to ensure that it is staying on track. At this point in time, it feels like the process is on track, but I recognize that there have been challenges and acknowledge that the time has been much longer than we projected and wanted. We will continue to work with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to realize this plan.

Mr. Kent: I want to turn to a couple of things that were contained in the confidence and supply agreement that the Liberal government signed with the New Democratic Party.

One thing was to accelerate regional land use planning. Obviously, the Dawson land use plan is working its way through the process right now, but what has been done with respect to accelerating regional land use planning in other areas throughout the territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is in my mandate letter, and I have asked for the assistant deputy ministers and deputy ministers to work through some options around how this might proceed. My last conversation with the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was to look at the issue and bring it forward. I think that this would probably lead us to the Yukon Forum. We have had direct conversations with several First Nations. For example, I recently sat down with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

They expressed to me their interest around moving forward on this, but they are interested in looking broader than just in the Yukon. Their traditional territory extends into British Columbia, so that was part of that conversation. I have also sat down, as I just expressed earlier, with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. I had a brief conversation with the Selkirk First Nation, so sometimes the challenge — for example, if we are thinking of the Northern Tutchone region — is that different First Nations are at

different stages about where they wish to be with respect to regional land use planning.

I have raised the issue with colleagues from the federal government and just recently, again, briefly with Minister Wilkinson when he was here earlier this week talking about wanting the federal government to be in support. We have been exploring various ways and at all times being respectful of First Nations' desires, which are not all the same — they range in what their desires are — but what I have always indicated to them when I sit down with them is to say that it is within my mandate letter, and I will work with them to advance land use planning when they are ready.

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: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 53, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 204, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Kent: So, just before the break, we were talking about some of the EMR commitments in the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the New Democrats. I'm curious about the successor resource legislation development, if the minister can provide us with an update.

It is our understanding that, as part of that agreement, those two pieces of legislation would be tabled this fall. I'm curious if the minister can give us an update on where we're at, as well as how much money is in this year's budget for that work to continue, or be undertaken, with respect to the successor resource legislation development.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Let me start with the update on the steering committee and the work on successor legislation. It's going very well is what I will say. I recently was invited to speak again with the steering committee and had a chance to connect with them a little bit. I guess they were back up to a partially in-person meeting and partially by Zoom. The steering committee has identified key topics throughout their work. They have taken on some of the larger topics. These include disposition, reclamation, monitoring, enforcement, and royalties. So, they have been working on these issues. They maybe have 10 or a dozen different ones. I guess it sort of depends on how you carve it all up, but they have taken on those significant issues.

I can also say that they have met with industry. They have also met with environmental groups. They have now also had the industry and the environmental group sit together, working at one table, which I think is very positive. I will work to get some information on the budget that we have identified this year for the successor legislation work.

Also, while I am on my feet, I will update the House on activities on Haeckel Hill. We have a dozen or so personnel on-site daily right now, along with heavy machinery. They are placing the anchor rings; they are moving them up the hill right now, which will block the access road for some stretches of time. That will put in place the base for the windmills. That was the thing that I mentioned earlier that I had been informed that there was activity on, and it was those anchor rings.

I hope to have more to announce on this shortly. It is moving ahead, and of course, we are excited about wind, because solar is great, but it is predominantly a summer energy and we need winter energy, and one of the realities for the Yukon is that the wind blows in the winter.

So, Deputy Chair, the amount in our budget is approximately \$1.4 million for successor legislation — in the 2022-23 budget.

Mr. Kent: Apologies to the minister; I may not have heard, but I am just kind of curious — if he did answer, apologies about the timing — whether or not that is going to be ready to be tabled this fall or not — both the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*.

I will move on to another question with respect to the drafting of a mineral staking and development policy for planned and zoned communities, if the minister can give us an update on where that is at. I am sure that it will be quite topical as we move into May and the Association of Yukon Communities gather for their annual meeting. Again, an update on that, and if he can just clarify whether or not we can expect that legislation to be tabled this fall.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can say is, as per the confidence and supply agreement, that the work around successor legislation also requires that we have that full engagement — that full consultation — with Yukon First Nations and that work is ongoing right now. I will just say that we are in the middle of that and I can't judge it yet, but the work on successor legislation is doing well. It's deep in the heart of it, and I will look to hear back from First Nations about what kind of time they need to make sure that this is done well and correctly, as per our agreement.

