Yukon Legislative Assembly

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HANSARD

Thursday, November 5, 2026 — 1:00 p.m.

Whitehorse, Yukon

Speaker: The Honourable Yvonne Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
2026 Fall Sitting

Speaker: Hon. Yvonne Clarke
Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committee of the Whole: Patti McLeod
Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole: Tyler Porter

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Currie Dixon	Copperbelt North	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Cory Bellmore	Mayo-Tatchun	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Linda Benoit	Whistle Bend South	Minister of Highways and Public Works
Hon. Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Minister of Health and Social Services
Hon. Jen Gehmair	Marsh Lake-Mount Lorne-Golden Horn	Minister of Economy, Tourism and Culture; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation
Hon. Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Minister of Environment
Hon. Scott Kent	Copperbelt South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Laura Lang	Whitehorse West	Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Women and Gender Equity Directorate; Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
Hon. Ted Laking	Porter Creek Centre	Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Party

Doris Anderson	Porter Creek North	**Yvonne Clarke**	Whistle Bend North
Adam Gerle	Porter Creek South	**Patti McLeod**	Watson Lake-Ross River-Faro
Tyler Porter	Southern Lakes		

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Official Opposition Takhini	**Lane Tredger**	Official Opposition House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Carmen Gustafson	Riverdale North	**Brent McDonald**	Klondike
Linda Moen	Mountainview	**Justin Ziegler**	Riverdale South

THIRD PARTY

Yukon Liberal Party

Debra-Leigh Reti	Leader of the Third Party Third Party House Leader Vuntut Gwitchin

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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Thursday, November 5, 2026

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Indigenous Veterans Day

Doris Anderson: I rise today on behalf of government and the Third Party to pay tribute to National Indigenous Veterans Day, observed every year on November 8. This day is an opportunity to recognize and honour the service and sacrifice of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis veterans, as well as Indigenous members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Canadian Rangers who continue to serve today.

For generations, Indigenous people have answered the call to serve our country. They served in times of war, in times of peace, and in missions here at home. They served with courage, determination, and a deep sense of duty to their communities and to Canada. Many Indigenous service members volunteered at a time when they did not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other Canadians. Despite those barriers, they stepped forward to contribute, to protect others, and to help build a safer future for generations to come.

Their service left a lasting legacy. Their contributions can be seen in military records and medals. Their stories continue to be shared by families and communities across the country, including here in the Yukon.

For some of us, this recognition is deeply personal. Many Yukon families have strong connections to the military service. The values of sacrifice, resilience, and commitment to others continue to be passed from one generation to the next.

Today, we honour Indigenous veterans whose contributions were not always fully recognized in their own time. We acknowledge the challenges many face both during and after their service. We also recognize the ongoing work to ensure their stories are preserved and shared.

Across the Yukon, Indigenous veterans have served their country in times of war, in peacekeeping missions, and through service in the Canadian Rangers. Their leadership skills and knowledge have strengthened their communities and helped protect Canada's North. Their examples still inspire younger generations who choose a path of service today.

Here in the Yukon, their contributions continue to be felt. Indigenous veterans and Canadian Rangers have supported emergency response efforts and strengthened Canada's presence in the North. Their knowledge, leadership, and dedication continue to make a difference every day.

As we approach Remembrance Day, National Indigenous Veterans Day reminds us that the story of military service in Canada cannot be told without the contributions of Indigenous peoples.

To all First Nations and Indigenous veterans and to those who continue to serve today, we offer our deepest gratitude. We remember your sacrifices. We honour your service, and we commit to ensuring that your stories continue to be told, lest we forget.

Gunałchîsh, thank you.

Kate White: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Indigenous Veterans Day. Today and every day, we honour the thousands of Indigenous Canadians who have served and continue to serve Canada, both in times of war and in peacekeeping.

Even though more than 12,000 Indigenous people served in the major conflicts of the 20th century from the World Wars to Korea to the many peacekeeping missions the world over, with the loss of an estimated 500 lives, it was not until 1994 that National Indigenous Veterans Day began in Winnipeg. It began because up until that day, Indigenous veterans had not been recognized in Remembrance Day activities.

When Indigenous people were able to join the Canadian Air Force in 1942 and the Canadian Navy in 1943, both men and women enlisted, serving as soldiers, nurses, and in other roles. Many served with distinction, winning medals for bravery in action.

But all was forgotten when they returned home, having enlisted to serve their country overseas. Many returned home to Canada to find that they were no longer accepted on their home reserves because, as enlisted people, they had become enfranchised and were no longer considered eligible for any of the programs or services that the federal government provided. At the same time, Indigenous veterans were unable to access the services provided to returning veterans through Veterans Affairs because they were Indigenous — a terrible and shameful catch-22 orchestrated by the Canadian government.

Returning Indigenous veterans who had fought in overseas wars on behalf of democracy were denied the most fundamental exercise of democracy on Canadian soil until 1960, when they were finally given the right to vote.

It has been remarked upon many times that Indigenous peoples of this country have shown remarkable patience in the face of persistent and systemic racism. In 2026, some may find it hard to believe that it was not until 1995, 50 years after the Second World War, that Indigenous peoples were finally allowed to lay Remembrance Day wreaths at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to remember and honour their dead comrades, or that it was not until 2001 that the first monument commemorating the role of Indigenous people during the First and Second World Wars and Korea was dedicated in Ottawa, or that it was not until 2003 that the Government of Canada would finally provide veterans' benefits to First Nation soldiers who had been denied them in the past and the Métis veterans who had never received them.

We remember all Indigenous peoples and their families who have given their lives and express gratitude to those Indigenous members of the Canadian Armed Forces who continue to serve on behalf of all Canadians. Lest we forget.

Speaker: There are no members' statements today.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Currie Dixon: I have for tabling a corrected version of the Yukon Public Accounts 2025-26. I understand

that the copy I tabled last week, due to a misprint, was missing three pages.

Speaker: Are there any committee reports to be presented?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Question — Rural nursing vacancies

Kate White: Recent data shows that in rural Yukon, 44.5 percent of primary health care nursing positions were vacant from January to August of this year. Behind those numbers are health centres in Destruction Bay, Beaver Creek, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Teslin, Carcross, and Faro that have had no nurse on-site. When I asked about this earlier, the minister told Yukoners that these vacancies in Community Nursing were vacations and medical leave. The 44.5-percent vacancy rate in rural Yukon is the highest that it has been in the last four years, and those are not just nurses on holiday. The minister has pointed to a new electronic record system, more agency contracts, and bigger bursaries, but communities are still going without a nurse.

Can the minister explain to Yukoners why the vacancy rate keeps climbing?

Hon. Brad Cathers: What I would remind the member of is that some of the statistics, when she's looking back in the past and under the previous government — they hadn't even been keeping records of when or disclosing when they had vacancies occurring at some of these community nursing stations. However, in the context of health centres, this remains a challenge.

I would also remind the member that in looking this year at the total number of vacancy days, one health centre, Beaver Creek, is a major contributor to that due to the gap there in staffing and challenges recruiting there. We are taking steps to deal with it. It remains a serious challenge.

It's also one of the reasons why, under the Working Together agreement that I recently announced along with Yukon's Member of Parliament on behalf of the federal health minister, one of the priorities we've identified in that funding agreement for the next four years is additional resources for Community Nursing. We recognize that more resources are necessary there. As I've mentioned before, we have increased the number of agency contracts. We've continued to do our best through the department to recruit people to fill positions there, but this remains a consistent challenge, and that is why it is a priority for additional resources.

Kate White: This is from a recent ATIPP. When a First Nation was told that its community health centre would have no nurse for nearly a month, its health director wrote to the department saying that something must change, because this is not working for us. They asked whether more closures were coming and what the plan was to ensure staffing. The department replied that it could not guarantee there would be no further disruptions.

Residents of rural communities and First Nation governments are telling this government that this cycle of closures is not sustainable. The minister has said he has taken some steps, like implementing electronic records.

What additional actions is the minister taking, and when will communities see the results of those changes?

Hon. Brad Cathers: The member has acknowledged that we've committed to implementing electronic medical records, which is set to begin next month for the first ones going live, if all goes according to schedule. What the member doesn't seem to recognize is how important that record is for certain positions, including nurse practitioners. One of the issues that we've been advised of is that to be in compliance with their obligations, it makes it extremely difficult for a nurse practitioner to actually take a rural position without an electronic health record to use. That is an important part of it.

The rollout of electronic health records also will help patient information come in from communities when someone is coming to the Whitehorse Hospital or being sent down south. It also plays a role in helping Community Nursing staff here in Whitehorse be able to provide additional support and mentoring to nurses in rural communities — or I should say it will. That is important.

But again, as I noted in my first response, we recognize that there are more resources necessary. Community Nursing has not had new positions added to it since 2018. I would remind the member of that, and we've recognized the need to add positions. We've made it a priority and look forward to making those enhancements going forward.

Kate White: Maybe based on this minister's response, it means that he intends to hire nurse practitioners for Beaver Creek, which I'm sure would be a welcome action for that community.

Health centre closures in rural Yukon communities cause anxiety and disruptions and can delay care. When these closures occur, residents want to know how the government will prevent them going forward. A briefing prepared for the minister earlier this year says that there is an ongoing review of models of care for rural Yukon, but nothing has been shared with the communities affected or with the public.

Will the minister commit to tabling a rural nursing stabilization plan developed with communities and health care professionals?

Hon. Brad Cathers: I'm not sure which document the member is referring to, since we have been looking at this for a while. I'm not sure what she had seen, but there have been a number of things considered for enhancements to Community Nursing. We recognize again that since there has not been a single increase in positions to Community Nursing since 2018, I remind the member during all of the time that the NDP held the balance of power and propped up the Liberal government, there were no additional resources provided to Community Nursing to invest in our rural health centres.

We are changing that. That is why, as I mentioned earlier in the announcement that we made in October, along with the federal government and the MP as a representative, we've identified as a priority, under the Working Together funding we received from the federal government, investments in our

community health centre, adding new positions for Community Nursing, including additional float positions to help us reduce the number of closures that occur.

We recognize how important this is to communities. In response to a request received from AYC, I look forward to meeting with AYC to talk to them about the details of what we're looking at doing and look forward to being able to share more details publicly once we're in a position to do so.

Question — Scheduling energy witnesses in Committee of the Whole

Lane Tredger: Yukoners have been waiting for answers about sky-high electricity bills, unexplained charges, billing mistakes, and rates that keep going up.

The Yukon NDP asked for witnesses from ATCO, Yukon Energy, and Yukon Development Corporation to appear before the Assembly. We wanted MLAs to have the opportunity to question all three and get answers for Yukoners, but the Yukon Party has scheduled all three for a single afternoon. That gives MLAs less than an hour per corporation to ask questions on behalf of Yukoners.

Why is the Yukon Party limiting these three corporations to a single afternoon when electricity costs are one of the biggest concerns facing Yukoners?

Hon. Scott Kent: As the Government House Leader, it's my responsibility to communicate with Opposition parties about things such as the scheduling of witnesses. We have scheduled ATCO, YDC, and YEC to appear prior to the end of this Sitting. The timing for that will be from 3:00 to 5:30, which is half an hour longer than normal.

Of course, I should remind members and those listening in that YDC and YEC, the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear regularly as witnesses here in the Legislative Assembly as well.

Lane Tredger: There is an enormous amount of ground to cover with ATCO, Yukon Energy, and Yukon Development Corporation. Each corporation plays a different role in the Yukon's electricity system. One deals primarily with customers and their bills, while the others make major decisions about how electricity is generated and how the system will meet the Yukon's future needs. These responsibilities raise very different questions about affordability, infrastructure, and the major projects being planned.

Squeezing all of that into one afternoon means important questions will be rushed or missed entirely. But it's clear that this is a very important issue for Yukoners. Why is the Yukon Party refusing to provide enough time for Yukoners to get answers to their questions about energy?

Hon. Ted Laking: Thank you to the member opposite for bringing up the motion that we actually brought forward, which was to bring all three of the corporations into the Legislature. Of course, they only wanted to bring one. They wanted to leave a huge part of the electricity grid and the energy system out of the discussion. We thought it was important to ensure that everybody was there.

