



Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Monday, November 21, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2022 Fall Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, November 21, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. The following motion was not placed on the Notice Paper as it is not in order because the action requested in the motion has already been decided upon by the Assembly during the current Session: Motion No. 540, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

In addition, the following motion was removed from the Order Paper as it is outdated: Motion No. 454, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse West.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed with the Order Paper.
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We have a number of individuals who are here with us today in the Assembly. First, we will be doing a tribute to a very special Yukoner, and a number of family members are here to attend with us today. From the Hougen family, I would like to welcome — and this is from the second to fifth generation of this family — here with us today: Rolf Hougen, Craig Hougen, Kelly Hougen, Heather Hougen, Karen Hougen-Bell, Jim Bell, Erik Hougen, Kim Hougen, Greta Gray, Bob Gray, Maureen Nielsen, Rick Nielsen, Tanner Hougen, Cody Hougen, Erik Gray, Maria Gray, Patrick Bell, Mason Gray, and Riel Gray. I am hoping that I didn't miss anybody. Thank you for attending today.

As well, we have a number of reports that we are tabling today. First, from the Yukon Housing Corporation, we have a number of individuals who are with us. So, with us today from our board, the Yukon Housing Corporation board, we have Anne Kennedy, as well as Chris Mahar — welcome to you both. As well, Mary Cameron, Lisa Oddy, Daniel Jirousek, Philippe Mollet, Marcel Holder Robinson, and Laura Lang — thank you as well for being here today.

We also have, from the Lottery Commission and the Liquor Corporation: first, our president, Mr. Dennis Berry — thank you for attending from the Liquor Corporation side — and Mr. James Price, as well — thank you for attending. On the lotteries side, our director, Mr. Matt Ordish, as well as Karine Potvin, and from our board at lotteries, our vice-president, Sara Skelton.

I thank everybody for being here today for the tabling of those important reports.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am going to be tabling the report from the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board and we have here today from the board: the chair, Heather Burrell; members Scott Donaldson, Brad Thrall, and Neil Loveless, as well as admin support for the board, Fraser Pearce.

We are doing a ministerial statement today on work ongoing with the French Language Services Directorate, so today we have Deputy Minister Manon Moreau, director, André Bourcier, and our policy manager, Nancy Power.

If we could welcome everybody here today, please.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Margaret Hougen

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to mark the passing of a strong and lasting member of our community, Margaret Van Dyke Hougen.

Born in Edmonton to new immigrants from the Netherlands, Margaret was already well-travelled before she settled in the territory, regularly travelling across Alberta and flying by military aircraft into remote communities in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in service of the Red Cross in their work of collecting blood.

In 1953, a move that shaped the Yukon forever occurred. Margaret moved to Whitehorse, and the rest was history. At the Queen's Coronation Ball in June 1953, she met her husband, Rolf Hougen. They got married in 1955 and had a loving relationship for almost 70 years.

As almost everyone in the territory knows, the Hougen family is the stuff of legends, but Margaret herself seemed to never slow down. She was a member of the Whitehorse Community Choir, the local curling club, and the matriarch of a remarkable, big, close family, but she was also critical to the business success of the Hougen Group. The accomplishments of the family and their businesses owe so much to the talents and work of Margaret.

Mr. Speaker, new Yukoners may not realize this, but it is hard to overstate just how innovative the Hougen family is to the history of the Yukon. They did so much — and do so much — to invest in and preserve the remarkable history of the territory. You can observe that clearly by either attending the Yukon Rendezvous festival, which Rolf famously had a critical hand in reinstating or by walking around downtown and taking in the bust statues of remarkable Yukoners of days gone by. The Hougens did that and so much more. This family has ensured that our history is front, centre, and accessible.

To Margaret and the Hougens, family was and is everything. It is incredible how close this family is. Anyone who spends any time with them can tell this. I cannot stress enough how strong the bonds between mother, father, children, siblings, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are. That is a testament to the remarkable woman named Margaret.

What I remember most about Margaret was the kindness that she showed to each and every person. If she and her family were hosting a group of people in their home, you would not go

away that evening feeling like you had not been heard or not cared for.

Her warm and welcoming kindness was extended to everyone, and I am so grateful to have been a recipient of that kindness over the years.

Our deepest condolences to Rolf and the rest of the Hougen family. Thank you for sharing your remarkable great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, sibling, and wife with us for so many years.

I encourage all who can, in Margaret's memory, to support the Yukon Foundation's Hougen family fund, which provides funding related to the study, preservation, and enhancement of historical and cultural activities — another remarkable legacy of the Hougen family and of Margaret.

Also, Mr. Speaker, today is Margaret's birthday. So, happy birthday to Margaret and thank you for all you have done for the Yukon.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to honour and pay tribute to Margaret Hougen, or Marg.

In 1949, Marg was introduced to the Yukon as a Red Cross nurse who was part of the national blood transfusion service team. She flew into Yellowknife and Whitehorse on the RCAF planes to hold clinics. In 1953, her sister Rosalyn, who was married and stationed in Whitehorse with her Air Force husband, was having her first child and asked Marg to come support her. She attended a local dance — and then the fairytale meeting between young Rolf Hougen and the beautiful blonde, Marg Van Dyke. A love story began. Rolf was smitten and they spent quite a bit of time together. However, she moved away when Rosalyn and her husband were reposted south.

Asked why she left, she stated that she had to play hard to get. Rolf found her address and wrote and found that she did miss the Yukon. So, he went to move her back north. Now, remember the times. Rolf was meeting her parents for the first time and asking to take their daughter on an Alaska Highway road trip — heavens. Thankfully, they approved of this young man and allowed her to come north.

This was 1954, and upon arrival, Marg stayed with Rolf's friend, Erik Nielsen, and his wife, PJ. Rolf proposed; she accepted. He wasn't going to let her leave again.

It was May 3, 1955 in Edmonton, and they took a four-month honeymoon to Europe — so began their passion for travel, love of wine, and history. The family started, and Marg was busy at home. Rolf's business was growing, and the Hougen department store, which us old-timers remember as having a bit of everything, opened along with the auto dealership. Marg was always supportive.

Craig, Kelly, Karen, Erik, Greta, and Maureen were raised knowing their lot in life was pretty darn good, but they were also not given everything they wanted. They had to work in the department store after school and on weekends for pocket money, filling shelves, sweeping up, and general duties. As they got older, they all had ties to the store, but were also encouraged to do whatever they decided was best for them.

She said that her greatest legacy is the children and family, but they were still a work in progress. She had much on her plate — the children, their activities, planning parties and dinners, and ensuring that Rolf was okay, as he travelled a lot with his business. She said it wasn't hard as the older kids helped with the younger ones.

It was said that Marg was the centre — the rock in the glue — that held everything together. To show what a wise woman she was, the kids were important, but she always had her time with Rolf. She was his sounding board and adviser, and I'm sure that many decisions were run by her before anything happened. As a couple, they made sure to cut out time for themselves, and Marg said, "Rolf always made me feel so loved." Now, that is special.

In this household, there is never a fear of empty nest. All of the 18 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren are cherished and loved, and to see the photos of them all is truly another upcoming chapter in their Yukon story. The pictorial history and family story records the story of their ancestors and their life in Yukon as the times changed.

Using the rock in the centre of the glue analogy, home should be your rock — a place to centre you with love that holds all together, like glue. This is Marg's legacy.

Our sincere condolences to Rolf and the family and, as of today, it's her 93rd birthday. Happy birthday, Marg.

Applause

Ms. White: Losing the matriarch of a family sends ripples far and wide. So, today, the Yukon NDP share our condolences with the Hougen family and all those who are feeling the heartache of loss. We can only imagine the stories that you will share about such a rich and well-lived life.

It sounds as though Margaret truly lived each and every day to its fullest, and for that, we celebrate her legacy and the impact she had on those around her — her family, her friends, and her community. We are sorry for your loss.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Pursuant to section 23(2) of the Yukon *Housing Corporation Act*, I have for tabling the Yukon Housing Corporation 2021-22 annual report. Pursuant to section 16 of the *Liquor Act*, I have for tabling the Yukon Liquor Corporation 2021-22 annual report. I also have for tabling the Yukon Lottery Commission 2021-22 annual report.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling today the 2021 Yukon Minerals Advisory Board annual report.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have, pursuant to section 50(1) of the *Environment Act*, for tabling the 2022 Yukon state of the environment interim report.

Ms. Clarke: I have for tabling a report dated November 14 from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics on investment in building construction.

Speaker: Are there any committee reports to be presented?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to establish a Finlayson caribou herd oversight committee with Kaska Nation representation by December 31, 2022 and clearly communicate the details of this committee to the Yukon public.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop legislation requiring each member of a government-appointed board or committee to receive training on fiduciary duties and conflict of interest within three months of being appointed.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to agree to and implement the recommendations made by the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner in the June 14, 2022 report on the use of video surveillance technology in Yukon schools.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide in-centre hemodialysis to Yukoners requiring it.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to request that the Yukon Utilities Board to investigate and review the affairs, earnings, and accounts of ATCO Electric Yukon for the 2022 year.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

French language services

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today we are launching a public engagement to inform the next strategic framework for French language services and communications. Our Liberal government is dedicated to increasing the public's access to government services and information in French.

The new framework will help us prioritize our actions for the next two years. It will build on the successes of the previous framework and guide our investments to better serve the growing Yukon francophone community. Statistics Canada recently released census results showing that the proportion of Canadians who speak predominantly French at home decreased

in all provinces and territories except the Yukon. More than 14 percent of Yukoners speak French, up from 13 percent in 2011, maintaining the territory's ranking as the third most bilingual jurisdiction in Canada, after Québec and New Brunswick.

We are proud of our growing francophone community, and we want to ensure that our services keep pace with this demographic increase and keep current with the community's priorities so we can focus our efforts where they matter most. In the next few weeks, we will engage in a meaningful conversation with the francophone community to identify what is working well and what could be improved.

We will also discuss with Yukoners outside of the Whitehorse area to capture their valued perspective, knowing that accessing French language services in communities can sometimes be more challenging.

Our government's strategic response to COVID-19 accelerated some social trends, such as: the high standard we set for sharing timely emergency and public safety communications; the increasing mobility and distribution of our workforce; the growing number of e-services; the increasing impact of artificial intelligence in the language industry; and the tightening of the labour market, which impacts our capacity to recruit bilingual employees.

We want to openly discuss the best ways to answer these new challenges with the francophone community. The new strategic framework for French Language Services will be our third framework, and each one has renewed our commitment to better serve and inform the francophone community in French. Our \$28-million agreement on French language services with the Government of Canada for 2021-22 to 2024-25 has been instrumental in improving our services in the Yukon.

Over the last few years, we increased our bilingual emergency communications responsiveness by sharing information in French, including during flood and wildfire emergencies in near real time, even on weekends and evenings. We also improved the delivery of online and in-person services. For instance, we deployed a new live video interpretation service and started piloting designated points of service to provide immediate and consistent services in French.

The French Language Services Directorate supports some 15 designated bilingual positions in the Department of Health and Social Services and 11 in the Department of Justice. The directorate provides more than \$3 million annually to support French language services across the government and \$350,000 to support French language services in the three hospitals in the Yukon. Earlier this month, our government opened the Centre de Santé Constellation Health Centre, which also provides more access to health care services for our population.

I firmly believe that improving French language services benefits all Yukoners. I look forward to engaging in meaningful conversation with the public and the francophone stakeholders in the coming weeks.

Ms. Clarke: Merci to the minister for providing an update on French language services and communications. As we know, the francophone community is extensive in the

Yukon; however, we are wondering how the franco-yukonnaise will be able to provide their feedback to this public engagement. Can he clarify what he means by “meaningful conversation”? Perhaps he can outline the way the government will be collecting and reporting this feedback in his response. Also, can he expand on how rural Yukoners will be able to provide input?

We look forward to seeing the results of this engagement and to reviewing the new strategic framework for French language services and communication.

Ms. White: Merci Monsieur le Président. Nous sommes contents d'apprendre que 14% des Yukonaises et Yukonnais sont francophones. Nous restons donc fièrement la troisième juridiction la plus bilingue en anglais-français du Canada. Il va sans dire que le gouvernement devrait mener des conversations approfondies avec la communauté francophone du Yukon pour guider le développement du nouveau cadre stratégique pour les services et la communication en français. La reconnaissance du français et de la communauté francophone au Yukon est fermement due aux revendications et à la défense des droits de la communauté francophone, une communauté qui fait preuve de créativité, de résilience et d'adaptation afin de servir une population grandissante. Nous attendons avec impatience des nouvelles de ce nouveau cadre stratégique. Merci.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you to the members opposite for their kind words in support of the French community and also for the French Language Services Directorate for the work that they do. The Member for Porter Creek Centre asked how that engagement would happen. First of all, the French Language Services Directorate works very closely with l'Association franco-yukonnaise — l'AFY. In the past when this work was done, there were workshops; there were some very creative ways — I think there was even an improvisational opportunity where they used theatre and ways to engage the communities to draw out their various responses, so there were a lot of ways in which the engagement happened.