With respect to mineral activities in Yukon communities, we did go out some time ago, just before the pandemic started. We were doing work across the Yukon with municipalities, First Nations, and also local advisory councils to talk about land use conflicts related to mineral staking and zoning regulations. We carried that out to produce the "what we heard" document and to talk about the situation. What we are doing now is using the results of that initial engagement to draft a framework to guide plans and regulations, and we are out there talking with the public again; we are out there talking with municipalities and LACs, and then we will be talking with the public this year, so that work is ongoing right now.

Mr. Kent: I do want to ask the minister about compensation for mineral claims. Obviously, there was an announcement made by the government about the relinquishment of a number of claims during the annual Mineral Exploration Roundup. That was one of the press releases that the government put out at the time. One of the

companies that relinquished a number of those claims also made an announcement about that.

Outside of the Peel watershed, where does the minister see potential new cases for compensation emerging here in the next couple of years? We know the Dawson regional land use plan — the associated restrictions and staking withdrawals — affects a number of claims. The territorial wetlands policy may also restrict development activities.

We have the proposed McIntyre Creek park, which extends up and through the old Whitehorse copper area, which has a number of active claims as well. I guess perhaps even the Beaver River land use plan may affect existing claims as well, or strand claims, if protected areas cut them off from surface access.

Can the minister give us an idea of where he sees potential new cases for compensation beyond what has already happened in the Peel watershed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I can say that the work to resolve the compensation for mineral claims in the Peel has been pretty successful. There have been no expropriations, and that's despite the fact that, around the Peel, there was a lot of staking because of how the land use planning process unfolded with the Yukon Party. That issue has been going well.

One of the things I will say is that we typically use relief from other monetary obligations as a way — so it's not revenue that we were previously counting on. It's just a way in which we can get to that compensation.

We can say that wherever we do land use planning, there is a potential for this, but I don't want to speculate on that. I will say as well that, with the Dawson regional land use plan, we have approached this differently. What we agreed to do is that, when the draft plan came out, we would withdraw lands that were identified for conservation. Even before the draft plan came out, we took some of the highest profile areas for which we anticipated to see conservation as sort of the higher value. We put protection in place then. We did it as the draft plan came out, and I think that when the final recommended plan comes out, we will do that again. That is so we don't get as much conflict with claims. Inevitably — there will likely be some, and we will continue to work with it in the way that we have. So far, we have been quite successful at finding compensation for those claims, so I think that has been a very good model and we will keep using that model, but it's difficult for me to speculate about where that will be in the future.

Mr. Kent: I did want to ask the minister about the western Arctic offshore and the oil and gas moratorium that is in place. I understand that the original five-year moratorium put in by the Trudeau government was set to expire in 2021 but has been extended until the end of 2022. Obviously, the Government of Yukon is an equal partner when it comes to the negotiations of western Arctic offshore oil and gas co-management and revenue-sharing regimes. I am curious if the minister can tell us if his government is in support of developing oil and gas resources in the western Arctic offshore.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The Government of Yukon continues to participate actively in negotiations with Canada, the Northwest Territories, and the Inuvialuit Regional

Corporation on the western Arctic offshore oil and gas accord. We haven't been as involved in the past, but we are actively involved now. I think that the main point is that we are wishing to have the ability to have a say about whether there is oil and gas development in the Beaufort, north of the Yukon — in the area that is the Yukon's overlapping jurisdiction. That is what we have been working toward. I know that the negotiations are in their final stages. I am happy to report back to the House once that is signed — or I am sure that we will make that public. It is not about being pro or con; it is about having the Yukon's perspectives and participation in the decision-making in the offshore.

Mr. Kent: So, when the Premier spoke recently about Arctic sovereignty — and I believe that he and his colleagues from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut had a call with the Prime Minister prior to the budget being tabled in Ottawa — he spoke about resilient communities and about — I believe that it was support for the Canadian Rangers in the north. I guess that is why I am asking this question of the minister: Does the Government of Yukon support oil and gas development in the western Arctic offshore, as part of what the Premier was speaking about with respect to resilient communities? Is that something that the government supports?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just respond in the same way that I just did. What we support is that the Yukon has a decision-making role in activity that would happen in the Yukon's offshore. I, of course, won't speak for the Premier, but the purpose, as I understand it, was to make sure that we were part of the decision-making process.

Mr. Kent: It's my understanding that the draft accord was to be completed by the end of 2021. Has that taken place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm pretty sure that the accord is just about ready for sign-off by the parties, so it will be shortly.

To be very specific about the question, if the member opposite is asking whether the draft accord was ready by the end of 2021, I'm not entirely sure, but I do know that the accord is in front of the parties now.

Mr. Kent: I'll follow up, I'm sure, in future Sittings with the minister on that particular issue.