Also, I remind the member opposite that the Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation were already here in the spring. We've gone over and above what previous governments have done by bringing them in for a second time this year. I also remind the member opposite that when they were here in the spring, they ran out of questions and they wrapped up early and had to leave.

If the member opposite is worried they won't have enough time, then maybe they should be a little bit more judicious with their questions and ensure that they actually have enough to fill up the entire day.

Lane Tredger: The Yukon Party still has time to fix this. The witnesses aren't scheduled to appear until late November. ATCO, Yukon Energy, and Yukon Development Corporation could appear on separate days. The Yukon Party could also extend the period of time that they're here so MLAs have enough time to question them properly. This is not an unreasonable request.

Serious questions remain about billing accuracy, major infrastructure projects, and the future cost of electricity in the Yukon. Yukoners deserve thorough answers from the organizations responsible for generating and distributing electricity and billing for them. They should not lose that opportunity because the Yukon Party decided to cram everything into a single afternoon.

Will the Yukon Party reconsider this schedule and give each corporation enough time to answer questions, either through separate appearances or a longer hearing?

Hon. Ted Laking: We've more than doubled access to the corporations compared to previous governments. I think that's a good news story. We've gone and taken the extraordinary step of bringing ATCO into the Legislature — also a good news story.

But I would ask the member opposite to ensure they have enough questions to actually fill up the entire afternoon this time when they come in, because I agree: There are a lot of important questions to ask about energy security in the territory, the reliability of our grid, the ability to continue to grow our economy and our community. These are all very important questions. I would say that many people in this Legislature were quite shocked that the Official Opposition ran out of questions for the corporations the last time they were in here.

Question — Proposed Premier's and minister's hunting permits

Justin Ziegler: On October 29, the Minister of Environment told this House about a new idea for generating revenue. He called it a Premier's permit and a minister's permit. These would grant special hunts for sought-after species in exclusive areas at exclusive times. The minister said they, quote: "… could be auctioned off or awarded through a draw system." He then said, quote: "… the minister of the day, which is me now, can give one tag out to a Yukoner…"

Yukoners want to know the rules of these permits and the manner in which they will be distributed before they are introduced. An auction, a draw, and a tag given by a minister are three very different things. One rewards money, one rewards luck, and one rewards being close to power.

Which one is it? Will the minister or the Premier have any say in who receives these permits?

Hon. Wade Istchenko: This is actually fairly exciting for the department and exciting for residents. This idea and this

concept come from work that I've been doing as a minister and work that I would done previously as a minister, having the ability to look at other options and success stories.

One success story I would like to talk about is the positive, forward thinking of Kluane First Nation who developed a sheep hunt. They developed the sheep hunt, settled it in their land claim, so there's an opportunity to raise money for conservation for their First Nation and an opportunity for a Yukoner to hunt.

This is the general idea behind the Premier's hunt and the minister's hunt. I look forward to more following the work I'm doing with all the different organizations on this, and there'll be more to follow in the Legislature.

Justin Ziegler: Yukoners already have a fair system for rare hunts. It is called the permit hunt draw. It is run by the department with rules that everyone can access. No politician's name is on it.

Where I come from, we knew another system very well. It was called the king's hunt. The best hunting carried the ruler's name and it belonged to the elite few. The French Revolution brought an end to this in 1789, along with any ruling class privileges.

There are other examples of permits where the focus is not on personal titles but rather on clearly communicating the permit's intended purpose. If this permit is about conservation, call it a "Yukon conservation permit". A hunting permit should belong to the people of the Yukon.

Why does the permit belong to the Premier and the minister to award at their pleasure?

Hon. Wade Istchenko: This permit isn't new across Canada. British Columbia and Alberta have a Premier's hunt and they have a minister's hunt. It happens in other jurisdictions. It's important for Yukoners that there's an ability to raise money for conservation.

The members opposite and I spoke a little bit in this House about the minister's advisory council on hunting, fishing, and trapping and the conservation fund that those funds will go toward that will fund opportunities for conservation within the Yukon, much like the funds that the Kluane First Nation gets when they auction off their tag as far as the Wild Sheep Foundation.

Justin Ziegler: The minister said these permits would offer, quote: "… unique hunting opportunities such as sought-after species or an exclusive area or time period." In the Yukon, seasons and closed areas exist for one reason: to protect wildlife. They give animals space to raise their young. They give them time to recover. A permit that opens a season or an area closed to every other Yukoner sells an exception to the very rules that keep hunting sustainable. That is a strange way to raise money for conservation.

If the government goes ahead, Yukoners need to know the money will serve wildlife first. On October 29, the conservation fund's criteria were still being written.

Will the minister commit that every dollar raised from these permits will be dedicated in regulation to wildlife population surveys and habitat protection and reported publicly every year?

Hon. Wade Istchenko: I will absolutely guarantee that the monies and funds will go toward conservation.

I think sometimes the narratives in the House here are a bit inherited. If you were to go to local communities, you could talk to locals about the experience that the people have living in the outdoors, living on the land, gaining the understanding of how Mother Nature works and how all populations of animals need to be considered when it comes to wildlife management.

That's why it's important to gather the science-based knowledge and local and traditional knowledge to make sound wildlife management decisions. With this understanding, one thing that we can do is promote food security and conserve future fish and wildlife — but especially wildlife, because we're talking about that today — for future generations to come.

Question — School nutrition programs

Linda Moen: For six years, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate nutrition program provided meals to hundreds of students in communities across the territory.

That program lost federal funding following changes to Jordan's Principle, and the directorate had been forced to go to the Federal Court simply to obtain a decision on its appeal. When the federal money ended, this government had a choice. It chose not to prioritize food for children in its budget and instead decided on a hot lunch pilot in just seven schools, a fraction of the nearly 900 students the previous program served.

Why didn't this government step in to keep the program running for nearly 900 students who relied on it?

Hon. Scott Kent: The Department of Education recognizes that the federal program changes to Jordan's Principle have affected education partners, including Yukon First Nations through the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, who have relied on this funding to support Indigenous students. The department supports the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate's appeal and continues to work with the directorate and Yukon First Nations to understand the impacts related to Jordan's Principle funding changes.

That said, like many Yukoners, we too are watching for the tabling of the federal budget later today, which we hope includes additional support for Jordan's Principle and could lead to the reestablishment of this important program in rural Yukon.

Linda Moen: The government says it's tracking the success of this pilot, including attendance. Earlier this week, the minister said: "There are a number of initiatives that we need to continue to advance when it comes to ensuring students can be active and engaged in our schools and that the attendance numbers improve as a result of that." However, the data is already conclusive. With a lesser food program, attendance is already dropping.

Given that data already shows attendance falling under this reduced food program, will the minister stop waiting and commit to a universal school food program for all Yukon students?

Hon. Scott Kent: It's difficult for us when the federal government funds a program like they did through Jordan's Principle and then they abandon that program. That's why we're supporting the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate's appeal of the Jordan's Principle funding cut for

rural nutrition and we continue to work with them to try to reestablish it.

I've mentioned, of course, earlier that we are looking forward to the tabling of the federal budget, looking potentially to increase funding for Jordan's Principle, which could lead to the reestablishment of this program.

But I should also recognize and thank private sector mining companies, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association members, for also stepping in to help fill that gap in nutrition programs throughout rural Yukon when the federal government abandoned the Jordan's Principle funding for rural nutrition.

Linda Moen: Sadly, some students still go to school hungry. Every week this program stays cut, students in Yukon schools go without a meal at school. Educators have been very clear about what is needed, and the evidence from the pilot is already in front of this government. Yet the minister continues to point to more tracking, more initiatives, and more time.

Will this minister stop stalling and make the changes needed to the school food program so that students in every Yukon community have access to a meal at school?

Hon. Scott Kent: As I mentioned in the two previous answers, this is something that the federal government was funding through Jordan's Principle, and they removed that funding. They just made a decision that they did not want to fund it. Yukon First Nation Education Directorate has launched an appeal of that decision. We're supporting it. I should also note that our Member of Parliament, Brendan Hanley, has also supported that appeal and would like to see that funding restored and recognizes the importance.

As the member mentioned, there is a pilot program that's underway. It includes funding for hot lunch programs in Carmacks, in Faro, in Carcross, and in Watson Lake as well as three schools here in Whitehorse. These are important programs.

We look forward to the tabling of the federal budget. We're hoping, obviously, that the Jordan's Principle funding is increased so that Yukon First Nation Education Directorate can continue offering this important program.

Once again, I would like to thank those mining companies that stepped up when the federal government stepped out of this space to support Yukon communities when it comes to rural nutrition and providing lunch and meal programs for the students in rural Yukon.

Question — Cellular network connectivity

Adam Gerle: Constituents continue to raise concerns about dropped calls, poor reception, and gaps in cellular coverage in Whitehorse and across the Yukon. This has been an issue for years. Reliable cellular service is essential not only for residents and businesses but also during emergencies. While telecommunications infrastructure is largely owned and operated by private companies, Yukoners want to know what progress is being made to address these concerns.

Can the Minister of Economy, Tourism, and Culture update this House on efforts to improve cellular service and network capacity in the Yukon?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: Yukoners and Yukon businesses have consistently told us that cellular service needs to improve. When we took office, we began advocating for Yukoners and working across government to find solutions to improve the telecommunications infrastructure in the territory. We engaged directly with the CRTC; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; and Bell Mobility. We've also met with Bell several times to communicate concerns and priorities that we are hearing from Yukoners.

As a result of this constructive collaboration, I'm pleased to advise this House that Bell Mobility has confirmed plans to make investments here in the Yukon. Bell is committed to advancing two new cellular sites in Whitehorse and continued upgrades across the territorial network. These investments will help improve reliability, capacity, and service quality for Yukon residents and businesses.

Adam Gerle: I'm sure my constituents and many Yukoners will welcome these investments that improve connectivity and strengthen the territory's telecommunications infrastructure. I'm also confident they'll want to know more about this work. Can the minister tell this House whether Yukon taxpayers are being asked to fund these projects?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: These improvements are being fully funded by Bell Mobility. This is a fully private sector investment and no Yukon Government funding or subsidy is being provided. While Bell has not shared project details like costs with us, the company is investing in new infrastructure to improve coverage and capacity. Work to secure sites, approvals, and permits is ongoing, and we can anticipate construction taking 12 to 18 months.

In addition to constructing two new cell towers, Bell is upgrading existing infrastructure with next generation equipment that will support increased capacity, enhance network performance, and expand 5G capability. These improvements are expected to reduce congestion on the existing network while supporting the future population and economic growth in Whitehorse.

I welcome Bell's investment in Yukon telecommunications and look forward to seeing the benefits for residents and businesses.

Adam Gerle: The Yukon is growing, and so is the need for reliable cellular service. Yukoners across the territory want to know when they can expect to see these improvements and what difference they will make in their daily lives. This is especially important for rural Yukoners and for travellers who rely on dependable connectivity along Yukon's highway corridors for safety, business, and staying connected.

Can the minister tell us what benefits these new sites will provide, how they will support improvements in rural Yukon and along highway corridors, and when my constituents can expect to begin seeing these improvements?

Hon. Jen Gehmair: Two new cellular sites are expected to strengthen both 4G and 5G wireless service in Whitehorse. They will improve network reliability, increase capacity, enhance indoor and outdoor coverage, and support faster data speeds for residents and businesses.

My understanding is Bell is in the land acquisition process right now and looking to secure the permitting process. Based on information provided to us, projects of this nature typically take approximately 12 to 18 months to complete once the sites

have been secured. The sites are expected to be in Whitehorse and intended to help accommodate the city's continued growth, increasing demand for wireless service.

But I also acknowledge that there are reliability and service gaps in rural Yukon that would also benefit from increased capacity. I will continue to work with the federal government to secure funding to strengthen and expand cellular service in Yukon communities and along Yukon highways and in rural communities to improve connectivity and safety for all Yukoners.

Question — Power Potential Portal and call for power

Lane Tredger: Yesterday, the Yukon Party announced a new Power Potential Portal to help identify possible sources of electricity. The government's announcement called the portal an early planning step. It also confirmed that this is not a call for power, not a commitment to purchase electricity, and not a guarantee that any project will receive funding.