There are always ways in which we reach to the communities as well, so we are keen to work with l'AFY and engage with the community directly.

I think it's worth acknowledging the work that l'AFY has done — l'Association franco-yukonnaise. They have a tremendous organization with a range of folks, including artists, members of the media, volunteers, entrepreneurs, and just people in general who help the French community thrive and who really showcase the Yukon across Canada. I would really like to thank them for their support. We have an ongoing agreement with l'AFY in support of our delivery of French language services, so we will look to continue that and to keep that great collaboration going.

I can say as well that, when it comes to the priorities of the French community, one of the things that they have stressed to us is around health, especially for beginning of life and end of life. So, we have made a strong effort around that, including work with our Mental Wellness and Substance Use branch to help them transition into a designated point of service for

bilingual services, including our three hospitals, and including 50 positions across all government departments.

So, again, thanks to the French Language Services Directorate for their great work. Thanks to the francophone community, and looking forward to the strategic engagement for all Yukoners.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Whistle Bend development

Ms. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, I again asked the Minister of Community Services about the continued delays in releasing building lots to Yukoners. The lack of land available for housing development continues to be a significant factor contributing to the Yukon's housing affordability crisis. In early July 2021, this minister cancelled the tender for phase 7, delaying the release of those lots by a building season, and we know developers were unable to access lots until late summer, months after they were supposed to start building. So, what we're talking about today is the minister's inability to deliver lots for Yukoners.

On November 10, the minister stated that he would release 200 lots this year. Can he confirm when these 200 lots will be released?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The issue of housing lots and housing in the territory is certainly very important to Yukoners, and I appreciate the opportunity to be able to address that today.

We've had a long discussion — the member opposite and I — about lot development in the territory. I have made every effort to talk about how much we have invested in lots over the last several years. That effort is certainly on the record. We've made historic investments indeed, Mr. Speaker, in lot development and housing — \$30 million in the budget for lot development and land development in the Yukon this year, and we're working to develop a thousand lots in the coming years. That has been our commitment; we're still working on that.

We continue to advance Whistle Bend as quickly as possible in phases. We see progress every year, releasing lots by way of lottery for private citizens and contractors before the spring start to the construction season.

Once Whistle Bend is completed, it will include 15 phases, over 2,000 lots, and \$300 million in investment and economic benefit for Yukon contractors and businesses. It provides a foundation for much-needed homes for our growing population.

The member opposite has asked about the 200 lots in Whistle Bend, and I fully expect that those lots will come on board before the spring building season.

Ms. Clarke: I think everyone listening knows we are talking about this government's delays in getting housing lots to market. The private sector is ready to build, but the stats are showing that the lack of lots is having a big impact. Last week, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics released the September investment in building construction stats. When adjusted for inflation, the amount spent on residential construction during the January-to-September building season decreased by

24.5 percent from 2021 to 2022. Builders were simply unable to spend money to build because they couldn't access lots.

So, will the minister confirm that we won't have further delays and that over 200 lots will be released this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would like to see the statistics that the Yukon Party is referring to. They have proven to be unreliable when it comes to their information. We have seen that time and time again in the House.

What I can tell the members opposite, though, is that we have increased our budget to \$30 million this year — \$30 million. The members opposite, as we have talked about — in their last year in office, the Yukon Party actually invested \$7.7 million in lot development. Those are really the statistics to talk about this afternoon — the difference in the approach — as this Liberal government works very, very hard to ensure that Yukoners have a supply of lots.

Now, I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that this year's budget, as I said, includes more than \$30 million in lot development. In the last two years, municipalities across the territory issued almost 1,300 permits for residential construction — a significant increase over the historic average. Over the last four years, we have seen the addition of more than 1,000 new homes in Whitehorse, a 60-percent increase over the previous four-year period. Residential investment has reached record highs in the Yukon, with \$267 million in residential development construction in 2021. These are the stats we are standing by, Mr. Speaker. We are working for Yukoners; we are working to get those houses out the door.

Ms. Clarke: Well, these are the facts. The Bureau of Statistics confirms that, compared to last year, the amount spent on residential construction was down by a quarter. We know builders were unable to access lots this summer due to Liberal mismanagement. The stats showed that the average cost of a house had risen to \$701,000 by the end of September.

So, can this minister confirm for Yukoners if there will be further delays? Can the minister confirm if phase 6B was completed this summer, as planned, or has it been delayed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That was a true goulash of information that came from the member opposite over there. Let me just try to talk about where we are trying to make this understandable to people.

The Yukon Liberal government has invested dramatically — I believe that the number is more than \$267 million in residential investment construction in 2021, shattering the 2020 record of nearly \$200 million. In the coming years, our goal is to develop a thousand new residential lots across the territory. We have been doing that. I read the stats into the record last week.

The land development process takes time. As I have said before, phase 4 was tendered in the summer of 2017 and released in three phases in the spring and fall of 2019-20. Phase 5 was tendered in 2018 and released in the fall of 2020. Phase 6 — 102 single-family lots, 65 town house lots, and four multi-family lots — was tendered in January 2020 and fell behind schedule. Phase 6A lots were released in the spring of 2022. More than 200 lots — phase 6B, 101 lots; phase 7A, 86 lots; and phase 8 with 16 lots — are under construction and targeted

for completion this year. They will be available before the building season next spring.

Question re: Finlayson caribou herd management

Mr. Istchenko: It has now been over four years since the Liberal government shut down all resident and outfitter harvest of the Finlayson caribou herd. That was a decision that was made outside of the normal Fish and Wildlife Management Board process, as is outlined in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Since then, the Liberal government has committed to conducting more study of the population, so when I asked about this back on April 3 of this year, the minister told the Legislature that they were planning a population survey of the herd in 2022 and that it would be shared publicly. So, can the minister tell us if that population survey of the Finlayson herd was conducted and if it is available publicly?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak about the great work that is being done with respect to caribou herd data collection. There are 29 different caribou herds located throughout the Yukon. To monitor our caribou herds, we deploy collars to track their seasonal movements, conduct multiple composition surveys each year, and typically one to three population censuses. We co-manage a number of herds with other governments, including First Nations, provincial and territorial agencies in British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alaskan state, and federal agencies.

The primary tools we use to manage the caribou populations in the Yukon are population monitoring and harvest management. Harvest management for some herds is guided by herd management plans, such as the Porcupine, Southern Lakes, and Fortymile caribou herds. We also use the following regulatory tools to manage the harvest of caribou herds through permit-hunt authorizations, quotas through establishing hunting closures, and non-issuance of licences. The use of these tools is intended to allow a herd to recover.

For one such herd, which the member opposite has asked about, we have limited licensed harvest on, and that is the Finlayson caribou herd, which is in the traditional territory of Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation. In order to address our shared concerns for this herd, no resident hunting permits have been issued for the Finlayson caribou herd since the 2018-19 hunting season, and I will continue —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Istchenko: When the former minister made this controversial decision in 2018, she bypassed the Fish and Wildlife Management Board's process, which is outlined in the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. This left the Yukon Fish and Game Association and the outfitters looking for answers and a path forward. At that time, the minister said that she hoped to have a collective management plan within six months. That was in October of 2018.

Can the minister tell us if there is a collective management plan in place yet for the Finlayson herd?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Just continuing on with respect to the Finlayson caribou herd, although our latest census estimates and composition survey of the Finlayson caribou suggests that

the herd may, in fact, be stabilizing, we need to continue to monitor it to ensure that this is a trend over time prior to having further harvest allocation discussions. Any further licensed harvest of this herd will require further discussion between the Government of Yukon, the Ross River Dena Council, and the Liard First Nation.

As we know, harvest management discussions across the territory can be challenging, but we will make informed and collaborative decisions by generating and sharing knowledge. With this knowledge, the Department of Environment employs adaptive measures to manage caribou more responsibly and, as needed, to adjust our actions and impacts. Composition surveys provide estimates of adult sex ratios and calf recruitment and allow us to monitor long-term population trends.

The department introduced, as indicated, a permit-hunt authorization for Finlayson caribou herd in 1998, issuing 30 permits annually until 2018. However, Mr. Speaker, no licensed hunting opportunities have been made available for the Finlayson caribou herd since 2018. We look forward to processing the data recently received and moving forward with a plan —

Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Istchenko: It has now been over four years with zero hunting opportunities for licensed hunters or an outfitter harvest. So, can the minister please explain what information he does not have that he needs to make a decision about this issue, and will he agree to propose a regulation change through the Fish and Wildlife Management Board process — that's a great process — to allow some hunting opportunities for the Finlayson herd next year?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you for that question.

As indicated, we have continued to monitor the Finlayson caribou herd. The population estimates in 1996 were approximately 4,437 animals, which were estimated to have declined to 2,712 animals in 2017. Mr. Speaker, in March 2022, census results indicated 3,359 animals, which may indicate the herd is stabilizing, but we will continue to monitor population demographics to evaluate trends over time, and some of that data is being processed and evaluated now, over the course of the winter and into the spring.

Certainly, I am open to having discussions with the Ross River Dena Council. We will be having discussions with the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation and with other stakeholders with respect to the possibility of the consideration of providing opportunities, both in the Finlayson caribou hunt area and in other areas, where data supports a reconsideration of providing hunting opportunities, both in that area and across the Yukon.

Question re: Hemodialysis services in Yukon

Ms. Blake: The lack of in-centre hemodialysis care in the Yukon is once again in the news. Just this week, another story came out about a Yukoner who travels to Vancouver every single week to receive the medical care that keeps them alive. This is exhausting and unsustainable, even for a healthy person. This Yukoner is unable to receive this care at Whitehorse General Hospital. This government is willing to

cover their airfare, medical travel subsidy, and out-of-territory medical costs but is unwilling to provide a service that more than one Yukoner needs and deserves.

What work has this government done to address the lack of in-centre hemodialysis in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is a very important topic to Yukoners, and we certainly heard the media today and have much compassion for individuals who are affected by chronic kidney disease. Here in the Yukon, we currently have approximately 50 people who have chronic kidney disease. Nine of those individuals undergo dialysis treatment at home, through either peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis.

The BC Renal organization provides support to Yukoners who need dialysis or kidney transplant. Their guidelines, at this time, do not recommend developing a hemodialysis centre in the Yukon Territory. It's based on expertise availability and based on the territory's population and the number of Yukoners who would need such a service.

These guidelines recommend establishing a hemodialysis centre for a population of 85,000 with six to eight beds that can service approximately 24 patients. In order to protect the privacy of individuals, the statistic that I have at this time is that there are fewer than five individuals requiring this level of support in the Yukon.

Ms. Blake: Some Yukoners are able to care for themselves through in-home hemodialysis, but this is not an option for many. Just three years ago, a Yukoner returned to the territory to die rather than remain away from his home and family. His only other option was to remain in Vancouver for the rest of his life. After his death and the publicity surrounding it, we received many e-mails and letters from folks who were shocked by his needless death but also concerned for their own future health care needs. We heard then from this government that the numbers just weren't high enough to require in-centre hemodialysis.

How many Yukoners currently require hemodialysis?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it's critically important for Yukoners to know that we continue to work with all Yukoners to establish what they need and to assist them in whatever way we can. These are extremely difficult choices. Our medical travel program is available to provide support to eligible Yukoners who need to travel out-of-territory to access dialysis services.

I would note for Yukoners that the medical travel subsidy has been doubled by our government to \$150 daily and made available on the first day of travel, which is something that was never available before. We also approve escorts to assist individuals who need to travel to have this care. The medical travel program provides coverage for scheduled air travel for those who require access to inpatient dialysis services and can also provide a daily medical travel subsidy for those requiring it. We continue to work closely with BC Renal to monitor this important issue.

Ms. Blake: What an impossible choice: move permanently away from jobs, home, friends, and family to receive in-centre hemodialysis or remain here to die. In the Northwest Territories, there are two communities where in-

centre hemodialysis is available. One is located in Yellowknife and the other is in Hay River. Hay River has a population of just under 4,000 people, which is one-tenth of the population of Yukon. It now has four in-centre hemodialysis machines, and we have zero.

How does the minister explain that the Yukon cannot provide this same service that the Northwest Territories is able to provide?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it's incredibly important for us to receive assistance and have a strong partnership with BC Renal, which provides support to Yukoners who need dialysis or kidney transplant. This is, of course, a specialized service. The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health concluded that independent dialysis, such as peritoneal dialysis and home hemodialysis, are as effective as hemodialysis provided in a hospital setting.

The Yukon does not have the advanced health infrastructure to accommodate all dialysis patients. Some dialysis patients would still need to travel out-of-territory even if a hemodialysis centre were established in the Yukon. We continue to work with every single patient who comes to our attention to assist them in determining what they need. These are difficult choices.

As I noted earlier and in response to one of the questions, I want to protect the privacy of individuals, so the statistic that I have at this time is that there are fewer than five individuals requiring this level of support. That does not mean that this is not a very difficult situation for individuals who are affected by kidney disease. We certainly appreciate that.