I did want to ask about the releasing of the 5th and Rogers land parcel to the private sector for future housing development. I know that EMR is one of the parties, according to the mandate letter. They are not the lead, as that is being led by the Housing Corporation, but they are in a supporting role. I know we talked about this — I think it was last fall or perhaps in the spring — but I think the minister mentioned that they had hoped to see construction on that parcel in this construction season. Is that still on track with respect to that 5th and Rogers land parcel?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is a Yukon Housing Corporation lead. I'll provide a little bit of information. I'll see if I can get any further right now, but I'm sure there will be an opportunity to ask this question of the corporation when they're here.

I understand that we have an RFP in the works. I think it is intended to go to tender fairly soon. I don't know a timeline, but if I get that information from my colleague, I will share it.

Yes, it is part of my mandate letter to work from the perspective of the Land Management branch to make sure that we are supporting the Yukon Housing Corporation and, for that matter, our colleagues at Community Services and the City of Whitehorse on this project.

For Yukoners who don't know about this, it is a full city block that previously had not been developed because of some remediation that was required. That remediation is now achievable in how the lot is developed, so that is why we are going out. We also know that we have wanted to explore opportunities for private sector development, and this is one of those ones where we are doing that, and we are looking forward to 5th and Rogers coming onstream.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to turn the minister's attention to the YESAA reset oversight group. We brought this up in Question Period, I believe yesterday, with the Premier, and the minister referenced it earlier on in debate, so that's why I thought perhaps we could ask him about it as well.

We have established that on December 21, 2020, the Yukon government and the Council of Yukon First Nations sent a joint letter to Minister Vandal at the time requesting a focused review of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, or YESAA. The federal minister responded on February 18 indicating that his commitment to working with members of the oversight group on amendments and renewals, and the purpose of the review, will be to propose amendments to address issues surrounding the need for an assessment when a project's authorization is amended or renewed.

As I mentioned yesterday, it is over a year ago that this exchange of correspondence happened and the purpose of the review was established. I understand there was a meeting in September of last year to discuss the assessment of amendments and renewals. I am curious if the minister can provide us with an update on where this is at and when we can expect these to go out to the public and if the minister has any indication of when he expects this to potentially be tabled in the House of Commons. We can defer to the Premier when he is on his feet for the Executive Council Office, but I am curious about why there has been no public announcement about potential changes to YESAA when this was initiated well over a year ago.

That will be my final question before I cede the floor to my colleague from the Third Party. Again, I thank the minister and thank the officials for their time here today. I have quite a few more questions, but they will have to wait for another day. Hopefully, we get to have Energy, Mines and Resources back on the floor here before the Spring Sitting concludes.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is the lead of Executive Council Office, so that would be the Premier who will update. What I can say is that I have had conversations with federal counterparts about YESAA and the process. I also know and will inform the House that our MP, Brendan Hanley, has also been having conversations about this with us and with federal ministers. I will leave it for the Premier to provide an update on any specific next steps that are there. I recognize that this is working with First Nations and the federal government to

improve YESAA, and it was our commitment all along to do that work in conjunction with First Nations. I think that it is the right way to go.

The members opposite are asking about timelines and are concerned about those timelines, but my perspective is that some of the challenge here is that when the Yukon Party previously introduced these amendments without working with First Nations, that set us back. This is the work that we are doing now to get that on track. I am happy that the work is being done in conjunction with First Nations.

Mr. Kent: Just to correct the record, the Yukon Party did not introduce this legislation. It is federal legislation, as the minister knows. When he says that, it is not being factual and not providing accurate information to the Legislature.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member for correcting the record there. No, what happened was that the Premier of the day, Premier Pasloski, worked without First Nations and asked the federal government to bring in those amendments through the Senate. That is why we call it "Bill S-6". And First Nations were plenty upset; Yukon First Nations were plenty upset about those four amendments, and that's what we're working to resolve today.

Ms. White: The minister just left the door wide open by saying that plenty of First Nations were upset. So, let's talk about the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun that is currently taking the Yukon government to court because they say that Yukon has breached its constitutional duty to implement treaty promises — land use planning. The minister has told me multiple times that he's ready to do land use planning when First Nations are. I think this is an indication that Na-Cho Nyäk Dun is ready to go, so where is the minister's stance on that?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Ahead of the last Yukon Forum, I had several conversations with Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, in particular, talking about Beaver River land use planning. The Chief of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and I sat down at the Yukon Forum, and the chief asked me if we were supportive of going ahead, and I said that, yes, we are. On that day, there was conversation with the other First Nations in the Northern Tutchone region. They were also expressing at that moment that they were ready to go. Subsequent to that, we got different information back from other First Nations, and so what we are doing and what I've indicated to Chief Mervyn is that it is in my mandate letter. We do want to proceed. We also want to be respectful of the other three regional land use planning areas, but I continue to express my support to Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and interest in moving forward on regional land use planning with them.