Early planning is what you would expect at the beginning of a government's mandate. But the Yukon Party has been warning Yukoners about electricity shortages and the risk of rolling blackouts for a year now. Yukoners are worried. They expect action, not early planning steps or a "portal", which is a fancy word for an online form.

Does the Yukon Party really believe that launching an online form is the action Yukoners have been waiting for?

Hon. Ted Laking: It's very exciting to see that the Official Opposition is finally interested in energy planning. Of course, they propped up the previous government that didn't believe in energy planning, which has led us to the situation that we're in now.

The Power Potential Portal that we launched yesterday is actually really exciting news, and it's going to help us as we move forward as a territory to secure our energy future. It will look at projects of all scopes, all sizes. It will look at whether it's just the concept or if it has a feasibility stage, and we'll be able to then take those projects, move them into our planning process, and then start to look at how we could either advance a partnership or advance funding opportunities to support other energy generation opportunities. It will be looking at solving the major gap, which is winter reliable energy, so peak demand in the winter. But we also want to be looking at storage solutions as well.

I would expect that the member opposite is very supportive of this work, and I'm actually surprised to hear some criticism about it.

Lane Tredger: Developing an energy proposal takes a huge amount of time and money. First Nations, development corporations, businesses, and communities deserve to know what the government is looking for before they invest in creating a proposal.

The Yukon Party has said that proponents can provide details about their technology, location, cost, capacity, or stage of development, but they don't have to. It's optional. How will these proponents decide if it is worth putting time and money into those details?

The Yukon Party has not done its part to set clear expectations. They have not published any evaluation criteria, timelines, or how much they might be willing to pay for power. This leaves potential proponents to work completely in the dark.

Why is the Yukon Party asking proponents to invest time and money in proposals when they haven't done the work on their end to define a clear ask?

Hon. Ted Laking: Interesting choice of words by the member opposite, working completely in the dark, because that's what the territory would have been doing if the NDP had still had their hands on the wheel when it comes to energy policy in the territory. We're trying to move away from rolling blackouts, and we think that this is a good opportunity to go and identify energy projects that will support the territory, support our current needs, and support our growth.

Yes, we engaged with First Nation governments before we launched this publicly. We've offered capacity funding to support their involvement in this process. We want First Nation governments to be at the table, and I honestly think that the member opposite, rather than just responding in a partisan nature to this, would probably think that this is a good idea and very helpful for our future of energy in the territory.

Lane Tredger: The Yukon already had clear ways to seek new electricity projects and build energy partnerships. For example, the standing offer program led to most of our new projects in the last 10 years, like the Haeckel Hill Thäy T'äw wind farm and the North Klondike Highway solar project. Right now, that program is closed, but it could be reopened. The government could also issue a call for power. That's what the Yukon NDP committed to in our platform.

But instead, the Yukon Party has made an online form. The minister says it might eventually lead to a future call for power, which might eventually lead to actually getting new power. The Yukon needs action, not another planning stage before the real work begins.

Why is the Yukon Party starting another planning exercise instead of just moving forward with a call for power?

Hon. Ted Laking: There was no planning exercise previously. That's how we got into this situation. What we are moving forward with is the winter reliable energy plan. The Power Potential Portal will identify projects that help support the energy future of the territory. It will help us gather the information required to develop and launch a call for power.

We're very excited about this work, and when the member opposite talks about action, there's a significant amount underway. We talk about the work that's begun to stabilize the Wareham dam to prevent loss of 15 megawatts of clean energy up in the Mayo region. We talk about the early work that we've already begun on the Whitehorse Power Centres to ensure that we could double our capacity for our grid and give the territory enough energy for the future. Just earlier this week, we also launched new and exciting incentives for Peak Smart to help people get more money in their pockets and reduce their energy use. We launched the Dependable Grid program earlier this year that will also give people incentives. We also have doubled the affordability rebate to help Yukoners reduce the impacts on their family bills due to energy costs.

All of these things, Madam Speaker, have three things in common: (1) They put more money back in the pockets of

Yukoners; (2) our government brought them in; and (3) the NDP voted against them.

Question — Access to lawyers and legal aid

Carmen Gustafson: This week, CBC reported that the Law Society of Yukon lists only 12 family lawyers practising in the territory. Of those 12, only half live and work locally, and all of them are based in Whitehorse. Lawyers practising family law are at or overcapacity, and many can't take on new clients or may turn down more complex matters. The Law Society of Yukon's 2024 access to justice report makes it clear that Yukoners simply cannot find a family lawyer when they need one.

In addition to people across the territory struggling to get help with family law, they are also finding it challenging to hire a lawyer to represent them in civil matters and criminal cases. Even people who can afford a lawyer are often turned away because there are not enough lawyers available.

How is this government working with justice groups to find ways to increase access to justice in the Yukon and address the shortage of available legal representation?

Hon. Laura Lang: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for that question. It's a difficult question. It's an important question, and it's a question that we are grappling with across Canada.

This is not a Yukon problem, and I was thankful, actually, to recently meet with the Yukon Legal Services Society, which most Yukoners know as legal aid, and yes, they have been really struggling with finding lawyers to support specifically family law.

What was really great, though, is I got the great news that more lawyers have been hired. In fact, Yukon is a place where lawyers are looking to come to because of the type of experience that they can get. While I don't suggest for a moment that there are not challenges in recruitment, I can confirm that the problems that we have seen in recent years, for at least the Yukon — we are seeing some positive steps forward by the Legal Aid Society, and I thank them for bringing this very important issue to my attention and to the member opposite.

Carmen Gustafson: In the CBC article, a retired Chief Justice emphasized the highly traumatic nature of family law matters and the need to retain legal representation right away. Without a lawyer, these stressful matters may drag on for too long or Yukoners may not find resolution at all. It has been reported that half of all matters before the Yukon Supreme Court now involve someone without a lawyer, and in family law, 70 percent of Yukoners are left to represent themselves and navigate the system alone. These numbers represent Yukoners going through life-changing situations like separations, fighting for custody of their kids, determining who keeps a family home, or seeking protection orders.

What is this government doing to help Yukoners navigate the legal system and address the shortage of family lawyers in the Yukon so families are not left to face legal proceedings alone?

Hon. Laura Lang: Again, I agree; anybody who is accessing the justice system, no matter what their issue is, that is traumatic in itself, especially when you are working through issues related to — family and children are involved. I completely agree with the member opposite. I think I've already spoken quite well to the matter, recognizing that there are struggles across Canada right now to find lawyers who are able to fill the void right now and that we're lucky in the Yukon to see our territory as a destination people are looking to come to.

What is it that we're doing? Not only are we working with the Legal Aid Society to figure out what are additional solutions that we could imagine that we aren't currently working on, I can remind the member opposite that we also have a program called Family Court Workers. This program is something that has been developed through the Department of Justice, and it supports family law matters and includes working with First Nations, including individuals in the Yukon who don't have a family lawyer, and it includes just general assistance for any matter that is related to family law that people have questions about.

Again, Yukoners are being served well by our justice system, but there's always more work to be done, and I realize that it is a problem, and I am looking for creative solutions.

Carmen Gustafson: Legal aid provides an invaluable service to Yukoners going through the legal system. In the past, staffing shortages have meant they had to reduce family law services available to Yukoners.

There is also a widening gap between who qualifies for legal aid and who can actually afford a lawyer. In the Law Society of Yukon's 2024 access to justice report, more people are turning to legal aid, but also, more had to be turned away. It reported that applications refused due to financial ineligibility rose by 44 percent between 2016 and 2021. In the Yukon, an individual may only qualify for legal aid if they earn $27,000 a year or less. This leaves out many Yukoners who are unable to afford legal aid or a lawyer.

Will the minister commit to working with legal aid to explore and support the need for expanded eligibility criteria for legal aid services?

Hon. Laura Lang: Yes, that is exactly what I am doing. I just met with the Legal Aid Society. We went over exactly this problem, and I am thankful to see that the board's interest in looking at eligibility amounts is quite serious and quite committed to exploring higher thresholds. We will continue to do that work with the Legal Aid Society.

We will also continue to explore other potential programming options or alternatives. I just simply don't know about that. We'll see increased access to legal support as we learn. Other jurisdictions are also grappling with this issue, and they too are finding innovative ways to address this issue.

Again, I thank the member opposite for the question, and I can confirm we are aware and working on it.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Speaker's statement — Tabling documents read in debate

Speaker: Before we proceed to the Orders of the Day, the Chair has a few procedural matters to note.

First, I would like to clarify a ruling that I made yesterday. During debate on Motion No. 195, the Government House

Leader rose on a point of order regarding whether documents quoted in debate need to be tabled.

The Standing Orders only stipulate that documents that are required by law or order of the House must be tabled during the Daily Routine. It has, however, been the practice of this House for members to table documents when they are read in debate. This serves two functions: It ensures that Hansard will have access to the material being quoted to verify its proper transcription; and it provides other members access to the information. Depending on the nature of the tabled documents, they may or may not be entered into the archived working papers of the Assembly.

In 1941, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Hon. James Allison Glen, ruled: "… an honourable member is not entitled to read from communications unless prepared to place them on the Table of the House."

Here in the Yukon, on April 23, 2001, the Speaker, the Hon. Dennis Schneider, delivered a ruling to this House regarding quoting from and tabling personal correspondence. Some of the procedural authorities Speaker Schneider quoted have been updated since his ruling two decades ago. The latest edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* notes in chapter 13 — quote: "If a member quotes from private correspondence, they must take full responsibility for its contents." While an emphasis in the past was placed on verifying the origin and authenticity of quoted correspondence, in our modern world, members must be cognizant of the potential effects of sharing the opinions of private individuals in a public forum.

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair also wishes to inform the House of the following changes made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 192, standing in the name of the Member for Riverdale North, has been removed from the Order Paper, as it is similar to Motion No. 196, which was adopted by the House yesterday. Motion No. 146, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party, has been removed from the Order Paper, as it is now outdated. Finally, the motion that the Member for Porter Creek North gave notice of yesterday, Motion No. 200, was not placed on the Notice Paper, as the motion is not in order. Motion No. 200 urges the government to amend an act, but I will remind all members that it is this Assembly that has the power to change law. If a member would like to see an act amended, that member may introduce a bill or urge the government to introduce the amendments.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 6 — *Act to amend the Workers' Safety and Compensation Act (2026)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third Reading, Bill No. 6, standing in the name of the Hon. Laura Lang.

Hon. Laura Lang: I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to amend the Workers' Safety and Compensation Act (2026)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to amend the Workers' Safety and Compensation Act (2026)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Laura Lang: I would like to acknowledge there are a number of folks in the gallery who I think this bill is rather important to.

Bill No. 6 is rooted in a straightforward principle. Our workers' compensation system should recognize the risks that wildland forest firefighters take on every time they are called upon to protect our homes and communities. It is not enough to recognize that service with gratitude. Our legislation must reflect it.

At Second Reading, I spoke about why this change is needed. During Committee of the Whole, members had the opportunity to examine how the bill will work and asked important questions about its scope, its application, and its future. Today at Third Reading, the question before us is whether Bill No. 6 meets the need before us in a fair, practical, and lasting way. I believe it does.

I would like to take a moment to thank all members for their thoughtful yet minimal participation in that debate. The minimal debate helped clarify the purpose of this bill, and how its provisions will apply in practice is recognized by everyone in this House. That succinct debate clarified our shared understanding that firefighters who serve Yukon should be treated fairly and that the regulations intended to support them must stay responsive to emerging evidence and to the realities of their work.

Bill No. 6 advances both of those goals. Effective November 1, 2026, as a retroactive measure, it will extend the firefighter cancer presumption to wildland forest fighters. When a wildland forest firefighter is diagnosed with a listed cancer and meets the required period of service, their illness will be presumed to be work-related unless evidence shows otherwise. This is a focused change, and it will make a profound difference.

Wildland forest firefighters have always been able to apply for compensation when they develop cancer as a result of their work. Under the current legislation, however, they are asked to show the connection between their cancer and their employment. Bill No. 6 changes that requirement when the conditions of that presumption are met. It creates a more direct path through the claims process. It reduces red tape, and it eases the burden on firefighters and their families at a time when their attention should be on their health and on recovery.