Question re: Paid sick leave rebate program

Ms. Tredger: The government recently released its new plan for managing COVID-19. The chief medical officer of health recommends that people stay home as long as they have symptoms of any illness. Unfortunately for many people, it's not that simple. Many Yukoners face the choice between staying home from work or earning the wages they need to put food on the table and to cover their rent and mortgage.

I know the minister will mention their sick leave rebate, but that is a temporary program. This temporary program has been extended again until March 31, 2023, but Yukoners are not going to magically stop getting sick after that date. How long does the minister plan to continue the temporary paid sick leave rebate program?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The COVID-19 paid sick leave rebate program has been in place since March 2020, and a fourth extension until March 31, 2023 has been approved. The paid sick leave rebate program helps employers and workers without a paid sick leave benefit to meet their financial needs while staying home with specific COVID-19 illness. As of October 27, 2022, we have seen 2,488 people from 448 businesses, and they have received \$3,447,157 in rebates through the paid sick leave rebate program. I have more to share on this, and I'm looking forward to getting a little deeper into the forward process, but I think that it's important just to show how effective this program has been. Again, in the interim, we

have extended it to the end of this fiscal year and look forward to question number 2 and number 3.

Ms. Tredger: The question that Yukoners are still waiting on for an answer is: What will happen after March? Will this program continue?

Yukoners want to do the right thing and stay home when they are sick. One problem is that the current rebate program is just for people who are sick with COVID-19. It's not just COVID that's the problem right now. There is also RSV, the seasonal flu, and more. People with non-COVID illnesses are not eligible for the minister's rebate program, and many can't afford to stay home to recover. We know that paid sick leave is a critical tool to combat the spread of illness. Will the minister commit to expanding his paid sick leave rebate beyond COVID-19 to include all illnesses?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Certainly, through the early years of this program, it was really focused on COVID-19 — you are absolutely correct — and we have been aware of some of the other challenges that have been coming but also the fact that there has been ongoing public conversation around sick leave in general and the extension of sick leave.

I would say to the member opposite — I have to say, and I may not be informed properly, but I haven't heard of a lot of people coming to us asking: What is happening after March 31? What they are saying is: "Is there a program in place that I can use now?" I think, by the numbers, that you are seeing almost \$3.5 million that we have paid to Yukoners, and they do understand that there has been a safety net in place. I think that I would also like to identify the fact that this, of course, was leading in the country. We had many large provinces reach out to us afterward, such as Ontario and Manitoba, and ask for the framework of this. So, we think that it has been put together very well; we think that it has been very effective.

We know that there needs to be a plan going forward and that is what we are certainly working on, but we do need to have a conversation with the business sector, the private sector, as well as other stakeholders before we decide what happens after March 31.

Ms. Tredger: The Government of British Columbia implemented five days of paid sick leave nearly a year ago. The Government of Canada just implemented 10 days of paid sick leave for federally regulated private sector workers. We aren't the only ones asking for this. Experts and Yukoners alike are on board. To combat the emergency room crisis, the Canadian Medical Association, a non-partisan organization, said — and I quote: "... an enhanced form of paid sick leave is urgently required."

So, what about this government? Will they do the work to implement a permanent paid sick leave program for all Yukon workers?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Really, what we are talking about this afternoon is making sure that Yukoners are kept safe wherever they are working. Our strong leadership on this side of the House guided us through the pandemic and kept our economy going at the same time, as my colleague said just moments ago. The paid sick leave program that we put in place led the country. We put it in place first. We put in a program to

protect Yukoners to make sure that they could take the time they needed to get well, without impacting their bottom line, and also kept businesses going through that whole pandemic. This has been our focus throughout our mandate — certainly throughout this mandate with the pandemic coming into a new phase.

So, we worked together, my colleague and I — my colleague on the NDP benches — we worked on the Making Work Safe Panel. We came up with a lot of good recommendations. Those recommendations are currently being reviewed and worked on from a policy perspective within the Department of Community Services, and as my colleague said, we have to go out and talk to businesses to make sure that we adhere to that pillar inside that Making Work Safe Panel recommendation, which was to make sure that, when we implement this policy, we do not hurt businesses.

Question re: Mining legislation

Mr. Kent: So, the deadline for the consultation period on the Dawson regional land use plan is now extended into December. The recommended plan has prompted questions about existing mining claims within the planning region. When existing claims are located in areas where development is prohibited or limited, claims may be deemed to be alienated and/or expropriated, either directly or indirectly, through access restrictions.

So, can the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources tell us what the government's policy is regarding compensation for mineral claims that are either expropriated outright or effectively expropriated in the land use planning process?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you for the opportunity to rise to talk about the Dawson regional land use plan. I was at the Geoscience Forum and trade show this weekend, and even this morning, I went to speak at the forum, and I spoke about the Dawson regional land use plan. The commission has given a recommended plan, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon government are out engaging with Yukoners on this. We are really keen to hear from all Yukoners, and that deadline has been extended to December 20.

With respect to claims, we have done a lot of work, for example, with the Peel watershed, or the Peel land use plan area. Under that area, what we have continued to do is to work with claim holders to help them to relinquish those claims by negotiating a settlement with them. That's the work we have had ongoing generally. I think roughly two-thirds of claim holders have been sorted out in the Peel area. Right now, we're not there with the Dawson plan, of course, because we don't have a plan yet. So, I think it's a little bit premature for Dawson, but it is, of course, a question that we discuss in the process, and we have seen good examples of how we're dealing with it in the Peel.

Mr. Kent: So, one of the topics I heard at the Geoscience Forum over the weekend that came up today, as well, is with respect to compensation for claims that are adversely affected by government decisions. So, in January this year, the Yukon government announced that some claims in the

Peel region were given up in exchange for relief from work requirements on claims held elsewhere in the Yukon.

So, can the minister tell us what policy framework was used to determine the value of these claims?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm not sure if there's a specific policy framework, but what I did say was that it is negotiated. So, what happens is that our mineral branch works with claim holders to talk about the claim itself and to discuss and to negotiate a package that allows for some relief on assessment work that might be coming up.

What I will say is that, in those instances, the claim holders are agreeing to this package. That's great. Roughly two-thirds have happened. We are trying not to repeat the Yukon Party's performance on the Peel land use planning process. We don't want to end up in Supreme Court. We think that was the wrong approach, so we've taken a new approach with the Dawson regional land use plan. We're moving ahead with that. We anticipate that there will be some challenges again with claims, but I want to thank the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources for their good work with claim holders around relinquishing those claims.

Mr. Kent: So, while relinquishing claims in exchange for relief on work requirements for other claims may have worked for some claim holders, it is not a policy that will work in all situations.

So, will the government agree to engage industry to develop a claims compensation policy for mineral claim holders in areas of land use planning that become unable to be developed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Again, thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker.

I think I just stood and said that roughly two-thirds of those claim holders have been sorted out now. I think I've stood in this House and thanked them for the work that they've done with Energy, Mines and Resources so that the process continues to unfold. Of course, this time, under the Dawson regional land use plan, the Liberal government made the decision to work with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the commission to withdraw areas from staking or to put protection in those areas that they were identifying as the areas that they believe should have that protection, and that would lead to fewer claims where we have to have these challenges. That was not the case under the Peel plan. We'll continue to work with mining companies. So, we have been engaged with them all along, Mr. Speaker. It's not about starting that work; it has been ongoing.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice to call motion respecting committee report

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I give notice, pursuant to Standing Order 13(3), that the Motion Respecting Committee Reports No. 4, the motion for concurrence in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, presented to the House on November 17, 2022, shall be called as government-designated business.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 206: *Second Appropriation Act 2022-23* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2022-23*. Is there any further general debate?

Department of Community Services — *continued*

Mr. Dixon: Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to return to this. Where we left off, we were discussing the aborted bid for the Canada Winter Games in 2027. In particular, we were exploring the idea of a scaled-back version of the bid. Since last Thursday when we spoke about this, we have learned a couple of things. The City of Whitehorse has come out to state that there was indeed a discussion about an alternative plan, which included a scaled-back version of the plans for Takhini Arena. I wanted to ask the minister a bit more about that. What other options were considered, other than the full bid that was submitted to Canada?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is good to be here this afternoon. I want to recognize my two officials this afternoon. We have Matt King and we have Phil MacDonald. Once again, thank you very much to them for assisting with this discussion this afternoon.

The member opposite is talking about a scaled-back version. What I can say is that the Canada Games committee — the bid committee — worked for 18 months with the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon government, and experts in and around the field of the Canada Games to draft a bid that met the conditions of the Canada Games committee and that met the

conditions of the City of Whitehorse. In September, we submitted that bid for evaluation by the bid committee. In October, the bid committee came up to Whitehorse and met with us — met with officials here in Whitehorse — and they toured our facilities. At that time, they said that they would work with us and they were really excited about the opportunity to host the games in Whitehorse. At that point, they said that they would work with us to make sure that they could do what they can to host the games here. But as far as actually tabling or actually exploring a so-called “scaled-back” version of the games, to date, we haven’t really had a lot of meaningful conversations. I talked with the Mayor of Whitehorse last week when she brought the idea to me, but as far as actually exploring the options, it is at the very, very preliminary stage. I don’t even know what one would look like in its holistic view.

Mr. Dixon: I am just trying to understand, I guess, the comments that the minister has made in comparison to those made by the president and CEO of the Canada Games Council, because the president and CEO of the Canada Games Council, in the media last week, made it very clear that the bid that was presented by Yukon was — to borrow her term — the “shinier version” of what was needed and that it could certainly be done for less money and with less investment.

I am just trying to understand a little bit more about the contrast between what the minister has said about what the Canada Games Council had said and what the president and CEO of the Canada Games Council had said publicly last week.

Are there any discussions underway right now about presenting a scaled-back version that may be considered by the Canada Games Council?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite talks about all the swirl in the media after we made the fiscally responsible decision — after Ottawa made the very hard decision not to provide any funding beyond the very base amount that they provide to any jurisdiction. The very fiscally responsible decision that this government took — that it could not fund the games all on its own — we communicated that information to our colleagues federally and at the City of Whitehorse and to the Canada Games committee.

I will say that, for 18 months, the bid committee worked with — Community Services had representation — the Yukon government did. We also worked with other people with expertise in the Canada Games and who worked with the Canada Games Council. We worked with the City of Whitehorse to refine a bid that we submitted to the Canada Games Council that met the needs of the Canada Games Council as laid out — to what we had to provide to host the games here in Whitehorse. As it said, it was a fourth sheet of ice and we needed housing for the athletes’ village.

That’s the bid that we pulled together. The bid committee worked and refined that bid for 18 months to make sure that it met the needs of the City of Whitehorse and that it met the needs of the games committee, and we made that submission to the Canada Games Council. It’s currently on their desk.

I don’t know what sort of shiny bid the member opposite is referring to in the media. All I know is that our bid reflected the needs outlined by the Canada Games Council and met the

needs of the City of Whitehorse, which was looking out for its citizens, and we submitted that bid. That's the bid that's currently on the table. As far as any other plan B, I guess, at this point, I don't know what that would look like.

Mr. Dixon: So, the term "shiny" is not my own; it's the one that was used by the president and CEO of the Canada Games Council in the media last week. Last week when I asked questions about this in Question Period, I cited the CBC article itself. So, that's where that comment comes from.

I think that a lot of Yukoners, particularly those in the sport community, are wondering why there was no other consideration of anything in between a \$115-million replacement for Takhini Arena and the need for a fourth sheet of ice, because as we know, in 2007 we hosted the games just fine with Stan McCowan Arena representing the fourth sheet of ice. McCowan was essentially a sheet of ice in a tin can. I have very fond memories of that rink, but it wasn't, by any stretch of the imagination, a nice arena.

So, I guess the question is: Why wouldn't we look at something less fancy than a \$115-million replacement for Takhini Arena, which is an otherwise lovely arena and would serve Yukon, I believe, very well for quite a few years longer? So, the question is simply: Why not look at another option for a fourth sheet?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, what I can say this afternoon is that the bid committee was clear all along about the need for a fourth sheet of ice in Whitehorse. That's where the conversation went with the bid committee. That's what they worked. So, they needed the fourth sheet of ice. They also needed — the other thing is a facility — a place where the opening and closing ceremonies can be hosted. So, they needed that as well, and that was somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 who needed to be accommodated in the facility. So, those were two requirements of the bid from the bid committee.

The City of Whitehorse was clear, as well, as we worked with our partners on the bid committee, that there was no interest to host if not getting the criteria laid out in the arena complex. That was developed in close partnership with our City of Whitehorse partners. They had spoken about what they had needed to see in that facility, and we accommodated them. As a matter of fact, they wanted more. There was a lot more wanted, and we actually refined the ask to get that fourth sheet of ice down to the current specifications that we submitted to the bid committee in September.

