



Yukon Legislative Assembly

2nd Session

34th Legislature

Index to **HANSARD**

October 1, 2018 to November 22, 2018

NOTE

The 2018 Fall Sitting of the Second Session of the Thirty-Fourth Legislature occupies two volumes

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| Volume 8 | 106 - 120 | 3215 - 3755 |

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Clerk of the Assembly | Floyd McCormick |
| Deputy Clerk | Linda Kolody |
| Clerk of Committees | Allison Lloyd |
| Sergeant-at-Arms | Karina Watson |
| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

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Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 91

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, October 1, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Clerk of the Assembly | Floyd McCormick |
| Deputy Clerk | Linda Kolody |
| Clerk of Committees | Allison Lloyd |
| Sergeant-at-Arms | Karina Watson |
| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 1, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

I would like to begin the 2018 Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly by respectfully acknowledging all Yukon First Nations and also that we are meeting on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

We will proceed at this time with the prayer given to us by former Speaker Sam Johnston. Mr. Johnston was the Speaker from 1985 to 1992 and was the first First Nation Speaker of a Legislative Assembly in Canada.

Prayers

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the introduction of our pages, the Chair will make a statement regarding the artwork that is now featured in the Legislative Assembly Chamber. Members and others will by now have noticed the four showcases on either side of the Chamber. I will now briefly describe how they got here — how this came to be.

At its first meeting on February 23, 2017, the Members' Services Board of the 34th Yukon Legislative Assembly agreed to form an all-party subcommittee to consider changes to the decor of the Legislative Assembly Chamber. The subcommittee was authorized to make recommendations to the board regarding any such changes. One change that was agreed to was to include more art by Yukon artists in the Chamber.

When the Legislative Assembly first sat in this Chamber on November 2, 1976, the only artwork on display was the tapestry behind me. It is impressive artwork and when we do tours of the Legislative Assembly, we certainly get a lot of questions about it; however, the artist who created it was not from the Yukon.

The Legislative Assembly office worked with the arts unit of the Cultural Services branch of the Department of Tourism and Culture to identify works of art for display in the Chamber and for arranging the proper manner of display of these works.

The artwork was to be chosen from the Yukon permanent art collection. The collection was created in 1981 by a group that is now known as "Friends of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection". The Government of Yukon funds the purchase of new acquisitions every year. Since its creation, the collection has grown to more than 450 original works of art created by more than 225 artists. These works are collected for the people of Yukon and pieces from the collection are on display in more than 30 locations in Yukon, including now the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

After careful consideration, eight pieces were chosen from the permanent art collection for display in the Chamber. The pieces are as follows: *Traditional Doll — Girl* by Annie Smith; *Tlingit Eagle Frontlet* by Keith Wolfe Smarch;

Arrival of the Dog Team by Deb Enoch; *Caribou Flagan* by David Ashley; *Fire Bag* by Gertie Tom; *Raven's Flight* by Eugene Alfred; *Forget-Me-Not Mukluks* by Mary Deguerre and *Wood-Ash Glazed Vessel With Lid* by Monika Kate Steputh.

The display will be officially unveiled at a reception later this month. The current collection of pieces will be on display until the fall of 2019 and then a new collection will be put on display.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention and looks forward to hosting them and members of the general public at the official unveiling. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: Now it gives me great pleasure to announce the following students who will be serving the House as Legislative pages for the 2018 Fall Sitting. They are: Trisha Schamber and Tenesha Christiansen from Porter Creek Secondary School; Sya Berkman, Sasha Emery and Martina Vos from F.H. Collins Secondary School; and Heather Mislant and Phoebe Qiu, as well as Gavin Spence, from Vanier Catholic Secondary School. Today, we have with us Trisha Schamber and Tenesha Christiansen.

I would ask the members to welcome them to the House at this time.

Applause

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes which have been made to the Order Paper. The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they are now outdated: Motion No. 56, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre; Motion No. 125 and Motion No. 194, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South; Motion No. 138 and Motion for the Production of Papers No. 10, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge; and Motion No. 264, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motions have been taken in whole or in part: Motion No. 133, standing in the name of the honourable Premier; Motion No. 150, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; Motion No. 160, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane; Motion No. 211, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North; Motion No. 270, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; and Motion No. 299, standing the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Motion No. 263 standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre has been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

Finally, Motion No. 309, notice of which was given by the Leader of the Third Party, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as it is similar to Motion No. 19, adopted by this House as amended on November 22, 2017.

We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

DAILY ROUTINE

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to acknowledge in the gallery today that, sitting with my Executive Assistant Emily Farrell, is the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations Peter Johnston.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would also like to acknowledge a Klondiker in the gallery as well. Coming down from Dawson City, we have Serge Lamarche — not to be confused with a lawyer in town — who is one of my constituents in the gallery, with his son Yves as well. Thank you for coming.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to take the opportunity to welcome members of our cultural community who are here for the tribute that will follow: Mr. Casey Prescott, Ms. Michelle Emslie, Ms. Mary Bradshaw, Ms. Heather McIntyre, and Ms. Heather Steinhagen. We have here today our Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture Valerie Royle and my executive assistant Jessie Stephen.

I would like to welcome you all here today and thank you for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take the opportunity to say hello to some of our staff and volunteers who were part of the United Way breakfast. This will tie into our tribute in a few minutes. I would like to recognize Mr. David Whiteside who is here, the president of United Way. As well, from the departments of Economic Development and Community Services, Mr. Jason Rayner, Mr. Jason Seaton, Vanessa Innes, Kathryn Ives and Lauren Muir.

Applause

Ms. White: I would ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Sue Greetham and thank her for her continued work with Fair Vote Yukon. It's important and we're happy to have her here. Thank you for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this moment to recognize Information and Privacy Commissioner Diane McLeod-McKay, who has joined us this afternoon. Please join me in welcoming her to this House.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: I ask the House's indulgence to help me in recognizing a few people today in the gallery: Mr. Connor Whitehouse, as well as Ms. Amanda Leslie and Mr. Jonas Smith, who was recently acclaimed as the Conservative candidate for the upcoming federal election.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just a couple of colleagues who are here who are working on an information system — Mr. Luke DeCoste and Wes George.

Applause

Speaker: I note that one of my constituents and a friend, Fred Smith, is in the gallery today. Welcome to the Legislature.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like to recognize in attendance today Annette King, the Child and Youth Advocate.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Culture Days

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal government to pay tribute to Culture Days, an annual three-day celebration of Canadian culture. I am so pleased that this is the first topic to be discussed in a Fall Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

From September 28 to 30, this past weekend, people across the country celebrated, appreciated and participated in free cultural events and activities in their community. Culture Days is a collaborative, pan-Canadian initiative to raise awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement with all forms of art and culture. Activities and events featured a multitude of creative professions including artists of all types, heritage experts, curators, architects, designers and many, many others. As stated in their mission, Culture Days aims to foster appreciation and support, promote interaction and affirm that every citizen is a guardian of their cultural community.

I am pleased to share that this year, 35 events took place in Whitehorse and Carcross as part of Culture Days. In Yukon, Culture Days was combined with another event called "Doors Open" which provided free access to the public to culturally and historically important buildings. Dozens of Yukoners, artists and organizations coordinated and presented a fantastic range of events for all interests and ages. From art tours to performances, workshops, open houses and much, much more, Yukoners spent the weekend exploring our diverse historic heritage, indigenous and arts communities.

I was lucky enough to participate in the opening ceremony at the cultural hub at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre on Saturday, which was followed by a very enthusiastic cultural display in the parade. I took the time to explore our cultural community throughout the weekend and it was fantastic. I am proud to say that several programs for the Department of Tourism and Culture were part of Culture Days, including Yukon Archives, the arts unit, historic sites,

the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre and the heritage unit at 133 Industrial Road. This is where our archaeology and palaeontology collections are held.

The Yukon government is proud to support Culture Days events through the Culture Quest fund and I would like to thank the Yukon Arts Centre, the Yukon Culture Days steering committee, for coordinating Culture Days this year and the Doors Open, as well as the community partners that participated in the event.

Thank you again to everyone who attended here today. You are doing very important work on behalf of all of us and thank you so much. Taking time to enjoy and appreciate our local arts, heritage and culture is essential to our well-being. Making it accessible, inclusive and fun is just as important, and I'm honoured to pay tribute to this annual event. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: It is an honour to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the arts and culture sector of Yukon's Culture Days held this past weekend, September 28 to 30.

Each year across Canada, Culture Days is celebrated during the last weekend of September. This year, Yukon has joined the celebrations, and although we differ on the theme, it is still a welcome addition to our calendar.

The national theme was "OnBeat", encouraging an array of drumming and rhythm-inspired events. Yukon's theme is "Doors Open", which is self-explanatory — visiting various sites where doors were open for free and hands-on, interactive activities. We are blessed with such a wide range of talented and gifted artists, musicians and ideas that are shared freely. From events such as the Scottish dancing give-it-a-try sessions to the heritage highlights scavenger hunt hosted by the Yukon Historical and Museums Association to the National Film Board shorts for the whole family, there was something for a wide range of interests. Art matters, and culture is meant to be shared. These two sections can and do contribute to a healthy, stable society. Concepts, notions and facts are shared during Culture Days and I am so pleased that Yukon has joined this fantastic endeavour.

Events such as Culture Days will allow a glimpse into a wide range of backgrounds and dreams for those willingly giving of their expertise and talents. We encourage all Yukoners to get out and enjoy, learn and engage in the arts and cultural life of the communities and regions during the coming years. Kudos to all who participated and assisted in making 2018 a success.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to celebrate the wonders of Culture Days. I would like to think that culture had an early start on Friday morning with the musical performances at the United Way breakfast and then with the opening of Yukon's first mosque. Congratulations to the Yukon Muslim Society on this glorious accomplishment.

Friday morning was just the beginning. The festivities and activities were spread throughout the community for three solid days. With so many interesting and engaging activities, it was hard to keep up. From printing presses to roving ravens, the creation of glass percussion instruments, exciting museum scavenger hunts, inflatable planetariums and hands-on workshops, the fun never ended. Thank you to all of the artists, facilitators and volunteers who made Culture Days 2018 such a colourful success.

Applause

In recognition of United Way Month

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal government to pay tribute to the United Way Month, which is the start of the annual fundraising campaign in support of Canadian charities. This year's theme is "Better Together". This year, United Way Yukon is supporting 12 local charities, which include: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon, the Child Development Centre, the Freedom Trails Therapeutic Riding Association, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre and the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre — to mention a few.

These are all amazing organizations with programs that support Yukon families, respond to the needs of those with disabilities, work to address alcohol and drug abuse and aim to reduce the impacts of poverty. These programs make real differences for some of Yukon's most vulnerable members of society. This year's fundraising campaign began on September 22 with seven teams participating in the second United Way plane pull event.

Several members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly participated on Team All Stripes with other political leaders from our community. I will quote Whitehorse City Councillor Jocelyn Curteanu in saying that we didn't come in first, second or third. Actually, I think we came in last, but our politicians definitely went the extra mile, pulling that plane further than we had to. I will thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for leading us the extra 75 metres. At the end of the day, the big winner was the United Way Yukon and all the charities they support. Close to \$13,000 was raised during this year's plane pull. I would also like to thank Roslyn Woodcock, who was the 2018 United Way campaign champion, for pulling our team together.

The most recent fundraising activity took place just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, with the departments of Economic Development and Community Services taking the lead on the annual United Way pancake breakfast. Yukoners came together and helped raise more than \$20,000 at this year's breakfast and silent auction. Many members of this Legislative Assembly were celebrity chefs and I would like to thank you for your support.

I wish to recognize the contributions from local businesses, media and all the sponsors who came on board to make this event a success.

I would also like to recognize the Yukon Energy Corporation for their efforts during their annual United Way fundraising week, which will take place from October 9 to 12. I understand that they will have their own kickoff pancake

breakfast, silent auction and sign-up drive for payroll deductions.

I encourage everyone to support the United Way Month in whichever way you choose, whether it be through personal involvement or corporate campaigns and sponsorship.

We are joined this afternoon by David Whiteside from the United Way and I would also like to thank and recognize the members of the organizing committee from the departments of Economic Development and Community Services, some of whom we welcomed earlier today. Those would be Amelie Quirke-Tomlins, Andrew Seymore, Ann Bowen, Carolyn Derkatch, Charmaine Cheung, Jason Rayner, Jason Seaton, Melissa Ordish, Nancy Lewis-de Graff, Rosemary Fordyce, Shelly Jeffrey, Vanessa Innes, Aisha Montgomery, Brian Ng, Damien Burns, Ellen Andison, Jon Trefry, Kathryn Ives, Kayla Jurovich, Lauren Muir, Marie Cairns and Sara Russo.

I also wish to acknowledge the Yukon Wildfire Fire Management branch, including David Johnson, for the support provided during the breakfast set-up and tear-down.

Finally, a big thank you to the celebrity servers, the RCMP M Division, the live entertainment and numerous other volunteers who generously donated their time in making this event such a success.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to tribute United Way Yukon and the efforts of Yukoners who rally together to raise money through a number of events for the 2018 United Way fundraising campaign.

United Way Yukon has been an integral help to countless organizations since 1995. Yukoners volunteer in force to support United Way, especially at this time of year.

This year, money was raised to help fund 12 Yukon organizations with projects and programs that directly help families and individuals in a range of areas. It has been wonderful to see how event turnout increases as word spreads about just how much one person or a family can help their community. It is as easy as getting together for breakfast. I was pleased to participate once again in the United Way breakfast this year as a celebrity server.

This year, the departments of Community Services and Economic Development put on an excellent, fun and very successful breakfast. Thank you to every one of them and the other volunteers who contributed to that event.

It's not an easy feat serving an entire community, so thank you to the staff of both departments as well as the other volunteers and performers who came out to make the event a success.

The other major component of fundraising for United Way Yukon is the plane pull, for which teams of 15 sign up to have a chance of competing for the fastest time in pulling out an Air North 737.

Thank you to everyone who took part in a United Way event this year and to those who volunteered to make United

Way Month a success, as well as those who contribute to the United Way on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: Today I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to congratulate the hard-working staff and volunteers who put in the hours and energy making not only this year's but every year's United Way fundraising drive such a success.

United Way fundraising ensures that many non-government organizations receive funding for projects and services that they might not otherwise be able to provide. We know that these services are often those that fill in gaps in service and help to build stronger community. We as a community owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who volunteer to serve on the board of the United Way. As my colleague here mentioned, it has been since 1995 — and I can tell you that I don't think it has changed too much over the last 23 years in terms of the difficulty of both attracting and maintaining that dedicated core of people, because it's no small challenge to find new and ongoing dynamic ways to work together with a goal of helping those who are really the unsung heroes who help in our community across Yukon.

The United Way is encouraging all Yukoners and large and small businesses to consider new ways to donate, including corporate donations or payroll deduction programs. I am often thinking, Mr. Speaker — as a territorial government of 5,000 employees, imagine, if 50 percent or 75 percent of those employees enrolled in a payroll deduction program, how the United Way would flourish.

So again, thanks to those volunteers who work so hard for the United Way Yukon — and, through their efforts, the many Yukoners whose lives are enhanced in ways both small and large.

Applause

Speaker: Tabling returns and documents.

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: The Chair has for tabling the annual report of the Conflict of Interest Commission for the year ending March 31, 2018. This report is tabled pursuant to section 19 of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* and was distributed to members and made public on June 28, 2018.

The Chair also has for tabling a report from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on the absence of members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees, dated October 1, 2018. This report is tabled pursuant to the direction of the Members' Services Board.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have for tabling the *2018-19 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update*.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Pursuant to section 103(1) of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, I have for tabling the 2017

annual report of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have for tabling two legislative returns. The first is a letter sent to the Member for Kluane in response to Written Question No. 27, and the second is a letter sent to the Member for Lake Laberge in response to Written Question No. 25.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to table three responses to questions raised by the Member for Porter Creek North on April 16 and 18, 2018.

Mr. Cathers: I have for tabling today a memorandum to all deputy ministers re: 2018-19 period four detailed variance report and 2018-19 period eight detailed variance report, which CBC made public earlier today.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Adel: I have for tabling the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, dated September 14, 2018, and the committee's ninth report, dated September 20, 2018.

Speaker: Are there any further committee reports to be presented?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 207 agreed to

Bill No. 22: *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I move that Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 22 agreed to

Bill No. 20: *Societies Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 20 agreed to

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 12(1) of the *Elections Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Maxwell Harvey as the Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon, effective October 1, 2018, for a term as stipulated in subsection 12(2) of the *Elections Act*.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

- (1) follow through on the review of the medical travel program that it committed to on March 14, 2018, which is intended to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners;
 - (2) confirm if work has begun on this review and provide an update on work completed to date;
 - (3) commit to public consultations as part of this review;
- and
- (4) provide a deadline for completion of the review.

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

THAT this House recognizes and congratulates the Government of Canada on reaching an agreement in principle on a modernized trade agreement for North America, including Canada, the United States and Mexico.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure Yukon has flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure dollars in the best way to meet our communities' and territory's needs.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table a plan detailing how many affordable and social housing units they will build by the end of their mandate.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to table in this Assembly the implementation plan for actions to be taken by the Yukon government in response to the May 2018 *Whitehorse Correctional Centre Inspection Report*, including clear action items and timelines.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to tell Yukoners what services will be affected by this government's across-the-board, ongoing, two-percent cut to all departments.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Interim fiscal and economic outlook

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise today to provide Yukoners with an update on the state of Yukon's public finances and our economy.

The mid-year fiscal and economic outlook tabled today presents a snapshot of current expectations for Yukon's finances and Yukon's economy. It highlights key changes from the forecast in the spring. The fiscal picture has not changed significantly since the release of the 2018 budget in April.

As a result of better forecasting, this government's spending, outlined in the main estimates, remains on track and accurately represents spending that will occur this year. On the economic side, Yukon remains one of the best places in Canada to be, with the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and some of the highest weekly earnings. Strong retail sales as well as high levels of construction activity are reflective of a positive economic climate. The mid-term economic outlook remains positive. Future gains are expected in population, along with continued strength in the labour market and growth in real gross domestic product, or GDP. Yukon's unemployment rate is on track for a record low in 2018, after averaging 2.6 percent over the first eight months. The unemployment rate is forecasted to average 2.8 percent this year, which is well below the budget forecast of 4.3 percent.

Yukon continues to have a robust mining sector. Current estimates put exploration spending at \$172.3 million for this year, the highest since 2012 and the fourth in the country in terms of spending. Development of the Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle Gold project is in full swing, with major earthworks well underway on the site as we speak. Goldcorp's Coffee Gold project is now in the environmental assessment process. The proponent indicates that the company is on track for construction to begin in 2020.

The real GDP forecast for 2018 is now forecasted to be 2.5 percent for 2018. Beyond 2018, real GDP gains are expected every year out to 2022, spurred by high levels of mine development and production from new mines.

Mr. Speaker, the development of new mining projects will also boost local private sector investment, positively

impacting Yukon's construction industry. Local construction activity will continue to be supported by public spending, particularly on key infrastructure, such as highways, water services and schools.

The tourism industry continues to gain momentum for a record year in 2017. Growth has continued into 2018, with gains in the first six months in key tourism metrics, supported by positive feedback from tourism operators.

A strong economy is reflective in retail sale performance. Following a record \$800 million in 2017, further gains have been registered in the first half of this year, with retail sales up 6.6 percent from the same period in 2017.

With a strong labour market and positive economic conditions, Yukon's population is projected to grow as well, increasing 1.7 percent this year. Our population is now forecasted at over 42,400 for 2022. At the same time, our low unemployment rate is expected to continue, averaging about four percent over 2019 to 2022.

Mr. Speaker, the economic indicators in today's outlook are mostly positive. They match what we're hearing on the ground.

Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to rise today as the Official Opposition Finance critic to respond to the Premier's ministerial statement about the 2018-19 interim fiscal and economic update. The most notable part of his statement is what he conveniently glossed over — notably, the fact that he and his Liberal Party repeatedly told Yukoners during the 2016 election campaign that the Yukon had the worst economy in Canada.

One of the Leader of the Liberal Party's favourite claims used to be that we were in a made-in-Yukon recession under the Yukon Party. In the 2016 election, the now-Premier said this to media — and I quote: "We have the worst economy in Canada."

As recently as April of this year, his Minister of Economic Development publicly stated that Yukon had the worst economy in 2016. These two statements are in stark contrast to the Premier's own economic update that he released today.

In fact, according to that report, the Yukon's GDP grew by 8.3 percent in 2016. Let me repeat that point: the economy grew by 8.3 percent during the last year the Yukon Party was in office. On page five, this report refers to that as robust growth. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, the Yukon had the highest growth rate in Canada in 2016.

The Premier's report also states this: Yukon's real GDP contracted 1.4 percent in 2017. Mr. Speaker, that means that during the first full year the Liberals were in power, the Yukon's economy actually went downhill and saw a reduction of 1.4 percent — again, according to their own report. I think we know why the Premier glossed over that important detail about the 2017 economic downturn under the Liberals.

The report also states this inconvenient detail that the Premier glossed over in his opening remarks — that the 2018 growth rate for real GDP has been revised down. That's a quote from the report, and it is contrary to the claim that the

Premier made in his opening statement because, in fact, the picture has worsened since this spring. While the revised forecast for growth in 2018 does suggest that the economy will make up what it lost during the 2017 economic downturn under the Liberals, it is only forecasted to do slightly better than that.

In conclusion, like we saw in the Financial Advisory Panel report, when you dig into the details of the Yukon's fiscal and economic picture, the Liberal talking points fall apart. Will the Premier now show the courage to apologize to Yukoners for misleading them during the 2016 election campaign?

Ms. Hanson: In responding to the ministerial statement made by the Minister of Finance this afternoon, the clearest reaction that the New Democratic Party has is that, again, what we're experiencing is really radio silence by this government on the options and provocative questions that were raised by what was an ostensibly independent expert financial panel. Two years into this new government, I would have expected a government that had claimed to be serious about diversifying its economy for the long-term would have started to create the building blocks for that diversification, for exploring — as the panel very vigorously suggested — the obligations and benefits to modernizing the revenue options from our non-renewable resources sector to create wealth now, not just for the current period of time, but for years into the future.

I would have expected that this government would have looked at the options that the panel talked about in terms of creating — by engaging in that robust and provocative conversation — measures whereby we can begin to build now a sovereign wealth fund for the future, for generations to come. Instead, we see that the Minister of Finance's statement offers much of the same as we have heard for the past 15 years. It has been 15 years, Mr. Speaker, since the Yukon government assumed the authority, the responsibility and the opportunities afforded to this government when Canada transferred the provincial-like responsibilities for land and resource management in the Yukon, to work in partnership with First Nation governments.

Quite frankly, as a citizen and as a member of this Assembly, I am disappointed in the continuation through this statement and the unimaginative — some might say "timid" — response of this government to exploring, through robust dialogue among, for starters, members of this Assembly as elected representatives of all citizens, some or all of the ideas generated by the independent Financial Advisory Panel — ideas that would move Yukon from its current transactional status — that is that it spends all it can get from Ottawa without real or serious consideration of options or opportunities lost by refusing to take the leap toward self-government as was contemplated by both the implementation of First Nation final and self-government agreements and the Yukon devolution.

Today, we are hearing again that the Liberal government, like its Yukon Party predecessor, can spend whatever money

it receives from our federal government, but lacks the creativity and courage to take steps toward a government focused on creating wealth, for not just the current, but future generations of Yukoners, by beginning to take those hard steps on making and using critical thinking to analyze that government is not just about spending money. It is about thinking about how we do it in a more effective and efficient way.

It is nice to have some statistics thrown at us, but it is a repeat of what I have heard for the last 15 years.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would respectfully disagree with the member from the Third Party, the Leader of the NDP. I think we are boldly doing different things, starting with the signing of the chapter 23 implementation agreement increasing the First Nation portion of shared resources. That would be one example.

Our tourism strategy — the first time in 17 years — would be another example. The Yukon Forum has 16 working groups right now with indigenous governments right across Canada, not to mention a plethora of subcommittees from those working groups. There is a five-year capital plan as well.

Negotiating a cap on cannabis-related taxes going to the federal government and the 75-percent share of the federal excise tax, carbon levy exemptions for aviation and dollar-for-dollar rebates for the placer industry — I would say that this government is doing an awful lot different compared to the narrative being perpetuated by the member from the Third Party. Our government has, for the first time in Yukon history, laid out a five-year capital plan that will be updated with each budget and will bring even more clarity for Yukon government expenditures, which the member opposite is clearly interested in.

I want to thank the opposition for their comments today. Under our government, the economic outlook in the spring and an update in the fall have become a norm. This wasn't always the case in recent years. The outlook is an opportunity for members of this House and the public to understand and see the hard numbers. We are not throwing statistics at the opposition; we are showing hard numbers that underpin our economy and our budget. It is also available to potential investors in Yukon's economy so that they can make informed decisions about the future.

I will note that forecasts are simply that, Mr. Speaker. Some of what is included in the document may not come to pass. That information may not come to pass. However, it is our best estimate at this time as we see what is coming down the pike.

On the economic side, Yukon remains one of the best places in Canada to be, and we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and some of the highest weekly earnings. Strong retail sales as well as a high level of construction activity are reflective of a positive economic climate. The mid-term economic outlook remains positive, with expectations of further gains in population, continued strength in the labour markets and growth in the gross domestic

product. The economic indicators in today's economic outlook are mostly positive, and I am happy to report them to the Legislative Assembly.

I thank my colleagues for their comments today.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Water quality

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, this summer, the government started testing the lead levels in drinking water at Yukon schools. During the course of the testing, they found elevated lead levels of this water at a number of schools. However, the government did not notify parents, teachers or students of the elevated levels until three weeks into the school year. So we're curious, can the minister tell us why this government did not notify parents before the beginning of the school year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The health and safety of Yukon students and the staff in schools are of course always our first priority. Government is taking proactive measures to ensure that the water in Yukon schools remains safe to use and to drink and that it meets the requirements set out in the Canadian drinking water guidelines.

In August 2018, we completed water tests for lead levels at all schools that were built before 1990. We have shared the results with the school communities at the earliest possible time. Mitigation work is taking place at any schools that have had results above the national guidelines to ensure the water in the schools remains safe for students and staff over the long term.

The chief medical officer of health advises that there is no short-term risk to health associated with water fixtures, the levels above the national standards that were found in our tests and in a general way. The national standards are based on exposure to lead over a lifetime, and children drink water from multiple sources. Therefore the occasional consumption — if that has taken place — and we hope, of course, that it has not — from those fixtures is enough to proceed without any ill effects on behalf of the children.

Mr. Hassard: It's interesting to note that the minister certainly didn't answer the question about why it took so long to notify parents.

On September 14, the *Yukon News* reported that the government was refusing to release the detailed figures of what the lead levels in the drinking water at our schools are. I believe that parents, families, children and teachers have the right to know what those lead levels are in the schools' drinking water. Why is this Liberal government refusing to share this important information with Yukon parents?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: In fact, I did answer the last question, but apparently the member opposite didn't hear what I said about the testing and when that took place.

With respect to the figures of those test results, they are relatively complicated in determining what the readings mean, but they are available to the public electronically now on the Department of Education website and have been for a bit of

time. I couldn't give you the exact date, but I can certainly look it up and provide it to the House in the near future if that was something that is of concern. They are available.

Mr. Hassard: Just for clarification, is the minister saying that those levels are available to the public at this time?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: That's the information I have been provided. I spoke with the department as late as last week to determine that those figures would be going up on the website for anyone to review.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Kent: This morning, the CBC obtained and made public a document written by the Deputy Minister of Finance to all departments, telling them that the Liberal Cabinet had directed them to all come up with a plan to cut two percent from their operation and maintenance budgets. Mr. Speaker, a two-percent cut to the Department of Education's O&M budget would be \$3.6 million.

Can the minister tell us where the Liberals are intending to cut the \$3.6 million from Education's budget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to comment on the document that the member opposite is referring to. Suffice it to say we've seen this style happen before and the results of those leaked documents didn't come to fruition. There is a reason why we have ATIPP — access to information to get current documents — but I'll stop on that. I will say that it's not news to anybody in the Yukon that the government is looking for new ways of being efficient. That was one of the central recommendations of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. We are looking now at how services are organized. We're looking at management and delivery of services and we're looking for efficiencies to better deliver services to Yukoners.