Ms. White: Although I do appreciate that answer from the minister, this is a quote that I read in a Question Period. This is the quote: "The treaty promise of land planning is meaningless if there is no land left to plan when the planning finally begins. It is meaningless if nearly 30 years — an entire generation — can pass without the promise being acted upon."

So, the reason why I'm reading that in again is because the minister can say he has the utmost respect, but Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has also said that, since this petition was first filed last year, the Yukon government has multiple times tried to have it

thrown out. So, how is that a respectful relationship between governments?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: With all due respect, I will defer to the Department of Justice. I won't speak about a specific court case.

What I will speak about is the importance of land use planning. What I will say is that, at every turn, I have continued to be supportive, whether that's the Beaver River land use plan, the Northern Tutchone regional land use plan, Dawson — on all of these, we, as a government, continue to be supportive to move forward with land use planning.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister's stance about not wanting to speak about it, but I just wanted to put out that if we want to talk about plenty of First Nations being upset, there are current examples, so let's just be honest here.

I think that one of the challenges — I can go back between 2011 and 2016. At the time, out of the 80 quartz mining applications that went before YESAB — they were almost never denied. They could come with the recommendation that they would be denied and the government of the day allowed them to go forward.

The reason I'm bringing that up is that when the — I'm going to call it the "spot plan". When the government started the process around the Beaver River land use plan spot plan outside of the land use planning process — it's not described in the UFA; it's not described in chapter 11 — it was completely independent. At the time, my colleague and I highlighted our concerns that, if there was a moratorium put on staking, the area would be staked out. At the time, the then-Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources told us that we were overreacting. Within days, it was all staked out.

One of the concerns that the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun has is that, since 2006, there have been over 500 quartz and placer mining projects put forward in their traditional territory, and only one project has ever been declined.

I think, if we want to talk about working with First Nations, going hand in hand, it's about making sure that we do so in a respectful manner. I think that goes beyond words; it goes in actions as well.

I hadn't planned on leading with that, but the minister just opened the door. If he has a comment about the work with First Nations when YESAB makes recommendations — or even for or against — how does his government decide which projects to approve and which ones to deny?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, first of all, with respect to any time there is a project that is proposed and which has gone through the YESAA process, we always consult with relevant First Nations before issuing decisions. We certainly consider the recommendations from YESAB, and if the project does go ahead, we always consult again during the regulatory phase. There are always ways.

Now, the member opposite, if I heard her correctly, said that before we were in as government, there was not one of these denied, and I am assured by my department that there are many that we deny. I guess I would have to hunt back to get specific examples, but there are certainly projects where we deny. There are other projects where, based on the balance of

the evidence that we have in front of us, we approve, and so there are times when there will be a First Nation who has indicated to us that they don't wish to see something go forward, and yet we will approve.

I don't ever expect that any two governments can always agree on all things. I can expect, or believe, that governments should always be working respectfully — government to government. What I can say is that there is a clear difference between us, as a government — and one of the main things that we chose to try to do, when we came into government in 2016, was to repair the relationship between First Nations and the Yukon government. We re-established the Yukon Forum. We have met four times a year since we came into power. And I tried to say to other governments, whether they are municipal or First Nation, that I don't always expect us to agree, but I do expect us to treat each other in a respectful fashion. We have heard examples of it today. Successor legislation — that is a way in which we are sitting down with all First Nations, and it has been really a tremendous effort.

I also worry because sometimes in conversations about mining, it is as if we — there is something specific about mining, as opposed to other types of land development. There are all sorts of land development. There are roads; there is agriculture; there are lots that we develop. There is mining; there is forestry; and there are all sorts of land-based activities that we have. There are some that are of more or less concern.

When I hear about blanket notions of what should happen and then at the same token, I get an application to do something, I can see that the whole idea of a pure moratorium is difficult, because there is always going to be a project that is wanted and another project that is not — for a range of reasons.

What I think we have agreed to do, based on our conversation with First Nations, is to accelerate land use planning. It's not an immediate process; I appreciate that, but starting with the Peel, we have that back on track. We have Dawson now working, and we, as a government, are ready to work on other regional land use planning processes.

With respect to the Beaver River land use planning process, I agree that it is not a regional plan, but I recall in conversations with the previous Minister of Environment that the way in which it was developed was — I will check to see where it was derived from, but it was always respectful of the final agreement — let me say at least that.