There was no interest from the City of Whitehorse in proceeding with a bid without a legacy piece for the City of Whitehorse on its terms. That has shifted somewhat in the last week or so, but I don't know what that looks like at this time.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the answer from the minister. I take it, then, that it was the City of Whitehorse that insisted on the \$115-million replacement for Takhini, not the Yukon government; at least, that is what I infer from the minister's comments.

The next question I have is in relation to the funding that was made available by the federal government. The minister has said that this was all the federal government was willing to commit, but we got a different version of things from our

Member of Parliament, who commented that, in his view, there were significant other pots of funding available for infrastructure and for housing. He suggested that there were ongoing discussions, as high as the federal ministers' offices, with regard to finding further support.

I just want to understand a little bit more about the minister's announcement and explanation about the amount he has cited — the \$3 million for capital and the under-\$20-million total that the federal government had offered. How can the minister explain the inconsistency between what the MP has said and what he has said about the availability of federal funding?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is no inconsistency between the events — where they have unfurled since the beginning of November and last week. We have worked very closely with our federal partners on this project for many months. I have been in touch with Minister LeBlanc, Minister St-Onge. We have been in touch with the Prime Minister's Office, with the Deputy Prime Minister's office, with a number of ministers at the federal level — as has the Yukon MP. We have been working on this file. I made a request to the federal government in writing — this was in September, as I've said — laying out the needs to proceed with the construction of the facility and that we needed some sort of concrete indication that the funding would be available to us. We got that response at the beginning of November saying that there is no funding — there is no new funding; there may be funds coming forward and you can apply on those. There are competitive processes up to \$25 million; nothing was guaranteed. So, at that time, facing the need to go ahead with the construction projects for the games — the arena at a \$115-million estimate plus the housing estimates — we decided that we couldn't take on that on a wing and a prayer. Fiscally, it was not the responsible decision to take without any concrete, guaranteed funding from the federal government. So, yes, I'm sure that we could keep talking, but there is no guaranteed funding. Nothing could be said that: "Yes, we will make you whole. Yes, we will contribute X amount of money." We had these conversations right up there. We even had conversations last week with, again, senior level — senior officials in the federal government — and again, still no commitment to the Yukon government for proceeding with the games or any funding. So, looking at that — from a fiscally responsible decision — either we go with \$160-million black hole — don't know where the money is coming from — and start with the projected project to start with the arena with nothing in place, or we actually say, "You know, it's not the right decision at this time without any support from the federal government." We made that very difficult decision.

I know that it was a difficult decision for Ottawa. We have heard about the austerity — Chrystia Freeland has signalled austerity at the federal level. We are coming into very, very strange times. There are all sorts of other — we have inflation happening and supply chain issues. We have seen contracts here coming up and being very expensive, and we have labour shortages. There are a lot of things happening in the market that really weren't there. They just started to materialize. That has all played out on this bid. Without any backstop from the

federal government identified in writing, we decided to take the very hard decision to not proceed with funding the games from our end.

Mr. Dixon: I thank the minister for that answer.

I would like to ask a little bit more about the decision that the minister just described. Can the minister explain why he didn't consult with the City of Whitehorse with regard to the decision and why the minister didn't live up to the memorandum of understanding that existed between the Yukon government and the City of Whitehorse with regard to communication and planning for the bid?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Really, we are getting into a forensic examination this afternoon on an item that, I will note, isn't in our budget submission for the supplementary, but I am happy to have this conversation anyway. I know that it's a matter of importance to Yukoners.

So, what the member opposite is talking about is delving into the financial considerations of the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government. There is Management Board, and Management Board met on the Canada Games and made a decision and immediately our decision — which is about funding, and so that is the purview of our budgeting process and our Management Board and our procedures under Finance. As soon as Cabinet took that decision in Management Board, I communicated that decision with Management Board to the City of Whitehorse. The public communication was clear: that we are not prepared to go ahead and fund the games from within the Yukon government budget solely. We already honoured the City of Whitehorse's budgeting process in that they committed to an \$11-million figure maximum. So, we knew that was the maximum that they could commit to, outside of their budgeting process, and they weren't even committing to it. They sort of signalled to us that they would do that. We proceeded with that and we did the exact same thing back saying that, as far as the games were concerned, we were not willing, as a government, to proceed with a \$160-million investment, given what we learned from the federal government on their budgeting side and from the City of Whitehorse from their budgeting side. So, I did communicate that immediately to all of our partners, and that was the process we took.

The end result is that our decision not to front \$160 million on our own, with absolutely no guarantees from the federal government to make us whole, essentially doomed the bid that we had submitted to the Canada Games Council. But I suppose that if the city had decided to reach out and say, "Okay, now that we know what your financial decision is, let's see how we can go forward", then we would have to look at that. But in terms of us killing the games, what we did was that we made a decision and announced the decision that we were not willing to fund \$160 million without having any backstop from the federal government.

Mr. Dixon: So, the minister has explained some of the overtures that he has made to the federal government. He explained that he reached out to the federal minister's office. He also mentioned the Prime Minister's Office. So, I just really quickly wanted to ask: Is the minister aware whether or not the

Premier reached out to the Prime Minister specifically about this issue?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm sorry, Madam Chair; I missed the last part of that question. I heard that the Premier reached out to the Prime Minister's office, but I did miss the rest.

Mr. Dixon: Yes, I asked whether or not the Premier had reached out to the Prime Minister specifically about the Canada Games bid.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will look into the specifics. I know that the Premier's office was in touch with the Prime Minister's Office. I'm not entirely sure whether they mentioned it directly. I do know that the MP did talk to the Prime Minister directly about financing the Canada Games bid.

Mr. Dixon: So, I guess the final question that I will ask about the Canada Games announcement is one that is certainly percolating out there among the sports community. I have heard a lot. Just a basic question is: Is this totally dead? Is this completely dead? Can we expect some sort of set of circumstances to change that may breathe new life into this, or was the announcement made last Monday by the minister the ending word on this? Is there any future possibility of reviving this bid, or is it completely DOA?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I have said several times in this Chamber, we worked — not "we". The bid committee did an extraordinarily good job and worked for 18 months to pull together Yukon's bid for the 2027 Canada Games. A number of people worked very, very hard for many, many months to refine and hone, with our partners, to make this bid a reality. The bid reflected the needs identified by the City of Whitehorse for its citizens. The bid reflected the terms dictated by the Canada Games for a jurisdiction, such as ourselves, to host the games — a fourth sheet of ice, an athletes' village, and opening and closing ceremonies — and it met the conditions that the Canada Games Council laid out to us early in this process, and we worked very diligently on that.

In order to proceed with that bid, which was costed to meet the games' criteria, we would need federal support. As I said just last week, we've been in touch with the federal government to explore options to continue talking to see if there is any money. We heard that there might be other funding pots. We still have not secured any new funding. We have not secured any funding pertaining to this bid that we put together.

The federal government has been extraordinarily generous to the territory, in terms of its infrastructure funding over the last — we have seen historic investments in the territory in the north Klondike Highway, down in Teslin, in Ross River and Faro, in Watson Lake, Kluane, and Whitehorse. It has been an absolutely incredible investment in our territory to make sure that our critical infrastructure is upgraded and improved to meet both our needs and the needs of the changing climate that we see. That's not the issue. The issue is, in this case, recreation and where that fits in the agenda in an austerity budget. I know that the federal government made a very hard choice, I'm sure, in saying that they couldn't come up with a number for us by the time the deadline had been set by the Canada Games Council. So, here we are.

If the federal government were to come forward with a tangible offer of capital money to support the bid, then perhaps, if it came fast enough, we might be able to proceed with a bid, but time's wasting, and we have a very, very short build season. The infrastructure we have to cobble together for the bid has to be completed by 2026. The members opposite know full well how difficult it is to design, tender, and then build under very tight deadlines and what that does to the costs.

We are right up against very hard deadlines for the Canada Games committee. If we can't do this, then they are going to have to go somewhere else, and that's going to be difficult for the next jurisdiction as well.

So, if the federal government were to come forward with a tangible offer of financial help, then perhaps something could happen, but that's not shaking loose at the moment. At the moment, the Yukon government has made a very difficult, fiscally responsible decision to not commit to fund the infrastructure contained in the bid that was worked on diligently and very, very well by the bid committee over the last 18 months.

Mr. Dixon: So, the minister has indicated that we're up against — his words — a "hard deadline". I would just like to — but he has left the door open that, if the feds did show up with a cheque and with some — a guarantee of a certain amount of money — that the bid may be rejuvenated. Can he give us a sense of what the drop-dead date might be for the federal government to make that type of offer?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The bid committee was looking at — has given us a date of — I believe it's December 8; is it not? Is that the date? So, December 8 is the date that we've been working toward.

Mr. Dixon: So, if the federal government were to re-engage and offer some funding of some amount — an amount to be negotiated, I presume, between now and December 8 — there is still a hope that Yukon could host the games in 2027; is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The member opposite, I think, is correct. If the federal government were to provide clear guarantees that there would be funding from the federal government of sufficient value, we could continue with the bid, provided we got that information before December 8.

Mr. Dixon: So, have we asked the federal government for that ask? Has the federal government been made aware that they have until December 8 to make an offer of some amount of funding to make the games happen?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I've said twice before this afternoon, Madam Chair, we are in touch with the federal government, have already been in touch with the federal government on several occasions, and we will continue to converse with the federal government, both with our contacts there and with the MP of the Yukon, who's working very, very hard on behalf of Yukoners to secure the resources they need to make this territory a good place to live.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the answer from the minister, because that is certainly — it would appear to me, at least, based on his comments, that there is a glimmer of hope still for

the Yukon to host these Games in 2027, if a reasonable amount of money can be secured from the federal government for some sort of, what I imagine would be, a scaled-back version of the bid that was submitted. I would anticipate that would be well-received and knowledge that will make people at least hopeful that there is still a chance that the games could be hosted here in 2027.

I know from hearing from the president and CEO of the games Council, in her public comments, that she noted that there is a great deal of challenge finding an alternative location for 2027. So, if they were unable to find another option, I believe — my understanding is — that the 2027 Games would simply be cancelled or perhaps delayed by a year or so, which, of course, nobody wants to see.

I think we have probably exorcised this particular issue. I have committed to passing the floor on to the Leader of the Third Party before the Member for Watson Lake takes over, but I do have a few other questions not related to the Canada Games, if I could sneak these in before my time elapses here.

I wanted to ask the minister about the Dawson rec centre. Obviously, there is an amount budgeted in the capital plan for the Dawson rec centre. The minister has indicated that there is funding applied for under ICIP for a Dawson rec centre. I am wondering if he can give us an updated sense of the budget for the Dawson rec centre and at what stage the federal funding is at, in terms of getting that secured.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to begin by correcting some of the assumptions that the member opposite made in his last remarks on the Canada Games. As I have said several times today, 18 months of work went into the design that has been submitted to the Canada Games committee formally under our bid process. That is the bid that we are supporting right now; there is no other bid; there is no plan B; there is no plan B scoped out; we don't know what plan B looks like, and we don't know what it is. The December 8 deadline applies to the bid that we submitted to the Canada Games Council. That Canada Games Council is assessing that bid. So, if the federal government were to come forward with a commitment to fund the components of the bid that has been submitted, then that bid could be resurrected. That is really what is on the table right now. Talk of hypothetical "other" plans that have yet to be scoped, discussed formally, and mapped out are just that: hypothetical.

So, at the moment, it is the plan that was scoped out with the City of Whitehorse and the bid committee — with our partners in the bid committee — that is on the table, and that is the one that we have received word from the federal government that they cannot support. That is the plan that we would seek funding for if the federal government were to have a change of heart and find some concrete investment that they could make in the territory to make that happen.

All right, Dawson recreation centre — yes, we have committed to the Dawson City recreation centre. Detail design is currently underway for that project. We have committed funds under ICIP.

So, we have funds under the existing Investing in Canada infrastructure program to apply to the Dawson City rec centre.

Once the detailed design work is completed, we then, as with all projects under this program, submit those detailed designs to Ottawa, and they then okay the funding. So, that's where we're at right now. But the money is under our existing ICIP program and has been allocated to the Dawson City rec centre, and the five-year capital plan does have that project in its pages.

Mr. Dixon: So, how much money has been allocated from ICIP for the Dawson rec centre?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At the moment, \$20 million of ICIP money has been allocated to the Dawson City rec centre.

Mr. Dixon: How much money has the Yukon government budgeted for this project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At the moment, the territorial government has earmarked \$25 million — about \$26 million — for the Dawson City recreation centre. The ICIP funding is about \$20 million, as I said, and the total estimate at this time is in the neighbourhood of \$60 million. There is a lot of play there. We are doing the detailed design work and working on that, and we have the new spring budget underway right now, so we'll have to stay tuned to see how much we allocate. We have said that we would commit to building the Dawson City recreation centre, and we are committed to doing that for an estimate of about \$60 million. At the last count, the territorial government had committed \$25.5 million, but, of course, we are in the budgeting process.