We are also getting ready to launch a comprehensive review of programs and services delivered by the Department of Health and Social Services and that will be coming later on this year.

I am very comfortable with the financial direction that we are heading in as I outlined today in the ministerial statement. I'll keep the speculation that the opposition will continue on hard facts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kent: Over the course of the summer — actually, over the course of the last two years — we know that the Liberals have a tendency to take no responsibility and blame others when things go wrong. The letter was pretty clear. I mean, it even has the new logo and the fancy wave. It says that Management Board, which is made up of Liberal Cabinet ministers, has given direction that departments need to come up with a plan for two-percent cuts to operation and maintenance. The letter is from the Deputy Minister of Finance.

Is the Premier suggesting or denying that Management Board has told departments to find these cuts?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm saying that we're going to govern based upon official documentation on this side of the House and they can keep on speculating on omnibus bills or some kind of cuts.

You know, honestly, when it comes down to it, Mr. Speaker, we do need to curtail the spending here as a government. You know, the trend from the previous government was to spend \$1.50 for every dollar earned and that has to be taken into consideration. Now what we're going to do is make sure that we do the best we can to find efficiencies without cutting programs and services. That's the goal. That's what we're going to keep to.

Again, I am completely happy with the changes we've done to my department — the Finance department. In previous years, it was more of a budgetary consideration. It's now a comprehensive financial department and it's working in a whole-of-government approach to make sure that we right-size this government and make sure that our programs and services are not affected because Yukoners have come to appreciate those programs and services.

Mr. Kent: As we've said, the document that was obtained by the CBC and tabled earlier today by my colleague for Lake Laberge clearly states the Liberals have given direction for departments to come up with plans to achieve two-percent cuts in their O&M budgets.

As I stated earlier, a two-percent cut to the Department of Education's O&M would be \$3.6 million. So at Education, O&M is services and programs for students as well as salaries and benefits for teachers and those who work in the department.

Will the Premier today then rule out any budget cuts to any of those areas in the Department of Education?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. He may speculate on things to come — I will not. He may speculate on leaked documents and their government may table supposed Management Board documents, which is interesting for a former minister to do, but I am not going to comment on that document or on the accusations from the members opposite, but I will say again that we are looking at being more efficient. We spent good money with the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel to do so. The previous government spent more than they earned to the tune of \$1.50 for every dollar earned. We need to right-size this government and we need to curtail that spending and we need to make sure that we don't affect the programs and services that Yukoners have come to appreciate.

Question re: Financial Advisory Panel

Ms. Hanson: Since the Minister of Finance is on it, it has been a year since the release of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel final report. A year later, Yukoners are naturally curious as to the outcome of this \$300,000 exercise. Nowhere in the report was it suggested to blindly cut every department's O&M budget by two percent, yet this is what the government seems intent on doing.

Various ministers have repeated many times, however, that at least one of the recommendations or observations made by the panel would be followed. For example, the Premier said — and I quote — that we are — not future — we are conducting a “comprehensive review” of Health and Social Services' programs and service delivery.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell Yukoners when this review started, what the key terms of reference are, who is conducting it, will the public have a say and when can we — Yukoners — and members of this Assembly expect it to be finished?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm glad the Leader of the Third Party came off of the lead, which is to speculate. I don't expect that from her party. I do expect it from the members of the Official Opposition. However, she does bring a good point to bear, which is talking about the Financial Advisory Panel. I will talk in specifics and I will let my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, talk about the specifics of the Health and Social Services' review.

We were presented a number of options for the Yukon government to return to a healthy fiscal position and we will do so. This includes raising revenues through taxes or fees or cutting government spending. Those were some of the suggestions from the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. The panel noted that fees and fines in Yukon were considerably lower than other jurisdictions in Canada and that the cost of providing services to Yukon was considerably higher than fees charged by the government. The Yukon government has conducted a preliminary review of those fees and fines and the sale of government goods and services.

So to talk specifically about what we're doing with the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, there is another advance right there.

Public engagement with the Financial Advisory Panel — we heard that Yukoners were not supportive of raising additional revenues or new taxes. Fifty percent of the survey respondents identified a reduction of government spending as a preferred option to return ourselves to a healthy financial position. I can guess from the chagrin next door that this is not what the NDP would do.

Ms. Hanson: Rather selective hearing of what Yukon citizens said. However, the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel did make numerous observations about how the Yukon government currently manages the non-renewable resource sector.

The panel pointed out that Yukoners own the natural resources and that it is up to the Yukon government and First Nation governments to manage Yukon resources on behalf of all. However, as they pointed out, the current fees and royalties don't come close to covering the cost of the services provided to the industry. That is why the panel recommended that the Yukon government review resource sector policies — and I quote: “... with a particular emphasis on ensuring fair and efficient royalty rates, fee structures, permit and licensing costs, tax exemptions...”

When will the Premier engage with First Nation governments, industry and the public to ensure that Yukoners receive fair value for the non-renewable resources owned by all citizens of Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is always a great opportunity to talk about success stories in First Nation relationships and mining with this territorial government. The minister signed an MOU with the First Nation governments and made sure that their

priorities were identified through that memorandum of understanding, and that is where we are going to focus our attention. One of the things that I am extremely proud of from this whole-of-government approach in the Yukon Liberal Party government is the signing of that *Chapter 23 Implementation Agreement* increasing the First Nation portion of shared resource royalties. That is an extremely important position when you take a look at Victoria Gold coming on line — hopefully within a year — which will be producing to the tune of 200,000 ounces of gold a year. That is where the money is. That is where the First Nations have definitely been happy to see the increased share of royalties.

I will let the minister speak in specifics about relationships with First Nations and mining, but we are very pleased with the mining MOU that was signed with the First Nation chiefs. We are very pleased with shared priorities being identified therein, and we are going to stick our attention to those shared priorities.

Ms. Hanson: The Financial Advisory Panel listened to Yukoners, other governments, businesses and financial experts. Some of the suggestions are already at work elsewhere — for instance, creating a payroll tax for fly-in/fly-out employees of large mining companies who earn income here but do not pay income tax to Yukon. This is but one example put forward by this independent expert panel. The most significant response to date by this government is silence, and now it appears that this government is ignoring the panel's recommendations to raise additional revenue and is simply applying a two-percent cut to all departments. Why did the Premier order a \$300,000 report by an independent panel if his plan all along was to simply blindly cut across all departments?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we keep on giving answers and the members opposite are still saying that there are no answers. It is hard to respond to that, other than to say that we are taking a look at all of the options from the Financial Advisory Panel. We heard from Yukoners about some very specific major suggestions like the harmonized sales tax in Yukon, and Yukoners gave us a resounding “no”. We are focusing in on reviews. We are focusing in on a Health and Social Services review. That department has been growing to the tune of 14 percent per year and we need to curtail that.

But again, as we are doing this — in opposition to what we are hearing from the NDP — our focus is to make sure that the programs and services don't suffer when we do this. There are so many efficiencies that we can work on. I am very proud of our progressive agenda in this legislative session, for example, with the *Societies Act* to make sure that there is clear guidance and understanding of the rules and regulations within the *Societies Act*, so that individuals have a more efficient approach when they are dealing with their individual societies and that the paperwork that we're asking for as a government is less onerous.

These are the things we can do to increase efficiencies. We're working on a whole bunch of different initiatives, and we will see as we move forward how well this happens as far

as turning the ship around and getting us back onto financial footing that is necessary for Yukon businesses to succeed.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. White: Yukon's housing crisis is not new and it continues to be a problem for workers, young families, employers and for everyone in between. This summer the government got a taste of what other employers are facing when they had trouble recruiting staff for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility because of the lack of housing in Whitehorse. In an unprecedented move, the department literally asked its current employees to open their homes to new employees. It would be funny if it weren't for the thousands of people struggling to get by because of this ongoing housing issue. The government has known for years that it would need to hire hundreds of new staff for the Whistle Bend continuing care facility but somehow forgot that these people would need places to live.

If this government can't plan housing for their own employees, how can Yukoners trust that they can solve the ongoing housing crisis?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the question. I would like to start by saying that we do acknowledge the pressures. The pressures have been there for many, many years with the planning of the Whistle Bend facility — recognizing the growth of the Yukon population and the pressures with respect to the growth in our government. Obviously it's evident that we would have compounding pressures, and we recognize that.

We are working with our stakeholder groups and we're working with our partners. As well, we are working with Canada as we look at one of our major partners on improving the delivery of affordable housing to Yukoners. We look at trying to balance the pressures by better aligning our funding initiatives with that of our stakeholder groups by creating the Housing First initiative project this past year, the partnership build initiative. We've contributed a significant amount of resources in this year's budget to better align with the pressures that we're seeing and we will continue to do that into the future.

Ms. White: If government employees are struggling to find a place to live in Whitehorse, imagine how people in the private sector are feeling. Around the same time this summer, the government put out a tender looking for a consultant to help it solve its staff housing problem. The tender documents asked to: "... gather information on potential solutions to overcoming the lack of available rental accommodation." It is good news that the lack of available rental housing is now on the government's radar, but you would think that with the 200 or so people on the wait-list at Yukon Housing, it would have given them a clue that this isn't a new problem. I'm not sure how that tender went, but here's a revolutionary idea: let's build affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government actually do something about the housing crisis and build more affordable housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let me start by saying that we are addressing the need for housing in a number of ways. We have released a number of lots recently in Whistle Bend. We're working with the construction of a 16-unit Housing First residence in downtown Whitehorse. We have worked at expanding funding programs through the Yukon Housing Corporation, and we will continue to work with our partners.

As a note with respect to affordable housing over the past two years we've invested and we're seeing an increase in new affordable housing units. We work with the Da Daghay Development Corporation and the Klondike Development Organization. We've worked with the victim of violence funding for Blood Ties Four Directions. We will look at affordable micro-units. In Whitehorse, we're looking at working and expanding our municipal matching grant. We've also looked at our funding programs for this last year, Mr. Speaker, which will result in an increase in housing, so we're seeing now an increase in total units of 363 for the last year.

Ms. White: With 195 people self-identifying as being homeless in the last point-in-time count, I'm not sure that one Housing First project is really going to solve the problem. Mr. Speaker, this project won't help employers retain staff who can't find an affordable place to stay — or any place to stay, let's be honest. It won't help minimum-wage workers who can't afford Yukon's housing market.

Affordable housing isn't a money-making business, Mr. Speaker. Most private developers will go for more lucrative options, like building condos — and why wouldn't they? We can't blame them. That's why the government needs to step in. Affordable housing won't build itself — or we wouldn't still be in the middle of this never-ending housing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, how many new affordable rental units will this government build in the remainder of their mandate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question. She talked about the need for our businesses that are growing here in the territory and where they can find homes. We look at housing as a spectrum here, and on that spectrum we're working at all ends.

I thank the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation for talking about how to work at the affordable housing end and we're working today. The supplementary budget was just given its first reading today, and within that budget we're increasing the investment in land development so that we see more lots coming online by \$4 million.

I'll stand up later and we can talk further about what that will create in terms of new homes and houses — not just single-family homes, but duplexes, townhouses and multi-family homes that will be there for the spectrum of needs for Yukoners.

Question re: School bus service

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, with the start of the school year, we've heard a number of complaints from parents about school buses — everything from overcrowding to no assigned seats for younger students and bad behaviour of some of the

students on these buses. The parents I've spoken with are working through these issues with departmental staff.

However, one issue that I asked about in the spring was about who actually knows which students are on which buses, particularly at the end of the day. The minister said at the time — and I quote: "The drivers are aware, the school is aware, and I know that there is close monitoring, particularly of younger children, to make sure that they are on the right bus at their school — because they are getting on a bus that they did not arrive on — or at a transfer that is required." Mr. Speaker, if for some reason a parent isn't sure which bus their child got on at the end of the day, who are they supposed to call? Would they call the department, do they call the school or do they call the busing contractor?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the question. I would hope that they could call any of those locations if an error had been made. I certainly am aware that the individual staff involved with busing at the Department of Education are extremely responsive to a parent's concerns.

Whether that concern comes through the school or through the busing company and contractor, clearly the most important thing in all of those situations is ensuring that students have safe and effective transportation to and from school and that they arrive where their parents need them to be in a safe and efficient fashion.

Mr. Kent: At a recent school council meeting that I attended, this very issue came up and it was determined that neither the school nor the contractor would know on a day-to-day basis which students got on which bus at the end of the day. Unfortunately, it appears the minister was incorrect in the spring when I asked her about this particular issue.

Given this information that I heard about, what actions will the minister take to make sure parents know who they can call if they're not sure which bus their child is on?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is unfortunately the very first time that I have heard of this particular situation. The member opposite did not contact my office. I think he will have to admit that when he does contact my office about anything, that we respond as immediately as possible and often within hours, if not a day or so, to give him the answer he needs.

Certainly, if it's about a busing situation and a young person here in the territory, we would want to take that as seriously as it should be, deal with it immediately and do so. I don't disagree, Mr. Speaker, that —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm sorry. I'm not sure who's talking, but I think I have the floor.

I'm not sure about the details of this particular situation. I would urge the member opposite to please advise my office or me personally of those so that we can determine that. I certainly agree that everyone should know where the children are on the bus — their families, their school and the bus company.

Question re: School structural safety

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, in a 2013 report, there were seismic deficiencies identified in eight Yukon schools. Those

schools were Kluane Lake School, the Nelna Bessie John School, St. Elias Community School, Wood Street Centre, Christ the King Elementary School, Selkirk Elementary School, Takhini Elementary School and Whitehorse Elementary School.

The total cost estimates at the time to address these issues were just short of \$20 million. According to a report on the HPW website, short-term mitigations have been completed as well as planning for long-term mitigations.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Education update this House on where we're at in regard to seismic mitigations in these identified schools? Are there updated cost estimates, and when will the work be completed?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We do take the responsibility for our buildings and making sure they're safe for our students and our staff who use these buildings — the public.

As the member opposite has noted, we are in the process of evaluating and taking care of all of the work that needs to be done on our schools and public buildings in terms of seismic mitigation. We will roll out those — we want to ensure the safety of our students in our schools. We have been very clear about that up in the Ross River area with the Ross River School and we will continue to do that with all of our schools — making sure that they are safe for our students and doing the work that needs to be done in a timely manner.

Mr. Hassard: So it appears we're not going to get any updates today.

When the Liberals tabled their five-year capital concept this spring, only two of the eight schools identified in the seismic report were included — Christ the King Elementary and Kluane. We noted at the time that one of the Yukon's newer schools — Holy Family elementary — also made the cut as part of the government's school revitalization plan.

Can the minister tell Yukon parents if the remaining six schools that have seismic deficiencies will enter the queue for either renovation or replacement?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have just answered the question for the member opposite. We have said that we are monitoring our buildings very closely in terms of the work that needs to be done — the seismic work. We do robust and comprehensive building analyses on the buildings and their condition. We will make sure that our buildings are safe and we will take care of the appropriate work to make sure those buildings remain safe in a responsible and methodical fashion.

Mr. Hassard: Another school that was left off of the five-year capital concept was the Ross River School. We know that the government received an engineering report that said the school needed to be relevelled last summer. However, they didn't take that recommendation, so they went and got a second opinion so that they wouldn't have to fix that school.

Can the minister tell us what the government's plans are for the Ross River School and can this government assure parents and teachers that this facility is safe?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can assure parents, teachers and staff in that Ross River School facility that it remains safe. That school has been settling due to freezing and thawing of

permafrost under the school for many years. Over the years, a number of structural repairs and interventions have been made to that school. A recent building condition report was completed by engineers in February 2018 on the structure and confirms the school remains structurally stable and safe for occupancy. We are continuing to monitor, as recommended in the report.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to call at this time the motion for which I gave notice earlier today regarding the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon.

Unanimous consent re calling Motion No. 312 for debate

Speaker: The Government House Leader, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, has requested the unanimous consent of the House to call at this time the motion for which she gave notice earlier today regarding the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is unanimous consent.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 312

Clerk: Motion No. 312, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 12(1) of the *Elections Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Maxwell Harvey as the Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon, effective October 1, 2018, for a term as stipulated in subsection 12(2) of the *Elections Act*.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have very little actually to add with respect to this. I think the motion says it all. The proper process, selection and evaluation assessment of candidates was followed. This matter comes to the House with respect to this motion recommending that Maxwell Harvey be appointed as the Chief Electoral Officer for the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Kent: I'll be brief in my remarks as well. I was fortunate enough to be selected as a member of the interview committee, as well as the Member for Porter Creek Centre and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I would also like to thank Helen Fitzsimmons for all of her work in helping us through that process. I would like to congratulate all of the candidates that put their name forward and, of course,

congratulations to Mr. Harvey as well. We wish him every success in his new role as Yukon's Chief Electoral Officer.

Ms. White: I would just like to echo my colleague in saying that it was almost pleasurable to go through the interview process, mostly due, in fact, to the work done by the director of the Legislative Assembly. So a big thank you to Helen Fitzsimmons for walking us through that process and again just for the good candid conversations we were able to have — the three of us who were on that committee. We're excited that Mr. Harvey has taken up the offer of the position. We thank the other candidates for their application, and I think that Elections Yukon is in good hands.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the vote.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on this motion?

Before putting the question, the Chair must draw members' attention to subsection 12(1) of the *Elections Act*. That subsection requires that the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly to the Commissioner in Executive Council respecting the appointment of a Chief Electoral Officer be supported by at least two-thirds of the members of the Assembly. The effect of subsection 12(1) is that, for the motion to be carried, at least 13 members must vote in favour.

Division

Speaker: In order to ensure that the requirements of subsection 12(1) of the *Elections Act* are met, the Chair will now call for a recorded division.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried by the required support of two-thirds of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and that the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner in Executive Council that

Maxwell Harvey be appointed Chief Electoral Officer of Yukon.

Motion No. 312 agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move at this time the motion for second reading of Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, which received first reading earlier today.

Unanimous consent re second reading of Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*

Speaker: The Hon. Premier has requested the unanimous consent of the House to move at this time the motion for second reading of Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, which received first reading earlier today.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is unanimous consent.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 207, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you to my colleagues in this House for unanimous consent. I am pleased to rise this afternoon to outline the spending requests as part of the first supplementary estimates for 2018-19. In the spring, this government stressed the importance of supplementary estimates as an exercise in accountability. At that time, we said that these appropriations are an opportunity to further clarify Yukon's financial situation. They are also providing insight into the government's approach to fiscal planning. Outside of exceptional circumstances, supplementary estimates should not be very far off a government's intended annual spending plans. When they vary significantly, as they have in the past, it is clear that the territory has only a rough fiscal plan.

Our government is committed to ensuring that the government's finances and the government's actions are clear and understandable to Yukoners. This work begins with tabling a main estimate that accurately represents the spending that will occur during the year. As we know, unexpected events have happened and the timing of some of the projects can have an impact on the government's financial situation. This is the purpose of supplementary estimates. They are not, however, an opportunity to propose new spending on major projects. This has been our commitment in the past and we remain committed to this into the future.

This year, things are no different. The story that we are telling with the first supplementary estimate is the same as in the spring. The purpose of this spending is to capture largely unexpected expenses. With this approach, we will be improving Yukon's long-term financial position by avoiding unnecessary burden.

In 2017, we set out to establish a more strategic and sustainable approach to fiscal planning. We examined the true state of government finances and confirmed that the government has been spending beyond its means. While I am very pleased with the first steps that we have taken as a territory and as a government, there is more work to be done. The Yukon Financial Advisory Panel was the first step in this process and it led to several clear commitments from this government. The input the panel received and the insights that they provided to the government are informing our budget process and will for years to come. We announced several explicit undertakings in the spring, but I will restate them for the members.

One key focus for this coming year will remain a comprehensive review of Health and Social Services, as the panel suggested. We will also strive to increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services to Yukoners. We will look not just at what government does, but also how it does it. This government is also committed to getting out of the business of doing business by getting out of work that elsewhere is done by the private sector. This government heard loud and clear that the people of Yukon are not in favour of a sales tax. This government was clear and deliberate: There will be no sales tax in Yukon. While a sales tax is off the table, a key finding of the Financial Advisory Panel was that the own-source revenue in the territory is drastically lower than every other jurisdiction in the country. This may be an area where Yukon needs to catch up as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now spend a few minutes detailing changes to spending between the main estimate and the supplementary estimates. In its entirety, the 2018-19 first supplementary estimate contains \$13.4 million in additional spending. This is less than a one-percent increase over the main estimates. It is made up of \$4.8 million in operation and maintenance and \$8.6 million in capital. Revenues, which include recoveries of operation and maintenance and capital costs, have increased by \$2.5 million. The transfers from Canada remain unchanged. Forecast net financial assets have decreased by \$7.4 million since the main estimates were presented this spring. This change can be attributed to timing of special projects and an increase in capital expenditures related to tangible capital assets.

Mr. Speaker, I will remind members that Yukon must continue to invest in its infrastructure. In evaluating how best to return to a path of fiscal sustainability and returning to surplus by 2020-21, this government is looking further than the next budget cycle. Aging infrastructure presents a very real financial risk to provinces and to territories if left too long and can severely compromise our ability to offer those services that Yukoners require.

We weighed the options carefully and decided that the most pertinent course in 2018-19 was to take advantage of money that Ottawa has put on the table through its generous infrastructure funding programs. Mr. Speaker, we will not allow Yukon communities to fall into disrepair or pass the burden of maintenance on to future Yukoners and Yukon governments. We are reducing the infrastructure deficit that we inherited. This government will continue to invest in roads, bridges, hospitals and schools used by Yukoners and we will make use of federal funding, whenever available, to do so.

Diving into O&M spending, the single largest contributor to additional spending in this area can be attributed to fire suppression. In North America, we know climate change is not just a theory. It is the cracks in our highways; it is the shifts in the foundations of our buildings and a significant increase in fire suppression activity due to the lengthening and variability of the fire season. I think we are all aware of the challenges of this past fire season in western Canada. Not only are we empathetic to the damage caused by wildland fires in British Columbia, but Yukon faced its own challenges related to those fires. In 2018, these changing circumstances translated to \$4.4 million in additional wildfire costs, not only in southeast Yukon, but to our support of our neighbours as Yukon fulfilled its commitment to assist other jurisdictions under mutual aid agreements.

The other major increase is in the area of funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation in the form of \$1.3 million for higher chemotherapy treatment costs, as well as \$1.6 million for union staff collective agreement funding, medical imaging and lab services.

Another important addition this year is the work being completed in cooperation with the Child and Youth Advocate. In March, this government made a commitment to complete an independent and impartial systematic review of the transitional support services program.

This \$100,000 commitment to the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate will support her work in undertaking an independent and impartial review of this program. This review was requested as part of our work to ensure that children and youth in our care are receiving the best care and support possible that meets their needs.

In terms of additional funding that contributes to Yukon's thriving economy, this government saw increased uptake of the Yukon film development fund. This additional \$956,000 is a key factor in a company's decision to shoot in the Yukon and to hire and to train Yukoners for field production. These projects significantly impact the growth of the Yukon film and media sector and the local economy.

This government has also made its commitments to reconciliation a priority. We remain committed to work together with our First Nation and Inuvialuit partners to foster reconciliation. Our work with the Inuvialuit to implement their final agreement in Yukon includes management of Herschel Island Territorial Park, as well as collaborative management of fish, wildlife and habitat on the North Slope. A \$408,000 increase in this agreement is made up of \$242,000

in funding received late in 2017-18, for which projects could not be completed prior to year-end and a further \$166,000 which forms the annual increases to this agreement.

Also in the area of sustainability, I am pleased to say that Energy, Mines and Resources has seen a considerable uptake in its energy rebate program. 2018 marks a significant year of investment for the Government of Yukon in energy-efficiency rebates in our territory. Our energy rebate programs are very popular and assist businesses and homeowners to make investments in buildings and heating systems to reduce energy consumption in Yukon and to convert to renewable forms of energy. This additional interest has led to an \$800,000 increase over the main estimates.

In addition, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has identified some non-compliance at the Wolverine mine site. To ensure that conditions do not deteriorate, the department has begun remediation work in the amount of \$6.5 million and will use the security posted to fund the work.

Mr. Speaker, this government also has two noteworthy decreases in operation and maintenance spending. The first involves a \$17.8-million decrease for Assessment and Abandoned Mines as the federal government takes over the Faro mine work plan. As the regulator and members of the oversight committee, the Yukon government will continue to ensure that the Faro mine site meets existing standards necessary to protect the environment and ensure human safety.

Discussions are ongoing between the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon and affected First Nations on the management of the Faro mine remediation project. We are looking forward to seeing businesses and employment opportunities for Yukon First Nations and local residents related to implementing these projects.

The other decrease of note is \$950,000 for the Kluane First Nation windmill project. This project progressed more slowly than anticipated, but definitely will continue.

There are also a few notable changes to capital spending. Of the \$8.6 million in additional capital spending, the most significant piece of the pie is related to land development at \$4 million.

We all know that housing stock is becoming increasingly tight in the Yukon. These funds are largely being dispersed to address demands through the completion of phase 3 of the Whistle Bend project, continuation of phase 4 and initial work of phases 5 and 6. For context, phases 3 and 4 are expected to release over 200 lots in 2019 and phase 5 generating over 160 lots in 2020.

The other major expense is a real allocation of \$3.8 million in funding not spent from 2017-18 for the completion of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility, which recently opened on budget.

All other changes to capital spending are related to the purchase of two new fire trucks by Community Services or to address lapses in funds from the previous year being spent this year.

We also have some changes to recoveries included in the first supplementary estimates. Of additional note is a \$6.2-million reduction in operation and maintenance recoveries. Included in these changes is a \$14.4-million reduction as part of the changes in governance related to the Faro mine, once again. This is offset by a recovery for the Wolverine remediation work that I mentioned earlier.

I would like to continue my summary by speaking to some increases in revenue. As many prospective homeowners know, we are in an increasing interest rate environment. The Government of Yukon has benefitted positively by the latest interest rate increases to the form of \$118,000 in additional revenue on government investments.

The largest area of growth, however, is in land sales. As a result of higher than anticipated demand for lots, we have seen an \$8.6-million increase in revenue. This is largely as a result of the successful lottery held earlier this year and goes hand in hand with the additional capital spending I mentioned earlier in order to continue to meet this demand.

I would like to conclude my remarks by restating the purpose of supplementary estimates. While we may be used to conveying any new and unexpected changes to the main estimates, it will be always in our aim to make realistic assessments of our annual spending as the year starts. We will always work to account for any expenses we know will occur based upon the best possible information at the time.

Today, our government presents a first supplementary estimate that does not stray far from the 2018-19 main estimates. This is an important step toward long-term fiscal sustainability, but there is still a lot of work to do — work that I am excited to see progress in the next coming months and years ahead. We look forward to working with all members and Yukoners to take the necessary steps to create a sustainable and prosperous path for the territory.

I invite members to treat Committee of the Whole as an opportunity to request further detail on any areas included in the supplementary estimates, and I look forward to comments from my colleagues.

Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to rise here this afternoon as the Official Opposition Finance critic. I will be making most of my remarks in that context, though I would also like, at this point, to thank my constituents in my riding of Lake Laberge for the continued opportunity to work with them and to serve as their MLA.

I would like to thank as well the Leader of the Official Opposition for the continued opportunity to serve as the Finance critic, as well as all of my caucus colleagues and our staff for their continued support and the work that each of them do each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, in talking to Yukoners over the past several months, it's clear that Yukoners are becoming increasingly upset with this Liberal government's lack of action on important issues. This is the Liberal government that is full of platitudes but weak on substance. There have been plenty of photo opportunities and platitudes but we see a complete lack of vision. In fact, the single-most comment I hear from

ordinary Yukoners about this Premier and the Liberal government is this: What have they actually done?

The Premier is two years into his mandate. The sand is slipping out of the Liberal hourglass fast. They have largely squandered 40 percent of their mandate or as much as half if the election is called before year mark. What have they actually done? That is what Yukoners are asking.

Yukoners want their government to take issues that matter to them seriously. Photo opportunities and platitudes are very nice, but they don't actually fix any problems. A few of the issues ordinary Yukoners care about and that they have brought to my attention include: the hospital bed pressure crisis; the delay in opening the Whistle Bend continuing care beds; growing wait times for procedures, including cataract surgery; issues around support for our EMS volunteers in rural Yukon; highway safety; a desire to see expanded cell service; a desire to see the government move forward with the review of medical travel and to see increases in that area; concerns about our education system; land availability; housing; availability of land; the cost of living; and, of course, the economy — all issues that are top of mind for Yukon citizens.