Bill No. 6 also creates flexibility to update the regulations in the future, recognizing that firefighting is not a uniform job. Structural and wildland forest firefighters may face different working conditions, risks, and occupational exposures. The work may differ, the risks may differ, but as scientific and medical evidence evolves, our regulations should also evolve with it.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is also working with the International Association of Fire Fighters to advance cancer prevention. This work will equip firefighters with the knowledge and resources they need to reduce their exposure to carcinogens, because protecting firefighters means

more than providing support when cancer occurs; it also means doing everything we can to prevent it in the first place.

Bill No. 6 also protects firefighters when a cancer is added to the presumptive list in the future. An eligible firefighter who was diagnosed before that cancer was listed will have 12 months from the date it is added to apply under the presumption. The timing of a regulatory change should not close the door on a firefighter whose diagnosis came earlier. This provision ensures that door remains open.

These amendments are careful in their design and clear in their purpose. They respond to the need for immediate change while preparing responsibly for what may come next. Bill No. 6 also reflects a commitment made to the Yukon firefighting community and a commitment this government is proud to fulfill.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of this House for their questions, their considerations, and their contributions throughout the debate. I would also like to recognize the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for the expertise and care it brought to the development of these amendments. My thanks as well to the legislative drafters in the Department of Justice and to everyone whose work helped bring Bill No. 6 before this House. But most importantly, I would like to recognize Yukon's wildland forest firefighters. You step forward when our communities need you. You take on difficult work in dangerous conditions to protect our homes and our communities. Bill No. 6 ensures those risks are reflected in legislation. It ensures that your service is not only deeply appreciated but that the occupational risks you face are understood and acknowledged.

That is the purpose of Bill No. 6. That is the commitment reflected in the amendments to the legislation before us today, and that is why I am proud to ask all members of this House for their support.

Kate White: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the minister for her words. I'm especially grateful for all the folks in the gallery, because we've been here many times before and some not so happy, I'll note. I think about the first e-mail that I received from Nicholas O'Carroll, who asked if I could meet with him and Alex Forrest to talk about presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters. Then I think about the message I received from Kris Johnson, who told me about his family stories, wildland fire, and their cancer journey and how that all tied together. Did I know that wildland fire was excluded from the presumptive cancer coverage in our existing legislation? It's crazy to think that was five years ago, because it feels like a lifetime ago. For folks who have been on the front lines of wildland firefighting for years and decades, for them, it's much longer than the five years that I've been along.

I think about the lessons that the folks on the front of this have taught me. I think about the letters and e-mails from Lewis Cameron telling me that even when we got to this point, we were going to have to recognize that wildland firefighters would have different risks and really highlighted the example of skin cancer.

Then I think about sitting at a table for a YEU press conference on the importance of including wildland forest firefighters in presumptive cancer coverage and getting to sit next to Alex MacPhail, who has shared so much of what being a wildland firefighter means to him and the cost not just to him but to his family. Sitting at the table, I was lucky to sit next to Jim Regimbal, who was the fire chief in Dawson City, with structural fire, but after retirement couldn't sit back and really wanted to make sure that he was able to weigh in. I think about all of the support of the Whitehorse Fire Fighters Association, the IAFF local 2217, who told me that once we got the additional cancers across the line that they would not stop supporting their brothers and sisters in fire, and they didn't; they never walked away. I think about the leadership from the Yukon wildland fire. I think about Chad Thomas from Yukon First Nations Wildfire at the time, who shared his own cancer journey and what it meant not having that presumptive coverage. I think about Nick Mauro from First Nations Wildfire and all the support that has come from there.

Standing here right now, for me, it's just about the stories, and honestly, it's only been five years since I started talking to it, but it feels like a lifetime. I thank the minister for getting it across the line and the Premier for committing to this during the last election campaign, because we all recognize that this was the right thing to do — the important thing to do. I'll note that there's still going to be work to be done, but I know that with folks in the gallery who are willing to put the energy and their knowledge behind it, it will happen.

Really, what I want to say right now is I just want to say thank you. I want to say thank you to anyone who ever sent me an e-mail. That's what I was looking for. I was trying to go through my e-mails to figure out — I didn't want to miss anyone, and I'm sure I have. But I just want to say thank you: to the Yukon Employees' Union who made sure that this was top of mind; to the Whitehorse Fire Fighters Association for making sure that when they got what they needed, that they didn't stop there and they made sure that everybody would have that same access; to the wildland firefighters who constantly reached out and who would remind me about what it was, or next actions, or had I thought about trying to tackle it this way?

I'm grateful to be here, and I'm grateful in this Assembly that this is going to be a really easy one, because the last time we were trying to extend presumptive cancer, it got a bit spicy, but only because I want coverage for everyone in the fire community. Again, I say thank you for putting your time and energy in. For many of you, you might not have thought that we would ever get there, but here we are, and that's a pretty big deal.

Thanks to the minister and the department and the officials at workers' compensation. Thank you to the drafters. Like I said, there's going to be more work, but it's going to be small potatoes compared to what it took us to get here.

I look forward to this vote, and I thank everyone who's been there along the way and, you know, who will be there on the other side.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Laura Lang: I think we've said all that we need to say. I am thankful for the collaboration from across both sides of the floor; well done.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Currie Dixon: Agree.
Hon. Scott Kent: Agree.
Hon. Cory Bellmore: Agree.
Hon. Brad Cathers: Agree.
Hon. Linda Benoit: Agree.
Hon. Ted Laking: Agree.
Patti McLeod: Agree.
Hon. Laura Lang: Agree.
Hon. Jen Gehmair: Agree.
Hon. Wade Istchenko: Agree.
Adam Gerle: Agree.
Doris Anderson: Agree.
Tyler Porter: Agree.
Kate White: Agree.
Lane Tredger: Agree.
Brent McDonald: Agree.
Linda Moen: Agree.
Carmen Gustafson: Agree.
Justin Ziegler: Accord.

Clerk: Madam Speaker, the results are 19 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried and that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to amend the Workers' Safety and Compensation Act (2026)*, has passed this House.

Motion for Third Reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam Speaker, I move 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: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 11 — *Yukon Firearms Act — continued*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 11, entitled *Yukon Firearms Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 11, entitled *Yukon Firearms Act*.

Hon. Laura Lang: As I did yesterday, I would like to welcome my officials. To my right, I have Mark Radke, my Deputy Minister of Justice and the Deputy Attorney General. To my left, I have Drew MacNeil, the Director of Policy and Communications for the department.

Brent McDonald: I have a series of questions and hope to get some clarity. I would like to begin.

The Premier has described this bill as delivering on an election commitment. Can the minister point to anywhere in the Yukon Party 2025 platform that commits specifically to a firearms advocate position?

Hon. Laura Lang: I don't actually have the party platform from 2025 at hand, but I do have the Premier's mandate letter to me, which includes as an element of restoring public safety and keeping communities safe, one of the aspects that we agreed to do was to protect law-abiding firearms owners and ensure policing resources are focused on priority areas. We've done that with our policing resources, as seen recently in our two-year priority letter to the RCMP. We are also doing that through the establishment of this bill and based on the engagement we did over the summer, the application of an advocate had more support than it did not, and so we are proceeding with that role at this time.

Brent McDonald: The minister's spring 2026 briefing note on firearms, last updated, I believe, March 26, describes the government's status as exploring options. It doesn't mention an advocate.

When did the Cabinet first decide to create this office, and what analysis was it given at that time?

Hon. Laura Lang: I was pleased to see over the summer months the engagement that took place on our approach to this firearms legislation, and one of the aspects within that piece of engagement was whether or not an advocate was something that Yukoners thought was a reasonable approach to how we proceed in this area. More Yukoners than not agreed with that, and so that is what you are now seeing reflected in the bill.

Brent McDonald: Was a cost estimate prepared for Cabinet or Management Board before the bill was drafted, and if not, how was Cabinet able to approve a new office without one?

Hon. Laura Lang: I previously answered that question.

Brent McDonald: The minister has told Yukoners that no territorially funded RCMP resources would be used for the federal buyback compensation program.

Had the federal Government of Canada ever requested Yukon policing resources for that program?

Hon. Laura Lang: For the RCMP, there are two different streams of funding. One is the funds that come through the federal government that supports the RCMP. The second is the contracting resources that a jurisdiction provides. For us, the contracting resources come from the territorial government. Our contracting resources have not been used for this initiative and will not be used for this initiative, and the federal government

understands we will not be using those resources for this initiative. Federal resources have been used in Canada. They currently are not being used in the Yukon.

Brent McDonald: This past March 25, this House passed Motion No. 54, passing 14 yea and zero nay, calling for a northern carveout in relation to the federal firearm buyback program. I believe the three territorial justice ministers wrote jointly to the federal public safety minister.

What response has the Yukon received in regard to those communications, and would the minister table that correspondence?

Hon. Laura Lang: I would just like to go back. I misspoke, and I heard it as soon as I sat down. My last comment, I said federal resources are not being used. Federal resources were used. They are not currently being used in the territory.

In terms of the correspondence between the three jurisdictions to the federal government, I can confirm that we have not received a formal response by the Minister of Public Safety through the federal government.

Brent McDonald: Engagement for the advocate position ran for about five weeks from July until early August, right in the middle of the summer months. In a July 2 statement, the minister said: "There is limited time between now and when we anticipate tabling the firearms legislation this fall." Why was the timeline set by the government's own tabling date and not necessarily by the time Yukoners needed to respond?

Hon. Laura Lang: When we undertook this work, the federal government's amnesty period was set to expire this October. While that has been moved back to allow for the matter before the Supreme Court of Canada to be heard, we are moving forward with this legislation to create a framework to put a firearms advocate in place.

We also wanted to make sure that Yukoners' voice that we've been hearing over the last number of years has not only been listened to but that they're seeing signs that we are listening and respecting it and taking movement on it. Again, the way that we have established this firearms legislation, it's not only hearing from the engagement this summer but is reflective of what we've been hearing for years not just from Yukoners, but we're also seeing that trend across Canada. While the advocate is a unique position to the North, it is something reflective of bringing our voice in a much more considered fashion to those federal tables.

Brent McDonald: Has the minister received any formal responses from any First Nation government regarding the creation of an advocate position?

Hon. Laura Lang: As I have previously stated, we did meet at Yukon Forum with this as a subject and had conversations at that time. I also was pleased to have subsequent conversations with additional chiefs and we will continue to have those conversations in terms of not only how this legislation will be proceeding but also how we will be partnering between the territorial government and First Nation governments to bring Yukoners' voice to the federal government.

Brent McDonald: Does the minister know how much has been spent to date on the engagement, advertising, online platforms, the "what we heard" report, and staff time? How much money has been spent to date to bring this bill to where it stands today?

Hon. Laura Lang: While I don't have the numbers that the member opposite is asking for, I can confirm that staff time is not tracked from file to file. I know that to be true as a previous public servant and I also know to be true that often, when governments have priorities, the public service accommodates those initiatives within their existing resources.

Brent McDonald: On September 17, the minister and I think all of us welcomed the appointment of a northern chief firearms officer, especially one based in Whitehorse. That officer will be overseeing licensing, transfers, gun ranges, and delivery of the Canadian firearms safety course. Three weeks after that, date this bill was tabled.

Was this bill revised at all after this CFO was appointed?

Hon. Laura Lang: No.

Brent McDonald: This bill gives the advocate a role in promoting safety training and education. The new federal chief firearms officer, the Yukon Fish and Game Association, and certified instructors are already delivering that training.

Is there a specific gap the advocate would fill, or how will duplication of these services be avoided?

Hon. Laura Lang: To answer more specifically to the member opposite, this is a complementary role. When you look at both the Yukon fish and wildlife associations, when you look at the different businesses that put on PAL programs, when you look at the newly appointed chief firearms officer position, they all have a role within the firearms community and in the hunting community and in subsistence lifestyles, and part of what many of them do has some type of an educational component or a safety component, but they're all different pieces.