Mr. Dixon: So, there is \$20 million from ICIP; there is \$25 million or \$26 million from the Yukon government. That is \$45 million or \$46 million, and the total project cost is about \$60 million. So, where will the gap of \$14 million to \$15 million come from?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once we get the detailed design, we will know how much the Dawson City rec centre actually costs, and the Yukon government is committed to spending the money to make sure that the Dawson City rec centre is built.

Mr. Dixon: So, the Yukon government will come up with the balance, then.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, we will.

Mr. Dixon: Can the minister indicate the best guess for timing right now for this project? When will we see construction begin?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The anticipated completion date for the Dawson City rec centre is 2027. So if you work back from there, we are hoping to get the detailed design done, submit all the paperwork to Ottawa, and then start the tendering process. We would like to get this built as soon as possible, but right now we are working toward the date of 2027.

Mr. Dixon: I would like to change gears again quickly before I cede the floor. I just want an update on a question that we have asked a few times in Question Period. What is the status of phase 6B of Whistle Bend?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Phase 6B — 101 lots in 6B. They are substantially completed. They will be put out to tender before the next building season. The only caveat that I can put on that is that we need one week of paving. We ran out of weather this year and we couldn't get the paving done. So, the paving for that 6B phase is going to be done. It's about a week's worth of work. It will be done first thing in the spring, but the lots will

be tendered — 101 lots will be tendered before the building season next year.

Mr. Dixon: The minister said that they will be tendered. Can I assume that he means that they will go out to lottery?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Yes, that's correct. This isn't the first time that this has happened in Yukon government history. We're following standard procedure. It's not perfect, but we have substantially completed 6B and we just have to get that little bit of paving work done. We will put the lots out to lottery — and then with the caveat that there will be paving done first thing next spring.

Mr. Dixon: Was the original contract cancelled and then subsequently awarded to a different contractor? We heard that it may have caused some delays. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say on the floor of the House this afternoon that the change in contactors had nothing to do with the inability to get the paving done in this season.

Mr. Dixon: The minister referenced a change in contractors. Was there a change in contractors, and if so, why and what happened?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What I will say this afternoon is that the work on phase 6B was not delivered by the contract end date. The department issued a notice of default on October 12, 2022. Alternative plans were taken to complete the work. The work was substantially completed by the time the weather turned, and we were not able to get that last week of paving done.

Mr. Dixon: How was this second contractor selected, then? Was there a competitive process, or was it sole-sourced?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once the contract went into default, the Department of Community Services took over the work and subcontracted the work to get it done.

Mr. Dixon: My question was: Did the department use a competitive process to select the second contractor to get the work done, as the minister said?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can assure the House, and I want to be very clear here, that we worked within the procurement rules to award the work — subcontract the work to get the work done on phase 6B.

Mr. Dixon: I sense a bit of reluctance to provide a clear answer, so I will move on.

Are there any cost implications as a result of this change in contractor?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The department went through its process assessing how much of the work had been completed and then assessing the cost to complete the work that had not yet been completed. At this point, we're not aware of any additional costs to complete the project.

Mr. Dixon: I'll have more questions to come, but at this point, I'm happy to cede the floor to my colleague, the Leader of the NDP.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague for sharing the time today. The first question I have is: How does the minister envision that the Better Buildings program will help folks who live in mobile home parks? So, someone who owns a mobile home but rents the land on — how will the Better Buildings program help them?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I welcome the Leader of the Third Party to this discussion on Community Services this afternoon. I will say that the program goal is to target deep retrofits that achieve a 20-percent modelled decrease in residential energy use with the best return on investment, including the cost of borrowing. So, based on that criteria, we are going to be targeting buildings that can demonstrate the ability to actually make those 20-percent modelled decreases in residential energy use. So, it would depend, I guess, on the mobile home itself. It also depends on the assessed value of the mobile home and the potential cost benefit to do the work. So, those are all the things that will go into the assessments under the Better Buildings program.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer.

Is the Better Buildings program, though, not tied to the taxes that get paid to a municipality? We have had this conversation before, and the reason that I ask about it is that mobile homes are in a position where you may own the asset, but you rent a portion of land, and although you pay municipal taxes, I am not sure that 25 percent of less than \$1,000 will get people very far. I would speculate that, if one was to insulate a mobile home, and all its six sides — so, from the floor, the walls, the exterior walls to the roof — that you would easily gain a 20-percent increase in energy efficiency.

So, how can someone in a mobile home — living in a mobile home park — access something like the Better Buildings program for home retrofits?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. It does provide a point of clarity.

So, when we were talking about mobile homes just a minute ago, I assumed they were on titled property. There are places up in my riding in Arkell that are on titled property. So, that's where that comes in. The member opposite is totally correct. It is based on your property taxes — the assessed value of your home and your property tax.

So, mobile home — people who live, who have trailers in mobile home parks, who are paying pad rent in that situation, there are other programs that may be able to help with their energy efficiency and improving their homes. I encourage them to contact the Energy Solutions Centre to see what assistance they may be able to leverage to help their home — help improve their heating of their homes.

As far as the other mobile homes on titled property, of course, I have gone through the criteria for that. There are, in the initial stages of this program — I mean, it is in *Our Clean Future*. The goal is to reduce our overall greenhouse gas emissions. This is one of the tools that we've brought in place to do it. It is from the municipalities' point of view — they are signing up, entering agreements with us to actually start delivering the program within their municipalities. I'm really heartened to see that support from our Yukon communities. We have, in our initial estimates — and as I've said on the floor of the House before, we have more than enough properties — assessed properties, properties with enough tax assessment — to deliver the 1,000 homes that we guaranteed that we would do through the Better Buildings program at this time.

As I said before, as well, we're going to assess the program as we go forward and see how it can be refined and improved so we can hit more people, more homeowners.

Ms. White: I'm going to thank the minister for that answer. The reason why I'm asking is, last week in the ministerial statement, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources highlighted the Better Buildings program as something that would be good for people in maybe more impoverished situations to access because of long-time payout. The truth of the matter is that the Better Buildings program totally misses an entire section of people who, I would say, are probably in the most need of assistance to do home repairs. Interestingly enough — and maybe folks don't know this — but unless a mobile home has been mortgaged by a bank, it doesn't actually exist in paperwork. Once it's sold and purchased outright, it doesn't even have a transfer. They don't have a registration card, for example, like you would for a \$2,000 car. Nothing exists for a mobile home, which has led to complications.

The reason why I was asking the minister for clarification is that his colleague had said that the Better Buildings program would be accessible for people in mobile homes. I just want to clear up that, actually, if you rent the pad that your mobile home sits on — so if you are people who are in the Benchmark Trailer Park, in the Takhini Trailer Park, in the Northland Trailer Park, in Lobird — Lobird is Benchmark, so I mean the one that is behind the mall in Porter Creek — or Lobird, as well — you can't actually access this lending.

When we have conversations about affordability and conversations about making things easier for people to live and better heating systems, often folks in these units don't qualify for many of the rebate programs. So, it's just something to think about going forward — that when we talk about making sure that these programs are accessible, they look at all accessibility.

I just want to move on to community transfer stations. Johnsons Crossing, Keno, Silver City, and Braeburn are all slated to be shut down. I want to ask about the status of where we are in that process right now.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. This is an issue that we have talked about a lot. It really cuts to the heart of a number of things, basically: responsible, sustainable waste management and reducing the amount of garbage that we produce in the territory. We produce a lot of garbage, and we really have to start getting that down. That is what this regionalization plan was. It was proposed by the Association of Yukon Communities. My predecessor certainly embraced it, and we have been working on it ever since.

We are close to getting regionalization agreements with the municipalities of the territory. Once we do that, some of these communities on the fringes — the satellite communities — near where the regionalization stations are will have their transfer stations closed, and the garbage will then go to the regional station and be transferred there.

Keno has been one of the communities that has talked about this a lot. They have really taken it on. We actually have a new arrangement with Hecla, the mining company in that

area. It has decided it will carry the waste from the Keno residents to the regional transfer station in Mayo. We are actually in the process of getting bear-proof garbage containers for Keno, and once those are in place, Hecla will start carrying the garbage to the regional transfer station for the residents of Keno.

The other areas that we were talking about — which included Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn — were necessary. As soon as we get those regionalization agreements in place, which is coming soon, then we will shut down those transfer stations, and the garbage will then go to the regional stations, which will help to minimize the amount of noxious chemicals, oils, and other garbage that we're seeing dumped without any oversight into some of these unsupervised sites.

Ms. White: I think that the minister and I have different ideas about what people in rural Yukon do to their landfill areas. Although I appreciate that the minister thinks that people are wild on the fringes of where they live and how they behave, I actually disagree. I would say that we see lots of dumping off roads in the City of Whitehorse, but here we are near a waste facility. So, it's good to know that there is an agreement being worked out between the Yukon government and Hecla for transferring the waste of the Keno City residents.

So, how does the minister imagine that, for example, senior citizens — or anyone, really, in the other communities, whether it be Johnsons Crossing — so knowing that they are more than 60 kilometres in either direction — so, 120 kilometres round trip to either Teslin or Whitehorse — or the smaller communities that would access the Silver City transfer facility. We understand the amount of traffic that Braeburn gets on average — not just the folks who live in the Braeburn area, but when we talk about the travelling public in the summertime.

So, how does the minister imagine that folks will get their waste to a regional facility?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm going to begin the answer to this question by disagreeing quite vehemently with the characterization that the Leader of the Official Opposition has just made about my supposed views about rural Yukon. I have been in rural Yukon and have travelled to all communities this year. I have met with mayors and councils. I have met with residents and I continue to meet with residents.

No, I'm not saying that they are, in any way, irresponsible, and that is not the point. The point is that we are working very hard to come up with a sustainable system that is really mirrored across the country and helps us to manage the colossal amount of waste that Yukoners are producing every year. This is important from a sustainability point of view. It's a responsible thing to do, it's good for our environment, and it is frankly a model that is used in most places in the continent. As a matter of fact, we are still very generous with the provisions that we put in place here to deal with garbage. I will say that it's part of this vision. We are modernizing facilities across the territory — that's what we're talking about — and we are investing in regional agreements with our municipal partners who ask for this and are investing in these facilities themselves. So, there will be fewer conduits for garbage, and when you take it there, you will have to pay to bring your garbage to these

regional transfer facilities. That's part of making people more aware of how much garbage they are producing and trying to get them to consume less and produce less garbage.

We're ensuring that waste disposal facilities have gates, adequate operating hours, similar tipping fees — so that there are not going to be other outliers, where you can get your garbage disposed of for cheaper, because we know that people will drive to those places where there are no tipping fees or places where they can dump their stuff without any cost or monitoring. We want to get rid of that system, and we want to have staff on-site at these regional transfer stations to monitor the waste streams and reduce the potential for environmental contamination. I was just talking to the Mayor of Mayo who just had an awful lot of waste — I believe it was oils — delivered — dumped — at their facility because it doesn't have a gate, it is not monitored yet, and they had a whole bunch of stuff dumped there, and they want that to end. I think we all should, here in this House, and that is really what we are talking about.

Places such as Keno, Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn — the investments — they are small places, and the investments — gates, adequate operating hours, tipping fees, and staff to monitor their waste streams — are just not viable in some of these very, very small communities. So, given the remote locations and small number of users, we are closing those transfer stations and adapting to a more sustainable solution — it was asked for by the Association of Yukon Communities — that we have been working on for years.

Now, we are, Madam Chair, just as we did in Keno, committed to working with residents at these locations to design reasonable solutions and to ensure a positive transition to the new service levels. This — in Keno's case, a mining company stepped up and said, We'll take your garbage to the regional transfer station for you. In other areas, we are going to talk with residents to see if we can provide bear-proof garbage bins — I have heard that up in Silver City — electric fencing to keep animal interactions down — again, I have heard that from some residents I spoke to in some of these smaller areas. Perhaps there is a trailer that we can provide that would make it easier for an individual to carry the small communities' garbage to the regional stations — and recycling bins, which will help reduce landfill waste.

We are continuing to work with these communities to come up with viable options that soften the blow of this transition to a sustainable and much more environmentally friendly approach to the enormous amounts of garbage that we are creating on an annual basis here in the territory.

Ms. White: I guess the minister and I might have a conversation about "reasonable".

It's interesting that the minister highlighted Mayo as having a problem, so Mayo is not one of the transfer facilities that's going to be shut down. The Mayo landfill — you drive in on the dirt road. There are signs with — toward the pits about where you throw things, but there is no gate right now. So, the minister's government has been talking about this for quite a while now, but there is no gate yet; it's definitely not people.

But if I was to look at Johnsons Crossing, I would tell you that there's an electric fence around a compound. There are garbage bins. There is cardboard recycling, and every time I drive past, I stop to go take a look, and I have yet to see the disorganization or the lack of regard that the minister has highlighted as being one of the problems.