I would like to note in remarking about Whistle Bend Place that I want to thank and congratulate all the staff of contractors who have worked on it for doing a great job on construction of this facility. We're certainly very pleased to see this facility constructed as well as seeing the Premier and government have a change of heart on this facility and, in fact, recognizing now the need for it.

What I am concerned about is we have yet to see a timeline from the government on the speed with which that facility will be filled and we continue to hear from Yukoners who are concerned about the number of citizens who are in Whitehorse General Hospital awaiting a bed in the continuing care facility as well as those who are on the wait-list.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Liberal government appears to be out of touch with ordinary Yukoners and their priorities. The issues that seem important to them are not the ones we hear about from ordinary Yukoners. The Premier indeed talks today about raising fees and fines and potential cuts to departments, but Mr. Speaker, there are decisions which have been made by this government which they had a choice not to make. It reflects their spending priorities, but the examples that I am about to list do not reflect the priorities that we hear from ordinary Yukoners.

A few of these examples — one minister was able to find \$144,000 to renovate office space for a new judge, but the same minister in a different portfolio of hers did not see fit to ensure that Golden Horn Elementary School received a portable they need or that Hidden Valley School received a portable they had asked for.

As one of my colleagues brought forward in Question Period today, there are a number of other schools within the Whitehorse area that are facing significant pressures.

Despite the Premier's repeated claims that the government is committed to getting out of the business of doing business, they proceeded with cannabis legalization using a model that actually grows the size of government and

insisted on spending \$3 million on purchasing cannabis inventory for the first four months of operation alone, as well as setting up a public retail store. We proposed an alternative similar to what the Province of Saskatchewan is doing, which leaves the private sector taking the risks and spending private sector dollars instead of public dollars on retail, but the government refused to listen and insisted on growing the size of government.

In the first year of the Liberal mandate, by the Premier's admission, the Liberal government added to the size of the government by some 240 new full-time equivalent employee positions, virtually none of which were related to continuing care. I would point out, the reason for the reference to continuing care is that tends to be the Finance minister's favourite area to point to as an excuse for the growth of government.

Despite the attempts to blame red ink and spending down the surplus on the O&M costs of Whistle Bend Place, it's now almost halfway through the mandate that Whistle Bend Place is only about to get its first residents. During the first year and the second year of the Liberal mandate, over 480 new full-time equivalent positions were added to the Yukon government, by the Premier's own admission, during debates in this House as reflected in Hansard. That is an increase of approximately 10.4 percent to the size of government in just two years since the Liberals took office. So again, as we see with the Premier's ministerial statement earlier today in referring to what's in the interim fiscal and economic outdate and the rhetoric which has been used around the state of the government's finances when they took office, upon examination of the details and the facts, the Liberal talking points fall apart.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to refer to another few areas that just show or demonstrate some of the areas where government's spending choices — the Liberal government's spending choices — were not in line with what we hear from Yukoners and are areas where, had they chosen to do so, they could have saved a significant amount of money. We've seen the government embark on the development of a new logo and new website at the cost of around half a million dollars. We've also heard that some of the costs that have been seen since that time do not appear to have been reflected in the government's initial statements about what the bill would be. Those include seeing a new letterhead, new signage, new nametags for employees, new signage on vehicles and so on. So we look forward to hearing what the total bill is, but we use the number they have of half a million dollars for the moment.

We see as well the \$300,000 that they spent on the Financial Advisory Panel report. I would agree with the Leader of the Third Party that the government seems to be ignoring it and set on taking their own approach. We've seen \$120,000 spent spraying water in the air, hoping for ice at Dawson City. We've seen \$105,000 spent by Cabinet upon taking office on personal electronic devices that were not due for replacement, and we've seen \$40,000 on Cabinet office

renovations, including the new glass wall that fortified, one might say, the Cabinet office.

Mr. Speaker, if you add up those areas, those few examples alone add up to an excess of \$1.2 million. We could go through — and will go through — other examples in the future. The point I am making is this: There have been choices made by this Liberal government that we believe are wasteful or, at the very least, non-priority items. Added up, they add up to a substantial amount of money. The government could choose to sharpen the pencil in those areas rather than looking at blanket cuts across departments.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, CBC today reported another revelation from a whistle-blower with an internal memo from the Department of Finance sent by the Deputy Minister of Finance to all deputy ministers, asking departments to find two-percent cuts. The Premier has also repeatedly touted his plan to have a health care review to make cuts in the area of health. The current O&M budget for Health and Social Services is \$403.796 million. A two-percent cut is over \$8 million. We are left with the question: Are the Premier and this Liberal government planning to cut funding for Health and Social Services by over \$8 million? If so, what area do they plan to make those cuts in? If not, why did a letter from the top official in the Premier's own department direct all departments, including Health and Social Services, to look for ways to cut their budget by two percent?

There have been times in the past when Health and Social Services has been given a different target than other departments in recognition of the fact of the growth of health care needs of our aging population and the importance of investing in our health care needs. Those were in years when we were actually increasing the funding across the board in all departments.

Again, if the Premier is not looking at cutting health care by two percent, why did this memo direct all departments, including Health and Social Services, to look for ways to cut their budget by two percent? Meanwhile, I have to point out that they do have the brand new logo on this memo that was sent to departments, demonstrating — at the top of the page — one area where the Liberal Cabinet themselves could have chosen to save money.

How are medical wait times going to improve if \$8 million is cut from health funding? How will people on the wait-list for continuing care beds get the care that they need if the budget for health is cut by two percent? How, when health care costs right across the country are the number one cost pressure in provincial and territorial budgets, does the Premier labour under the illusion that this government can cut health care by two percent without seeing dire consequences for Yukoners? What does the Premier or the Minister of Health and Social Services have to say to people who are currently waiting two years for cataract surgery, or to my constituent who needs a spot in continuing care and still cannot even get an estimate of when he will be off the wait-list and receive the care that he needs? It is time for this Liberal government to start treating the issues that matter to Yukoners seriously.

Ordinary Yukoners do, and they expect their government to do that as well.

The Premier's lack of leadership is causing serious problems, and sending in the plumbers to silence government employees is not a solution. Whistle-blowers appear to be coming forward in unprecedented numbers and the reason they are is because there are serious problems. Silencing them does not fix the problems. The Premier's reaction to a leak might be to call in the plumbers but that will not fix the problem.

A few areas I would like to touch on before wrapping up my comments, in the interest of expediting debate — again, as my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, pointed out earlier today, Yukoners are very interested in seeing progress on medical travel. They want to see increased coverage that addresses the current needs of Yukon citizens, because of course, as members know, the last significant changes and increases to this program were made about a decade ago when I was Health and Social Services minister at the time, and there is a need for an update in this area.

Our motion, as proposed by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, was supported in this House in the spring, which we appreciate, but we have not seen any signs of action on it.

The Financial Advisory Panel, in their report, twice recommended that government do budgets on a consolidated basis to show a more accurate picture of government's finances and their report — again, the government's own panel — noted that the consolidated financial picture shows a healthier picture than the government's budget would lead one to believe, and they said, and I agree, that it represents a more accurate picture of the government's finances. Their report, and the numbers shown in it, in fact, directly contradict the Liberal government's repeated claims about a dollar of revenue and a dollar and a half worth of spending and show it to be absolute poppycock.

Mr. Speaker, I would note as well that the government has their much-touted five year capital plan. We've seen a lack of detail; we've referred to it and characterized it as better being referred to as a five-year capital concept and, in fact, Yukon contractors are becoming increasingly frustrated by the lack of action in the government fulfilling the commitments that they made.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of expediting debate and dealing with our priority, which is getting to asking detailed questions on the finances, I will leave my remarks there for the moment but, as I have noted in the past — and I will not reiterate all of them this Sitting, but they stand in Hansard for the record — there are a number of areas we have identified where government could have chosen money but where this Liberal government has chosen not to save money. There are a number of areas where their spending has been wasteful and appears to respect their personal priorities or their personal pet projects rather than the priorities of Yukon citizens, and we will continue to call the government out on those areas and hold them accountable on behalf of Yukon citizens.

Mr. Gallina: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the first supplementary estimates of this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Porter Creek Centre for their time this summer in helping me further understand what's important to them and to their families. The conversations we have are invaluable and help shape the priorities our caucus brings forward through legislation, main estimates and, in this case, supplementary estimates. Thank you to everyone who attended our all-caucus barbecue at Shipyard's Park on July 10, to everyone who joined my family and me at my constituent barbecue in Whistle Bend on July 14 and to the many people who met my colleagues throughout the summer months as they hosted constituent and community events. It's encouraging to connect with so many Yukoners and constituents who truly want the best for the people of this territory.

Mr. Speaker, as I prepared and researched for this Fall Sitting and reflected on the interactions I was fortunate enough to have with people, I was reminded how the key priorities of this government align with the priorities of Yukoners. They want us to continue to prioritize a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive. They have come to see the value that's created through strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations as reconciliation is fostered. They know that a diverse, growing economy is providing good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way, and they know that strategic investments are building healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities.

Mr. Speaker, Whistle Bend Place and the programming and services being provided to Yukoners aligns directly with our people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive. This facility is the largest capital project in Yukon's history. It is an honour to have this facility in the riding of Porter Creek Centre and I am happy to report that it was completed on time and on budget.

It is encouraging to know that all eligible Yukoners on the wait-list for long-term care will be accommodated once Whistle Bend is ready to receive residents later this month. Whistle Bend Place requires approximately 250 staff for a full staff complement. Seventy percent of the staff needed have been hired, with approximately 140 staff being hired locally, including transfers from other facilities.

On September 12, 2018, I joined more than 1,000 Yukoners who attended a very successful grand opening of Whistle Bend Place. Inside the facility, we saw many spaces for a variety of activities and specialty programming. This includes a large multi-purpose room for special events and larger gatherings, a nicely appointed woodworking shop, arts and crafts studios, indoor and outdoor gardening areas and a quiet room for devotion and personal reflection.

There are also a number of small and large activity rooms that can be used for many special interests. Family rooms with kitchen appliances can be used for personal social gatherings or family dinners, as well as for a variety of programs, such as resident dining and breakfast clubs. There is also a central

therapeutic gym, as well as smaller therapy rooms and neighbourhoods on each storey.

Of particular interest to people I spoke with at the open house was the kitchen set up to receive and prepare wild game and the First Nation healing lodge with its central fire pit and its connection to the water with a running fountain.

More than 1,200 people contributed to the design and construction of this facility and, as the MLA for the riding of Porter Creek Centre, I want to thank them and have them know their contributions have created a tremendous Yukon asset that will serve Yukoners for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this government has taken great strides in addressing strong government-to-government relations with First Nations to foster reconciliation.

Again, as I meet with constituents and discuss ways in which people of this territory can thrive and be prosperous, it is evident — and I am reminded daily — that collaboration, partnerships and positive working relationships between the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations are vital to fostering reconciliation and the overall success of the territory on many, many levels.

Our action, as a government, to this priority is evident in the revitalization of the Yukon Forums. The Yukon Forums are now regular meetings of the political leaders of the Government of Yukon, Yukon First Nations and the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Yukon Forum was created in the spirit of reconciliation to develop strong government-to-government relations and collaborate on priorities shared by the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations.

The Yukon Forum approved the joint action plan last September and, since then, we have made significant progress on a number of initiatives. We overcame a long-standing issue by signing an agreement that clarifies how resource royalties will be shared under chapter 23 of final agreements.

Significant federal child welfare funding is now flowing directly to Yukon First Nations rather than through the Yukon government, and a trilateral table has been established to discuss child welfare issues with the federal government.

Intergovernmental workshops have been held on child welfare, land-based healing, justice and land use planning. These workshops will help inform the improvements we can make together as governments.

Again, it's about understanding the priorities of Yukoners and being able to translate those priorities into action. This is evident in the progress of this government, which I have outlined above. These priorities are reflected in the legislation we'll be bringing forward for debate this fall, as well as in the supplementary estimates on the floor for debate today.

As we can see in these supplementary estimates, there has been little change since the 2018 budget was released in April. The forecast is still for small deficits in 2018-19 and in 2019-20 before a return to projected surplus in 2020-21. This government is very serious about being diligent in our forecasts and tabling main estimates that are an accurate reflection of the projected revenues and expenses that will occur during that year.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the upfront work this caucus has done and the work of the administration because, for the second year in a row, we have tabled fewer and smaller supplementary estimates. Consistent with 2017-18, the budget tabled in April 2018 took a more comprehensive view of Yukon's finances and information on government's planned capital investments over the next five years. The long-term capital plan allows Yukon government to address planning, forecasting and timing of procurement for development and maintenance contractors.

This approach attempts to limit funding requests made through supplementary budget exercises. Consequently, the 2018-19 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* represents an increase of less than one percent of the main estimates. When we look at this change of \$319,000, or one percent in the accumulated surplus end of year and compare that to previous years in the same category, we see a trend in how the previous government forecasted its spending.

For the 2014-15 main estimates, there was an increase of \$3,024,000 — or 23 percent — added to the accumulated surplus end of year in the first supplementary estimates of that year. For the 2013-14 main estimates, there was an increase of \$3,944,000 — or 31 percent — added to the accumulated surplus end of year in the first supplementary estimates of that year.

I make this point to help Yukoners understand how this government is committed to the necessary work to accurately forecast the main estimates and making allowances in the supplementary estimates only for those unexpected and unforeseen circumstances. This is concrete evidence that this government takes the job of managing the territory's finances very seriously.

In closing, I would like to once again thank the constituents of Porter Creek Centre for allowing me to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly and for their time to help me understand what is important to them and to their families. I will continue to work hard for Yukoners and keep them apprised of the progress we're making as a government.

Ms. Hanson: My comments this afternoon with respect to the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* will be brief. Just on reflecting on comments made by my colleague from across the way on the government side, I am reminded yet again of the importance of having the opportunity to move the discussion of — as I think the Minister of Finance talked about — the importance of ensuring the efficiency and the effectiveness of financial resources that are voted in this Legislative Assembly.

I'm reminded again of the importance of moving that conversation to a conversation that is the non-partisan venue of public accounts or a finance committee, a process that we in this Legislative Assembly are moving toward — at glacial speed, I would suggest, but we're moving toward it.

It's easy enough for politicians to get into great rhetoric about whether we did or did not campaign on this or whether this politically is something that is important, but the fact of

the matter is that last spring we voted on main estimates. We voted on and agreed to, with the majority of this Legislative Assembly, a budget that was to be disbursed among departments and agencies and then spent. What happens when we come into this Legislative Assembly and we try to debate that — then we get into — as opposed to — was that money spent? Equally important is that, if it was not spent, why not? It has nothing to do with us in this room or the politics in this room. It has everything to do with how effectively our departments and agencies are managed.

It's about the accountability, then, of the 5,000 public servants who work on behalf of Yukoners to deliver, not on the political commitments, but to deliver on the commitments made in this Legislative Assembly to take and steward the resources that are given to them.

It's equally important — when we talk about this fact that this supplementary budget is relatively minor in the scheme of things — to focus on those areas where we're not spending. That kind of debate and discussion is not going to happen very effectively or efficiently — or, quite frankly, very intelligently — in this Legislative Assembly because we don't, as politicians — and I will say, with great respect, that even the ministers don't have that level of detail. It's the officials we charge to carry out that responsibility on our behalf who do.

I will just use one example. In the area of Energy, Mines and Resources, for example, there is a story to the fact that, with respect to assessment of abandoned mines, there are changes that reflect a revised work plan approved by Canada. There is a story to the change in the type 2 funding agreements with Canada that sees \$17,815,000 less being spent under the direction of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — the deputy minister responsible for that department and the officials there. It is a story that would be most effectively told and understood — and perhaps lessons learned carried forward by all members of this Legislative Assembly — if that story, in my opinion, was being told and shared in the context of the finance committee of Public Accounts. Because there are lessons to be learned when, since 2002-03, Canadian citizens have transferred to this territory over \$400 million for a project that was initially set up to be managed by Yukon government, an oversight committee of Yukon First Nations and territory by an independent entity — the activities managed by an independent entity — and, 15 years and \$400 million later, the federal government is now resuming responsibility.

That may be a story that the Auditor General in the future may look at, but I would think that, from an operational point of view, all of us have a keen interest in knowing what we can learn as we look at the other six type 2 sites. What can we learn as we go forward with respect to the kinds of issues that arise, for example, with Wolverine — with Ketza, which is a split federal and territorial responsibility?

I know that goes beyond the scope of a normal comment or discussion around supplementary estimates, but my two colleagues from across the way will be aware that some of us had the opportunity — I look and I'm saying this with sincerity to my colleagues from the Official Opposition. I do

encourage us all, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, to begin to think about making that transition to a fully accountable Legislature where we actually do understand our roles with respect to the finances of government. It's not about politics; it's about getting the best value for the money that Yukon citizens and Canadian citizens, quite frankly, are investing in this territory. That means sometimes taking it out of here and getting into the nitty-gritty of each department and each agency in a non-political but non-partisan way. That's what Public Accounts is about, and we're not quite there yet.

We'll have to continue to have hope on that and we will be coming back. We will be, as the New Democratic Party caucus, asking a number of questions on specific aspects of departments because, as I said in my comment, it's not just more money but sometimes it's the story behind "why not the expenditures" that is equally revealing about management and management decisions.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would just like to begin by thanking all MLAs for allowing us to proceed with the debate on second reading today on the supplementary budget. I think it's terrific that we can make better use of this time.

Just sort of following on the heels of the comments made by the Leader of the Third Party with a notion about how we work to try to get information more available for all Yukoners and members of the Legislature to try to remove the partisan nature or the politics out of the notion of a debate around our budgets in order to create better effectiveness of our spending and accountability. I think those are excellent words.

I also note the comments regarding the lack of spending. It is tougher to follow that stuff always. I think it is important that all of us as legislators seek to find that information.

Mr. Speaker, just as it's my first moment to stand to debate here in this session — as we were coming back to the Legislature, I started to put on my dress shoes again and I tripped going up the stairs because I'm just not used to wearing them, so it's always a moment to transition as we come back into this House.

I am standing to speak on this budget for a couple of reasons, predominantly because the Department of Community Services is seeking some supplementary funds on both the O&M budget and the capital budget. I will speak about each of those individually. Let me also mention, though, that notion of where we are not spending money. Just as we try to track things, I can say to this Legislature that, as we approach legalization of cannabis in a couple of weeks' time, that spending is on track. We are ready to introduce legalized cannabis here and will transition very quickly to support the private sector in retail, and we are looking forward to that.

Also, today we had the *Designated Materials Regulation* come into effect. I know that everyone in this House has followed this with interest over the past five years, I think — but over some time. Those programs are doing well and the funding for them is on track.

Let me turn to those areas where we are seeking some supplementary funds. First, let me start with the O&M budget,

and that is with respect to wildland fire. We are seeking an additional \$4.5 million. This wildland fire season, the Yukon experienced 66 wildfires that burned approximately 85,000 hectares of forest. This has been a typical summer in recent years. I say "in recent years" because, as we have been warming in the Yukon and in neighbouring NWT and Alaska, what has been happening is that our fire regime is increasing. Even though it is typical for recent years, it is not typical over the long term and it is an increase. Therefore, we did spend more money, although I want to say that you always hope that it will be a small fire season and that there won't be any damage or risk to our communities — however, it is getting more challenging. The risk continues to increase. We just met last week with the ministers of infrastructure from across the country to talk about such things as the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund. We discussed where, across all jurisdictions of the country, there are risks that we really need to address, and wildland fire is one of the ones that we have to deal with here.

When the fires hit in British Columbia, especially in the northern half of the province, and as our nights were starting to cool and the risk was starting to diminish somewhat here in the territory and resources began to free up — on the day that the fire hit in Telegraph Creek, I got on the phone with my colleague from British Columbia — the parliamentary secretary, Ms. Jennifer Rice — and we talked about how, as Yukoners, we would try to support our neighbours. We had already helped with launching some water bombers from Watson Lake, and that community got up to speed and support right away. I thank the Member for Watson Lake — or I thank the citizens of Watson Lake, and I pass that through her. When we talked to our counterparts in British Columbia, they listed four key things that they needed. We responded right away that we would be able to supply all of those.

That has nothing to do, ultimately, with the supplementary budget because we have an agreement of all jurisdictions across Canada. I apologize — I know the acronym — it is CIFFC. I think it is the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre. I will get it for Hansard. That agreement will allow us to send that support where the host jurisdiction will cover the costs, but you know when you need to get capacity and address those fires in a timely manner, it is important that we get those resources right away, and we were able to do so.

I'm thankful that we didn't have the same kind of disasters here in the Yukon, but the risks are always there.

What I really want to say is thank you to our wildland firefighters, whether they be members of our own Yukon government protective services team or one of the many First Nation crews who contract to do the work over the summer. They did a stand-up job, as always. It is very hard for those crews. I know when the fire hit along Windy Arm, there was a lot of smoke and concern and citizens needed to be informed about the level of risk. It is hard when you see those fires. We need them to burn in our wilderness zones so that the risk doesn't continue to increase, but it's difficult to watch. I know in that instance there was a lot of concern raised and each

year, as we go forward, we recognize that we'll need to take some more proactive measures in order to address the risk — more to come on that in time, Mr. Speaker.

In this supplementary budget, what we are looking for is to cover the additional costs that were incurred through a new normal of a higher level fire season than we have had over past decades.

The second aspect where I am coming forward to speak today is on the capital side of the budget and it is with respect to lot development and capital investment that we are putting into that lot development. There are two pieces within it. Predominantly, it is investment in Whistle Bend as a subdivision. I said today during Question Period — I mentioned it in one response — that there is an additional \$4 million that we are seeking in the supplementary budget to continue to ramp up the development of Whistle Bend. That will lead us to releasing 132 single family lots, 54 duplex and townhouse lots and 19 multi-family lots, as well as 35 commercial lots next year. We're on track for additional increases in 2020 and the whole notion there is to make sure that we have a two-year supply of lots available in Whitehorse.

At the same time, there is money that is being moved and it is not an increase to the budget overall, but what we are doing is shifting rural land development from Energy, Mines and Resources, where it had gone several years ago, to bring it in line with Community Services' lot development and bring those two teams together.

We do hope to get efficiencies out of that, Mr. Speaker. I believe it's around \$1.7 million. Again, that's money in and out, but for transparency purposes, we discuss it here. The idea is that when we get those two units working together we hope to get some efficiencies and that those efficiencies can result in productivity gains around lot development or in reduced costs, or both, and so we see it as a good move.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me address some of the comments that I heard from the Finance critic, the member for Lake Laberge, and just a few things that I wanted to discuss. I think that, first of all, he criticized that we were discussing the \$1.50 spent for every new dollar in revenue and was talking about that as not being correct information; however, my recollection is that it was the Financial Advisory Panel that actually laid that out for us and was borne out by the department as well, and so the very panel that he's suggesting we should listen to more is the group that is bringing that information forward.

I do agree that the Whistle Bend continuing care facility is an important facility; I think we all agree on that here in the Legislature; however, our concern was that there had been no consultation with Yukoners about where it should be located. Our concern was that if we're going to develop a plan, we would need to talk about it in the broader sense of aging in place, so it's good that we're getting the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. I heard him criticize that it was overbudget and not on time and I actually thought that it is on budget and on time, and I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Health and Social Services with that information.

There was some discussion around growing the public service. Well, that is one of the places where we naturally need to grow the public service — of course we need to staff it. So that is a growth — I'll acknowledge that — and yes, it is under our watch and yes, it is the right thing to do. The thing that seemed like the wrong thing to do, for me, was, Mr. Speaker, was when we first landed and saw that there were, I think, under the Department of Health and Social Services, but also under the Department of Education, new hires which hadn't been brought through this Legislature. Those are concerns to me. How do we create transparency and accountability if there is spending that doesn't pass through this Legislature? So I do think it's good to sharpen our pencils and I do think it's good to watch for where can create efficiencies. I do think, as I heard the Premier during Question Period say today, that we do need to look for ways to make sure that each of our departments is working to try to control the increase in spending while maintaining the level of service that we have for Yukoners. That is exactly what he has said to me and said to all of us as ministers and that is what we will do, working with our departments. We will continue to look for some of those ways.

Mr. Speaker, overall I'm happy that we're able to bring forward this budget close to where we had originally projected it, and a couple of the larger ticket items are within my department, so I will speak more about this, I'm sure, during Committee of the Whole where we can respond to questions regarding those changes to the Community Services budget, both in terms of operation and maintenance and the capital budget.

Mr. Kent: I'm going to be brief in my remarks at second reading. First of all, I would like to thank Finance officials, not only in the Department of Finance but throughout all departments in government, for their work in preparing the supplementary estimates that are before us here today. They do a tremendous job and we certainly appreciate that work that they put in on a day-to-day basis on behalf of Yukoners.

I guess my remarks will follow up along the same themes from what the Leader of the Third Party, the Member for Whitehorse Centre, spoke about and that's about the process for us to ask and get questions answered on the record with respect to departments that either aren't seeking an increase or have a decrease. It's my understanding that those departments will not be called for debate with ministers during Committee of the Whole, so at this morning's briefing with officials from Energy, Mines and Resources — and, again, I thank all those officials who participated in that as well as provided briefings last Thursday and Friday on the supplementary estimates in the departments that will be called — but my remarks to those officials this morning is that we will have to take up questions that we have about budgetary line items or other aspects for those departments that we don't anticipate being called during general debate with the Premier.

For instance, my critic responsibilities are Education and a portion of Energy, Mines and Resources. Education isn't

seeking any funds in this supplementary and Energy, Mines and Resources is looking at a reduction. I anticipate that neither of those will be called for debate during Committee, so any questions that I have with respect to those departments I will take up with the Premier, I guess, during general debate, unless other arrangements are made at House Leaders' meetings, but it has always been — my understanding is that those departments that aren't seeking additional funds or that have a reduction aren't called for debate.

I did mention again to officials this morning to pass that on to the minister and the Premier, that many of the questions that we have — I'm just going through them and I apologize, I don't have the actual documents, I'm working off of my phone. In some of the bigger departments, such as Education and Energy, Mines and Resources as I mentioned, we see Finance and French Language Services — Highways and Public Works is obviously a department that we have a number of questions about with respect to how projects were procured this summer and any dollars that may have been moved around within those budget line items to accomplish some of that work. Tourism and Culture — obviously with the tourism strategy, we would certainly like to question the minister with officials present on that, but again, given the process that we'll have to undertake, we don't anticipate that department being called with officials present. Yukon Housing Corporation and the others — I won't mention all of them — are the big ones where we will certainly have some questions, again recognizing that unless there is some other way to do it, we'll take those questions up with the Premier during general debate on this particular bill.

With that, that's the only thing that I wanted to say on behalf of myself and colleagues who are critics for those departments that may or may not be called. I just wanted to again thank officials for their work, and we look forward to debating this bill through Committee and into third reading during this fall session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hutton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge that today we're back together on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

As we discuss the first supplementary estimates this year, I wanted to take some time to discuss the great work that our wildland fire team has been doing this year. Climate change is happening and we're witnessing it first-hand here in Yukon. You can see it all around us. One of the effects of the changing climate is more forest fires as well as more intense forest fires. This summer was no exception.

Fires are still burning across the territory from Mayo Lake to Isaac Creek to the Robert Campbell Highway, and climate change knows no borders. Our neighbours to the south in British Columbia were ravaged again this year by wildfires. As we all know, many communities were affected. Several communities were evacuated and many individuals and families were displaced. We're fortunate to have many dedicated individuals who work tirelessly to manage wildfires,

protect property and help keep people safe when wildfires get out of control.

As a government, it's our responsibility to ensure that Yukoners are protected from the risks of wildfire. That's why we see an increase of over \$4 million in the first supplementary estimates going toward Wildland Fire Management suppression. That's important work and the efforts extended beyond our borders. We helped our friends in British Columbia, like those in Telegraph Creek who have strong connections with many of us in the territory. Yukoners are compassionate and generous people, Mr. Speaker, and I believe this is money well spent.

There are also increases in the operation and maintenance budget for the Climate Change Secretariat. This is partly to help in predicting forest fire risk across Yukon under a changing climate and to help track changes in Yukon forests during long-term monitoring. These projects fall under the climate change preparedness in the north program and will help us to better inform our understanding and response to forest fires. In addition to dealing with the most tangible effects of climate change, it's important that we do our part to work toward reducing our energy consumption and transitioning away from the use of fossil fuels to meet our energy needs.