As the advocate is put into position, I suspect that their job will also be to really understand where is the best fit for the advocate, because again, the role of the advocate is different from those other organizations, whereas those organizations are largely giving something to the community in terms of putting on a PAL course or putting on a HEED course. While this position may be able to advertise and to bring attention to that, I wouldn't say that they are going to be delivering those programs when there are other organizations to do that.

Their job is to bring Yukon's experience and Yukoners' voice related to firearms to the federal government — to those national tables, and so I suspect that what we will see is that instead of duplication — which is not something at all that I am endorsing — we're going to see improved services and Yukon perspectives within that advocate role.

Similarly, as an example, the hunter education and ethics development course, which is put on by the Department of Environment — they do a great job of running this program. It is a free program available to Yukoners. It is primarily a course that is geared toward those looking to take up or refresh themselves on hunting practices.

Again, how can the advocate work with the program providers to ensure more Yukoners are aware of this program and to the point where there actually may be future opportunities between the advocate and the Department of

Environment to support the promotion of this program both throughout the territory, perhaps also in partnership with the Department of Education? I'm looking forward to seeing how this advocate can really bring things together to be more of that coordinating role and also hear that voice of Yukoners brought to those federal tables.

Brent McDonald: I understand the advocate will be appointed by the minister. Will this job position be publicly posted, and will there be a hiring committee?

Hon. Laura Lang: I am still working through that process.

Brent McDonald: The minister said the advocate will not be a public servant.

Could you explain who supervises the advocate and who would conduct any performance reviews?

Hon. Laura Lang: I have already answered that question, and it's me.

Brent McDonald: The minister has described the advocate office as being at arm's length.

Can she explain how an office is at arm's length when the minister appoints it, sets the salary and budget, receives its report, and can constrain it and remove it?

Hon. Laura Lang: This position is independent from the government, but it also is a position that is expected to be accountable as a key component of their role. Being independent and being accountable are not exclusive. They can work together, which is what this position will be doing.

Brent McDonald: Chair, we have other independent offices and officers currently, the Child and Youth Advocate and the Ombudsman, that are appointed and removed only on the recommendation of this Assembly, and the all-party Members' Services Board reviews their budgets.

Why was that model rejected for an office the government calls or describes as being independent?

Hon. Laura Lang: Those models were not appropriate for what it is that we are intending to do. Again, this role for the position is there to engage with the public and provide advice to the minister, which means that the actual role is far more constrained than what the member opposite has raised, such as the Child and Youth Advocate.

Brent McDonald: The minister's briefing note records that the Yukon Ombudsman recommended that funding for the Human Rights Commission be overseen directly by the Legislative Assembly rather than through the Department of Justice.

Why does Bill No. 11 adopt the very funding structure the Ombudsman has recommended against in another circumstance?

Hon. Laura Lang: The Human Rights Commission and the advocate are two different things with two different requirements.

Brent McDonald: I believe the minister stated in one of the last sessions that they are looking to potentially appoint an advocate in January.

Is this correct? If so, from which vote and program will the advocate be funded?

Hon. Laura Lang: I've already answered that.

Brent McDonald: Is there any concern this new position will add to deficit spending in the next budget cycle?

Hon. Laura Lang: No.

Brent McDonald: The government has launched a responsible spending initiative and asked departments to find savings.

What existing program will be absorbed or be reduced to help pay for this office?

Hon. Laura Lang: I've already answered that question.

Brent McDonald: In her statement opposing the federal firearms program, the minister said limited policing resources should be devoted to improving police services and social supports for Yukoners and targeting criminals and organized crime. The firearms advocate is not a police service. It's not a social support and will not target criminals or organized crime.

By the minister's own test, why is this office a better use of limited financial resources than diverting it to any of those mentioned?

Hon. Laura Lang: As governments do, there are often multiple priorities that are being worked on. Simply, we can have more than one priority.

We do strongly value the RCMP and we've demonstrated that through the 10 positions that were provided in the 2026-27 budget, and we will continue to provide supports to the RCMP. Similarly, we have provided supports to social services and social servicing agencies, and we will continue to provide that.

We are also committed to supporting a commitment we made pre-2025 election, and we are committed to bringing the voices of Yukoners to the federal government in a different way than we have done to date. Again, we have multiple priorities that we are working on, and I'm proud to see the work that my colleagues are endeavouring to bring to fruition for Yukoners.

Brent McDonald: Our Premier can communicate with the Prime Minister and the federal minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs.

Our Minister of Justice has two federal counterparts on this file: the Public Safety minister, who runs the compensation program, and the Justice minister. Our Minister of the Environment can raise hunting and harvesting impacts with the federal environment minister, and this House has spoken in a motion with 14 to zero in support. None of that has changed federal policy.

What outcome does the minister expect from an appointee that she and the Premier cannot achieve?

Hon. Laura Lang: A multi-pronged approach is always a good thing, and that is what we have taken on this particular initiative. The advocate is going to bring an additional voice of influence, as I've already said many times in this House. Different voices must be heard at different tables. Having our northern perspective heard in multiple arenas is the driver behind what it is that we're trying to achieve on this poorly developed federal program. We all have a role and various types of influence, as I just said. I believe that Yukoners are expecting us to see how is it that you can bring a different perspective, a different lens, a different voice to an issue that is causing such distress.

Not only is this good for the Yukon, it's good for the North. We are elevating the northern voice in a way that the program as designed didn't consider. It considered problems in jurisdictions that are not the problems that we know to be true here in the Yukon or the North. We're looking forward through our multiple different channels to help the federal government include a northern lens when they are developing programs.

Brent McDonald: Does the minister view the advocate position as a higher priority for spending than extra health professionals to help keep rural medical stations open?

Hon. Laura Lang: As I've already said, our government can have more than one priority, which it does.

Brent McDonald: Does the minister view this position as a higher priority than more support for youth and adult mental health programs?

Hon. Laura Lang: I believe that is a repetitive question.

It's changing out the audience, and as I've already said, our government can have multiple priorities.

Brent McDonald: Does the minister view this position as a higher priority than trades teachers and other educational supports in rural schools?

Hon. Laura Lang: I've answered the question.

Brent McDonald: Does the minister view the advocate position as a higher priority than offering increased supports for affordability in programs such as, for example, electrical rebates?

Hon. Laura Lang: I've already answered the question.

Kate White: Thank you for the opportunity to come back for some of the questions.

I left off yesterday — I think it was yesterday — asking about gifts and trips, and I believe that I can't go to Hansard right now to just confirm. The minister has been clear that the expectation is that they are not travelling outside of Canada, and I was trying to get a sense on how travel would be communicated, for example, if there had been an invitation to attend something with the cost covered. I think the minister talked about reporting in section 8(3), but I'm trying to get a sense of how that will work. If the advocate is invited to attend trade shows or conferences, and travel is offered to be covered, I think the minister indicated that it would be her decision, but how will that work?

Hon. Laura Lang: Duties will be outlined in the job description, including expectations on travel and gifts.

Kate White: Will the advocate have to make a declaration of gifts received or anything similar? Gifts, trips, sponsorship, any of those things, will that have to be publicly declared?

Hon. Laura Lang: In addition to section 9 regarding conflict of interest, the advocate will be expected to provide a summary of their activities in the annual report.

Kate White: I appreciate that. But in previous things, we were having discussions, and I can't go back to look at the Hansard from yesterday. But my understanding was the minister would be able to have the final say if there was an invitation with a trip that was all expenses paid, and I'm just looking for clarification if I'm remembering that correctly.

Hon. Laura Lang: I believe I did answer this yesterday, but again, this will be addressed at the time of contracting and will be described in the contract.

Kate White: I thank the minister for the reminder. Without having that access, it's hard to remember what part of the conversations happened.

When considering the firearms act, was there any jurisdictional scan looking at the links between suicide rates and access to firearms — and I mean specifically restriction of access to the means used for suicide? For example, there's a *The Lancet Public Health* document that talks about the link between firearms access and suicide.

In the work of developing this, was there any jurisdictional scan or any looking for information of suicide and firearms access?

Hon. Laura Lang: Look, I think when it comes to the question on suicide, on mental health, we are all extremely sensitive to the reality of that for Canadians, including the higher risk that can happen when firearms are within the vicinity of individuals who are struggling with their mental health and have suicidal ideations. That is something both as the Minister of Justice as well as the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate — those are thoughts that go through my mind on a very regular basis.

For the purpose of this actual bill, when we developed it, I will refer to question 3 of the "what we heard" document, and the question said, "What should the advocate prioritize if given a budget to support related programming in the territory?" One of the answers included support for mental health services and suicide and domestic violence prevention.

What I have heard repeatedly by Yukoners who are both active within the subsistence, living off the land, hunting, sports shooting, trapping world — what I've heard regularly is that there has to be increased education around safe storage of firearms and the reality that there are times where sometimes maybe people don't adhere to those safe storages. We have to be always improving ourselves. We always have to be looking at ways that we can bring attention to these very sensitive, intimate issues like suicide, like mental health, and I was proud to hear the voices of so many in the firearms community recognizing this.

Again, the purpose of this bill is about an advocate to a federal program. That is what I would suspect the leading component of their job will be, but that does not prevent work on the educational side that equally focuses on suicide prevention and mental health, and I look forward to hearing from more Yukoners in this area.

Kate White: The minister has indicated before that this firearms advocate will work for all Yukoners, and my colleague just asked questions about the hiring. We've asked about, for example, whether there would be requirements for the job.

I actually have a question to go a bit deeper. I'm wondering what level of vetting will happen for that person if they're working for all Yukoners. I think that's a pretty important thing,

and so I just want to know what expectation Yukoners can have about the level of vetting.

Hon. Laura Lang: As I've previously said, details are still being worked out, but, of course, I am confident that the appropriate level of vetting will be occurring.

Kate White: I note that when there was a press conference, the minister was joined by people at the table.

Was there vetting involved with the folks at the table?

Hon. Laura Lang: In terms of the individuals that were sitting with me at the table during my press conference, to my left was Mr. Eric Schroff, and to my right was Ian Davis, two individuals that I do hold in high regard.

Kate White: In the photo that was shared in the *Yukon News*, is the minister familiar with any of the positions folks in that photo have taken in public forums?

Hon. Laura Lang: At that time, I was not familiar.

Kate White: That makes it sound like maybe there's knowledge now that didn't exist before, and I can leave it at that.

But when we talk about a position that represents all Yukoners, this is why vetting matters, because a Muslim firearm owner should be able to access the advocate, and a female firearm owner should be able to access the advocate, and people should feel safe while accessing the advocate. I just want to put here that it really matters who gets put in this position. This is critical, and I have lots of questions about what that will look like going forward.

But I will say here again, it is absolutely imperative that the person who gets put in this role by this minister is someone who is safe for all Yukoners, whether they be women, racialized people, people with disability, people who are Muslim or are not Christian and have other faiths. It is critical for that.

Can I just get the assurance that this person in this role that is going to be appointed by the minister — that there will be a deep vetting process to ensure that they are safe for any Yukoner who may access their support?

Hon. Laura Lang: I applaud the member opposite. I appreciate her passion for the importance of this position, and I could not agree more with what has just been said. Absolutely is my answer.

Kate White: I appreciate that response and that assertion from the minister.

Understanding that — and I appreciate that the minister has said if this bill passes, and it's clear it's going to pass, and the minister has talked about putting out the job description or what that process is going to look like on the other side. Will the minister commit to tabling the job description for the Yukon firearms advocate once it is completed?

Hon. Laura Lang: Chair, with respect, that is not normal practice. No, I will not be tabling the job description.

Kate White: I'll note that I will go through the Hansard Committee of the Whole when we're done, but we've been told about the unique position, the uniqueness of the North and the northern way of life. We have talked about how this position doesn't exist anywhere else, how this position is going to be able to sit at tables where the minister herself is not able to, where the Premier doesn't sit, where the Minister of Environment doesn't sit.

I have received, in the time that we're sitting here today, multiple outreaches from Yukoners asking about that job description and making it other than just publicly available. Again, I'll note that it's quite possible that it doesn't go to a listed position. It can be just an appointment, and so Yukoners want to know what that job will do, what is in that description, including whether or not it's sponsorships and gifts and trips, including what the expectation is, whether it's travel just within Canada, whether it's just travel, for example, to Ottawa, because of the federal gun legislation. It's a fair question, and right now, it is coming directly from Yukoners.