Ms. White: I fully understand that YESAB has lots of decisions that come in front of it. I think that from a lot of perspectives, it is the mining ones that can be denied from the YESAB perspective and then approved by governments, and those are the ones that become contentious. We could talk about the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, where they didn't want the subdivision of land and took the Yukon government to court.

I guess my point is that, despite the minister saying that they are doing things differently, if First Nations still need to go to court to stop things or to have their voices amplified or heard in a different way, then I think we still have to work on it. In all fairness, this minister is part of a government that was a majority government for four years before the last election. I

appreciate that there is work being done on successor resource legislation now.

I would like to think that I am part of the reason why that is happening. As was mentioned by the minister, that is part of the CASA commitment. It's good that it is happening, but when the minister was part of a majority government for four years, that work didn't start on successor resource legislation. It hadn't been started. It looks like the Minister of Education has a difference of opinion, so maybe the minister can correct me. Was this work started prior to that commitment in 2021?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have a couple of points. The member opposite raised the question of Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Just last week, I sat down with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to talk about land use planning and to discuss issues. Again, the point about the court case in and around the Ten Mile area was raised. I was with the Premier when he sat down with the chief and council previously and said that if CTFN wishes to put the court case in abeyance, then we can have that conversation, but, of course, we respect that it is the First Nation's prerogative to choose which avenue to take these conversations in. At all times, we work with them to have that conversation. Even when I talked with the steering committee on successor legislation, I talked with them about the journey to get to this point.

What did that include? First of all, it included the mining memorandum of understanding with all chiefs. That was signed early in our mandate. That led to the mineral development strategy — where we asked this panel to go around the territory and have conversations with Yukoners, including industry, about getting to successor legislation. Now we are there. So, yes, it's a journey, and I think there was groundwork put in place in order to get us there.

I wish that there was the ability to get to the end goal faster, but I have learned in my role in politics — not just here in this Legislature, but in other areas, and I'll even include running a community centre — that process is important and that we bring Yukoners along with us and they are part of that journey. I do see those steps that led us to successor legislation.

Ms. White: Can the minister tell me how many ounces of gold were mined in the territory last year?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My apologies, Deputy Chair. Could I just get the member opposite to repeat the question for me?

Ms. White: Can the minister tell me how many ounces of gold were mined in the territory — let's say by the placer industry — last year?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The last report that I have is from November 2021. The production for the previous season was 77,700 crude ounces worth approximately \$139 million.

Ms. White: How much in royalties did the Yukon government collect on that \$139 million of placer gold?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am just doing the math with my department here, but that would be \$29,000. I will also just point out that previously, when I was asked questions by the Member for Copperbelt South about successor legislation, one of the things that the steering committee has chosen as one of their first main topics is royalties.

Ms. White: So, \$29,000 of a non-renewable resource is how Yukon benefited. I appreciate that this is one of the topics of conversation around the successor resource legislation table.

I wanted to bring the minister's attention to an editorial that was written by his colleague in September 2011. I am going to read it — or good portions of it, anyway. It says, "A cost-benefit analysis" — "It's impossible to support the Liberal and Yukon parties' indifference toward 106-year-old placer gold royalties. But it is clear why they are turning a blind eye." Again, it is important to note that this is from the current Minister of Community Services, a member of Cabinet — has been a Member of Cabinet for a number of years. Although I appreciate that we are now looking at royalties, there was a majority government for a good number of years.

I am going to read from the article again: "It's impossible to support the Liberal and Yukon parties' indifference toward 106-year-old placer gold royalties.

"But it is clear why they are turning a blind eye. The costs outweigh the benefits by a wide margin.

"In this election, both the Liberals and the Yukon Party are positioning themselves as the players best able to manage the economy.

"And, amid this metal-price-driven boom, business people are a skittish bunch — a bit like a colt, worried the wrong rider will plunge them over a cliff.

"Radical actions, like raising royalties, would be considered reckless.

"So it's not going to happen.

"The Liberals are wooing this group — taking an aggressive approach to power generation, promising stable taxes and royalties."

It goes on to talk about the strong progressive policies — the Peel, a downtown sobering centre, support for an animal shelter, child-care assistance, and supported housing initiatives.

"The Yukon Party is promising a continuation of the last eight years by promising low taxes and royalties and wide-open development, including, it is assumed, development of the Peel. It is tossing crumbs to the social side — a yet-to-be defined tax credit to people caring for their loved ones and some undetermined money to build lifts for seniors.

"It has also announced a youth shelter, but it won't say whether it will be a new or existing facility.