That's why I'm very excited about our government's new innovative renewable energy initiative, which supports the development of public and private sector renewable energy projects. Earlier this summer, my colleague, the Minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation, was in Old Crow to announce a \$500,000 investment for the installation of a 940-kilowatt solar ray for the community. This community-driven project is a partnership between the Government of Yukon, the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the Yukon Development Corporation that will help reduce the community's dependence on diesel fuel and help to create a sustainable energy future for the people of Old Crow. This project is expected to save up to 189,000 litres of diesel each year.

That will create substantial cost savings both in terms of the fuel itself, but also the cost of transporting it to Old Crow by air. In addition, the Vuntut Gwitchin government has entered into a multi-year purchase agreement with ATCO Electric for renewable energy generated by the solar project. This means that the project will offer long-term revenue potential for the community, and it has already created local employment opportunities. This is a great example of how we can work together with partners to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and strengthen our communities while creating economic opportunities. We committed to Yukoners that we would increase the availability of renewable energy by promoting and developing energy policies, initiative and programs that source future needs from renewable technologies.

The Old Crow solar project is just one example of how we are delivering on this commitment. There are other examples too. In partnership with Yukon First Nations, we have installed three new solar energy generating systems on

buildings owned by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, White River First Nation and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in capable of generating a total of over 76 kilowatts of electricity.

Additionally, with the help of the Government of Canada small communities fund, we are investing in a 12 kilowatt solar energy storage project at Moosehide, which will reduce the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in reliance on diesel at this important community site. These renewable energy projects will help to reduce Yukon's reliance on non-renewable sources such as diesel, lessen energy consumption and help to transition the territory toward a sustainable and self-reliant energy supply. Our efforts to address climate change go hand in hand with our efforts to protect the environment.

The Yukon is filled with some of the most pristine wilderness in the world, and many of these areas have great cultural significance to Yukon First Nation people, who have lived here for millennia.

This summer, our government signed a historic management plan with the Dhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area with the Selkirk First Nation and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun. The Dhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area is approximately 1,600 square kilometres in size, located between the Pelly and Stewart rivers. The area was identified by the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Selkirk First Nation and the Government of Yukon under chapter 10 of their final agreements as an environmentally and culturally rich area of great significance to the Northern Tutchone people. The work to establish this plan began in 2000 — 18 years ago, Mr. Speaker. By working together with First Nations, we were able to develop and agree upon a management plan that will preserve this area as a legacy for our future generations.

I had the opportunity to be involved in part of the Dhaw Ghro management plan, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize one of the individuals who was absolutely key in the development of that plan. I am really sad that he didn't stay around long enough to see it signed off. Pat Van Bibber, when he was a young man, trapped in that area. His traplines were in there, and when the government decided to shut that area down, they just moved the Van Bibber family out of there. When it came time to develop the management plan for Dhaw Ghro and they asked Pat what he would like to have done with area, he said to leave it as it is. He wanted it kept the same. I think we owe a debt of gratitude, not just to the minister and all of the other people involved, but to Pat Van Bibber and the excellent work he did to protect Dhaw Ghro.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to be here today with my colleagues to speak to the *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*. Two of my departments are seeking additional funds for this year — Health and Social Services and Environment.

Our government wants Yukoners to live longer, healthier lives. We are working hard to advance this significant portion of the supplementary budget for Health and Social Services to support the important work that the Yukon Hospital Corporation does in improving quality acute care for people of this territory. Medical science continues to make advances in

the treatment of cancer. Improvements to chemotherapy drugs are leading to better outcomes. Advances and treatment have also led to escalating costs for drugs associated with these treatments. Additional funds are included in the supplementary to cover the rising costs of these drugs.

The supplementary estimates also contain funding for a project we are undertaking as part of a new agreement with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. This funding will be used to train health care professionals here in the Yukon in best practices in palliative care approaches. This funding is fully recoverable and will be available for the next four years.

On the capital side of expenditures, the department's supplementary includes a budget adjustment for the new Whistle Bend continuing care facility. These are funds not used last year that are being allocated to this year's budget for the completion of this new facility. We are extremely pleased to officially open the Whistle Bend facility in a few weeks. We look forward to welcoming residents who will begin moving into their new home after this month. This new facility, with rooms for 150 residents, is an important part of our commitment to helping Yukoners age in place.

Our commitment does not stop there. We have launched a broad conversation with Yukoners to help us to identify ways to support aging well in Yukon and, in particular, in rural Yukon.

The first aging-in-place summit was held this past summer in Whitehorse. More than 200 people attended and we are planning similar events in communities across the territory.

We are also continuing to apply a home-first philosophy to support Yukoners who need support. By providing enhanced home care services, these Yukoners have the opportunity to remain in their own homes longer. Yukoners are continuing to live in their own homes because of this initiative. In the last year this has resulted in approximately 2,800 days in which clients have stayed out of the hospital.

These are some of the programs that this government is taking action on to help Yukoners live longer, healthier lives.

In the coming weeks, I look forward to sharing with members of the House other initiatives to ensure Yukoners have access to services they need.

As I indicated, the supplementary estimates also contain funding to support the ongoing and important work of the Department of Environment. Our government is working with First Nations and our partners in Yukon to develop and manage our natural resources responsibly. The supplementary for the Department of Environment includes funding to support specific projects as part of our commitment to responsible management of our many natural gifts. More specifically, there is increased funding to support implementation of the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* and project funds related to this agreement. As well, there's funding for our ongoing effort around climate change preparedness, for vegetation assessments and the Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area and for the Yukon healthy air program. These costs are all fully recoverable from the federal government.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the department is carrying out many initiatives that advance our government's commitment to a healthy environment and sustainable wildlife populations. This year, our government took the final steps in establishing and protecting the Dhaw Ghro Habitat Protection Area with our partners, the Selkirk First Nation and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun. This historic agreement protects the current and future generations in an environmentally and culturally rich area located between Stewart Crossing and Pelly, an area that is of the utmost importance and of value to the Northern Tutchone people.

In August, our government and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board released for public review a draft conservation plan for grizzly bears. It is the first comprehensive plan for this species in Yukon and reflects work with First Nations, communities, stakeholders, organizations and the public.

Our government is also working closely with our partners in the *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* to address the proposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and continuing our efforts to support our partners in northern Yukon — in particular, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. We are collaborating on environmental impact processes that the environmental impact process has in place for leasing lands in the refuge for petroleum exploration. Our next step is to review and respond to the environmental impact assessment once it is released. As well, our government continues to work and provide financial and professional supports to the Vuntut Gwitchin Government as they advance the advocating work for the protection of the Porcupine caribou calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Housing Corporation does not request additional funds from the supplementary estimates; however, I do want to take a couple of minutes to talk briefly about some of our government's initiatives on housing. We all know how important affordable housing is to the well-being of our citizens in our communities. Mr. Speaker, our partners are key to making sure that quality affordable housing is available for all Yukon people, and our government is actively working with many levels of government, First Nation development corporations, non-profit organizations and the private sector on housing.

In May, we launched the housing initiative fund, a \$3.6-million fund for innovative housing projects to meet local needs. Our partners have responded with projects that will create 144 affordable housing units within the next year. As well, our developer build loan program is providing developers with financing to build modest, sustainable housing in Yukon communities.

We are taking steps to ensure that our most vulnerable populations have a safe place to live. Construction is underway on a 16-unit Housing First residence that will offer affordable, low-barrier permanent housing to Yukoners who require ongoing support. Those in our NGO community are important partners in meeting housing needs. Funding assistance from government is helping them realize new housing initiatives. Two of the key initiatives are the

Challenge Disability Resource Group plans for the new mixed-use cornerstone housing project and the Blood Ties Four Directions tiny homes project, which is now well underway.

Before closing, I would like to take a few moments to speak about my own riding of Vuntut Gwitchin. This summer has provided me an opportunity to spend some time with my constituents, my family and my friends in Old Crow and to spend time on the land. I always welcome this opportunity as it is something that is very near and dear to me. Earlier this summer I returned home with some of my colleagues and representatives from the Assembly of First Nations to celebrate Vadzaih Choo Drin, which is Caribou Days. It is an opportunity for us to acknowledge the traditional ways of the Gwitchin people and celebrate and honour the return of the Porcupine caribou. This occasion gave us the opportunity for community discussion on climate change, food security and some of the other important issues that have been raised with respect to the Old Crow solar project, which is very innovative and progressive thinking on behalf of the Vuntut Gwitchin looking at reducing their reliance on diesel and taking some advance innovation initiatives with respect to building and super insulating homes and looking at climate change and adaptation measures.

On the National Indigenous Peoples Day, we hosted a community barbecue in conjunction with the Old Crow cooperative, which is an organization that is owned by the Vuntut Gwitchin people as an indication of innovation and progressive thinking.

Being in my community provides me with the opportunity to meet also with the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the constituents to hear about concerns. I'm extremely humbled to serve my community and all Yukoners as we work to build a stronger and more resilient territory.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I won't be too long but I will take the opportunity to provide some brief information and to respond to some of the comments that have been made already.

First of all, I take the opportunity today to thank the people of Riverdale South. We had an amazing summer here in the Yukon and a lot of opportunities to meet with constituents in the various ways.

One of the highlights of our opportunity this summer was on August 24 when the Speaker, who represents Riverdale North, and I joined forces to welcome over 250 guests and provide local entertainment at a local neighbourhood business. We welcomed families and created an opportunity to talk with our constituents to learn about what interests and concerns them and how we can make their lives better. We also provided local entertainment at that time — Mr. Jeff Wolosewich, who is an amazing singer/songwriter who happens to live in my riding and is newly exploring his musical talents. We look forward to more from him as well.

It is an honour to be back here in this House, as has been mentioned, on the traditional territory of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. We are discussing

today the first supplementary estimates for the 2018-19 budget, and I will keep my remarks rather brief.

Neither the Department of Justice nor the Department of Education figure in this supplementary budget. I think I heard criticism about that earlier in some of the comments, but I am very proud of that and this is, in fact, a good thing. The purpose of a supplementary budget is to account for unforeseen expenses that come up between budget cycles. Our government has made it a priority to reduce those unforeseen expenses by integrating fiscal and economic forecasting in order to make our budget more accurate and efficient and by — may I say — exploring what those expenses will be very thoroughly in the budgeting process.

It is not simply a matter of it being “x” last year so it is going to be “x” this year. We clearly and carefully question each and every one of those entries to determine its significance and its importance in going forward. It has, in my view, resulted — as you can see here in this supplementary budget — in more accurate information. Our improved approach has led to this year’s supplementary estimates, which see an increase in spending of less than one percent over the 2018-19 main estimates. This variance is historically low and shows that our hard work is paying off.

As I said this year, there are no increases for the departments of Justice or Education compared, for instance, to the 2016-17 supplementary budget, which was presented not long after we were elected, when the Department of Education produced an increase of over \$12 million in the first supplementary estimate. That was shocking to me as a newly elected and appointed minister. It was nearly as much as this year’s entire supplementary budget just for one department. Certainly, that caused me concern as a person trying to learn the budgeting process and learn the department expenditures. It harkens back to a time when the former government would use a supplementary budget to account for expenses that were, in my submission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, foreseen. They could have been but were not dealt with — in my view — properly or properly portrayed in the budgeting process.

Our government was elected on the commitment of increasing transparency and openness. Our improved budgeting process is just one example of how we are delivering on that commitment as a whole-of-government approach. We are working very hard to show Yukoners the true cost of government and ensuring that our territory moves forward with strong fiscal management.

With respect to some of the comments made a bit earlier today, I don’t disagree with the Leader of the Third Party. I too hope — perhaps eternally — that we could together discuss, debate and decide on the responsibilities of spending the Yukon taxpayers’ money. It is a responsibility I can assure you that our team — my colleagues and I — take very, very seriously. Such frank discussions, however, require pulling together in making the best possible decisions and being accountable. In order to do that, they require honest, forthright debate.

Unfortunately, in some of the debate here today, I didn’t hear that frank exchange and it is, of course, frustrating.

I don’t believe that Yukoners think that the opposition’s job in holding us to account means just saying “white” if we say “black” — in other words, just taking the opposing view or stance. I believe that Yukoners want us to make the best possible decisions on their behalf. The Minister of Community Services earlier in his comments pointed out several of those inaccuracies where information just isn’t truthfully being presented.

Our one-government approach has led us to ask each and every department to look at where they can find deficiencies, to consider what we spend money on and if we are achieving what we hope to in the spending of that money — serving Yukoners as best we can. Are we spending wisely without reducing services? It is quite surprising to me that there seems to be serious concern, as evidenced by some of the questions that were in Question Period today, that just one of the possible options being explored is to ask government departments to see how they might be able to save some money, save some on the expenditures, without reducing programming. We are doing as has been suggested by the Leader of the Third Party: We are seeking the expertise of those who know best how departments are making their spending decisions. To do otherwise would, in my view, be irresponsible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank all those departments doing this very important work on behalf of Yukoners. I urge the Official Opposition and the Third Party to hold our government to account with honest, accurate questions and debate that promote the interest of Yukoners, not politics, and require us to be held accountable in the best possible way on behalf of each and every Yukoner. We came here to represent them, to work for them. We continue to do so every possible day and we certainly hope that we can do so with great vigorous debate with the opposition so that we come up with the best possible ideas going forward.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you’ll give me a little bit of flexibility just before I speak to the supplementary budget, I would also like to take a quick opportunity to thank my constituents in Porter Creek South for giving me the opportunity to be part of this Legislative Assembly. Time does not go by where I don’t take into consideration the privilege that affords me and I absolutely respect the opportunity I have to work on their behalf, on specific constituents’ issues or on broader policy issues here in the Legislative Assembly.

I also would just quickly — as we get into the response — I want to truly thank the departments that I get to work with. This was an extremely busy summer. The Department of Economic Development and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as those at the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy — all of those entities have taken on immense portfolios and projects. When the economy is in the state that our economy is in, it also leads to challenges as well as opportunities. Specifically, when I think about the Mineral Resources and Agriculture branches, just to name a few — an immense amount of work and people —

you know, it's unfair to even just name a few branches. Really, all these departments and also those individuals who have taught me that — as public servants — how important that work is and how vested they are in that work as they serve Yukoners.

I am absolutely happy to rise to speak to the first supplementary estimates of 2018-19. This supplementary budget speaks to the work our government has done to ensure our budgets are well-planned and executed. It is important to us, as a government, to be transparent and accountable in dealings with the people of Yukon. This was a promise we made to Yukoners during the 2016 campaign.

The highlights of the increases requested for the Department of Economic Development and the Yukon Development Corporation are a result of increasing population and an economy that is thriving. This year, we have seen increased interest in the Yukon film location incentive fund. This rebate-based fund encourages production companies to film in the Yukon, spend money locally and hire and train Yukoners. For the 2018-19 fiscal year, this fund has been over-subscribed. There have been three eligible applications, receiving a total of \$1,065,000.

The total increase being requested by the Department of Economic Development is \$956,000. The combined budgeted spend for the three projects is \$5.65 million and there are 128 Yukoners who have been employed or will be employed through this spending. We are truly happy to see the film industry growing here in the Yukon, and our government will continue to support this sector as we make progress in the diversification of our economy.

This morning we did hear from opposition benches some concern about what we are doing to diversify and what we are looking to do in the long run. Understanding that a portion of our economy, which tends to be a large portion of our economy, comes from the resource sector, I think that just the support that we are putting behind the film industry — and I will touch on a number of other areas of our economy — truly shows that we understand that you have to walk and chew gum at the same time. There are many things that we have to keep an eye on, and we have to ensure that all areas of our economy are supported and we have strategies for them.

Our 2018-19 budget also included a number of other projects and investments aimed at growing and diversifying our economy. As announced this spring, we have done our due diligence on the selection of the route for the diverse fibre project and are moving ahead with the Dempster route. This project will improve telecommunications reliability to Yukon businesses and residences. This is a necessary step to growing our tech sector here in the Yukon, and I am proud of the work that has been undertaken by the departments of Economic Development and Highways and Public Works on this to date.

Our government also included funds in this budget to support the innovation hub, now known as the NorthLight Innovation hub. NorthLight Innovation brings business, industry, Yukon College, the Yukon Development Corporation and public programs together under one roof to create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and to

promote the development and growth of innovative businesses in the Yukon.

The official opening will be taking place on October 11. I know there will be invitations granted to all members of the Legislative Assembly for that exciting and important event. Part of the goal with this particular type of infrastructure is to ensure that you build the appropriate ecosystem and culture for investment in the tech sector. We have not even seen the announcement for the official opening. We have seen a well-known entrepreneur in Canada, Mr. Brett Wilson, on his first visit making a commitment to invest financially in a Yukon-based tech company. What an exciting thing that is. We are seeing the companies that are in this particular space now quickly looking to scale and looking for expansion.

We have lots to discuss, share — debate policy — hopefully in the Legislative Assembly — about the strategy we are looking at integrating into our economic strategy and how we focus on these particular areas within the hub. There is a real opportunity for cross-pollination to capitalize and to enhance the knowledge-based economy here in the Yukon. It is truly a positive example of public, private and non-profit educational sectors coming together for a common purpose. The Yukon is a desirable place to work and live, and we are seeing that in our population growth.

It was touched upon early this afternoon that the July 2018 preliminary numbers for population are 40,476, which is a 2.1-percent increase over July 2017. Our economy is one of the strongest in the country, and this government is proud of that. The projected GDP growth for 2018 is 2.5 percent.

We have a truly strong labour market. We're seeing record low unemployment rates — in fact, the lowest unemployment in the country at 2.6 over the last eight months. Although our economy, compared to Ontario and British Columbia, is relatively small when it comes to total capacity, the economy is still the envy of Economic Development ministers and Energy, Mines and Resources ministers sitting at the national table with us.

Yukon's average weekly earnings have averaged \$1,099 over the past six months, which also is the fourth highest in the country. Retail sales are following a record \$799 million in 2017, but they continue to rise up. They're up about 6.6 percent in the first half of 2018. Mineral exploration estimates from Natural Resources Canada are expected to increase at about 4.4 percent to \$173 million over the last year. We do understand — my colleagues in opposition who have worked on these files and I know that there is still sensitivity. Capital can travel quickly and capital will go where it's wanted. That's why it's important to continue to look at all the variables that investment takes into consideration, whether it is regulation or certainty.

We were quite happy our teams that work on these subjects — Energy, Mines and Resources and Economic Development — I'm happy to see that Yukon was ranked second in North America this spring by the Fraser Institute when it comes to short term acceptance of permitting. I think that is a first — I could be wrong — to be rated that high.

We're seeing that the respect and collaboration with our First Nation governments continue to build a platform of certainty and that, of course, is a key driver for investment. But we will see.

Capital is seeking other opportunities in this country. We think a lot of it has moved into the cannabis space — about \$40 billion of capital moving into that space. So we will have to see what happens this fall but that, of course, was a lot of available capital that used to fuel the junior sector, and we'll have to see what plays out with these companies and if they are overvalued or if they can actually maintain the value and deliver what they have committed to as the markets open this fall.

Tourism numbers are up 16.1 percent this year from the same period of 2017. Again, I commend my colleague. We're excited about the strategy. We're excited about where this strategy — what opportunities this strategy will provide us. We know that it is even tough — they used to say the shoulder season was something that the — whether it be the local airline or the hoteliers — they would ask us to work in concert with them to make sure that those shoulder seasons were filled but now I think even this fall when you think about what we're hosting — world-class speakers and significant events. But certainly the industry and the private sector have given us an opportunity to look at the ability to grow even more in that sector.

So this population growth that I referenced, along with the increased electrification of homes, is the reason why the Yukon Development Corporation has requested an increase of \$170,000 for the 2018-19 budget. The rebate is meant to offset the cost of electricity for residential customers in the Yukon. As it currently stands, 95 percent of the Yukon's energy portfolio comes from renewables. Our government is committed to increasing the availability of renewable energy in reducing community reliance on diesel.

Last year, we launched the innovative renewable energy initiative, which provides support for small-scale renewable energy projects. The \$1.5-million fund is now fully subscribed for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Over the past two-year period, we have provided financial support to 10 projects across the territory. This initiative also supports economic reconciliation for First Nations by providing funding for First Nations to achieve their priorities in renewable energy. My colleague can touch on it. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun had mentioned one example. He spoke about the Old Crow solar and LED streetlight conversion project in partnership with Vuntut Gwitchin. It was quite a pleasure to be there and meet and speak with the individuals who have driven that project on the ground. We're looking at displacing just under 200,000 litres of diesel with that project on an annual basis and about, I believe, just around 5,000 litres of diesel with the conversion to LED streetlights. That really outlines — I'll have an opportunity to speak to these specifically when we present the departments.

In the budget, what you're really seeing from this government is strong reins when it comes to the budgeting process, ensuring that the dollars are spent as they were meant

to be spent and that we're forecasting appropriately. I'm proud of the work that the deputy ministers are doing, where we're bringing in the private sector to actually have conversations with public servants and decision-makers so they can understand capacity and so they can understand where there is the potential for growth — not just from a capital spending perspective where you're looking at that sweet spot of capital spending. You know, in the past, we've seen lapses of \$70 million, \$80 million. We're really trying to focus on areas of — I could be wrong; my colleagues will probably speak to this — that \$280 million, but also then disseminating the lines of business that exist in the private sector so that we can understand whether it's dirt-moving or subcontractors or how we maximize opportunities for Yukon business.

Once again, I thank my colleagues. We have areas that we also will focus on or that need attention. We touched on a few things today and we have to take into consideration part of our — we talk about our housing portfolio. I commend my colleague on her work when it comes to continuing to deal with deficits that have been in place for quite a while when it comes to housing for those in need, but also taking into consideration that part of the pressure when it comes to housing comes from really the dramatic turnaround in the economy, which also puts pressure on.

When it comes to ensuring, it is just nice to know that there are people who are coming to the Yukon who want to buy homes; it is nice to know that Yukoners' children can come home and find a job, whether it is working in the environment or working in the resource sector or working in the technical sector.

I think that we must take into consideration those perspectives. Certainly, we see that with the growth in the population and those coming back from post-secondary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to speak to this. I look forward to debating policy and discussing budgets over the fall, which we, of course, are put here to do.

Mr. Adel: It is an honour to be back in this Chamber on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council. I would like to take this opportunity right now to thank my constituents in Copperbelt North for their input over the summer. I was enjoying the wonderful weather as I was walking through the neighbourhood, talking to people and meeting with them on the street and coffee shops. It was certainly enlightening.

We are looking at the supplementary estimates for 2018-19 — the money that is required for the government to deliver programs and services that enhance the lives of Yukoners across the territory. All of our budget decisions are made in order to support Yukon's priorities. A people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. Strategic investments build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. Strong government-to-government relationships with First Nations foster reconciliation, and a diverse, growing economy provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way.

My colleagues and I have been working hard to advance these priorities and improve the lives of Yukoners. Talking about the supplementary budget is always a good opportunity to reflect on the good work of this government. Yukoners have just wrapped up a fabulous summer with some of that good, old-fashioned hot weather we used to have, and many spent their time enjoying the over 60 campgrounds and day-use recreation sites across this territory.

The Yukon government is investing \$1 million to improve camping opportunities for Yukoners and visitors this year alone. This is part of a multi-year plan to expand and enhance campground and parks infrastructure. We are also adjusting policies to improve services in Yukon parks and campgrounds, with a focus on user experience and accessibility. Having had guests in from out of the territory camping this year, I certainly heard a lot of compliments on our campgrounds and their facilities.

We heard from Yukoners that they wanted increased campsite availability and opportunities for all Yukoners to enjoy the outdoors. This season saw a new rule around occupied campsites that are left unattended. Leaving campsites occupied but unattended for longer than 24 hours could result in a \$200 fine.

We have also improved wheelchair access to campsites, such as popular Pine Lake, Aishihik Lake, Twin Lakes, Nahanni Range and two sites each at Conrad, Marsh Lake and Wolf Creek. There are now wheelchair-accessible trails at Tombstone Territorial Park, Pine Lake and Wolf Creek campgrounds. These improvements, along with the new 24-hour rule, have helped improve the availability of campsites and provided more fair access to Yukon parks and campgrounds for residents and visitors.

We also engaged Yukoners to help us create a Yukon parks strategy that will improve strategic guidance on how to sustainably deliver the environmental, economic, social and health benefits of parks and campgrounds. We know Yukoners and visitors have a strong connection to parks and that people's demands and expectations of our parks are evolving. The strategy will set long-term direction for Yukon's territorial parks, which include wilderness parks, campgrounds, recreation sites and others. Engagement with users and Yukoners will ensure that their needs and interests are reflected in the strategy. I look forward to seeing the results of this summer's engagement as the development of the strategy moves forward.

Summer is also the prime season for tourism here in the territory and the tourism department with their new strategy has been working very hard to enhance that.

Last year saw record-breaking tourism numbers, in part thanks to the success of the Yukon Now tourism marketing program. Our government has increased the annual investment in the Yukon Now program from \$900,000 to \$1.8 million. We are proud to support this critical marketing program to help the industry grow sustainability at a time when our visitor statistics continue to increase.

One area of particular interest is the growth of air arrivals. Our government is working hard to improve air travel

infrastructure and support the airline industry. The summer construction began on a new maintenance facility at the Dawson airport. Construction costs are estimated at \$7.7 million and the facility is slated for completion in the summer of 2019. This new facility will allow airport staff to work in a dry, heated facility year-round and will ensure airport equipment is safely stored during cold and inclement weather.

Having a heated maintenance facility at the Dawson airport is also required to fulfill the heightened maintenance standards and needs of a paved runway. Our government has committed to paving the Dawson runway and, earlier this summer, we released the tender for this project. The contract includes the paving of a second apron to ease congestion and to ensure airport operations continue to be safe and efficient. Improving the Dawson airport will support tourism in the Klondike and beyond. The Dawson airport is the second busiest airport in the territory — the busiest, of course, is the Erik Nielsen International Airport.

This summer, our government invested \$5 million to resurface the main runway with asphalt. Upgrading this essential piece of infrastructure will ensure the airport continues to meet the needs of Yukoners and visitors alike. More than just tourism, enhancing our aviation industry is important to growing Yukon's economy as a whole. Improving Yukon's air travel infrastructure is just one of the ways we're working to grow our economy.

The supplementary estimates in this going forward, number one, are the second lowest in 10 years. The good news is they are a reflection of how well we are doing with our main estimates and how we look at the economic realities of the Yukon and how we project to meet them.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am very pleased this afternoon to rise and speak about the supplementary estimates for 2018-19. It is becoming clear to the public that this government is running a tight ship when it comes to fiscal matters. This supplementary budget tabled by my good colleague for Klondike, the Finance minister, is the second lowest supplementary budget tabled in the last 10 years — the second lowest. It bears noting that last year's supplementary budget was the lowest, just \$29,000. How significant is this? It is very significant.

Today we are talking about supplementary spending of about \$4.7 million compared with \$34 million in 2015-16, \$21 million in 2014-15 and a whopping \$93 million in supplementary spending logged in 2013-14. Today we are talking about accuracy and transparency in financial management, because we are working very hard to have our main estimates reflect our spending priorities. Being in government demands tough decisions. Those tough decisions are being made with an eye on the public purse. We have heard from the Financial Advisory Panel that previous governments were spending \$1.50 for every dollar they generated or received from Ottawa. That was never sustainable, Mr. Speaker. You cannot continue to operate

when you collect 50 percent less than you are spending. It is a recipe for disaster.

That is the reality we inherited. It wasn't a pleasant discovery — that day early in the year 2017 — but it was the hand we were dealt. We took a deep breath, calmed ourselves and started to address the problems we faced. Today, two years later, we are seeing the results — one of which is accuracy in financial reporting.

We are looking at rigour, at process and at efficiency. We determine the most pressing needs through an evidence-based process, checking to see what data tells us about an issue. You can pick any issue, Mr. Speaker, any one — and there are many — and then ask the relevant questions: How many people are affected? Are there health and safety risks involved? Is there a precedent for what we are being asked to do? How much will this cost the Government of Yukon? How much will it cost in the future? Could a private sector solution be more efficient and/or cost-effective? Evidence-based decision-making, Mr. Speaker, is something that we campaigned on and I am very proud to say that it is something that we apply on a daily basis.