Can the minister tell Yukoners why they won't have access to what this job is supposed to do?

Hon. Laura Lang: The duties are outlined in the act for interested Yukoners. There will be an annual report tabled in the Legislative Assembly, and I believe that we have gone into a lot of discussion around many different aspects of questions related to the position, including gifts and travel. The process for how we will be hiring the individual, as well as the application, is still being worked out. I have already conveyed that, but once that is finalized, there will be public communication for interested Yukoners, and if there's any confusion or people are needing additional details, of course, I'm happy to answer questions from Yukoners.

Kate White: That was a question directly from a Yukoner. The reason why I think we're trying to get a sense of what this position does is because of the many different understandings of what this position is.

I'll note that there's an October 10, 2026 article on thegunblog.ca entitled "Yukon to Name 'Firearms Advocate' as Blowback Mounts Against Federal Liberal Attacks on Gun Owners". I'm just going to quote from this, and this is how come I'm trying to get a sense of what this position does. It says, "World's First Stand-Alone Gun-Rights Advocate.

"The Yukon Firearms Act, the draft law submitted to the territory's Legislative Assembly that day, aims to create a stand-alone government-appointed advocate to support gun owners, advise the government, and educate the public about firearms and gun policy."

Deputy Chair, I'll note that this person thinks that there's an education component. I'll leave that there. I'll keep going. "TheGunblog.ca couldn't find any equivalent role anywhere else in the world.

"Unlike Alberta and Saskatchewan, which included gun-rights advocacy among the duties of the provincially appointed Chief Firearms Officer (CFO) and the Firearms Commissioner, the Yukon Firearms Advocate won't be the CFO or a public servant, and won't make policy or enforce laws."

Here's another thought. This is another person trying to figure out what it is, and so the job posting, the expectations, the duties — this all falls in the same thing. The minister has said that it will be publicly available — hasn't indicated if it will be a hiring or an appointing, but I will say Yukoners want to know — I'll just leave that there. Yukoners want to know what this position is. If the minister can't tell us today, I

appreciate that, but they do want to know what it means and what it is going forward.

Hon. Laura Lang: Was there a question?

Kate White: There wasn't; there was a statement, but I'll make the question again.

Will the minister commit to making sure that the duties and responsibilities of the Yukon firearms advocate are made public?

Hon. Laura Lang: They are being made public through section 3 of this bill, including paragraph 3(1)d, which states: "… promoting public safety respecting firearms, including by providing, or facilitating the provision of, education respecting firearms use, ownership and possession."

Carmen Gustafson: I'm sorry to continue on this questioning. I've just been listening to the questions and the answers, and I'm afraid I still need some clarification. The minister talked about creating a job description and talked about contracting and that the actual duties of the advocate would be set out in a job description or a contract, which could potentially constrain the role of the advocate.

Could the minister clarify whether, under this legislation, she has the power to create a job description or a contract that's different than the powers or that constrains the powers that are in the legislation?

Hon. Laura Lang: I appreciate that, by virtue of some of the words that I'm using, I could be adding to confusion, and that is not at all my intent.

The fact is that what the duties are, having been outlined in section 3 of the bill, the details of focus of the position are what will be sorted out once this bill does pass. Whether that is a job description, whether or not that is a contract, whether it's an expression of interest, I don't know — I have to get there.

We've done this very fast. I applaud the speed with which the Department of Justice has been able to bring this together, and I applaud the efforts by Yukoners to bring their voices to this matter.

Again, the duties will be consistent with the legislation.

Carmen Gustafson: I won't go back and quote to the minister that several times she has responded saying that there would be a job description that would address these things or it would be through contract, but that has come up.

On the safety training earlier today, our colleague the Member for Klondike asked about the advocate's role with respect to delivering safety training, and my understanding of the minister's response was that they would not be delivering safety training and that would be in a job description. But now I understand that we're going back to the role as it's described in the act, which at paragraph 3(1)d, says that one of the functions of the advocate is "… promoting public safety respecting firearms, including by providing, or facilitating the provision of, education respecting firearms use, ownership and possession."

Could the minister just clarify whether the "what we heard" document indicated that firearm safety was an important priority for Yukoners with respect to this role? Could the minister just clarify whether the advocate will be delivering or facilitating education or training or whether they will not be?

Hon. Laura Lang: As I've previously said, there is no intention to duplicate what already exists, but instead, the intention is to address gaps where gaps are identified as needing attention. As I think that through, an example could be working with the chief firearms officer to create opportunities to improve the provision of PAL courses, for example, in rural communities. As I know, that is something that is of great interest and a priority for the federal government. There is a keen desire to see our rural representation of PAL holders increase.

As I think this through, based on what the Member for Takhini noted, who it is that fills this position is going to be very important, because they too are going to bring their own experiences and their own perspectives, which will also shape how we roll this program out or this position out. Again, I couldn't agree more with the member opposite's statement about who we choose for this role is going to be very important. Again, I look forward to learning and harnessing that expertise that the individual brings, and that includes how partnerships are also developed and harnessed to see better outcomes for Yukoners in the world of firearms both locally but also at the federal tables.

Justin Ziegler: I just wanted to see if the minister had an update regarding my questions about the differences between the French and the English version. She mentioned earlier this week, I believe, that she would get back to legal counsel and ask about these differences. I was wondering if the minister had an update.

Hon. Laura Lang: Thank you to the member opposite for returning to that question, and I appreciated, as I said in my comments earlier, his concerns being raised in terms of the alignment between the French and the English version of Bill No. 11.

As I committed to do on Monday, November 2, I did request the Legislative Counsel Office to review the concerns raised. The original drafting of French section 8(1) was technically correct. However, I also recognize that this is an opportunity to improve the clarity of the sentence structure. Sentences can always be improved. As I hear myself speak, I'm always thinking, "Oh, shoot, I should have said it differently." I appreciate there's always ways that we can work to ensure all people have access to the intent of the sentence.

For that reason, I am going to be proposing that during line-by-line, we make a friendly amendment that adjusts a technical difference instead of the potential use of the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act.*

I would like to specifically acknowledge the legislative office team who have placed considerable reflection on how to improve something that was technically correct. Again, their advice to me and my colleagues is respected, and I appreciate the member opposite for bringing up the question.

Linda Moen: I have some questions for the minister and her officials, and I did allude to this previously. I'm going to be careful on how I word this, because I think this is extremely important for the various hats that the minister wears, especially when it goes to the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. I know that the department funds a lot of those NGOs, and a lot of those NGOs, using the minister's words, deal with very sensitive issues that pertain to all Yukoners around safety for women and girls.

When I look at what this bill aims to do, as the official critic for those, I think there's money that could be placed otherwise and have higher priorities. I know the minister will probably mention that she's discussed this and they can have a multi-pronged approach. But she's the minister responsible for both those portfolios and both those files.

I see that there are very conflicting issues that affect probably more Yukoners than what the firearms legislation is showing. I would like to see what her response is on that.

Hon. Laura Lang: Respectfully, I didn't quite hear the question, but if the question is: as the Minister of Justice and as the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, do I see a conflict? Respectfully, I don't see the conflict. If anything, what I see is empowerment to both of my portfolios.

I see justice taking efforts to not only support the issues that are being raised for women and gender equity but me as the minister being able to bring a different voice to those files within the Justice department and then vice versa. I'm actually seeing greater collaboration and consideration, particularly on the files related to violence, to both gender-based violence or intimate-partner violence, to how our systems work both through Victim Services, through probation, through our advocacy to the federal government on bail reform.

Overarchingly, I could go on for a very long time on this. I actually see this as a very strong decision that our Premier made to make me responsible for both of these, and I expect that we will only continue to see positive advancements, including when I think through the federal funding that's coming through the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. I will be bringing both of those lenses to that opportunity with the federal government to allocate funds in a way that I am going to be asking for tangible demonstration of impact.

While we have a history of programs and services that are quite rich within the territory, I also know there's a lot of gaps. I know there's a lot of areas that we need to improve, and that is what I'm looking forward to working on with both of these departments as well as with my colleagues across the floor and then, of course, community members and Yukoners themselves. Again, I do see this as a benefit to Yukoners, and if the member opposite disagrees, I look forward to hearing that.

Linda Moen: Can the minister tell me how many women's organizations or groups that she met with in person?

Hon. Laura Lang: As it relates to this particular file, I ensured that all organizations knew they had the ability to engage directly with me. One organization chose to engage directly with me. I have met with all organizations, women-serving organizations in the Yukon, and I am pleased to note that we've talked about many different issues up until even just last week. I was meeting with an organization I've met with multiple times, and this has not been a priority for them to speak to during the time that we've had together.

But I would like to take an opportunity to talk about how I as the minister am considering the views of women's organizations as it relates to this particular bill. Not only did I as the minister take that particular perspective very seriously, which was then expressed to my colleagues within both departments to seek advice from both Women and Gender Equity as well as the Department of Justice, but I also took time to understand what are the programs and services that are already being provided in the Yukon not just for my understanding for this bill but also as we're going forward in how we're addressing other files that I am responsible for.

During the engagement on this particular bill, it included a number of responses raising concerns around victims of firearms violence and about the concerns of having firearms present in homes where there is intimate-partner violence. The Department of Justice, as I've already alluded to, does take that extremely seriously, as do I, as we do, I think, as Yukoners. This includes the well-being of victims of violent crimes and/or victims of gender-based or intimate-partner violence.

I have already alluded to the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. It has been in place for a number of years, and I'm thankful to the federal government for renewing those funds. As ministers responsible for women and gender equity, we met recently at the status of women meeting. I was pleased to see the advocacy that we have been quite diligent on with our federal partners result in additional funds for this funding stream.

I would like to just talk about a few things that are underway through the Department of Justice. For example, the Department of Justice is funding community organizations to provide transportation for victims of violence, to provide safer inter-community transportation options and financial support when leaving their home communities to seek safety and/or access clinical, legal, or other critical services. That is the purpose of that transportation. Our department is also developing a coordinated process team for high-risk intimate-partner violence cases, and this initiative is focused on a collaborative approach to identifying, assessing, and intervening in high-risk circumstances to prevent the lethality in cases of intimate-partner violence.

All to say, my mind is in multiple areas with great consideration, and I appreciate the member opposite's questions. They are very reasonable questions, and for the purpose of the actual bill, the role of what this advocate will be doing is specifically targeted at a federal program. But that doesn't mean that hearing voices of women's organizations is off the table. I've been very clear that I'm looking forward to hearing diverse perspectives from Yukoners in general for the advocate and that I also expect that as we move forward, I am considering both the purpose of this bill and the function of the advocate in parallel with my other responsibilities both within the Department of Justice but also as the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate.

Linda Moen: I think it's really important that the minister just really laid out exactly what I was saying about the conflict in the priorities on ongoing women's issues that are still being impacted — exactly what she just laid out on the violence that is occurring daily that we hear. Not only do we hear about it, we see it, and we know the impacts that happen not just here in Whitehorse but in our rural communities. I brought up numerous times in Question Period about some of those very issues and got very vague answers. Interesting that yes, I do agree. Her mind is probably in multiple areas, and that's why I said you're conflicted with the priorities of what's most

important. Is it the safety of women and girls in the Yukon? That could probably not only advance the issues here that women and girls face but probably could use a women's advocate at the federal level because of the very high rates of domestic violence that we continue to see and are on the increase.

I would like the minister's thoughts on that, please.

Hon. Laura Lang: I didn't actually understand what the question was. If the member opposite could please clarify.

Linda Moen: Again, with the high rates of domestic violence that we see across the North not just here in the Yukon but in Nunavut and Northwest Territories, Deputy Chair, would it not make sense for the priorities to have a women's advocate to address those very high numbers that continue to grow?

Hon. Laura Lang: Thank you, Deputy Chair, and I agree.

The domestic violence rates, both in the Yukon but also across the North, are shocking, and that is why I am working very hard with my colleagues in Nunavut and Northwest Territories to come up with solutions that will address that.