"And both will maintain placer gold royalties that were set in 1906 when gold was \$15 an ounce and gas was a staggering 14 cents a gallon (equivalent to about \$4 a gallon in 2004 dollars), which, at the time, prompted calls for research into a cheaper alternative fuel, like alcohol.

"So today, placer operations in the territory are paying 37.5 cents an ounce on gold they wash from the territory's rivers. Currently, the price of an ounce of gold is \$1,790.

"Both the Liberals and the Yukon Party assert the placer industry is marginal and, while gold prices have gone up (they have risen 300 percent since 2006, when it was \$600 an ounce) they suggest, lamely, so have gas prices (a barrel of oil was \$62 in 2006, today it's \$86, and it is still relatively less expensive than it was in 1906.)

"As a result, neither will monkey with the placer royalty.

“It is, if you like, the cost of these politicians doing business with business.

“In 2009, the territory’s placer operations mined 43,500 ounces of gold.

“The territory collected \$16,000 on that gold. The industry sold it for \$47.6 million, less the amount it spent on diesel fuel.

“A nominal increase in the placer royalty to, say 2.4 percent of the current price of gold (equivalent to 1906), would net the territory \$1.1 million a year, enough to cover the cost of a new animal shelter, but not a lot in the territory’s federally fuelled \$1 billion budget.”

And it goes on — it goes on. So, we are at a time when gold has never been higher. I mean, it was a little bit higher before, but now, at today’s price, it is \$1,951 an ounce. A barrel of oil — the best I can figure is \$116 a barrel, and we are still collecting 37.5 cents on a non-renewable resource. That is the part — a non-renewable resource. This isn’t something we can grow; this isn’t something we can plant, and I think the part that is really important is that this non-renewable resource belongs to Yukoners.

So, I appreciate that this is being discussed, and I would like to know what feedback or direction is coming from the minister in that conversation.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I appreciate hearing the editorial from the past. What I can say is that we are currently carrying out successor legislation on quartz and placer.

To give you an indication that’s significant, those acts are 100 years old — more. So, that does require — it indicates that, if it hasn’t changed in 100 years, there are probably some reasons — that there was some reluctance to get to that change. It is pretty significant. We should acknowledge it, as Yukoners here, that this is a big step forward and one, no doubt, that is overdue in some senses. Royalties is clearly one of those ones. In fact, the steering committee chose it as one of the ones to work on.

What I can say is that, in my conversations with the Klondike Placer Miners’ Association, they have acknowledged that royalties need to change, and they won’t be surprised to see that they need to increase, but there is a conversation that has to happen about: How does industry support or benefit the public good of the Yukon?

There are various ways in which that might happen, including buying fuel — it’s one of the ways. There is a local economy there, but I don’t know that this is the only way. I don’t think we should — as we work through this and think through it, what we need to do is see that balance.

I can also say that — I mentioned earlier, when I stood on my feet, that there has been a table brought together by both — under the successor legislation, a working group created a table where the industry and the environmental non-governmental organizations came together. I think that at their joint meeting, they also agreed that placer royalties need to change.

I have asked my department folks to look up what it is for quartz, because we can compare those differences just as a point of conversation.

I just want to say that I agree with the member opposite that this is long overdue and that this conversation is ready to

happen now. She asked what direction I gave. I haven’t given very specific direction.

It has been more about asking that the work around these various topics, like royalties, be considered in balance of the whole system and that there should be — wherever we have resource extraction, whether it is renewable or non-renewable, we do need to consider the public good. That is sort of the high-level direction that I gave.

I will provide one more piece of information. I am looking at the final agreement of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun, and I am looking at section 11.8.0, which is entitled “Sub-Regional and District Land Use Plans”. That’s where the Beaver River land use plan is derived from.

As I said, the work is being done with respect to the final agreement.

Ms. White: It is interesting, because the NWT right now is in the process of looking at their royalty rates — their mineral royalties. I think it’s important to note that, according to the International Monetary Fund, governments should collect between 40 and 60 percent of the before-cash-flow generated by the projects. That is what is suggested by the International Monetary Fund.

It’s interesting that, last year, we got just shy of \$30,000 on placer gold. The good news is we also charged \$5,000 for grazing lease leases. To allow animals to graze on land, we charged \$5,000. It is pretty comparable, I guess, between the two. I appreciate that it’s going to be looked into; I do. I just thought I would highlight it. This is a question that has been asked from my side for a decade, because although the minister is right — it’s from 1906 — this has been a problem probably since the 1970s, when we became a government in the territory.