We are bringing diligence to financial planning and execution, and our budgets, including the current supplementary discussed today, is clear evidence of that. They are accurate and they are small. My good colleague from Lake Laberge has referenced the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. As my bench mate from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes noted, I would be remiss if I failed to mention that the construction was delivered on time and on budget. Now we are talking about the largest and possibly the most complex project in the territory's history on time and on budget. That comes through the hard work and diligence of the Department of Highways and Public Works and its partners in Health and Social Services.

The departments tackled this project methodically with diligence and the results speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. It didn't begin that way; the project was launched with little consultation or long-term planning or consideration of operation and maintenance costs, but I'm happy to have played a part in landing this project responsibly, on time and on budget. The member for Lake Laberge has questioned what we are doing for the territory. I'm sorry to learn he is not aware of the profound changes we've made and are making to benefit the people of the territory. I'm sort of befuddled by that, but let me help him out. For example, instead of sitting on tens of millions of dollars of affordable housing money, we're building affordable housing for those who need it. This afternoon, my colleague, the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, laid bare all the work her crew is doing on this front and it was an impressive list. We are working with First Nations on housing and on a host of other issues. We've held a record number of Yukon forums with First Nations across the territory, involving them in decision-making in the territory to an extent never seen before. The work is ongoing, but the results are being seen in the certainty and confidence across the territory. We're seeing that in the resource markets; they're expected to spend more than

\$150 million in exploration this year largely because the territory is a good place to invest. Why, Mr. Speaker? It's about growing certainty and confidence in the future of the territory.

My colleague, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, has guided one of the first tourism strategies the territory has seen in 17 years. We're tackling aged legislation, one of the most comprehensive and progressive legislative agendas seen in this territory in the last 30 years. We're rewriting the *Societies Act*, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, on forestry and the *Coroners Act*. This is work that is long overdue — work that extremely hard-working and dedicated civil servants are tackling on our behalf — and we're grateful.

We're doing foundation work at the Whitehorse International Airport to fix the baggage handling equipment, the bridges that link the aircraft to the building, patching the tarmac, replacing aged snowplows, even fixing the long-broken elevator. It's not sexy work, it's not the stuff of ribbon cutting, but it serves the needs of the Yukon public in very profound ways.

Highway safety? Well, I heard as late as Friday that the Klondike Highway has not been in better shape for years and years, and that's thanks to the diligent work of the highways department and its crews. Our bridges are being strengthened in Carcross and in Carmacks, allowing us to bring in larger loads to the territory safely and more efficiently. We bolstered our mental health care in the communities through the hubs my colleague, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, has launched. We're building roads to resources in concert with our First Nation partner governments. We are building a redundant fiber optic cable line to provide long-needed protection to our business sector and tech industry. We tendered the medevac contract this year and awarded it to a local company through a competitive bid, ensuring good use of the public purse. We've also done much to improve procurement. We have a five-year capital plan — the first time in history we've done that. Whitehorse has a local knowledge clause added to value-driven contracts to ensure that local companies have a more level playing field when it comes to bidding. We are using the 10 \$1-million exceptions — we did so last year and we're going to do it again this year. We're the first jurisdiction in the country to use that tool.

We have contracts out earlier in the spring, helping contractors plan their construction season. We have worked hard to get more money into local contractors' hands and we're working closer with the private sector, communities and First Nations to plan our capital spending. The result is the lowest unemployment rate in the country and one of the busiest summer work seasons in recent memory.

Again, this is part of our rigour in budgeting. We have set a stable capital spend of \$280 million. People know what we are going to spend and where. As a result, our supplementary is lower than nine of the last 10 supplementary budgets — all of which is to say we are working hard on behalf of the people of the territory on a myriad of fronts.

I know my colleagues take this work seriously and it is my honour to work with such a dedicated, caring and compassionate crew.

In closing, I want to personally thank the Department of Finance, the finance crew from Highways and Public Works and those in the Public Service Commission for their superb job in preparing the 2018-19 supplementary estimates.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: While none of my departments are currently seeking increases under the *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, I would like to take the next few minutes to provide this House with a few highlights about the work being completed by the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Women's Directorate and the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, which stem from the main estimates.

I would like to start though by thanking, of course, my constituents in my riding of Mountainview for choosing me to be their representative in this Legislative Assembly. It truly is, as I have heard expressed by everyone else in the House, an honour to be chosen to be a spokesperson for even one person — that is an honour — let alone a whole riding of people who look to us each and every day to represent them in the best possible way.

I would like to highlight a few areas within Tourism and Culture first. My colleagues will have heard, of course, and we have heard lots of folks talk about it today, that the Department of Tourism and Culture has released a draft tourism strategy for public comment. I certainly took note of the Member for Copperbelt South's comments about wanting to ask questions about this draft strategy and I certainly welcome any discussion about the draft Yukon tourism development strategy.

The development of this strategy has been led by a steering committee made up of First Nation representatives, the Association of Yukon Communities, the tourism industry and many cultural, arts and heritage organizations. We have a 15-member committee that has overseen this process. The steering committee engaged extensively on this plan over the past year, receiving 12,000 comments from Yukoners. The draft plan that is now out for public comment contains a number of proposals. Once final feedback is received on this draft, my colleagues and I will consider all the proposals that have been put forward. We all share an interest in growing and strengthening tourism in our territory and the proposals in the strategy will be viewed through this lens.

The extensive engagement on the strategy shows that Yukoners understand the huge potential that exists in the tourism sector here in Yukon and want to take advantage of that. The future is bright when it comes to tourism in our territory and I look forward to working with our partners to seize the opportunities ahead of us and grow tourism in the Yukon in a responsible and sustainable way.

On other exciting topics, the Yukon made national and international news this summer with the discovery of several important archaeological finds. The Yukon archaeology program works each year on the ice patch project with

partners from six Yukon First Nations, being Kwanlin Dün, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Teslin Tlingit Council, Ta'an Kwäch'an Council, Carcross/Tagish First Nation and the Kluane First Nation.

On August 25, 2018, an ancient hunting tool was discovered near Alligator Lake in an archaeological ice patch within the traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. The intact and exceptionally preserved state of this find makes it very unique and unparalleled in the world. Just a few short weeks ago, after this remarkable discovery, I was lucky enough to be in Dawson City to help unveil two additional significant discoveries in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Both of these discoveries were made in the Klondike placer fields and are exceptional — a mummified wolf pup and a caribou calf. It was really a special day to be there and listen to Percy Henry talk about the balance between the wolf and the caribou and how they balance each other. So having these two significant finds found within two weeks of each other — everyone believes that it was not an accident and that it happened in that way. Both are extremely rare and provide invaluable contributions to scientific knowledge about the ice age. To our knowledge, it is the only mummified ice age wolf ever found in the world. The wolf pup is carbon dated at over 50,000 years and the caribou is carbon dated at 80,000 years. That is quite astonishing.

While I was in Dawson, people talked about these ancient beings and how this knowledge is coming back. So it was really a great event to be part of. All of these discoveries, once again, highlight just how special this land is that we all call home.

Finally, on the Tourism and Culture front, the department continues to work hand in hand with its First Nation partners on land management. In partnership with Carcross/Tagish First Nation, we managed the Conrad historic site as tenants in common. We are working with our partners to develop the Conrad historic site heritage management plan, which will ensure the protection, conservation and interpretation of the heritage values of the site and will also recognize and protect the traditional and current use of the area by the Carcross/Tagish First Nation citizens.

This plan is expected to be completed this fall and will be presented to the public for feedback. We also continue to conserve the Fort Selkirk historic site in partnership with the Selkirk First Nation.

An updated land management plan is currently being developed as the current management plan has not been updated since 2000. This updated plan will reflect current conditions of the site, set new priorities and ensure that the requirements of the Selkirk First Nation final agreement and *Historic Resources Act* are being met. Land management in partnership with First Nations is essential to creating a sustainable future for Yukon. I am also pleased that we are making such positive progress on this important front.

At the Women's Directorate, we're gearing up for a very busy fall. From October 16 to 19, Yukon will be co-hosting the federal, provincial and territorial meetings of ministers

responsible for the Status of Women. These meetings will cover important topics such as the gender wage gap, women's economic empowerment and gender-based violence.

Representing the Yukon at these meetings, I plan to emphasize the importance of addressing practical issues facing women in the north, particularly gender-based violence and the meaningful engagement with our indigenous partners, both locally and nationally.

During this week, the Women's Directorate is also organizing a meeting between the Status of Women ministers and the national indigenous leaders in advance of the FPT meetings. Ministers and indigenous leaders will have a full day of engagement, which is not something that is typically done at FPT meetings. Also, notably, a sacred fire will be lit and will burn throughout the FPT meeting. That's something that is very unique and something that the federal minister and I feel strongly about doing together.

As part of these meetings, we will be including an afternoon community visit to Carcross/Tagish First Nation, which will include a panel presentation by female indigenous Yukon leaders to highlight the impact of self-government on the well-being of women in the Yukon.

I'm very excited, of course, to host federal Minister Monsef and delegates from across the country. We are very proud of the planning that has gone on and the true partnership that we've created with our colleagues across the country.

I would also like to briefly update the House about the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. As the lead department responding to the national inquiry, the Women's Directorate is carrying out this government's mandate commitment to ensure that Yukon plays an effective and active role in supporting the inquiry. As such, I'm pleased to tell the House that Yukon will be hosting the final closing ceremony for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry in the spring of 2019. This is considered a full-circle event. It is special because Yukon also hosted the opening of this inquiry in May 2017. It really and truly feels like a full circle and so it will be a great opportunity for us to honour our families and pay respect to those who have been lost.

As Minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, I would like to update this House about the progress being made under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which was passed last fall. Regulations are now being crafted that focus on the prevention of psychological injuries in the workplace.

You will hear more about that in the new year. As we are all aware, this is a spectrum of risk that could affect the mental health of Yukon workers from exposure to traumatic incidents to the threat of violence. These new regulations are necessary to provide guidance to workplaces on how to establish measures to prevent psychological injury from occurring in the first place and, of course, how to respond if they happen during a person's regular work time.

On a personal note, of course it was an extremely busy summer — lots of highs and lows. I represented government

at many amazing events over the summer that took me across the Yukon Territory. Highlights are always the festivals that our department supports and that our government and Yukoners look forward to. Here in Whitehorse, we had the Adäka festival, and many of us attended Moosehide near Dawson City. I had the great honour of going to the Tlingit gathering in Juneau, where we promoted our festival that is coming next year — the Haa Kusteeyi Tlingit gathering. It is a great feeling to be close to our community and to connect with people during those times. I find that is one of the most valuable interactions that I have in my position as minister and as an MLA.

I did host a really successful constituency event for my Mountainview constituents on September 8. It was well-attended. We had over 200 people stop by to have conversation and share food with us, as well as some really great family fun. A lot of great discussions happened there. I am happy to keep reaching out to my constituents in that way and to provide opportunities for them to come together to share concerns. It was really interesting that, when I met with the constituents that day, a lot of them felt fairly content about what was happening in the territory. That felt really great to me as an MLA, that our government is making the right moves. People talked about having good work. They talked about being in training programs, in school and the excitement about the fall and the opportunity to come together.

Finally, when I left the Legislative Assembly after the last Sitting — life changes very fast. I know that tomorrow we are paying tribute to what happened in Telegraph Creek, but it is very personal to me. I feel like a different person standing here today. You never know what events are going to be life-changing, and this one was life-changing for me. I really wanted to share that with all of my colleagues in the House today. I look forward to honouring Yukoners tomorrow for what they have done for my nation and for people who are in need. It shows the generosity and huge hearts of Yukoners, and it truly makes me want to work even harder for the people we represent — every single citizen in this Yukon Territory.

I would like to thank you so much for the opportunity to give a few updates. I don't always get to give the updates on the good work that our departments are doing, so thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. White: Initially, I hadn't planned on speaking, because this morning at our House Leaders' meeting, I was under the impression that this was going to be a short start to the day and then we were going to get into actually asking questions in the Committee of the Whole.

I appreciate people's heartfelt comments — I do. When anyone is talking about their riding and the people they get to talk to, those are super important. I can't believe, you know, on the cusp of two years since the last election, that we have ministers from the Liberal government talking about what the Yukon Party did. I can't even believe it. I had to live through five years of that and I had enough — I did — I had enough.

To bring back how large the supplementary budgets were that were tabled — it just seems kind of crazy to me, actually,

because we should be moving on — and comparing yourselves to before, when I would say that that wasn't really like that — the bar wasn't set super high. That is my opinion. I would say that I told you initially that I wanted you all to do better. I wanted the Liberal government to do better than what had happened before. I didn't think we would still be talking about prior to the 2016 election, because really what I wanted to hear was what each government minister was going to do differently and where we would be going. I didn't think that we would be revisiting what had happened.

I really thank the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and I can only imagine what it felt like when your community, when the Tahltan Nation, went through that trauma. I thank you for sharing that, and I thank the Member for Mayo-Tatchun for talking about his community, but some of what was said almost sounded like election speeches. I mean, unless one is going to be called right away, what I wanted to know was what was happening within the departments, because I am not going to get an opportunity to talk to the Minister responsible for housing about housing, so I am going to talk to the Premier about it when we get into it, because I have questions.

I have questions about the Department of Education that I won't be able to ask. That is fantastic that both of those departments didn't need supplementary budgets. I appreciate that, but what I wanted to hear was what was happening within those departments and what was going on, as opposed to talking about what hadn't happened before. I just want to — I mean right now, Education — there's a crisis. They don't have enough EAs and they don't have enough substitute teachers. Then you talk to communities and you find out that teachers don't have places to live. How is that being addressed within both of those departments — Housing and Education?

I thought that, as we came into the 2018 Fall Sitting — you know, with almost two years under our belts in this 34th Legislative Assembly — that it wouldn't be kind of similar to the comments that were made the first time we were here — and some of them were. Not all of them, Mr. Speaker, because I would hate to use the same brush against everybody, but there were a lot of similarities.

I thought we were going to rise up — I did. Everybody in the 2016 election talked about how things were going to be done differently and sometimes it feels a lot the same. I had no intention of speaking today, except for the fact that, when we were revisiting the supplementary budgets of the past government, I felt that we had closed that and we were moving on.

I am impressed that this is the second smallest one. I am. But if we're just going to talk about our accomplishments and how well we're doing in comparison to something that I would suggest wasn't so great — congratulations. You formed a government two years ago. That's an indication that things should be different and that they shouldn't be the same. This was the same conversation that happened last year. We're 12 months on and it felt really similar.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Committee of the Whole where I'm going to ask my questions about the departments

that aren't going to come up. I look forward to having conversations with the ministers whose departments do come up because, although it sounded pretty great in the Mountainview riding, I can tell you that in Takhini-Kopper King things aren't so rosy. We had the wood smoke report come out. It targeted two of my areas — both the Kopper King and Range Road north. You know what the report can't cover because it's not part of the mandate? It doesn't talk about poverty. You want to know why wood smoke is so bad in the Kopper King area? It's poverty. When you see that people have wood screwed to the side of their trailers with plastic on it, it's not the appliance that's burning the wood that's the problem; it's poverty. When I hear that things are going well for other people, I'm relieved, but I can tell you that things aren't so rosy for everyone, and that's an issue. So when we revisit the past, we can go all the way back. I mean, why stop in the 33rd? We could go to the 32nd or the 31st. But what I want to know is what's different in the 34th? I want to know what actions are being taken. I want to know how things are being addressed, including lead in drinking fountains. It might not be a concern for a student who has only been there for two years, but what about an educator who has been there for 25 years? That is a longer time to be around that.

What I was hopeful for was to hear some innovation within the departments. What I got — and I'm going to reread it, to be clear. I will congratulate each of the ministers and each of the speakers for the innovation when I get to hear it. I'll give one right now to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We had a farm tour. We had a multi-partisan farm tour and it was fantastic. We had the ability then to hear from farmers about some of the hindrances. That was really great. I thank the minister for that. That was a fantastic opportunity.

I look forward to when my colleague and I are able to schedule our tour of the Whistle Bend facility because we missed out on that one. We will see it before it opens.

What I wanted to hear about was innovation and accomplishments. I wanted to hear about things that were different and not things that were the same. Talking about previous supplementary budgets as the difference — well, that's a bit disappointing. That's a pretty low bar at that point.

I look forward to being able to ask questions about departments that won't be up. I look forward to engaging with the ministers who will be up because I know that there has been hard work done over the summer. I look forward to hearing about it.

Mr. Speaker, in 2019, if there are similar speeches by the time we get to the Fall Sitting, I tell you — I'm not even sure which words or how many hand actions I am going to have at that point. For those who only get to read this in Hansard, my hands are moving because they have a very hard time staying still right now.

I look forward to Committee of the Whole debate.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on this debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess I will start with a response to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King's statements. I am a little perplexed. In her address, she talks about how the minister has been engaging with the opposition with a farm tour, but nothing has changed. I would say that's an example of something that has changed. I believe that this government is trying its best to reach out and embrace the opposition. When I go to events and I see members of the opposition in these events, I always acknowledge that they're there. I ask them if they want to come up and speak. I think there have been a lot of subtle differences and a lot of major differences. Performance plans, I say, would be a huge difference, and every year we're getting better and better at that. A five-year capital plan — huge differences.

If the member opposite doesn't want to see these differences, that's one thing. But it's rich to say that she's disappointed with the dialogue here in the second reading, but it gave her an opportunity to get up and talk about her community and about how important it is to her to discuss the socio-economic situation of those who are burning wood. I don't know how that is any more important or less important than anybody else on this side of the Legislative Assembly having their say and able to talk about what they say.

I will agree that I think we as a team — and I mean a collective team with the opposition and the government — need to do a better job of how we use our time inside this Legislative Assembly. For example, supplementary budgets should be debated — the numbers in the budget. We have used — and I have done it too when in opposition.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the Leader of the Third Party, it's my turn to speak. So if she could listen as opposed to talk over me, she might actually learn something.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

Ms. White: I'm going to struggle to find the right one, but when the minister is able to have that dialogue without us being able to defend ourselves, it seems unfair.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I don't quite understand your concern.

If the member wishes to be heard, she will stand up. Do you wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's interesting because it did seem like we were getting a bit of a lecture from the opposition. Now they don't want to hear a lecture back. That's interesting.

This isn't a lecture. It's a conversation about how we can do better with our time in the Legislative Assembly. When I was in the opposition, I too spent a lot of time in general debate and in departmental conversations talking about everything under the sun, and I believe we need to do a better job of our time in the Legislative Assembly by talking about

the budgetary items as we go through line by line as we go through these committees. Because in the end, if we can actually succinct our time in the Legislative Assembly better and address the budget numbers as opposed to having just general debate about everything in those departments, I believe we can get at more time legislating — more bills. I think we've done a good job this session of having a very progressive number of bills on the docket for the Legislative Assembly. I want to debate those bills. I want to spend time on the supplementary budgets where there are increases, because that's what we're supposed to be debating here in the Legislative Assembly — is when there is new cost pressures and new expenses in the departments. That's the job of the supplementary. That's the job of the members in this House.

We will entertain general debate on a flurry of conversations if you want — not a problem — but, at the same time, it's a conversation about how we can use our time effectively to legislate as well as debate the bill and the supplementary budget.

As the Member for Watson Lake mocks me across the way, I will continue to try my best to make sure we have an effective way of using our time in the Legislative Assembly — and maybe a maturity brought to this Legislative Assembly as well.

I'm going to answer some of the questions that were asked throughout the process. I appreciate some of the questions from the members opposite, so I'm going to get an opportunity to correct the record or to comment on some of the comments from the opposition.

I'll start with the Member for Lake Laberge talking about a change of heart — somehow a change of heart when it comes to the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. There is no change of heart. From the minute that I started my conversation about the process, about a 300-bed facility, I was completely against a 300-bed facility. I have always said that a 150-bed facility facilitates the needs of Whitehorse and the region around Whitehorse, so I'm extremely happy to see that particular facility come online.

The members opposite, with documents that they get — a piece of paper that they get — now are saying that we are somehow talking about cuts. I need the member opposite to realize that there's more than one way to get back onto a financially stable path — not just with cuts. We are not talking about cuts. We are talking about efficiencies, and when we talk about efficiencies, it brings up the concept of the new identity, for example, and our new website.

The members opposite would have you believe that this is a huge cost to the government when, really, in the end, it's a cost-savings, Mr. Speaker. The new website is going to increase access to government information and services for Yukoners throughout the territory. The new mobile-enabled website is going to focus in on the needs of the public and the means in which we can continue to expand services online — expansion of services, and not cuts of services, as the opposition would have you believe. By creating a single website, we're providing a better experience for the public to engage with. Since we launched yukon.ca in February with

180 pages, we've added another 1,700 pages, including emergency and safety information, campground, recreation facilities, government events, listings and a directory of government buildings. Since we launched yukon.ca, we've gathered more than 450 feedback forms and are continuing to adjust content to meet the public's needs. When we meet the public's needs, we're reducing their costs as well, Mr. Speaker. You had a website that was organized for government; now we have a website that's organized for the people.

When we take a look at the visual identity, this is where the real cost-savings come in. The visual identity for a whole-of-government approach helps people find and recognize the government services more readily. Our new identity is consistent with the look and feel, and it is about more than just logo or branding; it's about improving delivery of services and communications more effectively to the public. The visual identity helps us to make better use of financial and staff resources; therefore, we are anticipating a return on that investment.

Mr. Speaker, when you have every single department working on identity, when you have every single department on logos and when you have every single department working individually on these things, those are a huge expense to the taxpayer. What we've done is a one-government approach with a brand label that is tried, tested and true, working in partnership with Tourism and Culture, and we believe that there will be a cost-savings in the end.

When we are asked about what kind of efficiencies we are working on, there is another example of efficiency that we are working on. The Yukon Party keeps on talking about cuts. We keep on talking about efficiencies. We do not want to affect the programs and services that Yukoners have come to enjoy, so we are looking at how best to spend the Yukon taxpayers' money, and I believe that we are finding significant advances in that, and that is just merely one example.

We also had the member opposite talking about the growing of government and the FTEs. The Government of Yukon is here to provide necessary services to Yukoners. The fact is that the demand for many of these services is increasing, especially as our population continues to grow. There were 243 FTEs added in the 2018-19 main estimates; 186 of these were in Health and Social Services specifically to support our continuing care facilities and increases in home care. Imagine if it was a 300-bed facility, Mr. Speaker.

There were 29 in Education to provide teachers and educational assistants and support staff in response to enrolment-based growth — to address the questions from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. Here is an investment in the increase of educational assistants. Of the 242 additional FTEs, 27 were distributed across other departments to support programs, like the new sexualized assault response team, the family liaison information units, the Yukon family mediation programs and also the cannabis legalization and sales.

While this government is making the necessary and significant progress on cost savings and efficiency measures elsewhere, we have been clear that we will not make cuts to

services that Yukoners depend on. The member opposite talks about us growing the government — well, I will ask him back: Is it the home care that he would want us to cut? It is the continuing care facility that he would want us to cut? Or is it the teachers and educational staff? That is the majority of the numbers that we are talking about with the FTEs.

We keep hearing about cuts from the Yukon Party. It seems like that is what they are heading toward, especially when they keep asking about the increases to the FTEs, and we keep telling them what the information is and why it is necessary to make sure that the programs and services that Yukoners have come to rely on in the collaborative care model that we are moving forward in — which again, in my opinion, when you are talking about mental health and upfront health care, as opposed to acute services once you are ill, we will see cost savings in the end because of this government's approach when it comes to health care and when it comes to the services that Yukoners are happy to see continue.

The minister talked about a tourism strategy — the first one in 18 years. We have talked about the Yukon Forum — 16 working groups and countless subcommittees there. These working groups are so important to the supplementary budget. These working groups are making sure that we have a pathway forward, looking at the MOU that was established by the minister when it comes to mining. These working groups are helping us to draw down on chapters of the final agreements. These working groups are making sure that we have more legislation and less litigation, and we are very proud of that. We are very proud of our relationship with the mining sector — from new agreements for road maintenance to carbon pricing rebates for placer miners to tax reductions across the board for small businesses in Yukon where we are supporting the industries.

I have to be honest: I don't have a lot of requests — I don't hear a lot of requests from the industry — for returning to the old days of lawsuits and declining investments. We are bridging gaps. We're having more conversation and engagement. We're trying to be more effective with how we spend taxpayers' money and we are seeing the results of these endeavours.

Again, negotiating a signing of the chapter 23 implementation agreement, increasing First Nations' share of the resource royalties — again, this is good for the economy and it's good for the First Nations whose traditional territories are being affected, and that's where the real money is.

I'm most proud of our whole-of-government approach, our increased accessibility the government has — more consultation, progressive legislation for the LGBTQ2S+ community, the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and a red-hot economy as well.

As we are entering into the supplementary budget and leaving the general debate, I'm very appreciative of the team and all the work that they have done. It's always great to have an opportunity to get up and to tell our side of the story when we hear certain concerns from the opposition. There is still a lot more work to do, that's for sure, Mr. Speaker, but I think in the last two years this government has done an effective job

of new fiscal considerations, new fiscal scrutiny, evidence-based decision-making, relations with all levels of government and I think the proof is there. If the members opposite choose not to see it, that's on them, not on us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for my chance to speak to the second reading, and I look forward to more debate in Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 207 agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Seeing the time, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned 5:20 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 1, 2018:

34-2-63

Yukon Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly for the Period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-64

Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (October 1, 2018) (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-65

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board 2017 Annual Report (Dendys)

34-2-66

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Eighth Report (September 14, 2018) (Adel)

34-2-67

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Ninth Report (September 20, 2018) (Adel)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 1, 2018:

34-2-138

Response to Written Question No. 27 re: Alaska Highway West local area planning process (Pillai)

34-2-139

Response to Written Question No. 25 re: Fox Lake local area planning process (Pillai)

34-2-140

Response to oral question from Ms. Van Bibber re: Yukon Housing Corporation wait-lists and vacancies (Frost)

34-2-141

Response to Written Question No. 26 re: residential housing in Whitehorse (Frost)

34-2-142

Response to oral question from Ms. Van Bibber re: Yukon Housing Corporation loans and grants (Frost)

The following document was filed October 1, 2018:

34-2-57

Yukon 2018-19 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update (Silver)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 92

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Clerk of the Assembly | Floyd McCormick |
| Deputy Clerk | Linda Kolody |
| Clerk of Committees | Allison Lloyd |
| Sergeant-at-Arms | Karina Watson |
| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 2, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Under introduction of visitors, the Chair would like to introduce the staff of the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office. They are: Annette King, Yukon's Child and Youth Advocate; Bengie Clethero, the Deputy Child and Youth Advocate; Jessica Williams, advocacy caseworker; Lynda Silverfox, systemic analyst; Carrie Jackson, administrative assistant; Stephanie Sullivan, bachelor of social work practicum student; and finally, Mark Rutledge, the graphic designer who designed the Child and Youth Advocate office's annual report, which will be filed with the Legislative Assembly shortly by me.

Thank you so much for all of the fantastic work that you do. Please join me in welcoming all of these persons to the House at this time.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is kind of bizarre, actually, to have a certain individual in this Legislative Assembly without all of us standing and rising. I would like to welcome back to the gallery former Commissioner Doug Phillips.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would also like to welcome back to the gallery again — two days in a row — Grand Chief of the Yukon, Peter Johnston.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to take this time to welcome some very special guests to the House today: Charlene Waugh, Tamara Fischer, Bunny Bruton, Millie Johnstone, Cheryl Cook, Patricia McIntosh, Ian Angus, Melissa Carlick, Colleen Parker, Thelma Asp — who is also my niece, I would like to say — Kristin Kulachkosky and Nate Kulachkosky, Christina Strutton, Mark Rutledge, Jacqueline Shorty, Maureen Johnstone, Corinna Yuill, Nyla Klugie-Migwans, Ron Davis, Eileen Melnychuk, Marion Primozic, Norma Davignon, Tyler Doll, Carl Carpentier, Dustin Wentzell, Robyn Gillespie, Virginia Viernes and Asther Gayangos.

I just want to welcome you all here. We're going to be doing a tribute to all of these great people in a few moments. Thank you so much for coming today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today, from Community Services and all the Wildland Fire folks: Paul Moore, Mike Sparks, Lorne Harris, Mike Smith, who, by the way, won the national Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award from the first intake this year, which was great — congratulations, Mike — Coleen O'Hagan and Breagha Fraser.