But today we're here to debate the bill which is about a federal program, and so with respect, I look forward to having these conversations presented to me in Question Period, and, of course, I'm always happy to have those conversations offline if that would be of help to the member opposite.

Linda Moen: I would rather have the conversation here and on record for all Yukoners to hear, especially women's organizations that deal with these very impactful situations each and every day, Deputy Chair.

Just to continue on that thread, again raising the issues of conflict and priorities, I'm glad to hear that there is work being done, but specifically, she said she was meeting with women's organizations. But I want to know if she specifically met with them to discuss the impacts of Bill No. 8 specifically on the firearms advocate.

Hon. Laura Lang: I believe the member opposite spoke to Bill No. 8, but I actually think what was meant was Bill No. 11, which is the firearms advocate bill.

As I previously stated, I can confirm that women's organizations were invited to engage directly with me, and on this particular issue, one organization confirmed, and I did meet with them.

Linda Moen: Thank you, Deputy Chair, and thank you for the correction. Yes, Bill No. 11.

Can the minister tell me if she was concerned at the lack of engagement from women's organizations when again, as Minister of Justice, she knows exactly what kind of issues that women's organizations are dealing with?

Hon. Laura Lang: No, I'm not concerned.

I meet with the women's organizations on a fairly regular schedule, as does the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. I have an open relationship in hearing any concerns that they do have. I have very significant relationships with my northern counterparts on issues not just for women but for any northerner that is experiencing a violent situation. In terms of access to me and access to that particular area of my portfolio, I feel pretty comfortable in what I'm hearing and receiving.

Again, I remind us that the purpose of this bill is to address a federal program that has been put in place that has not included a northern consideration, did not consider consultation with the North, is specifically harming our northern way of existence, including our subsistence hunting, our safety on the land, and our northern culture.

While I absolutely sincerely respect the member opposite's concerns regarding what it is that we see in the North regarding domestic violence — I completely agree — but what it is we're talking about is something that is attributed to a federal program, and I'm able to see these files differently and proceed with an informed perspective.

Linda Moen: I'm very happy to hear about the ongoing relationships that she has with women's organizations here in Whitehorse. But I would just like to remind the Committee of the Whole that this work is long ongoing. These issues have not diminished. The numbers have not gone down. If anything, the numbers have increased, especially when it's violence with guns. I read this when this bill was first introduced. I had to say out loud the very grim statistics that women and girls continue to face at the hands of guns and having an advocate in the Yukon. Again, I don't see how it benefits women's organizations.

Going back to 2015, I negotiated a protocol that still stands today with the RCMP on the very thing to keep women and girls safe here in Whitehorse. I think it's highly important that this is decades of work that I have personally done and that I have championed here in the Yukon.

When I look at it as having an advocate — and again, I ask the minister how she is going to prioritize wearing different hats as a minister.

I could see where for me, as somebody standing here as an advocate on women and girls' safety issues, why I see that there is a big conflict here, and I would like to know how she is going to deal with that internal conflict if a women's organization goes to that advocate and says that they don't want guns, they don't want the promotion of guns.

Hon. Laura Lang: I do believe I've already answered this question, and as a reminder, the advocate is absolutely able to engage with all organizations, and that includes women-led organizations.

Linda Moen: All right, going on to my other hat as critic for Public Service Commission.

Can the minister explain how the classification process is going to go through this? Normally, when public service has a new position — because this deviates from the public service — a public service job goes through a classification process and, through that, is based on essential qualifications, education.

Can the minister explain how this position not only deviates from the public service in that as a classification but how it will be remunerated based on essential qualifications?

Hon. Laura Lang: As a reminder to all of us, the classification process that's applied through the Public Service Commission does not apply to this position, and I have also previously answered this question. But again, I will remind us that remuneration for the advocate will be clearly and transparently established in a ministerial order and published in the Yukon Gazette.

Linda Moen: Just to be clear, Deputy Chair, that there is no basis for a level of education that usually is equated to a remuneration or classification in different levels, especially when you get into senior leadership. Again, if the minister can explain that — I guess in fairness to others that work within the departments who have education degrees, master's — their education is remunerated based on that.

If you're looking at somebody advocating at a very high senior level, how are they going to come up with that dollar amount to remunerate them?

Hon. Laura Lang: Again, as a reminder, this is not a public servant position. The public servant classification is a process that is established within the public service. I have also previously answered questions related to remuneration as well as qualifications. Again, there's more to come on what this position will be, and I look forward to providing Yukoners with that information.

Linda Moen: In the "what we heard" report, it said there's strong support for more educational opportunities. Can the minister tell me if they consulted with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals?

Hon. Laura Lang: As a specific body, as it relates to this bill, no, I did not, as I do not see that as necessary.

Linda Moen: But it did come up in the "what we heard" report. Again, if she can expand on that — I don't know how they're going to provide youth opportunities in the school curriculum. It's interesting that she did not, but it's here in the "what we heard" report.

If she can please explain that or clarify that for me.

Hon. Laura Lang: I remind us that the "what we heard" report is exactly that. It's a report on people's opinions that we used to inform what the bill was going to include. It was fascinating to hear the importance of education, and as we go forward in the development of this position, I suspect that if we so choose to highlight education as an area of focus, then at that time, the advocate would be engaging with not only the Department of Education and the Minister of Education but also within the educational community, including the Yukon — I've forgotten the name of the organization — but any organizations related to education.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair: Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come back to order.

Is there any further debate on Bill No. 11?

Linda Moen: Deputy Chair, just to continue on when I was asking about education from the "what we heard" report, I find it interesting that sometimes the minister does refer to the report, but then other times when I brought it up about education and quoted from the report, which I have in my hand, it's varied answers.

I'll continue on a different stream. With this, now it's a contract — it's not a position. We understand that it deviates from the public service in regard to classification and remuneration and education, which I think is highly important, because we do want a skilled, educated person that's going to represent all Yukoners.

With this contract, if the minister can explain from what I'm gathering right now are ever-changing duties — she hasn't laid out the priorities or the duties — now it's a contract. We know it's not a public service position, but if she can maybe lay out how they're going to deal with priorities in the contract. As we're bringing up issues, she's mentioned they haven't gotten that far, but she can see the amount of questions and concerns that we're bringing on behalf of Yukoners — that this list has gotten longer.

Usually in contracting, it's in the scope of work, what the deliverables are, and that's usually with the remuneration as well.

If the minister can tell me how they're going to deal with changing priorities in regard to a contract, remuneration amount, and how is that going to be reported back to Yukoners as those priorities change and most likely the amount of the contract would change as well?

Hon. Laura Lang: I believe I have answered this question multiple times. But again, the way the office is to be established is outlined in section 2(1). The duties are laid out in section 3. The question about remuneration has already been answered.

Linda Moen: I think I was quite clear asking: As that scope of work changes, how is her department going to deal with it with increased costs?

Hon. Laura Lang: I'm repeating myself again. The advocate's operational budget will need to be developed in parallel with finalizing more detailed implementation planning and priority-setting for the advocate, as the two will need to align.

If this bill does pass, Members of the Legislative Assembly can expect to be discussing the budget for its implementation in next year's budget to be tabled in spring 2027, and debate on the implementation budget would be more constructive at that time.

Linda Moen: Just going back to the minister's own words that she said that this position would evolve, that's what I think Yukoners would be most interested in, is that as those roles and responsibilities change, if I was a contractor, I want to be remunerated for those changes in a contract. I would not be taking on additional roles and responsibilities that deviate outside my contract.

Again, I'm asking the minister: How will her department deal with those changes as they come along? Is it reported to the Assembly? She did mention an annual report, but to me, that does not suffice. If it's going on, if it changes month by month, I think that not only this Assembly but Yukoners should be aware of those increased costs.

Hon. Laura Lang: I'm not clear why the member opposite is suggesting that this role will be expanding. That is not something that I've alluded to and, in fact, what I have said is that this role will be appropriately scoped at the outset, and that goes with the necessary remuneration. I've also said that priorities will be set during that time, and I've also confirmed, as the bill has outlined, that the advocate will be required to present an annual report to the Legislative Assembly.

Linda Moen: Thank you for that clarification. I'm going to be careful how I word this. Can the minister confirm if the Yukon Employees' Union has been contacted about this contract position that role and responsibility may take away from what public servants already offer?

Hon. Laura Lang: As I've already said, the position is not part of the public service. So, no, the employee union has not been consulted with. It does not take away from a position currently within the Government of Yukon and, in fact, the position, as I've already said, is to provide advice to me, the Minister of Justice, which is why it is a ministerial appointment.

Linda Moen: But again, going back from what we heard about education and training and safety initiatives, we know that the Department of Conservation already offers some of those through PAL training and the HEED courses that students who may be going on, say, a bison hunt are obligated and it's mandatory for them to take that. If the minister can explain what this role would do above and beyond that and it's not taking away from any role and responsibility that public servants already do on behalf of Yukoners, I would be very interested to hear that.

Hon. Laura Lang: There seems to be some confusion about what the point of this bill is. I'm actually reflecting back on words that I previously spoke in the Assembly. Again, I say supporting lawful Yukon firearms owners is a key mandate commitment of the Government of Yukon. We have consistently opposed the federal Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program and the related federal provisions targeting responsible firearms owners. Yukoners, including members of Yukon First Nations exercising their subsistence rights, hunters, outfitters, and sport shooters face the brunt of this federal program.

When I think about what the member opposite has asked, it's a very specific detail about what the advocate could potentially do, could potentially focus in on, and that is related to an educational component for which we heard during our engagement, for which the report and the "what we heard" document were produced.

In fairness to the Assembly and to me, I believe I've answered this question in detail. I've given you a bit more of the previous material that I've already spoken to, and I don't believe I need to provide any more time for this House on this question.

Linda Moen: I disagree — this is what we're here for. We're here to flesh out what this bill is, what the impacts are, what our questions and concerns are on behalf of not only our constituents but of all Yukoners and specifically related to my critic roles — that's why we're here. We're here to have questions and we're here to have answers.

Part of "what we heard" is supposed to be a guiding document that the minister takes into consideration — what Yukoners are telling them. This was put on by their department, so this is what they heard. I'm asking questions about what's in the report. That's what we're doing here today.

Can the minister guarantee me then that there is no overlap in any role and responsibility that a public servant provides already?

Hon. Laura Lang: I've answered that question.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further debate on Bill No. 11, entitled *Yukon Firearms Act*?

Seeing none, we'll move to clause-by-clause.

On clause 1

Deputy Chair: Is there any debate on clause 1?

Justin Ziegler: I have a question about the definition: "chief firearms officer" being the French version, "défenseur des droits relatifs aux armes à feu". Is the minister going to present any amendment on this definition?

Hon. Laura Lang: No, I'm not.

Justin Ziegler: What is the meaning of the two titles?

Hon. Laura Lang: The draft bill uses the expression "défenseur des droits relatifs aux armes à feu" as a French equivalent of "firearms advocate". The use of les "droits" within the expression conveys the intended meaning. The lack of "droits" in similar titles, for example, "défenseur de l'enfance et de la jeunesse", or the Child and Youth Advocate, is because the positions are for a "défenseur" of specified classes of individuals, whereas the advocate's role is advocating on behalf of a specified class of interest. Conveying that meaning in French results in the use of the expression les "droits".

Justin Ziegler: Does this definition imply — what is the difference between children advocate and firearms advocate, and why are their titles different?

Hon. Laura Lang: I believe I've answered that.

Justin Ziegler: Does the minister have concerns that the French title, including the words "défenseur des droits", can create some confusion and can create a precedent that was not intended by this bill?

Hon. Laura Lang: I appreciate the member opposite's concerns that were raised earlier this week.

I have since had the time to speak to my colleagues, and no, I don't have any concerns.

Justin Ziegler: I would like my concerns to be down on Hansard. I think these are two different titles and they are reading very differently. I just want to make sure that my voice is heard too and that the French title implies something that I think the bill does not encompass.

Hon. Laura Lang: Thank you.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 1?

Clause 1 agreed to

On clause 2

Carmen Gustafson: Just quickly, could the minister walk me through section 2 as she understands it? Just in her understanding, what do the two parts of section 2 do?