So, when he says "reasonable" measures — so, right now, Johnsons Crossing, there are garbage bins. There is cardboard recycling. It's behind an electric fence. There's an electric fence. There's a cattle grate leading up to it. I know, in conversations with residents out in the Johnsons Crossing area, they've talked about, if it's gated, volunteering to be there and operating it when it's gated. I'm sure they would also collect fees. As it stands right now, the government pays to get it shipped. So, is the issue — is one of the issues that the minister has with it is that government right now is paying for the transfer of garbage, of waste, from these four areas to a closer facility? Because when we talk about Johnsons Crossing, it does have an electrified fence; it does have garbage; it does have recycling; it's well-maintained. Then I can look at the Mayo landfill, and they may have a fence, but certainly not in a way that I was able to see in the same way as Johnsons Crossing, and again, the garbage was thrown over the edge into a pit. So, can the minister help me understand, when he says "reasonable", what we're talking about when we talk about "reasonable" solutions?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Where to begin with that? First of all, we are working with all municipalities and with AYC to get the regional transfer stations up. I gave the example of Mayo not to shame them or to get them disparaged for their dump and everything else. The fact is that the municipality has the responsibility to manage an identified landfill site that is going to be a regional landfill station. When I have been up there with the mayor and officials from the Town of Mayo, they are proud of their facility. They work it very hard. It is a lot of work for them to do it, and they want to make sure that it's run efficiently.

They are fully engaged with the regional landfill system, and they want the gates, the gatehouse, the scales, the power, and the electric fences, which they have in place. They want it to be patrolled because they are running into problems. They fully support and really want to get on with the regional landfill system. The thing that is holding it up is trying to find some way to properly cost the existing environmental liability for these sites, which in some cases, I'm sure, is enormous. That is a huge process to do this. The municipality, in this sense, while we wait to get this thing going and the environmental liability assessed, is incurring greater liability and they are upset about it.

So, yes, I heard about it. I am not trying to shame Mayo. I know how much they like their landfill, how important it is for them, and how they want it run properly. They want this to happen, so we are working with them to make sure that they have the tools necessary. It is going to be hard. They have to hire staff to do it, and it's not easy for a small town to do that, but they are fully on board with it. Really, when I last spoke to the mayor, he wanted to fast-track this, and then, you know,

they got this dump at the site, which made them angry. Again, it underscored for them the need for these regional transfer stations.

The member opposite has talked about how some of these regional transfer stations are great. I will say that we are also getting complaints and pictures from people — the public — who are encouraging us to go out and clean up these sites — the very sites that the member opposite is talking about — on a fairly regular basis. They are asking us to do more to maintain some of these regional transfer stations because there is such a mess. There are two sides to this story. I'm sure that it sits firmly in the grey, but the system that has been floated by and endorsed by the Association of Yukon Communities — the one that we are working forward for — the vision — and have been for the last several years — the one that we are pushing very, very hard to get into place — I am grateful to the municipalities for their help on this because they are working very hard to get it in place, and we are hoping that we can make progress. It is the regional station, which means that these are places that are not supervised, that are generally very, very small community-run places where, on the way to X location, you can stop in and toss five barrels of oil or a bunch of paint or hazardous materials that you had sitting around in your basement for the last year, and you don't want to wait for hazardous waste day, so you go out, on your way to X location, and you dump it there. That's what we are trying to avoid.

Post-closure liability is an issue — as I mentioned, the environmental liability. We are incurring more liability — the more that we have places in the territory where you can dump stuff without seeing what it is.

We are a big place, but generally people do not dump where there is no garbage. If they see a place that is a little bit dirty, a little bit sullied, they don't feel quite as guilty tossing stuff there, because it looks like a place used for that. We want to get rid of those locations that are not supervised and start having supervised sites where people can actually discard their garbage in a controlled way that is supervised and managed — a system that is in place in most other places in the country and is proven to reduce our garbage and the amount of refuse that we create, that reduces our environmental liability going forward and makes the territory a better place to live and cleaner. That's the vision that we are following. I believe that is reasonable, and we are going to continue to follow that national model for garbage disposal here in the Yukon and start to bring some of those national standards to the territory.

Ms. White: Interesting take on the world — I guess we're both allowed to have our own opinions. What kind of support is the Department of Community Services offering municipalities that do not have the gates and stations at their regional landfills?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The simple answer is that we are funding it. We are putting in the scales, the fences, and the electrical, and that's really why we are negotiating with municipalities right now to come up with the costs involved with these things — and we are going to fund these regional landfills. That's what the Yukon government is doing.

Ms. White: That's fantastic news. So, when does the minister expect to do that work for the community of Mayo?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can say that what we are doing is working with all municipalities — the Association of Yukon Communities. That is why these talks are going on, because we want to make sure that we don't have one-off deals with each municipality. We want to sit down together as municipalities as a whole and come up with a fair and equitable and consistent approach to funding these initiatives throughout the territory. So, we know this. We have done work up in Mayo already, and we are running hydro lines up there. I believe that we were talking about putting in a gatehouse up there. So, that work is underway.

In the larger scheme of things, we are working with AYC, with all municipalities, to come up with a consistent approach to municipalities across the territory so they know what to expect and how it is going to roll out. We don't want to do one-offs in each community.

Ms. White: So, I guess, with that answer, that there is no timeline — can't give me a date right now. It sounds like the minister is talking about trying not to have individual communities requiring different things. So, is the minister saying that when he is working with municipalities, there will be no recognition of the differences for those communities and the outlying areas that they serve?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The timeline is as soon as possible, and I will say that discussions are active right now. We want to get a system that works for all municipalities and that is relatively straightforward and that is fair and consistent. We are having these discussions with municipalities. As I said, the discussions are active. If there are regional differences — if there are regional accommodations in, say, Mayo or Watson Lake — that we have to deal with, then we will do so.

Those differences are being raised at the table when we are talking with municipalities on this issue, and we certainly recognize that there will be regional differences. We will accommodate them as those points come up at the discussions that we are having with municipalities that are currently underway.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the minister recognizes the differences between those municipalities. So, so far, the minister said that there has been a reasonable solution found for Keno City — that Hecla, the mining company, is going to take their waste. So, what reasonable solution has he come up with for Johnsons Crossing, Silver City, and Braeburn?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I did answer this or provided some of the solutions that we are suggesting in some of these smaller places: provision of bear-proof garbage bins for residents, like we are doing in Keno; electric fencing to keep animal interactions down; a trailer to make it easier to organize or haul waste; recycling bins to reduce landfill waste. I heard that from residents in Silver City and other places; they wanted the right recycling bins; they were worried about the bears; they wanted electric fencing and perhaps bear-proof garbage bins for residents to use.

So, we're looking at all those things, and we're starting to incorporate some of those ideas in there. There are other

solutions that would be amenable, like in Keno. There is a mining company there that is looking to help residents, and they stepped forward. Those solutions will also happen in other regions.

I know that there are ongoing discussions in Silver City with the research station there. I don't know what the status of those discussions are right now. They have started to see what sort of services or support they might be able to provide when it comes to the closure of these transfer stations. So, there will be regional solutions there.

In the immediate term, we are looking at bear-proof garbage bins, electric fencing, and a possible trailer, if somebody needs to compile all the garbage from these little communities and bring it into the regional transfer stations. We are having those discussions with the residents in those various locations.

Ms. White: When does the minister expect to have those reasonable solutions decided for Silver City, Braeburn, and Johnsons Crossing? The announcement was made quite a while ago that those facilities would be closing down, so when does he expect his reasonable solutions to be rolled out in those communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The goal would be to coordinate that with the implementation of the regional transfer stations. Those regional transfer stations will start to come online, depending on how much infrastructure is needed to bring them online. We have talked about Mayo. There are some things to do up there. Once those transfer stations are open, those smaller transfer stations will close, and residents will have to start adjusting to the new reality of the regional transfer stations with the new regional model that we have.

Right now, the regional model is not yet in play, but I believe that with Keno, as soon as we can get the bear-proof garbage bins installed and up to Mayo — once that happens — then that system will start working, even though the regional station isn't entirely open in Mayo. So, the goal will be to key it to the opening of the regional transfer stations.

Ms. White: I would like to move on to the minister's paid sick leave for COVID-19.

Right now, if one goes onto the website and looks at it, as I am just looking underneath the "employer" aspect — because I think that it is quite clear there — the question says: "Does the employee need proof of a positive COVID-19 test result?", and the answer is: "The employee must declare to the employer that they have received a positive COVID-19 test result." The reason why I ask this is that it is pretty clear right now that it says — that this program is specifically about COVID, but in *Charting the Course: Living with and managing COVID-19*, it talks about how it is important to stay home when you have symptoms of illness. So, I wanted to know if the minister has any intention of expanding the requirements for the paid sick leave rebate that the Yukon government has in place until March of next year.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe that the existing paid sick leave program that we have talked about in the House, that I have mentioned, led the country, actually, in its implementation and its scope and actually served as a model for other

jurisdictions — another way that the territory led the nation during COVID. It is, of course, under the Department of Economic Development, so I think that the question is better directed to the Minister of Economic Development.

I can say that the fact that it was targeted during COVID has been recognized by our Cabinet, and we are starting discussions on that matter, but I think that question is probably better directed toward the Minister of Economic Development, who holds that program in his portfolio.

Ms. White: Then I will move on to an October 6 press release that came from the Minister of Community Services about making the truth and reconciliation day a statutory holiday. Can he fill us in on where we are at in that process?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The federal government, as we know, declared September 30 to be the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. It commemorates the harmful history and legacy of Canada's residential schools and honours those who were lost and the survivors, families, and communities who continue to grieve.

In 2021, federal employees and workers in federally regulated workplaces in the Yukon, such as banks and telecoms, observed the day. It was observed by employees of the Yukon government and many Yukon government public-facing services, including schools and courts. This spring, we did engage with First Nations and the public to determine how best to commemorate the day in the years ahead. The "what we heard" National Day for Truth and Reconciliation report was made public in September of this year, just a few months ago. We received a number of thoughtful suggestions on how to meaningfully recognize the day, and we're reviewing our options. One of the things we heard from the public and from First Nations was that they wanted the name of the day changed from "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation" to something else.

So, we are working on that right now. We also know that there are a number of legislative changes we have to make within the Yukon government to make this happen. I directed the department to start work on that bill. The work on that bill is expected to be completed this spring so that we can get it before the House so we can actually have this day recognized in time for the actual date in the fall.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2022-23*.

Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I just wanted to clarify my statements. I got a little bit garbled in my last remarks on the previous question.

I was speaking about our public consultation on truth and reconciliation day, and I referenced a name change. That was actually for National Aboriginal Day, which is June 21. People in our consultation process mentioned they would like it changed to "National Indigenous Peoples Day". That's the change that went on. It came out of that consultation we had.

Ms. White: I appreciate the clarification.

During the briefing, we were handed a map from the officials that said: "2022 fires of note in the Yukon Territory". I think it is really illustrative for folks to see the fires concentrated along assets — that being highways. At the time, I had asked if there was a willingness or a desire to share that publicly, and I just wanted to follow up with the minister to see if it is available on the website, and I say this only because I was not able to find it on the website.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is no problem putting that map up on the website. The department is more than happy to do that. I am not sure exactly why it's not there, but we will try to get it up there so people can see it online.

Ms. White: It wasn't meant to be a criticism. I think the map is really helpful. The reason I think it is helpful is that it signals to folks how come the cost of wildland fire management was as high as it was this year, and I think it just helps us understand where we are and what the future looks like.

One of the questions I have around that is this: How many individual people did the Department of Community Services hire this year to be front-line wildland firefighters?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Yukon has 75 initial-attack firefighters in regional bases across the Yukon and another 40 staff managing crews and aircraft, leading prevention programs, and providing logistical support. We also have a 20-person-unit crew from Yukon First Nations Wildfire.

Ms. White: How many folks came from out-of-territory to support this year's fire management efforts?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We had support from 297 folks from other jurisdictions.

Ms. White: That is a significant change from just the 75 and then the 20 from First Nations Wildfire. So, out of those nearly 400 people, how many hours does the minister expect that wildland firefighters spent on the front lines of fires this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: At the moment, we don't have that statistic at hand.

Ms. White: Then I guess the next question would be: Did the fire season last for days or did it last for weeks? Can he give me a ballpark about how long the fires were burning and then fought on the ground?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have a defined season in the territory for our wildland fire folks. They get paid whether there are fires or not. It begins April 1 and we start to let crews go at the end of August. There are some crew leaders who stay on a little bit longer to do the logistical support and wrap-up at the end, but generally it's April 1 to the end of August.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that.

Knowing that Yukon employees — let's say 95 people — who would be on the front line of fighting fires but had to call in initial support of 297 — would the minister say that the fire season was severe this year, was it moderate, or was it low? How would he classify this year's fire season?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This season, the Yukon experienced about two and a half times the average number of wildfires. There were a total of 270 fires by mid-July. In my opening remarks to this discussion in Committee of the Whole, I believe I said that it came on like a lion, and then I didn't say that it went out like a lamb, but that's sort of what happened. It came on really hard and required some support from down south and then later on it petered out.