There's Ben Asquith, the CEO of Da Daghay Development Corporation. From Charlie crew: Keith Fickling, Doug Cote — well, I don't think Doug — hi, Doug — Shawn Kinsella, Nick Mauro, Andrew Pike, Jesse Latoski, Hayden Kremer, Ocean Stimson, Brandon Smith, Nathan Smith, Austen Smith — all the Smith brothers — Derek Gordon and Anthony Gallo. Can we give them a round of applause, please, Mr. Speaker?

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know he was welcomed, but Nate Kulachkosky is my youngest constituent who I've ever had in this Legislature. I would just like to say hi to Nate.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I see Shirley Dawson has also joined us and I want to welcome her as well. She is part of Tahltan Strong. Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Ms. White: I am not 100-percent sure, but I would hate if we missed someone. Glen Sands is also here for Tahltan Strong. It's only because I could pick him out in a crowd. So thank you for coming with your very large, powerful group of people. Thank you for being here.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Tahltan Strong

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal government to pay tribute to the community members of Telegraph Creek who have shown so much resilience, strength and courage in the face of the fires that destroyed their homes and huge masses of their land this summer. Some 300 people had to evacuate their homes, with 27 homes in the community burning down and 29 other structures lost inside and outside of the community.

I pay tribute to all of the firefighters who worked hard and put their lives on the line to make sure nobody was harmed. Because of the efforts of the emergency services and

the support of many volunteers, everyone was able to leave Telegraph Creek safely. No one lost their lives and that is something we are so truly grateful for. I saw first-hand how efficiently the evacuation plan was carried out.

The support continues today as evacuees re-establish their lives. So many individuals, organizations and businesses are helping, from offering free haircuts to ensuring everyone has the groceries that they need. Here in our territory, Yukoners are helping the evacuees too. Many Yukoners, like me, have connections to Telegraph Creek and the Tahltan Nation or simply want to help out our southern neighbours. Volunteers have been gathering supplies and taking them down the highway ever since the evacuation began. Yukoners have found other ways to help too.

The Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce and Northern Vision Development co-hosted a fundraiser luncheon for the business community. Volunteers came together and organized a benefit concert and silent auction in Whitehorse on September 19 and 20.

All of this was led by an amazing community leader, Jacqueline Shorty. So many people wanted to be involved, whether as performers or in the audience, that the concert was held over two nights. The first night was at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre and the second was at the Coast High Country Inn convention centre. The concert raised — and this is new, this hasn't been announced — \$86,160.16 for the Telegraph Creek evacuees and firefighters.

This is just simply outstanding, Mr. Speaker. Eighteen bands played, along with special guest, Brett Kissel. The concert sponsors were Solid Sound Reinforcement, Northern Vision Development, Air North and Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. The Tahltan Strong Benefit Concert gave Yukoners a way to show our support by our physical presence as well as through donations.

I had the distinct privilege to emcee on both nights so I had a very unique lens to these events. I'm so proud to be a Tahltan member and I'm equally proud to be a born and raised Yukoner.

This event gave us a way to celebrate the resilience of Telegraph Creek, the Telegraph Creek community and the power of our connections. It truly raised the spirits of the Tahltan people. That's something I've heard over and over and over — that the spirits have been raised and it's given the strength for people to move forward.

They are strong people — Tahltan strong — and I know Yukoners will continue to do what they can to help them.

Our hearts will stay with our neighbours as they rebuild their town and their lives. My heart and the hearts of the Tahltan Nation continue to overflow with gratitude and love for Yukoners.

From the Tahltan Nation: meeduh and nedishcha; thank you and we love you.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize and express our sincere gratitude to all of those who rallied in response to the

wildfires that spread to the Telegraph Creek and Lower Post areas this summer. Extraordinary efforts by ordinary Yukoners, who had ties to the affected communities, are to be commended. So many others who helped in this time of need — although we cannot name everyone, know you are appreciated.

Efforts included collecting donations from businesses and individuals, transporting goods to communities, sheltering the evacuees, opening homes to those in need for a place to stay, making meals and much more. Every act of generosity is never too small. All the contributions were supported and organized by an enormous effort by many Yukoners. The heart that went into organizing one of the main fundraisers tells it all. The Tahltan Strong Benefit Concert drew crowds to fill the venues each night. Performers from across the Yukon and beyond took to the stage to entertain guests. We would like to express our thanks to everyone who had a role in organizing, performing and volunteering at the events, as well as those who donated to the silent auction.

It is always truly remarkable to see communities come together to support people when they are in need. Yukon's response was reflective of the concern and care for their neighbours. "Tahltan strong" says it all. The strength and perseverance of a people has shone through.

Bless all who have lost their earthly goods and we pray you endure the challenges ahead with dignity and courage.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to offer our heartfelt thanks to recognize those who recognized the need, dreamt up, organized, volunteered and presented the Tahltan Strong events. Financial support to a community that has lost so much is one thing, but the outpouring of love and support is another thing altogether. The events that were organized did more than just raise money. They said, "We see you; we feel you; we're here for you," and that recognition is far more valuable than money. It's the acknowledgement of loss, of pride of place and of respect for a nation. As a great woman once said, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

What we saw and experienced as Yukoners, whether in Watson Lake or Whitehorse, in response to the Telegraph Creek fires and the displacement of so many people is the best of ourselves. It is community supporting community.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Wildland Fire crews

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am honoured to rise to pay tribute to firefighters and personnel who help protect Yukon lives, property and communities from wildfire in the 2018 fire season. This year, there were 66 fires in the Yukon, which burned more than 85,000 hectares. More than 20 initial-attack fire crews and support personnel worked incredibly hard. Some were YG crews and even more were First Nation crews. Their jobs are demanding. They are often away from home, family and community. They work to keep the Yukon safe —

and not just the Yukon, Mr. Speaker. With a record year for wildfires in British Columbia, Yukon shared firefighting resources with the BC Wildfire Service as part of our commitment to provide support and resources across Canada wherever the need is greatest.

The first crew to Telegraph Creek was Charlie crew, a First Nation crew. I got to talk with them in the lobby beforehand, and I heard first-hand from many folks about the effectiveness of this crew and how much they felt supported by them, and I want to thank them. When I talked to our counterparts in British Columbia, they asked us for access to our air base, bomber support, structural fire protection crews and evacuee support. On August 15, Yukon deployed 20 firefighters, support staff and equipment to British Columbia to assist with wildfires in the province, delivering on all fronts. When a wildfire threatened the community of Lower Post, Yukon fire crews with support from the Watson Lake fire department and the Yukon Fire Marshal's Office acted on behalf of the British Columbia Wildfire Service to manage a quick and effective response to the wildfire. We were told that their work helped save 300-some buildings.

In the middle of a heartbreaking disaster, this was such welcome news to the community. I commend all of the hard-working fire crews and personnel for managing wildfires in the Yukon and British Columbia well into September. All fire personnel have returned home as of September 29. We thank them and their families, who also feel the brunt of long deployments during the fire season. On behalf of all Yukoners, Mr. Speaker, thank you to all of the Yukon fire crews who worked hard to manage wildfires and keep us safe this fire season and in the future.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to join the minister in recognizing the efforts of all of the firefighters, fire crews and administrative support, as well as the logistic support that played a part in responding to forest fires this summer, both in the Yukon and in British Columbia. I would like to especially thank all of those in the gallery and anyone who may be listening for their work in this, but also to all of our firefighters across the territory, whether a part of the wildland fire crew or First Nation crew. We do appreciate your efforts here and in British Columbia.

With extreme fire activity across western Canada this summer, we saw immense damage to communities very close to home, and for many people I know that there is a family connection, as well, to people who are affected in British Columbia. As fire conditions worsened, residents south of the Yukon border prepared their homes for evacuation.

Many people in the Telegraph Creek and Lower Post fire zones were able to return to their homes, fix some damage and begin working on rebuilding their communities. As the minister noted, some 300 homes were thought to have been saved, in large part, through the efforts of the Yukon crews.

We acknowledge, as well, people who are in a worse situation, having lost a portion of their homes and their

belongings and the effect that this has on their families. Every person who participated in the fire-suppression efforts made an enormous impact in those wildfire zones. I understand that a Yukon crew was first on the ground when it mattered in one case in British Columbia as well.

Thank you to all of you for curtailing the damage and for doing your best to protect homes and other structures. There is a page on the BC government website dedicated to thanking wildland firefighters. Residents are able to leave personal messages of thanks to those who fought so hard to save their homes and their properties.

One post reads: "Dear Firefighters, I am lucky. I have never had to experience the threat of fire next to my home. I have never had to flee at a moment's notice. I try to imagine the scenario but, until someone lives this, I doubt a person can really understand. You firefighters live it constantly. During this hot, dry summer, while many of us enjoyed the beaches and water and sunshine, you all slaved in the searing heat of so many fires across our province. I thank you for saving homes, lives, trees and communities. Your long hours and relentless efforts were, and continue to be, truly amazing."

That's the end of that post.

Again, on behalf of me as well as my colleagues in the Yukon Party Official Opposition, our sincere thanks to all those who work to fight forest fires throughout this season and in previous seasons.

On a personal note, last year the response originated by Wildland Fire Management to a fire near my constituents at Jackfish Bay protected the homes of people who were quite concerned when they saw the fire. I am very thankful for that, as well as a for a response this year from Wildland Fire Management that put out a fire quite near to my family's home on Lake Laberge. Fortunately, I've never had to experience the loss of home or property, but I do appreciate the efforts of those who prevented it.

To everyone in the network of volunteer fire departments, as well as fire crews who have received wildland fire training or responded to fires, thank you again for your ongoing efforts. Thank you to those who volunteer time and energy to organize firefighting efforts as well as to serve on crews. To all of you who have answered the calls, who have left your homes and fought fires and have taken the personal risk to protect the homes of your fellow citizens, thank you for your efforts.

Words seem a bit inadequate, considering the situation. We do appreciate that, for all of you who have been in that situation, next to an active fire, there is personal danger involved and we appreciate your efforts and your service.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to thank the wondrous men and women of Yukon wildland fire crews and their support staff who each and every year protect the lives, property and ecology that Yukoners value. In years like this one, not only do they protect Yukoners but they go beyond our borders to support our neighbours in other jurisdictions. It takes a special bunch — one might say a

wacky bunch — to do what you do, and for that, we are most grateful. So thank you for taking care of us and our neighbours. Your job won't ever be easy but it will always be appreciated. Thank you so much for your work this summer.

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office 2017-18 annual report. This report is tabled pursuant to section 24 of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling today the Yukon Liquor Corporation annual report, 2017-18, which is tabled pursuant to section 16 of the *Liquor Act*.

I also have for tabling today three legislative returns. The first is a response to the Member for Lake Laberge regarding medevac costs. Another for that member is regarding EMS and the use of helicopters. The third is in response to questions regarding the Grizzly Valley subdivision road design.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 27: *Coroners Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Justice that Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 27 agreed to

Bill No. 21: *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I move that Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 21 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land to allow for the private development of residential building lots.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Ross River Dena Council to achieve mutual understanding and agreement on:

- (1) a consistent set of hunting regulations on the Ross River Dena Council traditional territory; and
- (2) mutually agreed-upon methods to support and enforce the agreed-upon regulations.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Hassard: I'm wondering: Can the Premier confirm whether Management Board asked all deputy ministers to find two-percent cuts in their departments?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I assume the member opposite is referring again to the leaked document that was presented yesterday in the Legislative Assembly. I am not going to comment on the document that the member is referring to.

I will say that it's not news to anyone that the Government of Yukon is looking for ways of being more efficient and more effective, and that was one of the central recommendations of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. We are looking into how services are organized, managed and delivered, and we are looking for efficiencies to better deliver services to Yukoners.

We are also getting ready to launch a comprehensive review of programs and services delivered by the Department of Health and Social Services, and that will be taking place this coming year. I'm very excited about that, and I'm very comfortable with the financial direction that we're heading in, as I outlined in my ministerial statement and outlined again yesterday.

Mr. Hassard: The Premier can deflect all he likes, but Yukoners know that looking for a reduction of the budget by two percent means that you're cutting the budget by two percent. As we determined yesterday, at Education this would be a \$3.6-million cut. My colleague yesterday asked what the government would target with this. Is it going to be teachers? Is it going to be programming for students? What is it going to be? Yukoners deserve to know.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have been very clear in our answering of this question. We're not avoiding the question. I did read the leaked document for the first time yesterday and I didn't see the word "cuts" anywhere at all in that document. That's exactly where the opposition went. They are the only ones who are suggesting cuts at this time.

What I did see was an opportunity for departments to articulate their vision to achieve savings in their departments.

The Yukon Party says “cuts”; we say “efficiencies”. The departments agree with us, and we’re taking a whole-of-government approach to make sure that we do find savings across every department. I don’t see any problem in finding savings in departments, and I certainly don’t find any problems with the departments themselves being the ones coming up with those efficiencies.

Mr. Hassard: I say “deflection” — but anyway, the Premier likes to claim he has an open and transparent government but Yukoners had to find out that this government was cutting the budget by two percent via the media. The Premier is telling Yukoners that he needs to cut the budget for our schools by \$3.6 million, but then he goes and spends half a million dollars on a new logo or he spends \$120,000 to spray mist into the air in Dawson City.

Mr. Speaker, here is a very simple question for the Premier: Since he is telling us that he is looking to save money, can he confirm that his government gave all Liberal Cabinet staff a big raise this year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We are obviously managing finances differently from the previous government. The previous government’s trend to spend more money than they earned was very concerning to Yukoners. Yukoners are interested in turning around this irresponsible approach to running finances, so we are looking for efficiencies. To reduce spending, you have to look at efficiencies first. The human hours that we put into processes, duplication of services and overtime required for a government that is used to politically motivated decisions as opposed to evidence-based decisions — well, that is extremely costly.

Imagine the pressure applied to the Department of Health and Social Services when they found out in the news that there was going to be a 300-bed facility. Imagine redrafting the original Peel plan because the political wing didn’t like the report. With a gutted financial department, with decisions being made outside of Management Board and a political office running amuck, it was obvious that we were on an unsustainable path.

They see cuts when they see leaked documents; we see efficiencies. This government is making decisions based on evidence. We are projecting O&M and capital expenditures over a five-year schedule as opposed to one year at a time. We are keeping all major budgets in the mains, and we are leaving supplementary budgets for unseen expenses. Improving capital planning is one of the main reasons why the government was able to table a financial plan that included a small deficit this year that was much smaller than forecasted for the 2017-18 budget. I am very proud of the financial scrutiny of this department and this government.

Question re: United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

Mr. Istchenko: Yesterday, the Member for Copperbelt North introduced a motion congratulating the federal Liberals on reaching an agreement in principle on the modernized trade agreement between the US, Canada and Mexico. The Yukon Party supports free trade, but we do have some questions

about how this agreement will impact Yukoners. This morning on CKRW, the president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce raised concerns that the steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by President Trump remain in place. We are also assuming that Canada’s tariffs that it created in response are also in place. This hurts Yukon contractors, retailers and customers.

Has the Premier or minister raised concerns with federal colleagues about these tariffs remaining in place?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is a pleasure to rise to talk to this issue. We are seeing in a hot economy in the Yukon a lot of financial pressures, one of which is tariffs — that’s for sure. Prices for steel have gone up over 40 percent this year alone, not to mention softwood prices as well. My department has read through most of the details of the new agreement already, and I will be pleased to present our opinions on that to the members opposite as we finalize our look at that draft.

I am glad that we stuck with, on a national level, a good deal as opposed as to no deal, or any deal as opposed to no deal — whatever that line was. Most importantly, when we spoke to the Prime Minister just yesterday, he thanked every premier in every region for reaching out to all of their different counterparts — whether it was in Alaska for us or BC looking to Seattle in Washington — to thank them for all of the work to show how important trade is to the Americans. We are kind of like the insulation in the attic — they don’t know we are there until we are gone. I am very pleased with the support and I am looking to the next chapter where we can deal with the tariffs on aluminum and steel.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. Also included in this agreement is that the duty-free thresholds for online shopping have been raised from \$20 to \$150. In 2017, the Retail Council of Canada was quoted: “... if Canada raised the duty-free threshold to \$200, it would shed more than 300,000 jobs by 2020. Even changing the duty-free level to \$100 could have a huge impact on Canadian retailers...”

So we know local retailers are concerned with the leakage of customer dollars to online sources. So has the Premier or the minister determined what the impact of these changes will be on our local retailers?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do agree with the member opposite that the thresholds have been increased, which is an opportunity for some and again, it’s going to be a concern for others. To answer his question simply: No, we haven’t taken a look at that yet. Like I said, we’re still reading through the documents. I had a report by the end of the day yesterday from intergovernmental relations going through all of the different components of the new agreement. We’re still getting through that as well right now.

I was reached out to yesterday by our Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell. We are going to continue conversations with the federal government as he heads back into Ottawa. We are planning for some substantial conversations during Yukon Days with our federal counterparts and also before that as well.

It’s pretty new in this new deal to ask for the specifics to which the member opposite is referring, but I assure him that

conversations are ongoing and the analysis work is also being done as we speak.

Mr. Istchenko: So I'm just a little bit concerned, I guess. If the government is still reviewing the detail and doesn't know the total impacts on Yukoners, why are we in such a hurry to table a motion congratulating Canada?

So I guess my final question on this would be, in 2017, a *Globe and Mail* article quoted Prime Minister Trudeau as saying that it is crucial to include protections for women in the renegotiated *North American Free Trade Agreement* because gender equity is an economic issue. Canada also talked about the importance of indigenous and environmental chapters in the renegotiated NAFTA. So can the minister or the Premier tell us if we can find these chapters in the new agreement and what the interventions his government made on this issue to Canada were?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do believe that it's definitely worthy. As we review this new deal and we take a look at it from a 1,000-foot level, we are proud of what has happened in Ottawa and we do believe that this is a good deal. I guess the question for the Yukon Party is: Do they?

Question re: Procurement policy

Ms. Hanson: Last April, the government awarded a \$900,000 contract to a company from the Northwest Territories to a standing offer agreement. Many Yukon contractors were shocked to see such a large contract awarded without competition to an Outside company. This flies in the face of the promise made by this government to give local companies greater access to government contracts. The minister eventually cancelled the remaining phases of the contract, despite the fact that mere weeks before the government was standing by its decision and defending the contract.

How is awarding a contract worth nearly \$1 million without a competitive process to a company outside Yukon beneficial to Yukon, and why did it take five months for the government to acknowledge its mistake?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think I've been very clear on our communication in the last several weeks.

The tendering of this contract was not in line with this government's commitments and goals. A contract of this size should have gone through a more competitive tendering process.

In response, I've decided to end the current contract at the second phase with the Outside firm. The third phase of the contract, which will be between \$650,000 and \$750,000, will go to an invitational tender open only to Yukon businesses. That's how we're proceeding. That's the approach. As I said again, this wasn't in line with this government's stated commitments and goals and we've taken action.

Ms. Hanson: You know, the minister did eventually acknowledge that a mistake was made, but he washed his hands of the responsibility and blamed the public service. The minister said that he was not even aware of the contract being awarded.

Mr. Speaker, is this minister seriously suggesting that he does not understand that he bears the ultimate responsibility for the actions of his government? The government stood by its decision to award the contract to an Outside company without a competitive process until September 4 — less than a month ago — and then two weeks later, on September 23, the minister cancelled the contract, saying it was a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, what changed between September 4 when the government was standing by its decision and September 23 when the contract was cancelled?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I do appreciate the question. This is an important question to the people of the territory and this government has dealt with it in a straightforward, transparent manner.

What happened was I was away on business down south. I came back into the territory after my absence. I looked into the circumstances surrounding contracting this tender. I realized that my department — the department that I have; my name is on the door of that department — that we made a mistake. I stood forward. I admitted the mistake and we've taken action on that file.

I am very pleased with the work the department has done on procurement. We've done so much work. The Department of Highways and Public Works has done an excellent job on this file. I'm very proud of the work they've done, and we're going to continue to improve the procurement process in the territory by putting in local hire and local knowledge provisions in our value-based contracts. We're going to use the 10 \$1-million exceptions. We're the first jurisdiction in the country to have done that. We are going to make sure that we get contracts out earlier in the year, as we did this year. We set precedent and set records on the amount of contracts we got out of the door earlier. We're going to work with our First Nation partner governments on making sure that they benefit from our procurement processes. We have a Procurement Advisory Panel in place that wasn't in existence before. We've done an awful lot of work.

The Department of Highways and Public Works has done a tremendous job on this file and I'm very proud of the work they've done.

Ms. Hanson: So what remains is an unexplained five-month gap and a two-week gap. Mr. Speaker, our understanding and the understanding of many contractors, for that matter, is that the limit for contract awards under a standing offer agreement is \$250,000. It's not clear how this contract would go through without the minister being aware of it. We are talking about a contract nearly four times larger than the government policy allows. To make matters worse, this contract went to an Outside company, depriving Yukon contractors of the opportunity to bid on it.

Without falling back on last spring's speaking points, can the minister confirm that the limit for standing offer agreement contracts is \$250,000 and what steps have been taken since this debacle to ensure that this policy is adhered to?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to relay some of the anecdotal information that I have about this particular file.

The minister admits that mistakes were made and has taken ownership of that. I have even seen him speaking to individual members of his public service, saying, “We want you to boldly look where you haven’t looked before. Be courageous, reach out and if you make mistakes we will be there to support those directions.”

It’s a big budget and the minister admits that there have been mistakes made, but remedies have been made as well. Terry Sherman was quoted in the *Yukon News* saying that he found the government admitted — and saying the admittance was “honourable” — and that the complaint that the association received about the TAG contract had been resolved. He said he will give credit where credit is due and that the Minister of Economic Development and also the Minister of Highways and Public Works did an exceptional job of listening to the individuals in the Yukon and they took the correct action.

Question re: Tourism development strategy

Ms. Van Bibber: Mr. Speaker, currently the government is accepting feedback on the draft tourism strategy until October 3, which is tomorrow. We have taken a look through the strategy and the “what we heard” document. A notable inclusion in the tourism strategy is the creation of a new government agency. However, we did not notice that the “what we heard” document contains zero mention of anyone asking for a new government agency. This seems odd. Doing something as major as creating an entirely new government structure seems like something you would include in a document summarizing what you heard during the consultations.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Culture tell us where the idea for this new government agency came from?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I thank the member opposite for the question.

We currently have a draft Yukon tourism development strategy that contains a number of proposals developed by a steering committee. The draft proposal — we are currently seeking further input into this draft and it actually closes tomorrow.

I want to just focus a little bit on — the draft was developed with the guidance and expertise of the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee, which is comprised of 15 individuals who represent Yukon First Nations, municipalities, arts and culture community and the tourism sector. It was informed by an extensive Yukon-wide engagement, as the member opposite has spoken to. It generated over 12,000 comments. It included 55 engagements and many written stakeholder submissions. The draft Tourism development strategy is based on —

Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Van Bibber: I didn’t hear the answer to my question.

The government’s website states — and I quote: “... over 500 Yukoners shared their thoughts through an online survey, through formal submissions, or in person at one of our 55 engagement sessions.”

Can the Minister of Tourism and Culture tell us how many of those 500 — not 12,000 — Yukoners suggested the Liberals should create a new government agency?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Again, Mr. Speaker, as I’ve stated, this draft tourism development strategy was developed by a steering committee that’s made up of individuals who represent the entire sector. All of our partners were at that table.

We also conducted research. There were 12,000 comments that were gathered, and many of them were gathered through the engagement sessions. We had written stakeholder submissions that contained a tremendous amount of information, Mr. Speaker, but really it was the steering committee that drew together this draft tourism development strategy. We’re currently seeking more input from the public and from our stakeholders, and the committee will then take what they have heard additionally and table a final draft strategy that we will consider within government. All proposals will then be considered.

Ms. Van Bibber: The draft tourism strategy argues that the Liberals need to create a new government agency because — and this is a quote from the report: “Government of Yukon should get out of the business of doing business and change its governance structure.”

It sounds great but, according to this year’s budget documents, the Department of Tourism and Culture only generated \$16,000 in revenue and zero dollars in profit. I’m left wondering: What business is the department even doing? Can the Minister of Tourism and Culture explain to us what private sector business the Department of Tourism and Culture is currently involved in and that she is contemplating getting out of, and is she able to explain how the creation of a new government agency removes government from that area of private sector business?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Again, I would like to emphasize that this is a draft tourism development strategy that contains a number of proposals that were developed by a steering committee. Creating a Crown corporation dedicated to tourism marketing is just one of the many proposals within this draft strategy.

Again, I would like to emphasize that we have engaged extensively on the draft strategy and that we now need to consider all of the proposals that have been put forward. When we have a final recommended draft tourism development strategy — and I would like to remind the House that it’s the first new strategy for tourism in 18 years. It’s long overdue. We brought together all of the partners to fully consider the future of tourism in Yukon, and building a sustainable, long-term, multi-year plan is what is needed in this territory.

Question re: Tourism development strategy

Ms. Van Bibber: As mentioned, the consultations for the tourism strategy end tomorrow. We have heard from members of the tourism industry and the community that, unfortunately, the consultation period on this came during the end of their busy season, and they would like more time to review this. Will the minister extend the consultations beyond October 3?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the further questions on our draft Yukon tourism development strategy.

I would like to just say in reference to this particular question that this process started well over a year ago, and we have done extensive engagement through the direction of the steering committee. We started with a roundtable in July 2017 with over 50 stakeholders coming together. They identified the way the process should run. These are all the partners in the whole tourism industry, including arts, culture and heritage. They identified that they wanted to ensure that we did extensive consultation throughout the Yukon. We visited every single community. We gathered all the information that we possibly could. We gave every Yukoner a chance to speak to the tourism development strategy. We wanted to ensure that every Yukoner could see themselves in this. Again, this is a long-term strategic plan that is long overdue — the first new tourism development strategy in 18 years.

Question re: Tourism and culture initiatives

Mr. Hassard: On June 20, the Minister of Tourism and Culture attended the conference on tourism and culture ministers. In the joint communique that the Minister of Tourism and Culture signed off on, she committed to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review on the *Copyright Act* currently being conducted by the House of Commons.

Can the minister provide us with an update on the actions that her government has taken in follow-up to this commitment, and does Yukon have any concerns or has it given any input into this review of the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that the member has all of the facts correct. I believe that it was at the ministers meeting for heritage ministers in June, which took place in Yellowknife.

I would like to get back to the member opposite on specifics about this. Perhaps he could be a little bit more clear about what he is asking and what information he would like back. I would be happy provide that to the House.

Mr. Hassard: I asked about a communique about the *Copyright Act* that was signed off on by this minister, so I would certainly hope that she understands what we're asking.

At the same time, at the meeting the Minister of Tourism and Culture also committed to strengthen work to promote safe workplaces for those working in the tourism sector. I'm wondering if the Minister of Tourism and Culture can provide this House with an update on this work. Does it include any new training initiatives or funding for tourism operators and employees?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Last year, during our last Sitting, we actually passed legislation — it was directly related, actually,

to safer workplaces around the prevention of psychological injury in our workplaces. That will apply to every single worker who is covered under our Yukon workers' health and compensation, and I want to emphasize that for sure. I will get back to the member opposite with more information.

Mr. Hassard: That's interesting, because I thought that was for first responders but apparently the people in the tourism industry are now first responders, so let's try another one, Mr. Speaker.

At that same meeting, the Minister of Tourism and Culture signed off on a communique that stated it needed to stimulate and grow international export opportunities for Canada's cultural business, organizations and artists. As you know, Mr. Speaker, cultural products can range from crafts to films and books. According to Statistics Canada, Yukon had \$7.6-million worth of culture exports in 2016, so this accounts for 2.2 percent of the territory's total exports.

Can the minister provide us with an update on what action she has taken in follow-up to her June meeting to stimulate and grow international export opportunities for cultural businesses and artists here in the Yukon, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, our cultural industry is very important in the Yukon. I have stated that many times during my time in the Legislative Assembly. We are moving forward on a culture review, which will begin into the new year.

The intent of that review is to look at the full cultural industry in the Yukon Territory. This is something that is long overdue — really defining what culture is in the Yukon Territory and ensuring that we are moving forward together. We want to ensure that every Yukoner can define what culture is to them and really build that whole cultural industry. It is a tremendous opportunity for all Yukoners and we are looking forward to this further engagement and for the draft of that new cultural framework.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 3, 2018. They are Motion No. 313, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, and Motion for the Production of Papers No. 6, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 3, 2018. They are Motion No. 288, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, and Motion No. 129, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm pleased to rise in Committee of the Whole to outline the spending requests as part of the first supplementary estimates for 2018-19.