Hon. Laura Lang: Section 2(1), which is the office of the Yukon firearms advocate, is established as a corporation sole. I understand this to mean that it is establishing the office of the firearms advocate as a corporation sole, allowing the office to act as an independent legal entity.

Section 2(2), the minister may, by order, appoint an individual as the Yukon firearms advocate. I understand this to

mean that it allows the Minister of Justice to appoint an individual as the firearms advocate by ministerial order.

Carmen Gustafson: I appreciate that I have asked this question before, but again, I would hope that the minister could explain why the decision was made to establish the office as a corporation sole as opposed to some other legal entity.

Hon. Laura Lang: To the member opposite's point, I have already read this exact statement out, but I'll do it again.

Given its mandate, it is important that the advocate operate outside the public service. A corporation sole is a mechanism that creates an independent legal personality for the office, which would, for example, allow it to enter into contracts tied to the office and not the individual that holds the office at a given time.

Carmen Gustafson: Could the minister specify what sorts of contracts are expected to be entered into by the firearms advocate that necessitate it operating as a corporation sole?

Hon. Laura Lang: This is yet to be determined, but it does create the opportunity if the need arises.

Carmen Gustafson: The minister has said that the reason for creating the office this way was to enter contracts but that we don't know what contracts the advocate would enter into.

Are there any other advantages or characteristics of a corporation sole that are necessary for the functioning of the firearms advocate?

Hon. Laura Lang: Yes is the quick answer. It creates a legal identity, and I'm going to give a couple of examples that explain why this is helpful. For example, buying office supplies — so the office supplies belong to the office and not the individual is a key practicality. Another one is around office space. If it does become part of what the advocate uses, if an office space is rented and the advocate resigns, the office space belongs to the office and can be used by the successor.

Carmen Gustafson: Often when there are independent offices or bodies created, they receive legal counsel separate from Yukon Government.

Could the minister clarify who would be providing legal advice if needed to the firearms advocate?

Hon. Laura Lang: This position does not expect to receive legal advice. The role, as I've already stated, is specifically to listen to Yukoners and bring that information to the national arena.

Carmen Gustafson: Would the advocate have legal training?

Hon. Laura Lang: Not necessarily. That is something that is yet to be determined.

Carmen Gustafson: I will get back to section 2, but I do notice that one of the functions of the advocate is to provide advice to the minister in relation to legislation and policies in respect of firearms use. It may be that the office does require legal advice. Other reasons they might require legal advice might be about those contracts that they entered into or something of that nature.a

Just again, if the minister could clarify where they would be receiving legal advice from.

Hon. Laura Lang: The advice that I would be receiving from the advocate would perhaps be in the realm of legal advice. It might perhaps be in the realm of policy advice, but I remind this House that one of the privileges of being the Minister of Justice is that I have not only a Deputy Minister of Justice, but I also have a Deputy Attorney General whom I speak to on a daily basis about any of my legal concerns.

Carmen Gustafson: In section 2, establishing the advocate as a corporation sole creates an independent legal personality, and so I would suggest or guess that they would want legal advice that was independent of government. Along this line, I want to clarify whether a corporation sole is able to bring litigation on their own behalf or defend themselves against litigation on their own behalf.

Hon. Laura Lang: I have previously answered this question, and I believe that Hansard will reflect that. Formally, yes, but practically, this would require funding which will not be provided, and the reason is as simple as that the advocate is not there to usurp the position of our government. We have a Department of Justice that is able to litigate any type of situations that may come up, and I don't foresee that is going to be necessary, but that's why we have the very competent individuals in the department that we do.

Carmen Gustafson: The reason I bring this up is because an example of a corporation sole is the public guardian and trustee, who indeed can be sued by or can sue Yukon Government. I'm using an example of another corporation sole. Also, it has been said and the act when I read it in its entirety is that this advocate is advocating for firearm owners. It is possible that there could be a difference in that position.

Another possibility would be for the firearms advocate to intervene on behalf of Yukon firearm owners in other litigation, for example. I believe the Yukon Government chose not to intervene in the firearms case that's before the Supreme Court of Canada right now. The minister has said that this is targeted at a specific federal program.

Could the firearms advocate act in that behalf as a corporation sole that is by its very nature independent of Yukon Government?

Hon. Laura Lang: Not all corporations sole are the same, and I equate this to an area that I know better, which are Crown corporations. When I think about the function of a corporation like the Yukon Hospital Corporation versus a corporation like Yukon Housing Corporation, while they both are Crown corporations, how they function is very different, and that is a reasonable approach to what the needs actually are for their purpose.

In this situation, as I've already said, there isn't going to be any funding that is provided for litigation, and instead, I would offer that the legislation outlined in broad strokes the power of the advocate, and as you are aware, an advocate would be appointed at pleasure. I expect to have conversations with the advocate once appointed to discuss their priorities and how they will approach their work under the framework this bill creates.

Carmen Gustafson: It doesn't sound like a very independent position. If this is the case, I don't have any more questions on section 2.

Deputy Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?
Clause 2 agreed to
On clause 3

Carmen Gustafson: I will not ask the minister to tell me in her own words what this section means, because I believe we've asked her that several times now. I do want to start in section 3(2)(d), which is a provision that says that in carrying out the functions, the advocate may do any of the following. 3(2)(d) reads: "… any other activity that the Advocate believes is advisable to effectively carry out the functions of the Advocate."

To me, when I read that, that allows quite a wide scope of activities and the discretion lies with the advocate. The minister has suggested before that there will be some sort of job description or a contract. Given that this section is quite permissive, how does the minister see that working with this job description or with the contract?

Hon. Laura Lang: This is not an unusual section. It is common in many different positions that are outlined within legislation. Again, how that section is read must be read in the intent and the spirit of the legislation. Again, I repeat what I previously stated: The legislation is broad strokes. It outlines powers of the advocate for which that position will be appointed at pleasure.

I will be having conversations with the advocate once appointed to discuss their priorities and how they will approach their work under the framework this bill would create.

Carmen Gustafson: I just do want to reiterate that I have heard today that this is an independent office, and this provision does provide discretion to the advocate about those activities.

I will go back to the beginning. Section 3(1)(a) talks about providing advice to the minister. Would the advocate be providing advice to any other ministers as well?

Hon. Laura Lang: Deputy Chair, I believe the bill is pretty clear in stating that this is an advisor to the Minister of Justice and, of course, I as the Minister of Justice do have discretion to invite colleagues to be part of any meeting that I choose if it's going to help advance a file for the Yukon.

Carmen Gustafson: I'm just reflecting on conversations earlier about places where there's education respecting firearm safety and that perhaps other ministers would benefit from the advice of the advocate. In a later section, the ATIPP act applies to this office.

Would the advice provided to the minister by the advocate be disclosed under those ATIPP provisions?

Hon. Laura Lang: The ATIPP act does apply, and so, of course, any ATIPP request would be addressed on a case-by-case basis as any ATIPP request is currently done.

Carmen Gustafson: Is it anticipated that Cabinet confidence or other exclusions would apply to this advice under the ATIPP legislation?

Hon. Laura Lang: The ATIPP act applies, and nothing in the *Firearms Act* changes that.

Carmen Gustafson: Perhaps I could ask a different way. Has there been an analysis of how the ATIPP act applies to advice provided under 3(1)(a)?

Hon. Laura Lang: Like any other situation where the ATIPP act applies, it is treated on a case-by-case basis, and at that time, it would be determined what information would be provided back to the applicant that is requesting the ATIPP.

Carmen Gustafson: The minister earlier spoke about advice that she also receives from her officials and particularly the Deputy Attorney General and the deputy minister. In the case that the advice under this act or the advice of the firearms advocate and the advice of her officials conflicted, which one would she follow?

Hon. Laura Lang: This is a hypothetical question that I don't know how to answer — something that hasn't happened. But I can tell you that today I receive advice from many different people on many different issues, and it's my job as the Minister of Justice to be able to sort through what information I receive to then make a decision on.

Carmen Gustafson: Moving to section 3(1)(b), this function of the firearms advocate is to communicate with public officials, and it specifically refers to advocating for the interests of Yukon firearm owners. Earlier in debate, the minister talked about this position advocating on behalf of all Yukoners.

I'm just wondering if she could clarify that potential conflict — if it's advocating for the interests of Yukon firearm owners, as stated in section 3(1)(b), or if it's all Yukoners.

Hon. Laura Lang: When I read 3(1)(b), I see wording that says, "… including advocating for the interests of Yukon firearms users…" That does not mean it is exclusive. As I think through that even further, that means while this group of people are under this section, so too are many other classes of Yukoners.

Carmen Gustafson: "Public officials" is a term defined earlier in the act. There's no problem with that definition. But what public officials are we anticipating that the firearms advocate will be communicating with?

Hon. Laura Lang: This would be determined once the advocate is put into place and we identify what the priorities are. But to the member opposite's point, I have previously demonstrated examples from other jurisdictions, including Saskatchewan, where they have engaged with a variety of different tables, including the Independent Senators Group, where Saskatchewan engaged with the Senate on a number of different matters. And so, again, as we scope through what the priorities are going to be for this individual, I suspect so too will that correspond with the public offices that the advocate will be addressing.

Carmen Gustafson: As this is an independent office — and the minister was correct in pointing out that the provision uses the word "including", which expands the term. It doesn't solely mean that they're advocating for the interests of Yukon firearm owners. If the advocate is communicating with public officials, are they going to be expected to take a position that is consistent with Yukon Government?

Hon. Laura Lang: Independence does not mean there is a there's a lack of parameters or supervision. Yes, it is independent in that it is a corporation sole, but the actual advocate does have accountability to me as the Minister of Justice, and it is an at-pleasure position for which I would expect that position would take account of the Government of Yukon's position.

Carmen Gustafson: In section 3(1)(c), that section says, as a function, that the advocate could be "… disseminating information about firearms to the public, including information…" et cetera. That "disseminating of information about firearms to the public", what is intended to be captured by this section?

Hon. Laura Lang: This relates to information about firearms, which includes any programs that the federal government has put in place, any concerns we have with the programs, any opportunities where there is collaboration between agencies. As we previously spoke about, education has been noted as a priority. There may be an opportunity to work between that advocate and the Department of Education — simply anything for which we deem to be a priority for the position.

Hon. Scott Kent: Mr. Deputy Chair, seeing the time and as we are prepared to accept the Commissioner of Yukon to grant assent to some bills, I move that you report progress.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Scott Kent: Mr. Deputy Chair, I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Tyler Porter: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 11, entitled *Yukon Firearms Act*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

Commissioner Webber enters the Chamber accompanied by her Aide-de-Camp

Assent to bills

Commissioner: Please be seated.

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

Clerk: *Labour Relations Boards Statutes Amendment Act (2026)*, *Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act (2026)*, *Third Appropriation Act 2025-26*, and *Act to amend the Workers' Safety and Compensation Act (2026)*.

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

I'm going to say a few words of thanks. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge two important occasions that will be observed in the Yukon during the next few days: Indigenous Veterans Day on November 8 and Remembrance Day on November 11. These days provide an opportunity for all Yukoners to reflect on the sacrifices made by the brave men and women who have served our country in times of war, military conflict, and peacekeeping operations.

Indigenous Veterans Day holds special significance, as it recognizes First Nation, Inuit, and Métis veterans whose services and contributions were for many years not fully acknowledged. Despite facing barriers and discrimination, Indigenous people answered the call to serve with courage, dignity, and deep commitment to protecting the freedoms that we enjoy today.

On Remembrance Day, communities across the Yukon gather to honour all veterans, serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and those who continue to serve our country at home and abroad. We remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and we express our gratitude to all who have worn the Canadian uniform. I encourage all Yukoners to take part in local ceremonies to learn more about the stories and the contributions of our veterans and to observe a moment of reflection and remembrance.

We will remember them.

Thank you; gunałchîsh.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Hon. Scott Kent: Madam 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. on Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled today:

SP 36-1-62
Yukon Public Accounts 2025-26 (corrected) (Dixon)

Written notice was given of the following motion today:

Motion No. 202
Re *Employment Standards Act* amendments (Anderson)