Ms. White: I thank that minister for that description. That it came in like a lion is probably pretty relevant. So, when folks were on the front line of those fires, would the minister describe that as like hanging around a campfire, or would it be something more severe than that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can see where this is going. There are a range of potential risks in responding to wildfires, and so creating and promoting a safe work environment and preventing workplace injury and occupational illness is a key component of Wildland Fire Management's mandate. The goal is to prevent injuries up front. We don't want people getting sick or injured, so that's where we put a lot of focus. That's certainly the approach taken by workers' compensation as well.

Wildland Fire Management designs and delivers a broad range of training specific to developing and maintaining employee expertise in fire response and fire management with an annual budget of approximately \$250,000. Many wildland fire managers and staff are specifically trained to deliver mental health training such as the Working Mind First Responders, which focuses on destigmatizing struggles with psychological health and well-being or challenges in response to traumatic events. The fire operations joint health and safety committee is made up of management and staff representatives with a mandate to monitor and improve workplace safety, including promoting a health and safety culture to prevent workplace injury and occupational illness.

Any workplace health and safety issue, hazard incident, or accident that may arise is reported and investigated, and corrective action is taken and applied consistently across Wildland Fire Management. Workplace safety officers are also trained to provide health and safety oversight on large wildfires, assessing potential risks to workers with daily situation reports, fire behaviour advisories, and weather bulletins to ensure that employees are informed of potential risks as they develop.

Employees are encouraged to access the employee family assistance program as well as other corporate training and personal development opportunities, such programs offered through YGLearn. We also make sure that our employees have the proper PPE to mitigate any potential exposures or risks that they might experience on the job.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the minister found the path that we are going down and it only took a couple of questions to get us there.

The next question that I have — since we made changes last year to the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* — at the time, I was trying to bring forward amendments to include wildland firefighters and presumptive cancer once the WCB appeared as witnesses last year. I had actually asked: Have they had a conversation with Wildland Fire Management? At the time, they said no, and then they came back and said yes. So, has the minister had conversations with his own employees within Wildland Fire Management around their thoughts about presumptive cancer coverage?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to repeat what the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board officials said at the very opening of their remarks here. If somebody gets sick or injured on the job, they are entitled to compensation — period, full stop.

We have had the discussion about presumptions here in the House. The legislation that we tabled in the House is among the top pieces of legislation in Canada, and perhaps even in North America, in terms of how far it goes to improve safety and coverage for workers who find themselves in the horrible position of being injured or falling victim to some sort of workplace illness as a result of their work on the job. But they are covered.

The member opposite and I have had these discussions now for a long time, and I know that we have a difference of opinion on this. At Community Services and the Wildland Fire Management team, we take safety very seriously.

We are doing all that we can to keep our workers safe and well-equipped to deal with the situations that they find themselves in on the ground in the territory every summer fighting fires. As I said — as my officials and I have said in this House many times — if there is evidence to support presumption going forward for Wildland Fire Management in the territory, we would look at that. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that they are exposed to any pathogens that might cause the types of illness that the member opposite is alleging or fighting for, and were we to actually give them a presumption, there would be an obligation on the part of Community Services to start to equip them with the proper PPE to prevent that, and that would probably be very onerous on folks working in the territory every summer fighting wildfires to prevent illnesses that frankly there is no evidence to suggest that they are exposed to and if, in the future, they were actually unfortunately to succumb to something like that, they would be covered by workers' compensation.

Ms. White: So, my question was: Has the minister spoken to his staff within Wildland Fire Management around presumptive cancer coverage?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have spoken to staff at Wildland Fire Management on many occasions. They have never brought this issue to my attention.

Ms. White: Has the minister asked?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have spoken to staff at Wildland Fire Management on several occasions thanking them for the work that they have done. I have not had that question posed to me once. I have heard lots of things, but it is not an issue that

has come to my attention through the wildland fire folks I have spoken to.

Ms. White: I will just try one more time. Has the minister asked the question? That was the last two times I have asked the question. Has the minister asked the question of the people at Wildland Fire Management?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say once again that I have had many conversations with folks at Wildland Fire Management. I have had many conversations with folks at Yukon First Nations Wildfire as well. This issue has not been brought to my attention by any of the staff.

Ms. McLeod: I look forward to the conversation with the minister with the help of his officials, of course.

I wanted to start off by talking about one of our favourite topics, which is land development. I want to start off with talking about Whistle Bend. In early July of 2021, the minister cancelled the tender for phase 7 of the Whistle Bend development, which had serious impacts and delayed the release of building lots. Last year, the government was supposedly on track to tender phases 7 and 8 in December or January of this year. At the time, phase 9 was scheduled to be tendered by early summer of 2022 and phase 10 targeted for January of 2023.

For those four phases, can the minister provide the details of the new schedule of release for each of these phases?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to continue the discussion about all that we're doing to get land developed for citizens of the Yukon. This is an issue that's important to Yukoners — I have said that, as well — and it's an issue that's going to require years of work and required years of work before 2016 — that didn't happen. So, we have fast-tracked and worked very, very hard to get money into lot development throughout the territory. I said in this House before and I'll say it again: As we move the territory forward, we are investing more than \$30 million this year in lot development. That compares to \$7.7 million in the Yukon Party's last year in office. It compares to \$6 million a year in lots.

The reality is that the territory did not do enough years ago to keep pace with demand, so we have had to work incredibly hard to overcome the deficit we inherited, and we have done that work. We have built strong, collaborative relationships with municipalities, with private landowners, developers, and First Nation partners across the territory to speed up the development of lots and homes in the Yukon. We have been working with First Nations — not against them — to make sure that we advance the territory's interests, and land is another one of those areas where we're working closely.

So, we are working hard to increase the supply of lots in Yukon communities for housing, as well as business and economic development opportunities. We have made the historic investments I spoke about in housing and lot development across the territory. This year's budget, as I said, includes more than \$30 million for land development across the Yukon.

In the last two years, municipalities across the territory have issued almost 1,300 permits for residential construction. That is a significant increase over the historic average —

significant increase. Over the last four years, we have seen the addition of more than 1,000 new homes in Whitehorse, which is a 60-percent increase over the previous four-year period. Residential investment has reached record highs in the Yukon, with \$267 million in residential investment construction in 2021, which shattered the 2020 record of \$200 million. In the coming years, our goal is to develop a thousand new residential lots across the territory. That was our commitment in our platform before the last election, and we are continuing through with that.

In Whistle Bend, there are more than 200 lots: phase 6B, 101 lots; phase 7A, 86 lots; and phase 8 has 16 lots. These have been completed this year and will be available to builders for the next building season. Now, I was questioned about this earlier this afternoon by the Leader of the Official Opposition — the Leader of the Yukon Party. I went into what happened with 6B. Really, all we are waiting for is to do one week of paving, so those lots are going to go out to lottery and will be available for people to buy later this summer.

We are also advancing design on multiple phases at once to have more phases tender-ready and to allow more flexibility with tender releases. We are targeting phase 9A and the lift station for this fall and phase 12 early in 2023 for target completion in the fall of 2023. Storm water work and various landscaping work will be tendered this fall and winter. Phase 9B and phase 13 will be tendered later in 2023 for target completion in the fall of 2024.

So, we are talking about phase 6B. This year, we will get 200 lots out to lottery, and that includes 6B — 101 lots. The one caveat on that is that we ran out of time this summer, this fall, to finish the paving work on 6B. That work will be finished first thing next spring to allow the builders to get onto the sites to start building those lots.

Ms. McLeod: First of all, I would like to clear up the budgeting amount that the minister referenced again today as being over \$30 million. Now, earlier this year, in spring, the minister — on several occasions — said that it was "\$26 million", and earlier today, in fact, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that it was "\$30 million". So, can we start by finding out what the real number is?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Let's just agree that it is five times what the Yukon Party spent on their land in their last year in office — so, five times what the Yukon Party spent in 2016. We can agree on that, perhaps.

In the mains, this year: Land Assessment/Planning — \$3.8 million; Rural Residential — \$13.6 million, if you're rounding; Whitehorse Residential — \$13.3 million — that is more than \$30 million.

Ms. McLeod: Of course, I wasn't adding that up, and I wonder if the minister has a total for us.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The three numbers that I just read to you — \$30.6 million.

Ms. McLeod: Now, earlier this spring, of course, \$26 million was the number being relayed to us here in the Chamber, and \$13 million of that was for Whitehorse development and \$13 million was for rural development. So,

will the minister confirm what the breakdown is with the new numbers?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: So, unfortunately — and I mean no disrespect — the Yukon Party has been proven unreliable when it comes to numbers and what they say in the House so often. So, I don't know what happened before, but let me clarify it for the member opposite this afternoon: \$13.295 million for residential development in Whitehorse; \$13.562 million for residential development in rural Yukon; and \$3.82 million for land assessment and planning to make sure that all of this lot work gets done and put out to tender. So, that's the total — \$30.6 million, I believe, was the total that Bill just provided me. That's the number that we are talking about this afternoon. That's more than five times what the Yukon Party spent in their last year of office, and actually, it's a lot of money. We are working to make sure that we get lots out to the public, and this year, we have 200 lots that will be going before builders by the next construction season. That's on point to build the 1,000 lots that we promised to build in our platform. That's the work that we are doing to make sure that Yukoners have a place to live in the territory.

Ms. McLeod: Of course, if the minister brought correct figures to the House to begin with, we wouldn't have had this conversation. I just want remind the minister that if he wants to talk about information that is not quite correct, I'm sure we could do that all day long.

The minister said that he would have 200 lots out this year, and I am kind of wondering what he considers to be “this year”, because clearly the 101 for phase 6B, the 86 for phase 7 — and I couldn't quite hear if it was 15 or 16 for phase 8 scheduled to be out in 2023, which is not this year; I presume that it is next year. In fact, the minister referenced “later this summer”, so I presume that means later in the summer in 2023.

The minister also said — and this is where it might get a little confusing — that phase 9A was going to be tendered this fall. Phase 12 would be tendered in the fall of 2023. We presume that phase 9A has already been tendered if it was going to be tendered this fall. Then the minister went on to say that phases 9B to 13 — and I'm not sure where phase 12 comes in there because that's 2023 — were going to be in the fall of 2024. Maybe the minister can just confirm those dates that he gave me.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will say again that we are targeting phase 9A and lift-station tenders for this fall and phase 12 early in 2023 for target completion in the fall of 2023. I think the takeaway here is that we are targeting phase 9A and phase 12 to be tendered for completion in the fall of 2023. That is really the number that you have to keep an eye on. We have two phases of construction that we are hoping to have tendered and completed by the fall of 2023.

Storm-water work and various landscaping work will be tendered this fall and winter. Phase 9B and phase 13 will be tendered later in 2023 for targeted completion in the fall of 2024.

So, following the completion of work for phases 9A and 12, which will be completed in the fall of 2023 — so that work will be done in 2023 and then the lots will be tendered. We will

go through a lottery system, and it will be available for building in the spring of 2024 — just to be clear — just like the lots that we did this summer in 2022 will be available to builders in the spring building season of 2023. Then phase 9B and phase 13 will be tendered in 2023. They will be completed in 2024. So, those lots, whenever they are tendered — the goal, though, is to get them done by 2024, and then they will be built in 2025, just like the lots that we built in 2022 are built in 2023.

I will say that the missing phases — that would be 10 and 11 — because of the situation — the way that the work is situated in Whistle Bend — it's easier for us to continue on the work to 9B and 13 because of their situation on the site, and the other two phases will be pushed off because they are in a different location. They are in a whole new area of Whistle Bend. To make it seamless and to make it easier for the construction companies to continue the work and get it all done for lots to be available in 2025, then we are going to continue and move on to the phases as I have laid them out, as opposed to going to 10 and 11, which are phases that are in a new area of Whistle Bend.

Ms. McLeod: So, phases 10 and 11 are pushed off to a future date. Does the minister have any kind of time frame on that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Once Whistle Bend is completed, it will include 15 phases total and more than 2,000 lots, and it will represent more than \$300 million of investment and economic benefit for Yukon contractors and businesses. It is the foundation for the growth that we are going to see over the next few years.

The goal is to have the final phases of Whistle Bend in 2028-29, so that is when we are wrapping it up. That's when the lot releases for the last phases will come to fruition — in the year 2028-29.

Ms. McLeod: Is the minister or the department having any conversations with the City of Whitehorse as to next areas for development?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We are awaiting the finalization and passage of the official community plan, which identifies the next areas of development in the City of Whitehorse. That is important work, and I am waiting for the passage of that official community plan so that we can see in vivid detail where they are going to build the next subdivisions.

Ms. McLeod: The City of Whitehorse, along with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, are currently working together on the Valleyview south master plan within the area that we all know as the tank farm. What role does Community Services have in the planning of this land, if any?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The City of Whitehorse is an autonomous government in the territory. It is responsible for most of the activity within its borders. In this case, the planning work is being undertaken by the City of Whitehorse and its private developer. We are there, of course, to support in any way that we can, and if they call on us, we will certainly be there, but the whole planning process for the tank farm is really a City of Whitehorse initiative and they are carrying it out. They

are a responsible government and we are just there to support if we are called upon.