I want to move on, which is probably good for everyone. I want to move on to geothermal and petroleum services. Can the minister help me understand how geothermal and petroleum services have been moved into sustainable resources?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think the simple answer is, when you think of people who drill in the ground, who previously do oil and gas, they are also the people who do geothermal. That’s where the expertise within the department is. Geothermal itself is a renewable energy.

That’s why the move has happened there. Within every department, there are always little interesting ways in which things are divided up, but it’s because we’re focusing on renewables; that’s the main reason.

Ms. White: I should have caught myself before “geothermal” left my mouth. Of course, I agree that it is a renewable energy.

My concern is more around the petroleum services. I appreciate that if we talk about drilling, it will often be — it has been in the past — the experience of drilling for petroleum. My thought was that the minister’s government had said no to hydraulic fracturing — there is a moratorium.

There are examples of wells having been drilled in the territory for not hydraulic fracturing reasons, but are there currently any petroleum projects in the territory that are active?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We still have regulatory requirements within the branch. One of the questions that was

asked is whether we have active oil or gas wells. No, but Chance Oil and Gas still has leases just northwest of Eagle Plains, but we have regulatory requirements, so the branch still has that role.

As I said, we want to support geothermal work, because that's a good potential renewable energy.

Ms. White: I remember when Chance Oil and Gas was Northern Cross. I was here for that, so I am well-familiar. I imagine that court case is ongoing and the minister can't talk about it, so I will look forward to that result.

One of the things that had been discussed from our side for a number of years was the importance of mapping geothermal resources. The reason for that, of course, is air-source heat pumps, which are being promoted right now by the government — this is good and we can talk about that later — and the other options are things like ground-source heat pumps. So, if we have an idea of our geothermal resources, we can look at home heating without hydrocarbons.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I can say that what we have over the next several years is \$3.4 million, some of which is coming from the federal government, to assess geothermal resources and the potential within our territory. I will also say that usually this is not about ground heat sources, because when we are talking about geothermal, we are usually talking about things that are deeper. You can use heat exchange loops and there is some technology around that, but often what we're mapping is where there is that heat potential. Those ground-source heat pumps can typically be metres deep, not kilometres deep, but we are doing this mapping over the next several years.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I got tongue-tied and was thinking about heat and ground and pumps and their importance.

I am going to pivot a bit here. I would like to go to the Minto mine. I want to know the status, actually. I will ask for an update. I know Minto mine was found in contravention of their water licence. I know that, on January 5, 2022, a new security demand was issued for the Minto mine under the *Quartz Mining Act*. The Government of Yukon determined that the \$104,274,643 in security, inclusive of the existing \$72 million-plus that is currently held by Government of Yukon, was required to be furnished by April 5 of this year — just last week.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The member opposite is correct. We had done a new assessment for security and had indicated to Minto Metals that they were required to furnish an additional \$32 million and that the deadline was April 5. They weren't able to meet that deadline, so what happens now is that we have amended their quartz mining licence, and we have placed the operations under an additional set of restricted operating conditions.

They have, under these operating conditions, up until September 1. They are required to not increase site liability. They are required to manage their contaminated water, which is the most critical issue that is on-site, and they are required to report to us every two weeks.

What I will say is that the mine has been working very closely with our Compliance Monitoring and Inspections

teams. Both the territorial government and the Selkirk First Nation government have been very proactive in that work. They recognize what the situation is, and we also have identified that there is a higher snow load this year coming up for the spring freshet. This is why we have been working closely with Minto and they have been working closely with us. That is the current situation.

Ms. White: I do appreciate that update from the minister.

Yesterday, there was a ministerial statement about the cautionary tale of Wolverine, and Wolverine missed a \$350,000 security payment — \$350,000, not \$32 million. I appreciate that things have been amended.

It is my understanding that Minto mine is in the process of getting their own — I'm trying to find the terminology; I apologize — is in the process of getting their own inspection done or they're in the process of trying to counter that number from Yukon government.

Yukon government said \$104 million, and Minto has said \$76 million, which is the difference of a substantial many millions of dollars. Can the minister comment on that, please?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: So, Deputy Chair, this is what the process looks like at this stage. The money is owed, and that isn't foregone at this stage, but what the mine is doing is looking for ways in which to reduce the risk of the mine. So, that is what they are working on, and when we assess securities, it is in order to have the funds to remediate, should the mine close, but it is based on the liability of the site, and if mining companies can reduce that risk and that liability, then that is a way in which they can work.