In the spring, the government stressed the importance of supplementary estimates as an exercise in accountability. That work begins with tabling main estimates which accurately represent the spending that will occur during the year. As we know, unexpected events will happen from time to time and they will have an impact on the financial position. This year, things are no different. The story that we are telling with the first supplementary estimates is the same as the spring.

I have some notes on an overview of changes, but much of this has been recorded in Hansard during my second reading, so I am going to skip over some of the highlights of the overall changes. Again, for Members of the Legislature, they can check the Blues or Hansard to see those numbers — suffice it to say, though, that the transfers from Canada remain unchanged, and when we are talking about matching funding with Ottawa, we weighed the options carefully and made a prudent financial decision to take advantage of the money that Ottawa was putting on the table.

In evaluating how best to return to a path of fiscal sustainability and return to a surplus, this government is looking further than the next budgetary cycle. Aging infrastructure represents a real financial risk to provinces and territories. If left too long, they can severely compromise our

ability to offer the services that Yukoners require. We weighed our options carefully and decided that the most pertinent course in 2018-19 is to take advantage of the money from Ottawa that has been put on the table for green energy fund, small communities fund and the clean water and wastewater fund.

Mr. Chair, we will not allow Yukon communities to fall into disrepair or pass the burden of maintenance on to future generations and governments. This government will continue to invest in roads, bridges, hospitals and schools used by Yukoners. We are trying to put the federal funding to the best use to meet Yukon's strategic infrastructure needs.

Again, with changes to operation and maintenance already recorded in my second reading speech — except I think there was one thing I didn't mention in O&M, which was that, to support work on Yukon's climate change preparedness in the north project, a total of \$536,000 in additional spending is being allocated to the office of the Climate Change Secretariat.

I am very pleased to say that Energy, Mines and Resources has seen considerable uptake — and I have mentioned this before — in its energy rebate program, but I am going to leave all the other things in that category because we spoke about it at length at the second reading.

Decreases in O&M — in this year's supplementary estimates, there is a noteworthy decrease in O&M spending, so I wanted to kind of reiterate that. The first is that it involves a \$17.8-million decrease for Assessment and Abandoned Mines.

As the federal government takes over this work plan, discussions with the Government of Canada and affected First Nations on the management of the Faro Mine reclamation project are continuing. In the interim, the Government of Yukon will ensure that the Faro mine site meets existing standards in order to protect environmental safety and ensure human safety as well.

There are also a few notable changes that I want to highlight again in capital spending. Of the \$8.6 million in additional capital spending, the most significant amount is attributed to \$4 million for land development. These additional funds will address housing needs in the Yukon, including the completion of phase 3 of the Whistle Bend Project, continuation of phase 4 and initial work for phases 5 and 6 for Whistle Bend. The other major expense is \$3.8 million for the completion of Whistle Bend continuing care facility. This is a reallocation of funds from the 2017-2018.

The last couple of things here are that the first supplementary estimate reflected a \$6.2-million reduction in recoveries; included in these changes are a \$14.4-million reduction as part of the changes in governance related to the Faro mine. This is offset by a recovery for the Wolverine reclamation work mentioned earlier.

I would like to conclude my summary by speaking to some increases in revenue. We did see an increase in the interest rates at the moment, which resulted in \$118,000 in additional revenue on the Yukon government investments. The largest area of growth, however, was in land sales. As

result of higher than anticipated demand for lots and largely the result of a successful lottery held earlier this year, we've seen an \$8.6-million increase in revenue there.

So I will conclude my remarks by restating the purpose of the supplementary budget — while they may be used to convey any new and unexpected changes in the main estimates, they are actions and principles that are always within our control. Today our government represents the supplementary budget that does not stray far from the 2018-19 estimates.

I invite members to request further details on any of the areas included in the supplementary estimates to myself and my ministers available here. They'll try their best and I'll try my best to answer the questions to the best of our ability.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to begin by thanking the officials from Finance for the briefing on the budget, as well as all of the officials who have been part of the preparation of the supplementary estimates.

The Premier will probably not be too surprised by the fact that I'm going to begin my remarks as Official Opposition Finance critic by expressing concern with the red ink in the budget that we see here. On page three of the supplementary budget, the reductions in the net financial assets, as well as the plan to spend further into the red, are of concern to us. So could the Premier explain what the main reasons are for the changes that we see to take the net financial assets to the end of this fiscal year further downhill and what his expectation is that the number will be in the year-end totals for this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have talked at length about, basically, the concept of cash for capital. There are a lot of federal pots of money that are on the table now, and those federal dollars are helping us as we work with other governments — First Nation governments and municipalities — to identify the pressures in capital assets that we face in the Yukon. Couple that with hundreds of millions of dollars — billions of dollars, really — from Ottawa that are coming at us at 25 cents our money to 75 cents their money. We believe that, with the deficit that we have inherited, with keeping up with our assets and with the pressure from climate change, as well — you not only have to redo these buildings or build new buildings, you have to build them to a new standard because of the effects of climate change — we don't want to leave any of that money on the table. If you are getting money to build these assets at a significant reduction, you might as well use those dollars because it makes sense to build it at a savings.

We are all aware that there is a very strong local economy right now, and there is a tight labour market as well. That is contributing to an overheated construction industry. There are lots of pressures when we are doing these builds. There are costs that are being influenced by factors outside of the Yukon. Also contributing to higher costs are higher prices for steel that stem from recent US tariffs and counter-tariffs from the United States. Those are some of the things that we are trying our best to work with the federal government to deal with, but, at the same time, what we can do internally is take

these federal dollars from the Canadian federal government and effectively use that money to prioritize.

What we have done in working with Community Services and all of the other departments is that we have prioritized our spending. As you know, Mr. Chair, we can only accomplish so much money out the door every year to spend on capital assets, and we want to make sure that we are maximizing the 25-cent dollars as we put those projects out to the consumers — to the private sector — who are building the assets for us on our behalf.

Mr. Cathers: That sounds nice, but it does cause me and members of our caucus, as well as a number of Yukoners, concern about the fact that the government is willing to, for short-term gain, spend on capital projects, and the ability for the current government to perhaps cut the ribbon on new capital projects and use the opportunity of photo opportunities and great fanfare to invest in capital projects across the territory while going further into the red in doing so. We recognize the value of federal dollars and the advantage of being able to leverage those dollars when we receive 75-percent federal contributions for Yukon projects. But there are limitations on how much that is actually a benefit. If we are seeing future generations saddled with the bill for the current government's decisions, that does go a long way to eating into the benefit of those capital projects. Spending beyond your means is perhaps attractive to do, but it's never a good idea in the long run.

It's very similar to one's own household budget. There are limitations to how big you can build a brand new house or how much you can afford in terms of renovations to an existing one or additions to your property. All of those may increase the net value of your property, but any homeowner who simply spends as long as the bank will approve an additional loan or a line of credit for them will quickly find themselves in a situation where they can't pay their bills. We're very concerned that it looks like the Premier is willing to take that same course of action with the finances of the people of the Yukon.

The Premier has talked about money that Ottawa is putting on the table and taking advantage of it. I'm going to ask him some specific questions about that. Is the government taking on debt, or contemplating taking on debt, to finance any of the capital construction projects in the territory? In that, I'm including not only projects that are directly being done by the Yukon government, but also those that are being done by First Nations or municipalities to which the territorial government is contributing. Has the government taken on any debt at this point in time since we last talked in the spring? Are they planning on taking on any additional debt in the near future? Last but not least, could the Premier confirm what the Yukon's current status is in terms of long-term debt at this point in time in the fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll just say up front that we're not contemplating taking on any extra debt for our five-year capital plan, but it is interesting that our debt cap is at \$400 million today. Of that, \$200 million has already been taken by the previous government. It's interesting now that the member

opposite — now that he sits in the opposition — is so concerned with the debt and the debt cap, yet his government racked up a bill of \$200 million in that pursuit.

I guess that when he was in government — and sitting, I believe, even as the Deputy Premier at one point in his career — they found reasons to go into debt and I'm sure they had their justifications at that time.

Mr. Chair, the future government is going to be saddled with something. If we don't do something right now, they're going to be saddled with deficits in infrastructure. That's what we found when we got into government. There are deficits in infrastructure. Now there's money available at 25-cent dollars to make sure that we get caught up with the capital investments that we need to get caught up with — because, right now, if we don't do something about the infrastructure deficit, think about the O&M costs right now in inefficient buildings and ones that haven't been retrofitted. This building is a great example. The previous government spent some money on this building and the cost-savings — I'm sure we're going to find that there were costs up front as well to do so. We need to make sure that we look at all of our buildings and effectively use the money that we have from Ottawa.

Now, if you take a look at all the money that's lined up, one of the big concerns that we have as a government — and we would love some help from the opposition to help lobby the federal government for some flexibility on that infrastructure spending. If we got more flexibility from the federal government on some of our infrastructure dollars, then we wouldn't have to consider other options.

We can use that money as effectively as we possibly can, and so that's what we're doing. The Government of Yukon consistently spends more on services and capital spending than it receives in revenues and recoveries in order to meet the needs of Yukoners. That's what is contributing to the deficits that we have seen in recent years, plain and simple.

Yukon has relied on growth and the federal transfer payments to meet the ever-growing needs of the territory and the residents over the last several decades. This has been at the expense of developing Yukon's own-source revenue, which continues to lag significantly behind the cost of delivering services. Services continue to become costlier, even, every year with no necessary increase to our revenues.

That's the important thing that we're taking a look at. We're trying to close the gap, so we need to explore all new avenues — those raised by the Financial Advisory Panel, for example — in order to close that gap between a growing need for services and a federal transfer and taxation revenue that does not keep up with this growth.

To be very clear, the Yukon government cannot continue to solely rely on the growth of the federal transfer to solve all of our problems. The previous government took up half of our debt already, and now we're left with the \$200 million, roughly, in that account and we're hearing from the members opposite, "Don't touch it and don't ask for an extension of it." I don't know what their plan would have been to continue spending that money, because they did. We are looking at other options but, at some point, we have to make some

critical decisions to make sure that when we take a look at the debt that is going to be passed on to further governments and further Yukoners, we have to be as effective and efficient as we possibly can to minimize the negative impacts of those debts being moved forward.

Mr. Cathers: I just want to briefly remind the Premier — since we have seen the tendency, shall we say, for the Premier and certain ministers to draw conclusions from their Financial Advisory Panel's report that are different from what the panel actually said, I just want to again quote from two important parts of the Financial Advisory Panel report, one of them being an area where the government has not followed through on listening to that recommendation.

The Financial Advisory Panel said — on page 15 of the report, it recommended: "Improve comprehensiveness and transparency of territorial budgeting to include fully consolidated books and projections." Again, we see that there was no change in the format to reflect that recommendation, which the Financial Advisory Panel saw as so important that they put it in their report twice.

Another area that the Financial Advisory Panel on page 38 noted in reference to the government's financial picture is — and I quote: "But, one must interpret these numbers cautiously. The financial health of the Yukon government is stronger than its headline deficit projections suggest. There are a variety of entities that are excluded in such calculations. The full consolidated budget balance is typically stronger when net income from these entities is included.

"There are multiple entities included in the consolidated budget excluded from the non-consolidated one. In particular, Yukon College, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Housing Corporation, and other entities each generate revenue that typically exceed expenses. But this revenue sometimes takes the form of an intergovernmental transfer from the Yukon general government to the entity in question. Of the \$170 million in other entity revenue expected for 2017-18, \$120 million is a transfer from the Yukon government. With other entity expenses of just over \$140 million, there is an overall surplus of close to \$27 million. Combined with the small surplus for the general government of \$6.5 million in 2017-18, the consolidated surplus becomes over \$33 million."

Going on, again quoting from page 38 of the Financial Advisory Report, they noted the following: "This is the difference between the red and blue bars below. Over the past five years, the consolidated surplus was just over \$30 million larger than the non-consolidated."

For Hansard, the first quote that I referenced was page 15 of the Financial Advisory Panel Report.

I just want to point that out for anyone who is listening or reading here — to recognize that, in fact, as the Premier's own panel noted, the government's non-consolidated books show a picture that is not as accurate or reflective of the overall finances of the territory as the fully consolidated budget. The fully consolidated budget shows a much rosier financial situation for the government upon taking office than what the Premier likes to suggest it is.

I also have to talk about this supposed “infrastructure deficit” that the Premier has coined the term for. I have to commend the Premier, or whichever speechwriter came up with it for that clever line, but it really sounds like a convenient excuse to saddle the territory with debt and mortgage the Yukon’s future by taking on new debt.

I would note that the Premier has been hinting now that he is looking for an increase to the debt limit or planning to use some of it. That is contrary to his statements in the spring and it is concerning to us — whether the Premier is contemplating borrowing money for which future governments and future generations of Yukoners will be forced to make the interest payments.

I am going to begin by asking a very simple question: What projects is the Premier currently planning on borrowing money for or considering borrowing money for, and what is the total amount that the government is prepared to consider borrowing to take advantage of federal infrastructure dollars?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We do see a tendency from the member opposite to pick certain parts of quotes. I will read the rest of the quote from the Financial Advisory Panel report that he left out. On page 39, continuing on — and I quote: “Nevertheless, there is a marked decline in the fiscal health of the territorial government since 2015. This can be further appreciated by looking at the net financial assets of the government. Though the plot below excludes external entities, even on a consolidated basis net financial assets are expected to turn negative by 2021.”

We can continue reading there or we can just get the people who are listening and paying attention to read the Financial Advisory Panel report. There is some excellent advice in that and we plan to keep on using it as we turn this ship around.

Interestingly, this consolidated versus non-consolidated — the member opposite knows very well that we always present a consolidated budget and we always have a non-consolidated budget. We also do that in the Public Accounts. All of this information is there for the members opposite to take a look at, again, just for the record. When he talks about deficits — assets and deficits — one can just turn to the Whistle Bend facility and how the previous government planned for a 300-bed facility out of the blue. At that time, no operation and maintenance was being recorded for that. Well, after a lot of what I would call cross-examination from the NDP and some excellent and thorough investigation from the NDP and me in opposition, we finally got a number. That number did not come close to what the actual O&M was for the building, as we are finding out now.

When we talk about an infrastructure deficit, one could take a look at 15 years of not paying attention to our aging population and then having to make a massive decision. The member opposite can say that I or some creative writer is making some stuff up. I am going to respectfully disagree with the member opposite.

As far as the current debt level, our government currently has a borrowing limit of \$400 million, and this limit is set by Canada under the *Yukon Act*. The government’s corporations

are included in this borrowing limit, and this includes Yukon College, the Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Development Corporation, the Hospital Corporation, the Yukon Housing Corporation and the Liquor Corporation. The member opposite mentioned two of those. As of March 2018, the Yukon government has approximately \$192 million in borrowed funds almost entirely within the corporations. In addition to reducing our level of debt, the Government of Yukon also has the ability to request an increase to its own debt limits. This is occasionally done in other jurisdictions. We have seen the two other territories ask for an extension. I believe their debt right now is to the tune of around \$1 billion each, and we are at the \$200-million level — somewhere around there.

I believe that answers all of the questions. There were a lot of statements, but I didn’t see any other particular questions in there, other than to say — and I have said this a few times, but I don’t think the member opposite is paying attention to it — that we are not contemplating borrowing. We have a five-year capital plan and we have no contemplation to be borrowing or adding to that debt cap for the five-year capital assets that are identified in our five-year plan. This is an accomplishment that we are very happy to have. A five-year capital plan brings certainty to industry and it allows a whole-of-government approach and an ability for us to work with the private sector and other governments in Yukon to maximize the amount of dollars that we can get from these federal programs that come to us to the tune of 25 cents our money to 75 cents their money.

If the members opposite are very concerned about the finances, they can help us out by helping to lobby the government and sending letters to the ministers responsible, asking for some flexibility. We have successfully lobbied the other two territories to do so. We have even successfully lobbied the western premiers to support that as well. When I go to Ottawa and speak with the premiers at the Council of the Federation, this is always top of mind. I want to thank the Deputy Premier as well for attending the last session of the Western Premiers’ Conference. I think he did a fantastic job of relaying our concerns over flexibility and we’re going to bring that message again to Ottawa when we get there for Yukon Days.

Mr. Cathers: Contrary to what the Premier stated, I have been listening to what he’s been saying, but we have an ongoing concern about some of the hints that the government has made at times. The Premier seems to be indicating that they are prepared to borrow money and even earlier in debate this afternoon mused about the debt cap and the amount remaining and talked about the government’s ability to request an increase. So I’m pleased to hear the Premier stating that they are not contemplating borrowing money for infrastructure projects. I hope he sticks to that commitment, but we will continue to ask about that because at times some of the hints and messages coming from the government appear to be foreshadowing a plan to do the opposite of that, and the Premier’s own statements to the federal finance committee last year in April — I believe it was on or about April 4 — the

Premier at that time specifically told the committee that they were interested in seeing electricity power excluded from the debt cap. Then, in conversation further with the Premier, he walked back those statements in the House — but the Premier can understand, I'm sure, because if he were in our shoes, he would entertain the same suspicion of wondering why, when someone's statements appear to contradict each other as his have. We are, of course, obligated on behalf of Yukoners to continue asking government and to see if the story is changing.

Just one minor point I should just correct the Premier on for historical record. The Premier had indicated that he thought I was Deputy Premier at some point. That is complete news to me and certainly not reflected by the history of Cabinet appointments, so just to correct that for the record.

I would also like to make one other minor point — the Premier's suggestion would have the casual listener or reader believing that the Yukon Party in office ran up \$200-million worth of long-term debt. In fact, a significant portion of that debt dates back to before I was even old enough to vote and was inherited from previous governments. The largest portion of debt that was taken on was, of course, related to the Mayo B hydro project, which the Premier should either know or could find out very easily from maybe his chief of staff or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The revenue that has come to the Yukon Energy Corporation and the reduction in carbon emissions that have come as a result of Mayo B — all of those have provided a significant economic and environmental benefit to the Yukon. The overwhelming benefits of that project, in my view, do justify the decision at the time to borrow money for it. However, one of the things government needs to be mindful of in ever contemplating any new debt is that change in interest rates can have a dramatic impact on the expected cost to future generations. Any decision by a cabinet to enter into long-term debt is a decision that burdens future legislative assemblies and future generations of Yukoners. Future MLAs, like me, may find that long-term debt taken on by a previous government is still on the books when they get to the age of voting and perhaps serve in the Legislative Assembly.

That is one of the reasons we will continue to oppose the government taking on more long-term debt and borrowing money to finance infrastructure projects. The Yukon does not need to go above the \$200-million threshold for debt that is currently in place.

I would also note that one of the sources of expected increase in revenue that we're pleased to see in this year's budget was an increase in the interest in revenue on investments. I believe the number was stated as \$118,000. I don't have that figure right in front of me, so the Premier or his deputy minister can correct that if I've recalled the number incorrectly. But that \$118,000 benefit to the territorial government from increased revenue — higher than expected revenue from investments — can easily go the other direction if the government makes a decision to borrow money.

I also have to remind the Premier, before getting on to other questions, that the decision that the government has

made to increase the size of the total number of full-time employees in the Yukon government within the first two years by over 10.4 percent — most of which have nothing to do with continuing care — is a decision that rests on their shoulders. In fact, the Financial Advisory Panel, when they were asked questions about their report, noted that with the government's future years' projections, they did not delve into all of the details of the budget. They were relying on information provided by government so they were relying on the projections provided to them by the Premier.

The Premier's favourite and almost only excuse for claiming that the previous government did not fully budget for costs is to point to the cost of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. I have to remind the Premier that the difference between the cost estimates provided by the then-Minister of Health and Social Services in Question Period prior to the election and what the government is currently envisioning through a staffing plan that they approved is, in fact, less money than the change that we see reflected in this year's supplementary budget for two relatively small line items — one being the change in Wildland Fire Management costs and the other being in the calculations under the Public Service Commission related to employee leave and future benefits. It's a nice attempt, but they are relatively minor amounts and that does not explain the rather significant increases in spending made by government nor some of the somewhat poorly advised decisions to spend money, such as spending \$120,000 spraying water into the air literally hoping for ice and the \$105,000 on Cabinet electronic devices and so on. I won't go through the list as I did yesterday, but they do add up into the millions of dollars through poor decisions made by government.

I'll take the Premier at his assertion for the time being that they're not planning on borrowing money for infrastructure projects, which would then indirectly answer a question of mine that he did not directly answer — that being, which projects they're contemplating taking on new debt for.

The Premier made reference to the Yukon's state of indebtedness at the end of the last fiscal year. Can he confirm whether there has been any increase in the Yukon's long-term debt or new areas entered into or changes in the calculation of what that debt is expected to be as of this point in time or if that figure is still roughly accurate?

A second specific question I would ask is: What are the Yukon's current financial assets, current cash in the bank and cash and cash equivalents?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That was a lot of preamble for two questions. We will go the FTEs. Our government is providing the necessary services that we need to Yukoners and the fact that demand for many services is increasing — well, this is expected, especially when a population is growing. We do have 242 FTEs that were added in the 2018-19 fall estimates. The member opposite says that very little of that was for continuing care, yet 186 of those were in Health and Social Services, specifically in support of continuing care facilities and increases to home care. The member opposite said that they properly budgeted for Whistle Bend. I believe the

number we were told at the time by the member opposite's Minister of Health and Social Services was that there was some money internally, but the budgetary number that they gave us at that time was \$4 million. I don't know how \$4 million is going to pay for 186 new employees — wait a minute; that's only for a 150-bed facility. Imagine if it was actually a 300-bed facility — but I digress.

Just to correct the record, not a lot of those — I forget the wording from the member opposite, but the major share of those 242 FTEs were for two things — one was for health care, specifically the continuing care facility, and 29 of those were education to provide for teachers and educational assistants and support staff in response to enrolment based on growth.

We heard from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King that we need more money for teachers and more money for education assistants. We have added 29 new teachers and educational assistants.

Also, of that 242 number of additional FTEs, 27 were also distributed among different departments to support things like the new sexual assault response team, the Family Information Liaison Unit and the family medical program. All of these are very important services and programs that we think that Yukoners want us to provide. We hear from the members opposite their fear of cutting, but yet they're also saying not to hire these people. I don't know how that would work where you don't hire the people for the services and programs that are desperately needed that are important to Yukoners, but yet at the same time — it's a confusing narrative from the member opposite, but I will leave it at that.

We believe in these new FTEs. We believe that we need the support staff for continuing care facilities and also the increase in home care. I believe that, with the increase in home care with the whole-of-government approach and collaborative health care model trying to keep our elders in their communities as long as possible, this is a cost benefit right across the government as well. This is as opposed to a 300-bed facility where all of our aging folks that are supposed to come from every single community — we're trying our best to keep them in their communities that they come from for as long as possible with a suite of health care services to provide for mental health, addictions and also keeping people in home care as long as possible. I think these are important FTEs. I'm proud of the work that they do.

If it is not health care services or the education, I wonder if the member opposite would not want us to have that new sexualized assault response team or maybe the family liaison information unit as well. Interestingly enough — and I can't reiterate this enough — these new FTEs do provide support directly to Yukoners. That has been carefully balanced against alternative options for the efficiency of delivery of services. Whereas in the past it may have been more about cutting ribbons and getting buildings out there before election campaigns, it is all about the delivery of the services — it is the programs and services that you have to basically maintain — most importantly. We believe that these FTEs were carefully balanced against alternative options for that effective

delivery of services. The largest area of growth is in continuing care and in education — two things that I know the member opposite holds near and dear to his heart, and I know that his constituents do as well.

I previously quoted a number that is before Public Accounts are finalized. I expect a small adjustment when talking about the current debt levels, but we have to wait — the opposition as well — to get those numbers from the Public Accounts. We will get that with the tabling of the Public Accounts very soon — to answer his secondary question.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier and I are unlikely to reach agreement here this afternoon on Whistle Bend, but I do have to remind the Premier that — unless he wasn't paying attention to the information provided by the former Health and Social Services minister in April 2016 — the minister noted at that point that the costs for Whistle Bend O&M were expected to be \$28 million — and that was also reported by local media — which is \$24 million higher than the number that the Premier cited earlier today. It is an attempt to find an excuse for the cost increases, in my opinion, but I do have to remind the Premier that with every one of those 482 new full-time equivalent positions, which government has added — or is it 484? I forget which number the Premier provided in the first two fiscal years. The decision to hire almost 500 new government staff and to approve each and every one of those staffing plans for the variety of departments that were affected was a decision that this government made and has to own and has yet to properly explain in detail to Yukoners.

I am going to move on to one point I wanted to touch on before leaving the area of federal projects and the value of getting 75-percent federal contributions to infrastructure projects. I do have to point out to the Premier and his Cabinet that a decision to push ahead with those projects quicker — and whether it is taking on new debt or spending down the surplus, there is a challenge with their decision to do that in the short term. That is that, with the trade dispute that is going on between Canada and the United States and the 25-percent tariffs on steel and aluminum, we are seeing building materials come at a significantly increased cost for anything that is built with steel and aluminum for some of those projects. Perhaps there are some that they were able to order and secure before those tariffs kicked in, but for anything after the fact that has been hit by a 25-percent cost increase to imports — and in some cases, as we have heard from certain Yukoners, including companies that sell boats, certain products are being hit twice with the tariffs on steel and aluminum as raw materials are exported from Canada to the United States and shipped back as a finished product.

That should cause the current government to take a hard look in the mirror and question whether proceeding as quickly as they can with spending federal dollars on capital projects is, in fact, even a good idea until the tariff issue has been fully resolved. Again, perhaps the Premier has heard something that I have not through internal sources, but, as of the latest media reports that I have read, it seems that, even with the new NAFTA agreement being concluded, the matter of the tariffs

on steel and aluminum has still not been resolved at this point in time. I would encourage the government to consider that.

I am going to ask two specific questions related to the number of government employees. Could the Premier tell me the current number of full-time equivalent positions and whether there has been any revision to the total number of FTEs they plan on hiring in this current fiscal year? Secondly, are there any Yukon government employees who are currently on a paid secondment to another level of government, whether that is the federal government, a First Nation government or a municipality? If so, what is the total amount of wages being paid by the Yukon taxpayers for all of those positions that are effectively supporting the operation of another level of government?

Again, I would note that it is not necessarily a bad thing if government is choosing to send someone on a paid secondment, but it is a decision that government should be transparent about — anytime that government is assisting another level of government, whether federal, municipal or First Nation, and is not obligated to do so and is passing the bill on to Yukon taxpayers.

Hon. Mr. Silver: There is a lot going on and then a question at the very end — so you will have to excuse me while I'm trying to coordinate my notes here.

It is not whether or not we agree on FTEs. We have been very clear on the new FTES. We just stated what the new FTEs are for and we can give a comprehensive breakdown of every single one — not a problem. We just explained what every single one of those FTEs is for, and then I sit down and the member opposite says that we're not giving any information on the FTEs, so that is interesting. It is not that we're agreeing or disagreeing. It is just that the member opposite is not listening to the answers.

I think his words were — pushing projects out the door in this economy that has some increased prices. On the contrary, Mr. Chair, it is not about pushing projects out the door; it is about sustaining a Yukon economy and making sure that we always put in our budget the amount of money that we actually can accomplish based upon the abilities of our construction industry. I don't know if the member opposite has noticed or not, but we have levelled off the predictions that they used to make in capital assets and we have made a more holistic approach to a real number that actually is accomplishable by the industries. In that, yes, I will agree that there are definitely some pressures right now, and the pressures are due to the economy that we're in.

He mentioned specifically steel and aluminum. Yukon doesn't produce our own steel and aluminum products, but the direct impacts of new US tariffs on our particular companies — that would be small. However, there is a noted increase to the construction cost of materials; he's absolutely correct in that. As US tariffs and Canadian retaliatory tariffs — they have the potential of increasing costs for our local construction activities. They also increase the price of some of our imported goods, as well, and the department will continue to monitor the trade disputes and keep an eye on that. We are hearing that there are positive conversations moving forward

to reduce those tariffs. I don't know if the member opposite would have us stop using 25-cent dollars for capital projects but that's what we're doing. We know that these are some of the things that we cannot necessarily affect, but what we can do is that we can prioritize our spending so that we cap the amount of money that we say we're going to put out for capital projects so it actually reflects the reality of what Yukon can actually accomplish and then, furthermore, prioritize — not push out the door — the money that we do spend on these projects so that hopefully every single project is using 25-cent dollars as opposed to money that isn't recoverable. That's what we're doing.