Ms. McLeod: Now, if the City of Whitehorse called upon Community Services for support, what does the minister anticipate that would look like?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: That is a purely hypothetical question. They haven't called on us for support yet. They are doing their work. Normally in Whitehorse, the Government of Yukon usually acts as a developer for the City of Whitehorse. In this case, they have a private developer doing this work, and so we are not that involved in this project at this time.

Ms. McLeod: Back in the spring when we were having a discussion on rural lot development, the minister said that in fiscal year 2021-22, five lots were released in rural Yukon — two lots in Dawson and three in Mayo. The minister went on to say that in 2022-23, which would be the year that we are now in, 20 to 45 rural lots would be released. So, can the minister update us on that, please?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Rural — in the Whitehorse periphery, we have 12 to 14 lots; in Carmacks, we have three to five lots; in Dawson City, four to nine lots; in Haines Junction, seven lots; in Ross River, two industrial lots; in Mayo, two lots; in the Teslin area, 21 to 25 lots; in Watson Lake, six to seven lots; in Grizzly Valley, one lot; in Faro, one lot; and in Destruction Bay, one lot. That is a total of more than 50.

In Carcross, the environmental assessment work is wrapping up in early 2023 for a residential development area off Tagish Avenue in Carcross. The Land Development branch will initiate a planning process for this area and will engage with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation regarding a joint planning opportunity with their adjacent C-31FS parcel on Bennett Beach. In Carmacks, feasibility work for multiple sites and priority areas have been identified. We are working with the Village of Carmacks and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to advance joint planning of a country residential area. A six-lot, urban residential extension was tendered in July but received no bids. We are going to retender for 2023 completion and target three to five country residential in 2022 and six urban residential lots in 2023. In Dawson City, Dawson is leading the north end development, finalizing a hand-off of all project files to the city. The Moosehide slide monitoring system installation is underway and should be in operation soon. The Dome Road serviced residential development project master plan — council is awaiting a formal letter of position from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. I could go on. In Destruction Bay, there is a concept for Glacier Acres phase 2 complete and is holding for next steps. In Faro, we worked with the new CAO and council to confirm land development priorities. We're working on three to six lot service upgrades and lot completions in future planning areas through the official community plan process. In Grizzly Valley, we're advancing rezoning and configuration of phase 3 lots, targeting 12 completions in 2022-23.

In Haines Junction, we have identified areas of interest as part of the official community plan. Project planning for urban, country residential, and industrial sites is underway. We are advancing feasibility and service upgrades of seven urban residential lots for target completion this year. We are targeting

the plan, design, and tender of phase 1 service for residential subdivision for construction in 2023.

In Keno, feasibility work for two to four lots is complete. It's on hold because of contamination and regulatory issues. In Mayo, there is country residential as well under the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. In Ross River, there is a zoning amendment recently approved for two new industrial lots. Environmental cleanup work led by the Department of Environment is underway and could allow for release in 2022-23. In Teslin, we are partnering with First Nations on lot development with the Teslin Tlingit Council. The Lone Tree subdivision is supposed to be completed soon. There are identified residential and industrial priority areas with the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Village of Teslin, and we are advancing feasibility and planning work.

So, there is a lot going on in rural Yukon as far as lot development is concerned.

Ms. McLeod: That was a most awesome briefing note, but I have to chuckle.

The question was: When the minister says that 20 to 45 rural lots will be released for sale this year — this year — what happened? How many were?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It really was — and is — an amazing briefing note. It goes into all of the things that we are doing here. I hope the member opposite gleans some knowledge from it — all the good work that the Department of Community Services and so many municipalities have put in on this file.

As I said in my previous answer to the member opposite, the work is done now. Those lots are going to be released and tendered for the next building season. That's the goal of the Department of Community Services. We build the lots in one year, and then we release them and put them out for lottery or for sale over the desk for the coming building season.

Ms. McLeod: Well, here's the thing. We come here and we listen to the minister telling us the things that he is going to do and that he is going to get done. "Great", we say. The minister did say that 20 to 45 lots were going to be released in rural Yukon this year. Now, I think it is fabulous that, down the road, some lots are going to be released, but we can only rely on what the minister tells us.

So, I hear from what the minister said that there are great things in the works, but nothing happened this year. Can he confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: You know, I have just gone on and identified a certain number — not even all — of all the lot development that we have done in rural Yukon. It's quite amazing. I really do want to laud the department, the communities, and the First Nations for all their work addressing this issue that we have been working on collectively together to solve since 2016 when we came into office and inherited a woeful shortage of lot development in the territory. So, yes, when the member opposite talks about years — when you table a budget in the spring, a year is a fiscal year. I don't know if I need to remind the members opposite of that, but that's what we're talking about and that's what we are doing. We are getting lots out to the people of the territory. We are doing extraordinary work building relationships, building lots, and

building homes. Building relationships, building lots, and building homes — that is what we are doing. We are doing that because that is what Yukoners elected us to do, and we take it seriously.

It's a lot of work. It's a lot of work for the department, for the contractors, for the municipalities, and for the First Nations. I'm not going to sit here in the Chamber and have it disparaged. That work is incredible.

It couldn't have happened without the relationships and the new approach to governing that we brought to the territory. I am not going to apologize for that. I am going to celebrate the work that has been done, and I look forward to seeing those lots being sold through lottery and across the desk of the lands branch of my fellow colleague at Energy, Mines and Resources in the coming months.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for confirming my statement.

I am going to shift gears here a little bit. We have raised this before with the minister, and it has to do with the flooding situation and the residents of McConnell Lake. We had asked the minister previously if he would meet with the people at McConnell Lake to try to come up with some solutions for them. I wonder if he has done that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm not going to go over my opening remarks to this, but I think that it's important to set the table here this afternoon. In 2022, the Yukon experienced a record-setting snowpack across all watershed basins creating persistent and widespread high risk of freshet summer lake flooding and high groundwater tables. The year 2021 made everybody stand up because it was so visible — the flooding that happened in Marsh Lake and Lake Laberge and the Southern Lakes. But 2022, in some ways, was worse. It was all over the territory, and a very small crew — we talked about 75 people in EMO, but it's a very small crew and they were dealing with substantial flooding across the entire territory this summer — unprecedented. In response to the widespread flooding and critical infrastructure impacts across the territory, the emergency coordination centre was activated from June 9 to July 15, 2022.

As I just intimated, different than other years, flooding was seen through a number of areas across the territory, and this provided additional challenges for a coordinated response and required responders to support 13 communities in total across the territory. Overall, 113 government personnel, 286,000 sandbags, and 6,350 superbags were deployed to support communities and protect infrastructure during this year's flood response.

Of course, I want to thank First Nation officials, municipal officials, local advisory councils, contractors, residents, friends, and neighbours for their collective response to the 2022 flood season. It was absolutely extraordinary and it continues to be because, just when we expected everything to go back to normal — to have low water in the Southern Lakes — we saw the water start to come up and up and up and up and up again to almost peak levels in October and November — never seen anything like it before — unprecedented.

Now, I could draw a hard line under *Our Clean Future*, the Yukon's nation-leading climate change action plan that we initiated with measurables and everything else to try to protect Yukoners, to take action against climate change, and to make sure that we had measurables for folks in the territory — work that was not done in the past — not like this. We took action on this because we saw these floods and fires, and we know how important it is to Yukoners. So, yes, it was an extraordinary flood season in 2022, just like 2021 was an extraordinary flood season, and 2022 continues to be an extraordinary flood season because we are seeing the numbers spike at the end of the season.

Now, the member opposite was asking about McConnell Lake, an issue that I did deal with on the floor of the Legislature not long ago, and frankly, nothing has really changed in the two weeks or so — three weeks — I don't know what it was; time sort of blends and warps in this Chamber — but we just dealt with that issue on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, and really, nothing has changed. We are waiting for an engineering report on the McConnell Lake flooding situation. We haven't received that report yet. It is challenging because of the terrain and the scope of the problem in that area affecting the 10 or so people living there. It is certainly dramatic, and I really empathize with those folks, because what they are seeing is challenging properties that they have sometimes had for a while, but we don't know why it is happening, and the scope — the terrain — the scope of the area at effect is really, really difficult.

So, we have hired an engineering firm and they are doing an assessment of that area. They are going to try to figure out what is going on, what can be done to fix the issue in that area, and EMO officials are keeping folks abreast about that report and when it is coming out, but once we get that report — as I said in the House before — I will meet with residents to sort of chart a way forward, but at this time, I don't have anything to say to the poor folks. I don't have a report in hand. I don't know what the problem is.

Once I know that, I am happy to sit down with them and discuss options going forward. Until that time comes, we have EMO officials dealing with the issues on the ground, which at this time, I would imagine, have sort of abated, unlike other places in the Southern Lakes where we are starting to see groundwater come up and threaten people's homes in October and November, which is really unheard of. I don't know what the effects of that will be in the coming months.

It was a challenging year — 13 communities. The team at CS worked very, very hard with municipalities and First Nations to deal with the logistics of supporting them in an absolutely unprecedented flood year across the territory, and yes, we are working with the 10 folks at McConnell Lake. Once we have the report from the engineering firm, we will certainly sit down with them and discuss options going forward.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the minister for his commitment to meet with those folks at McConnell Lake when the engineering report comes in.

I am going to move along and have a little conversation, I hope, regarding EMS. We, of course, have had many

conversations about EMS. And I was reading through the Blues from our last discussion on EMS, and I thought maybe the minister might want to confirm with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, because this spring, on two occasions during debate with her, he said that there were eight paid staff in Watson Lake. Perhaps the minister just erred, because I know that, a few days before that, we had a much lengthier conversation and settled on the fact that there were 3.2 employees in Watson Lake. I just wanted to flag that for the minister.

There was a conversation at that time regarding the number of volunteers for EMS in the communities. This is what the minister said at the time: that in Watson Lake there were two; in Faro, eight; in Mayo, eight; and in Ross River, two. Now, we further talked about the hiring of a clinical educator who was supposed to improve the volunteer numbers, so I wonder if the minister can give us an update on how that's going. Have the volunteer numbers improved in our rural communities?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Again, I'm going to try to — because the Yukon Party has proven unreliable with numbers and facts that they are putting before Yukoners, so there is a lot of confusion. There is a whole bunch of confusion here, so let's try to clear this up for the member opposite.

Yes, indeed, the new staffing model provides funding equivalent to 3.2 full-time positions of additional employee-based coverage and funding to cover standby costs when volunteers are unavailable in Watson Lake. That's the 3.2. These positions — which can be broken out into full-time, part-time, or auxiliary on-call positions — provide paid coverage in Watson Lake for more than 10 hours per day, seven days a week.

What I said, and what I will continue to say, is that the resources aim to provide paid coverage in Watson Lake for 10.75 hours per day, seven days a week. Currently, this schedule utilizes four full-time positions, three AOC positions, and one casual position. Now, that's: Four plus three plus one is eight. So, eight positions in Watson Lake, but the funding allocation was for 3.2 full time — just so that the confusion is clarified there and the member opposite — so that's where we're at with that. That's where the numbers came from.

Now, volunteer recruitment and retention is key for sustainability of rural emergency medical service and fire service across the territory, and we have taken action to bolster our training programs aimed to attract new talent and develop the talent we have. This includes clinical educators with a community focus and improvements aimed to reduce administrative hurdles. We invest in training to ensure success; we work with our partners in communities to help us recognize, recruit, and retain community volunteer emergency responders, who have been working very hard to create those community connections — working together, as opposed to working at cross-purposes. That's one of the hallmarks of our government, and that's what we have been doing.

Contingency plans are in place for communities when volunteer levels are low. This includes drawing upon community members, allied response agencies, additional medevac capability, repositioning staff for coverage, and

utilizing local health care providers and the RCMP to help with local capacity needs. So, that's it.

We have put this in place because it wasn't there before, and we want to make sure that we provide that support to our Yukon communities. So, we put this in place, and I think it will bear fruit. Is it bearing fruit right now? It is, but it's going to get better and better. So, just so you know, Watson Lake has, as of July 27, 2022, six active EMS volunteers; Teslin has five; Tagish has five; Ross River has three; Pelly Crossing has three; Mayo has nine; Marsh Lake has 10; Haines Junction has 11; Faro has eight; Eagle Plains has two; Destruction Bay has six; Dawson has eight; Carcross has nine; Carmacks has five; Beaver Creek has five, and that's as of July 22, 2022.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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 Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Ms. Blake: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 206, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2022-23*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled November 21, 2022:

35-1-78

Annual Report Yukon Housing Corporation — For the year ended March 31, 2022 (Pillai)

35-1-79

Annual report April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 — Yukon Liquor Corporation (Pillai)

35-1-80

Yukon state of the environment interim report 2022 (Clarke, N.)

The following documents were filed November 21, 2022:

35-1-113

Yukon Lottery Commission Annual Report 2021-22 (Pillai)

35-1-114

2021 Yukon Minerals Advisory Board Annual Report (Streicker)