So, whenever the regulator comes in — when we step in as the regulator and say, "This is what the security is", there is work that goes back and forth between industry and us, as the regulator. It is appropriate work and what is expected, so we are not forgoing any of this security, but the mine has an ability now — between now and September 1 — to find ways to reduce that liability, and one of the specific ways is if water is treated. That is one of the issues — probably the single most significant issue that is there under that \$32 million is the treatment of water.

That is where the mine will work now — between now and September 1. This is a specific phase that follows at this time. It is as prescribed, so the next step is for them to have, between April 5 and September 1, under their amended licence.

What I will say is that the mine has been very cooperative and has worked very closely with Compliance Monitoring and Inspections and the Selkirk First Nation as they go through this phase.

Ms. White: I am sure that I have mentioned this in recent years, but I worked at Wolverine when the first crisis happened. Well, it was the first of a long series of crises, if we're honest about it, when the water became so highly alkaline that it couldn't be treated. When we talk about water — understanding that the water is coming out of the ground and it needs to be treated before it can be put back into the natural environment — there is concern.

Because we know that we are not at the freshet yet — we know that the melt is coming and that this is happening — are there increased inspections done by the department?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The answer is yes, if we are talking about Minto mine, but I think we shifted a little bit to Wolverine there. I will say that I recently went to look at Wolverine directly. I asked the site manager if the member opposite's name was still up somewhere. He said that unfortunately that building had been demolished. He said he would send some photos of the fire that they used when they were cleaning it up.

Yes, if we are talking about Minto, we are in very close contact with the mine. That is one of the purposes of this amended quartz mining licence. It requires that there be additional inspections, additional reporting, and a much tighter turnaround. I will say again that Minto has been working very closely with our inspectors all along. We first went to them and identified the concerns, because I think we all saw the snow surveys that were coming out and we could see that there was additional freshet risk. That led to this ongoing conversation. We had to reassess securities, which led to further conversations.

So, the work has been ongoing. That is what I will say. My understanding of how the mine is working is that they are alerting our team if there are changes for the better or the worse. They are letting us know as those changes happen.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

I was on a website called www.sedar.com where public companies like Minto Metals are required to post all of their financial documents. It did talk about the request from Yukon government to increase the bond, but it also had a paragraph that said, "In light of the new surety bonding request, the Company engaged third-party consultants to perform a review of the surety bonding amount and have estimated the new bonding amount to be \$76.5 million as of December 31, 2021 compared to \$72.1 million in the prior year."

So, can the minister help me understand what the company is doing by getting that third-party consultant out to review the surety bonding amount?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to add to my previous answer that, when I mentioned about working with our inspectors, I should also have said that the mine has also been working very closely with the Selkirk First Nation. They obviously have a stake and an interest in this. It has been the three groups at all times staying in contact.

I think I am probably being pulled into a line of questioning that I won't have the ability to answer well. I believe that this is just a financial situation with the mine, so their surety bond is how they dealt with the original \$72.5 million in security. They may be looking at how they can use that in other ways, and it may be limited in how they can use it, but really, this is more a question that would need to be posed to Minto.

It is not our work to understand how the mine, or how any commercial enterprise, secures funding for its security; it's just that we require that security.

Ms. White: I guess, in asking the question, my hope was that the minister could help the average layperson, like myself, understand what the company was doing in the interim.

Again, yesterday, it was the ministerial statement on the cautionary tale of Wolverine, and that was missed payments of, you know, \$350,000 and this is \$32 million. I understand that we changed requirements and abilities for a number of months, but it just begs lots of questions from people like me who don't fully understand.

I am just looking across. Is there additional information?

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. White: Right, so I will not report progress right now. I look forward to the minister's response.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: One of the differences will be that Wolverine had already gone into temporary closure whereas Minto is an operating mine — so, there are differences. I have had some conversations with Minto about their financial situation, but I really don't feel that it is appropriate for me to talk about it. They have been very transparent around that in conversations with us, but I think that government has this responsibility to make sure that we — I said yesterday in this House that there is a cautionary tale, and so government needs to be responsible around these mines.

With Minto, my understanding is that we are in the exact step that is required right now. So, we reassessed security. It came in as higher. The mine will either generate that security for us or find ways to reduce liabilities to have us reassess that the risk is lower or they will not be able to operate. Those are sort of the options. At this point, when they did not furnish the security by April 5, we go into an amended quartz mining licence. That is the stage that we are in right now. In order to be in that stage, there is a requirement for bringing down the risks. We do that through a series of ways — by an agreement that they can't increase the risks, by having more reporting to us. So, that is the way in which this stage happens. It is an appropriate stage that we are at.

Again, one thing that I will say is that the Minto mine has been working closely with us and the Selkirk First Nation.

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes 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 5:28 p.m.