Again, the overall steel prices — yes, they have risen. They have risen quite substantially in the last several months — 40 percent. That is affecting the cost of materials and the price of manufacturing items that use steel. The International Monetary Fund is warning us that the current wave of protectionism is the biggest risk to the global economic outlook, which is a concern to our local mining sector, given the relationships between the global performance and the demand for materials. Again, we agree with the member opposite. The threat of US tariffs on vehicles — we are so happy to see that being rolled back because the consumer is going to get hit by all of these things.

Again, what we're doing here — the things we're trying to control, the things that we have control over — the way in which we organize our budgets. We've talked about how we don't want to have two budgets a year. If you have two budgets a year where you have capital projects coming out from the summer that weren't talked about in a budgetary cycle, not only is it uncertainty for the industries that are trying to build these facilities, but it's also a lot more work and overtime for the public servants whose job it is to get the tendering process going, the architectural work, the engineering work. It's a Herculean effort to do so. A five-year plan is also helping with the certainties there as well.

What we've done is that we're making decisions that are based upon evidence in planning. We've put human resources into our Department of Finance to make sure that the decisions are made based upon evidence and that the scrutiny is there. Projected O&M and capital expenses are given over a five-year schedule as opposed to one year at a time. Keeping all major budget items, as I mentioned, in the mains is extremely important. All of these things add to us reducing our costs and increased efficiencies.

Again, leaving those supplementary budgets that we are supposed to be debating here in the Legislative Assembly right now for unforeseen expenses is really important stuff, in my opinion. I think we're doing a very good job. There are the variables that you can control and the variables that you cannot control, and these are the ones that we can — and I give kudos to my Department of Finance for their work with the Department of Highways and Public Works and their work with Community Services and all departments — Economic Development — working together on a whole-of-government plan so that we make sure that we are maximizing the dollars we spend on behalf of Yukoners and, really, on behalf of

Canadians because, as we all know, most of our revenue comes from Canadian taxpayers.

The member talked a bit about NAFTA. We have provided representation at all negotiation rounds and remain in close contact with Global Affairs Canada to address issues that are very significant to Yukoners. We have shared extremely relevant consultation information with chambers of commerce, for example, to ensure that Yukon companies are aware of the opportunities to voice their concerns on Canadian trade actions, including regulatory tariffs and trade remedies. We have provided representation at all negotiating rounds and remain in close contact with Global Affairs Canada to address issues significant to Yukoners. As I mentioned earlier today in Question Period, when we had a phone call just the other day with the Prime Minister of Canada and all the other premiers, he again thanked all of the premiers for putting partisan politics aside and having a Canadian effort at the regional level — reaching out, as I just outlined here, to our partners, to Global Affairs Canada, to our American counterparts, whether in the Senate or the public servants therein. We believe that it really helped in this whole process.

My big thing — and the big thing from all of the premiers right from the beginning — was modernization. If this is an opportunity for us to take a look at modernizing the agreement, modifying with modernization, that's really important. As you can recall, Mr. Chair, NAFTA began before there was even an Internet. What a great opportunity to take a look at chapters of this agreement that actually take a look at e-commerce. I want to thank the people and the good folks in IGR for the reports that are coming in as we go through the details of this comprehensive agreement.

But the modernization details — the agreement includes a new digital chapter that governs important aspects of e-commerce and digital trade, recognizing the economic growth opportunities for this important sector. Modernization also includes intellectual property and telecommunication chapters involving corporate industries and technologies like biologics and 5G services that didn't even exist, as I said, 25 years ago.

The agreement contains a new customs administration and trade facilitations chapter, standardized customs procedures, compelling parties to digitize and simplify customs procedures for traders. It's a very important concept for jurisdictions like us that live very close to the American border.

Also there is a new small- and medium-enterprise chapter recognizing the fundamental role of SMEs in maintenance, maintaining economic dynamism and competitive processes. So again, a lot is going on in the NAFTA file.

I'm just touching on some of the things that the member opposite brought up before he went into, I believe, the next thing, which was the FTEs. I believe he asked what the total was of all FTEs. All FTEs in Yukon government — 4,913 in total.

If we went back to the 2016-17 budget, which would be the last budget of the Yukon Party — at that time, there were 4,414 FTEs, including an increase to Education at that time as

well. At that time, for Education, there were 968.2 FTEs. I believe that increase was done outside of the mains, for sure. We had to budget for those increases. There was a decision made by the previous government, but we had to budget for it.

The numbers went from 968.2 full-time equivalent teachers to 1,104.9. Again, these individual teachers were in their seats in their classrooms before the election even hit, and it was one of those “when you think you know where you stand as far as the budget and the conversations that are happening in the Legislative Assembly” — that was a big one for us to know that these teachers were hired and not accounted for. That's something that we had to account for — the numbers I identified there. If the member opposite wants me to break them down per department, I would be happy to.

Mr. Cathers: Yes, I would appreciate a breakdown by department of the FTE count and I appreciate that information.

I would just like to move on to a somewhat specific question about communications infrastructure, but it also relates to what the government's plans are generally and, as it affects more than one department, I would appreciate if the Premier could provide an update on it. As the Premier will recall, the issue of cell service for Yukoners — cellular phone service — has been important to people across the territory, as well as to a number of members of this Legislative Assembly, including the Member for Watson Lake, the Member for Kluane and me, based on what we hear from our constituents.

As the Premier knows, in the past the expansion of cell service beyond the Whitehorse area into communities where it wasn't economically attractive or viable for cellphone companies to make that move was done through the Yukon government going to tender and working in partnership with the private sector to support that expansion. We have, in the past in this Assembly, brought forward motions urging the government to expand cell service.

At the time when we did so and debated a motion, the government amended it to remove the specific references to cellphone expansion in certain areas and make a more general pronouncement about looking for ways to improve communication in the area. We did welcome the fact that there was a general interest in supporting communications improvements, while we were disappointed to see the specifics removed.

Revisiting that topic, since it has been quite some time since the discussion initially began, I would like to ask the Premier about whether government is looking at doing — as I have asked and as the Member for Kluane has asked — supported by our colleagues — for the government to partner with the private sector to expand cellular phone coverage to people without service in areas, including Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, Fox Lake, Ibex Valley, Junction 37, Champagne and Mendenhall.

Is the government willing to look at expanding cell service in any or all of those areas? If they are looking at only some of those areas, could the Premier indicate which ones they are considering and when they anticipate taking that step?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's an interesting question in that there is nothing in the supplementary budget that says anything about cell coverage. Again, we did a comprehensive main budget where we tried to get all of our considerations up front and nothing in the supplementary estimates, but I have to give the member opposite credit: This is a good way of getting questions that he might want to put at the table there for his whole caucus to talk about in Question Period. Maybe it didn't make the mark, so he is bringing it up in general debate here.

What I will do is — I don't have those numbers here — I am prepared today to speak to supplementary estimates and the money therein. We have gone above and beyond this year. We have given a briefing to the members opposite when it comes to Energy, Mines and Resources, for example, which doesn't have a supplementary consideration. We did get asked by both members opposite if we could have a Committee of the Whole debate on these types of items. The problem with that is that doesn't happen in the legislative process in the parliamentary system. If you're out of Committee of the Whole and if you're talking about a budget, you're talking about budgetary increases, and if there is nothing to vote on at the end, that is not the place to have that conversation.

So we're happy to have the ministers here in general debate being able to answer questions, but again, the ask was interesting from the Yukon Party in that I don't recall — and they can correct the record if I am mistaken here — if they have ever had a Committee of the Whole debate on a department that didn't have an explicit expense in the supplementary budget. I don't think that has ever happened. What we have done is — that's why — we do agree that there is a lot of money in the supplementary budget as far as recoveries, when it comes to federal funding and exchanges of responsibilities from Ottawa, so we agreed it was important to have a briefing on those numbers. I do know that the opposition asked a lot of extensive questions on that and we can get to those questions absolutely. I have a list here, but I would — if it pleases the opposition — like to give an opportunity to the minister responsible to weigh in on any new opportunities for cell coverage in the Yukon, if that's okay with the members opposite.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, at the direction of the Premier, I will indulge the Member for Lake Laberge. Certainly, seeing these particular details concerning a plan forward when it comes to increased communication coverage are not identified within the supplementary budget, but out of respect to the individuals in the communities that were named throughout the member's riding, I can let the House know that certainly we are looking at different avenues that may be available to our outlying communities, whether it is just outside of Whitehorse or in the Watson Lake region or in the Kluane region.

What we are closely watching at this time are decisions made by the CRTC on what subsidies they will continue to provide or where they may re-allocate funds at a national level. At this time, the Department of Economic Development continues to engage. We also have had multiple conversations

with Northwestel. We have identified potential opportunities to enhance existing infrastructure that is in place that may give us the strength within that existing infrastructure to add on areas, such as Deep Creek or the Grizzly Valley subdivision — or even potentially outside the Kluane region.

We are also looking at what the long-term communication strategy is going to look like for the Yukon. I will touch upon the fact that we are moving — Mr. Mosty and I — the Minister of Highways and Public Works, sorry — are working on our fibre redundancy. I think that in the short run we will also see — which the Minister of Highways and Public Works has alluded to before — major investment in low-lying satellite infrastructure.

There are about four existing companies that are now looking at significant investment in the short run and we will have to take that into consideration, ensuring that we can build communication infrastructure through fibre at this particular time — which will back up the entire north of Canada — and what the opportunities are as that line is enhanced and then understanding what CRTC's decisions will be, as they look at a modernization and digitization of the entire Canadian communications network. Thirdly, we are looking to see what is going to happen in the short run for investment in new technologies, all the while taking into consideration the platform of infrastructure that is in place and are there tweaks and opportunities. That certainly is information that has been provided to me from Northwestel. I would love to debate and discuss this and talk about policy, but probably at a point when there is a number in a budget that actually correlates to this topic versus sort of an ad-lib discussion on communications in the Yukon, but I am happy to do that for the good people of Lake Laberge, Watson Lake and the Kluane region.

Mr. Cathers: I do appreciate the response. I understand that the minister is probably not in a position to make specific commitments based on what he indicated earlier without talking to his Cabinet colleagues, but I would just note to the minister, as well as to the Premier, that this is an issue that my colleagues — the Member for Kluane, the Member for Watson Lake — and I hear from our constituents quite regularly. It is a concern. They believe, as we did in the past and do now, that the expansion of cellular phone service provides safety benefits, economic and lifestyle benefits to Yukoners when government supports that. Those areas that we identified are ones where we hear from people regularly who would like to see improvements in those areas and would very much appreciate concrete action by the government as quickly as possible to address those areas.

I would just add that when I refer to hearing from constituents regularly, just this morning, I heard from two constituents in the Grizzly Valley-Deep Creek area asking for an update on cellular service and whether we had heard anything from the government in that regard. I would hope that the government would recognize this request from a large number of Yukoners in rural areas and take that into consideration, as you're developing your capital budget for the next fiscal year. I would hope that you act on this priority,

in whatever form that action takes precisely. The people who are in these areas would very much like to see cell service, not just see government thinking about future cell service.

I would just remind the Premier that, although the questions I have asked do stray away at times a little from the specific line items in the budget, that is actually very similar to what the Premier did in opposition and what long-standing practice is in this Legislative Assembly. It is traditionally used — debate on the budget has for many years been used as an opportunity by MLAs of all stripes to raise issues that are generally related to the budget and the operations of those departments and to bring them up either in Question Period or in general debate on the budget, and that is exactly what I'm doing and what other members of the Official Opposition caucus will be doing during our opportunities to debate various parts of the budget.

Also to the best of my knowledge, the Premier had indicated that we requested a Committee of the Whole debate on departments that don't have appropriations in the budget. To the best of my knowledge, that request did not come from the Yukon Party. It has been long-standing practice to debate the budget in a way that occurs now. In lieu of departments having appropriations in the supplementary, the practice has been to ask those questions in general debate. As the Premier will know from talking to the clerks, that is in fact procedurally the way that members should raise questions related to departments without new appropriations, if they wish to do so, which is exactly why I'm straying into some specific issues of other departments, because they are either multi-departmental or related to departments that do not have new appropriations here in the supplementaries.

In the area of land development, I have a few questions related to that area. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources does not have new appropriations in the supplementary. There is a transfer of some of the responsibilities to the Department of Community Services. I would just ask, since it is a crossover in this fiscal year — a transfer from one department to the other — which responsibilities have been transferred from Energy, Mines and Resources to Community Services? Secondly, in the area of rural land development, what is being done in that area and in which communities? In the City of Whitehorse, is the protocol with Whitehorse around land development in effect and is it being followed?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm going to go over a few of these things again. That's a question specifically about which I would like to hear from the Minister of Community Services. He can give you a more comprehensive analysis of that work.

I will start with apologizing. I've done it already this time. Yesterday, I mentioned one of our members by name. I just heard another minister do it as well. I'm going to start a little competition here. It's like a swear jar. Whenever you mention somebody by name, we'll put some money into a jar and donate it to charity. Maybe that will stop us from doing so. I apologize for that. I did it yesterday.

When it comes to the cell service, I'm happy to hear the member opposite advocating. I am looking through the

casework and I'm not seeing that as casework from the members opposite for economic development. There is one casework in the last year here to economic development, I believe. I could be wrong, so I'm just wondering if my records show the complete story here. If the member opposite can let us know because it is an important issue for his riding and for other ridings — specific questions about specific ridings here. I think he mentioned Watson Lake, Lake Laberge and another region as well. I don't see the casework on that. If they can show me when they've been asking those questions that would be great. It is important.

Again, as we prioritize, the hope is to have 5G service as we see the modernization of NAFTA and the change in the name there. It would be good to have a priority list and, again, have that advocacy coming from the representatives from each one of those communities.

Now, I do have to push back a bit on the concept when I was in opposition, I would do the same. Well, I didn't; I really didn't. For one, being in the Third Party, it's hard to get some time during debate because you have to go after the Official Opposition. So really, I tried my best to keep my questions succinct. I remember when I saw that ministers were going on and on and not answering the question, I would just list them. I would say, "Look, here are some questions that I'm getting from Yukoners. Here's a question. Here's a question." I would just list them all and then that would be it. The members opposite could either take the time to answer those questions or not.

I don't remember spending more than a couple of minutes per question and sitting down. I wanted to get some answers. But if that did happen, let's just say this: Just because it's the long-standing tradition doesn't necessarily mean it's the most effective use of our time. We have a job to do — both sides of the House — to debate the supplementary budget. We also have a job to make sure that the issues from the individual MLAs come to the Legislative Assembly as well. We also have a job to do, which is to legislate. I think that last part we've been kind of sorely not really doing our responsibility so well over the decades. There is a lot of antiquated legislation and a lot of general debate in these supplementary budgets.

I would suggest that a more effective use of our time is to use general debate to talk about why we're here, which is the supplementary budget — to use Question Period and motions and other parts of the Legislative Assembly that are designed to bring the questions and the concerns forward from the communities. There needs to be more letter-writing campaigns and casework from individuals to get answers from the government.

There are lots of different ways to advocate, I believe, and maybe the opposition does or does not agree that we have some catch-up to do in legislation. We're trying our best to do so.

Let's continue down that road. I will pass things off to my Minister of Community Services, because rural land development has been transferred to Community Services and the minister can elaborate on that if it pleases the Opposition.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I'm hoping that I heard the question correctly and my apologies if I didn't. I'm happy to get up again.

I thought I heard both Whitehorse and outside of Whitehorse, so let me just start with that. Next year, we're anticipating for Whitehorse 132 single-family lots, 52 duplex townhouse lots and 19 multi-family lots, as well as 35 commercial lots. One of other things I'll just mention is that the department has said to me that we should start talking in terms of units, rather than lots, because it gives a better representation of the type of housing that we are providing for or facilitating.

With respect to the rural land development unit, I asked for an update earlier this week and I'm expecting one shortly. The information that I have I don't believe is as current as it can be; I'll give what I have right now and then I will offer — maybe when the Department of Community Services comes up through Committee of the Whole, we can revisit this question.

We have lots coming available sometime this fall in the Village of Mayo; I believe they are very close. Sorry — not in the Village of Mayo, but outside the Village of Mayo. I think it is 19 country residential and five agricultural lots. There are some that should be coming forward in Grizzly Valley. Some of those are dependent on other work. We have planning work going on in Dawson, Carmacks and Watson Lake. I don't have a projection on the number of lots, but as I said, I will try to get that information shortly. What I will say is that in talking with each community and, specifically, the municipalities of Watson Lake, Teslin, Haines Junction, Mayo, Dawson and Carmacks — am I missing one? The only one that hasn't asked for lot development is Faro, so in all of them there is an interest for lot development. We're working with them and I'll try to get an update for the member opposite when I get the chance.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you Mr. Chair. I appreciate the information from the Minister of Community Services on that.

Just on the issue of cell service — the Premier made reference to not having casework on the issue and typically, for those who are not familiar with the process, casework is usually generated in response to a letter from an MLA or an e-mail. In that case, no, I don't believe we've directly written a letter on that issue, but we raised the topic of cell service a number of times in the Legislative Assembly, including calling it for debate in this Assembly where members then voted on the amendment proposed by one of the government ministers and then on the final motion.

If the Premier would like us to also send him a letter on the topic, I know that I would be happy to send him one — as would, I am sure, my colleagues the Member for Watson Lake and the Member for Kluane — on behalf of our constituents if that makes it easier for the Premier and officials on this issue. Again, we raised the issue of cell service very early during this term.

I rose in the House in April of 2017 to urge the government to continue supporting the development of communication infrastructure in rural Yukon, including

improving access to emergency services by working with the private sector to expand cellular phone coverage to people without service in rural areas, including Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, Fox Lake, Ibex Valley, Junction 37 and Mendenhall. I missed at that time mentioning the area of Champagne, but it has since been added through the work of the Member for Kluane to that list of areas where people would like to see cell service. We are happy to follow up with a letter if that would potentially help us advance the case on behalf of our constituents.

In the area of land development, I am not going to spend much time here since I know that some of this, due to the transfer to Community Services, will no doubt have an opportunity for debate during general debate on that budget. Since the Minister of Community Services made mention of the potential of lot development in Grizzly Valley, I would just like to reiterate a request that I had made to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, as the minister responsible for zoning, on behalf of constituents who purchased lots in the first phase of that development. There are a number of people who are concerned by the plan to develop 11 lots in phase 2 of Grizzly Valley as lots owned for dog mushing. Some of those people have indicated to me that they were not aware of this plan when they purchased the lots in phase 1, and that would have affected their decision to purchase it. I have heard from a number of people who are very concerned about the impact on property values. I have heard from some who are seeking legal counsel to see whether they have the potential for compensation if government does proceed with that plan as is. I should note as well that I have heard from one constituent on behalf of her and her spouse who do support the development of those lots.

The request that I would make — and I am not asking for an answer right now unless the Premier wishes to give it — is that government re-consult on the plan to proceed with 11 lots in phase 2 of Grizzly Valley to be zoned for dog mushing operations and simply ask the public and specifically send letters to every single resident of Grizzly Valley subdivision and other areas within the normal radius of 1.6 kilometres to ask them whether they want those lots to be developed as dog mushing lots or changed to a rural residential designation or, as a third option, to develop some of them for dog mushing, but have the others developed with rural residential zoning. Again, as the Premier will hopefully appreciate the concern that people have is that if there are large-scale dog kennels zoning allows for, some people who have rural residential lots are very concerned about the potential noise disturbance and the potential impact on their quality of life.

Unless the Premier wants to provide me with an answer at this point, I would just simply leave that request there and encourage the government to seriously consider doing public consultation on those questions that I asked and asking Yukoners, in light of the fact that the plan to release 11 lots with dog-mushing zoning was set in motion a dozen years ago and there has been significant development in the area and change in the community since that time — to revisit the issue and respect the concerns of my constituents in the area.

I am going to move on to other topics. I am going to touch briefly on the issue of emergency medical services. The reason that I am bringing it up now, rather than in the Department of Community Services, is that the questions that I have relate as well to not only other departments, but in fact to all departments.

In the past, I raised the issue in debate both with the Premier and the Minister of Community Services about EMS rural volunteers and the issue of staff of government departments to volunteer. One of the issues that I hear coming up as a continuing concern is that in some cases, staff of government departments are not able to volunteer during the daytime due to their other job duties. While I understand the argument can be made for them to perform the job for which they are normally hired and not be interrupted, the capacity in rural communities is very strained for EMS and, in some cases, the end result we are currently dealing with is that there are increasing gaps in coverage. Allowing employees of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Tourism and Culture or the Department of Highways and Public Works, who are in non-critical service jobs, to have the ability to close their office and respond when emergency calls would, in some cases, reinstate and provide that service.

I would ask if the Premier can provide an update on that and, if he is not able to, if he could in fact seriously work on a whole-of-government approach to improving the ability of government staff who are in non-critical roles to close their office temporarily to respond to a call or leave whatever duties they might have in the field or elsewhere.

I would also ask — since, again, though it relates to Community Services, it is of great importance in the Premier's riding of Klondike and throughout the territory — whether the government is taking steps on the ability of rural volunteers to deploy by helicopter — including in situations where they don't have specialized training, but are dealing with a more low-risk general operations situation that could be critical in a time-sensitive situation.

If the Premier or the Minister of Community Services is able to provide information at this point, that would be appreciated. Or, if the Minister of Community Services wishes to reply during debate on Community Services, I would accept that as well. I am simply asking on behalf of people who are concerned about the issue.

I would note, as the Minister of Community Services will be aware, I did raise a number of other issues in a recent letter to him. Due to some of the sensitivities around them, I am not going to reiterate those issues here. I just look forward to the minister responding to my letter.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate from the member opposite the opportunity to answer those questions in Committee of the Whole when the Department of Community Services comes up. I want to thank him for his advocacy on the Grizzly Valley subdivision and the concerns of the citizens there and the expansions there. We will take that under advisement as well. To maybe expedite the time here today and hopefully get the NDP up to have some questions as well,

I really do appreciate the opportunity to answer both of those questions at Committee of the Whole in Community Services.

Mr. Cathers: I'm going to just move on to another area where I don't believe there are appropriations for in the budget that my colleague — I believe it was the Leader of the Official Opposition who asked questions yesterday about the capacity of schools in the Whitehorse area, including Hidden Valley School, Golden Horn Elementary School and others in Porter Creek that have pressures on capacity. There was a tender for a portable to be installed this year and other schools that had requested it that had not received a commitment. Can the Premier or the Minister of Education — since Education is not coming up for debate — provide us with information about what steps, if any, the government is taking to respond to the request from schools, including Hidden Valley, Golden Horn Elementary School and others in the Whitehorse area, as well as any that I may be missing in other parts of the territory?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will give an opportunity to the Minister of Education to answer the question, but I do want to correct the record. I do have a February 15, 2017, letter from Mr. Cathers — sorry, there is \$10 toward the jar already — from the Member for Lake Laberge, and this was a conversation about expanding the 4G mobile service into 18 communities looking ahead. There was a written question in the Legislative Assembly from the Member for Lake Laberge and the question on expanding to Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, Fox Lake, Ibex Valley, Junction 37, Mendenhall and Champagne and, just for the record, I will read in what the response was at that time from the minister responsible, as my member gets ready for her question.

Dear Member for Lake Laberge: "The Government of Yukon is committed to enhancing connectivity and bandwidth for all Yukon communities. We have recently completed an extensive project expanding 4G mobile service to 18 communities. Looking ahead, our main priority is the installation of a diverse fibre optic line that will improve the reliability of emergency and cellular services across Yukon including in the areas you reference in your written question of January 12, 2017.

"As well, we are pleased with the results of Yukon's intervention with the Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) that defined both fixed and wireless broadband as a basic service. The CRTC is now developing a funding program to aid rural communities obtain services on par with other Canadians. We are monitoring the development of this program and opportunities to further invest in communication infrastructure in Yukon. Sincerely," Minister of Economic Development.

This is great. So again, I appreciate from the member opposite clarifying that there was a written question that was provided to the Legislative Assembly. He is right. There was debate here. I was wondering if there was a paper trail. I'm sure I saw it somewhere. I was just kind of a little bit perplexed when I looked into my book of casework and didn't see it. This is what it is instead. It was an answer from the

Minister of Economic Development to the Member for Lake Laberge. Thank you for that opportunity, Mr. Chair.

If the Minister of Education could answer the last question from the member, that would be great.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I understand the question to be about portables primarily for Whitehorse-area schools. We simply don't have the enrollment pressures in the rural schools that we have here in Whitehorse now. I can indicate in response to the question, particularly for Golden Horn, that we're well aware of the space pressures that were coming with respect to Golden Horn. It is at or near capacity. The information I have may not be up to date today, but there are three spaces for grade 1 students, so there's not much space there at all.

We anticipated purchasing a portable for use at Golden Horn school early in the spring of 2018. We tendered that purchase and there were no responses. Our subsequent investigation revealed that there are virtually no portables available in western Canada for purchase, so we attempted to deal with a portable that is owned by the Department of Justice — or the one-government approach, assigned to the Department of Justice — and we thought we would be able to retrofit that particular portable. The determination was made that this was not feasible.

We worked with the Golden Horn school to repurpose some space that they have there. There are some other efficiencies happening with respect to that. There are some conversations with teachers at the YTA for the purposes of allowing an extra student. There are classroom limits, of course, in the YTA collective agreement with respect to the student numbers in classrooms. So there are a number of things — repurposing another space that was used as a music room at Golden Horn, for instance, and attempts were made.

I understand that we have now managed to sort out the situation at Golden Horn for the purposes of this year but, of course, we have pressures in the schools here in Whitehorse with respect to space. We are working with our partners at Highways and Public Works to purchase not one portable, but to find a method by which we might purchase four or five portables, so that we have them available when these pressures arise. I hope to have more information on that soon. There is, of course, a process for appropriating funds to do such a thing. My department and I are working with Highways and Public Works to figure out the best and most efficient way to do that so that we're not trying to purchase a portable that isn't available but, in fact, we might have some efficiencies if we buy more than one or find a place that will sell us — or create for us — more than one.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you; I appreciate that information from the minister and note that, for all of us who have constituents affected, both for this year and for next year, in terms of the school pressure, I am pleased to see that the minister has a plan at least for acting on that pressure.

In the area of Highways and Public Works — I will just touch briefly on — most of the items that we have questions for will be raised by the leader of the Official Opposition at a later point, but I'm just going to briefly touch on and not

necessarily expect a response at this point in time, but remind the government again of these ongoing issues and the fact that my constituents would very much welcome capital investment in these areas.

The highest priorities on the list include seeing a walkway added to the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road, seeing turning lanes added in response to the ongoing request for turning lanes in Hidden Valley, at the entrance to Grizzly Valley and Boreal Road and, last but not least, to see some significant investment in Takhini River Road to upgrade its condition. It's an area where the road was never built to real road standards so much as it was plowed in. The increasing traffic in the area and some roughly 50 households down the road and traffic to the Trans Canada Trail is creating significant pressure on the road and it is often in very poor shape. So we will leave those issues there and welcome a response, if the Premier wishes to give it and, if not, encourage them to consider those priorities very seriously when they are looking at capital projects.

I'm going to move on to another area, and that is the area of a project that appears to cross departments here, primarily in the area of the Yukon Development Corporation, but also affecting policies housed in Energies, Mines and Resources, as well as, in some cases, being a matter of First Nation Relations, which would be handled by the Premier.

We've heard about the innovative renewable energy initiative, and the minister indicated yesterday that the \$1.5-million fund is fully subscribed for this year. Over the past two-year period, it has provided financial support to 10 projects across the territory. All the information that we've heard on that is certainly interesting, but the question that I have in addition to the capital costs of that is, for any of these power purchase agreements that have been entered into, what is the rate being paid for that power and is the rate being paid being passed on to rate-payers? If it is not being passed on to ratepayers, how is that being funded and out of which budget is that coming — out of the Yukon Development Corporation? Are any subsidies associated with covering the costs of premium purchase agreements not yet in the current budget but anticipated for future years? Any information that the Premier or any of his ministers could provide would be appreciated.

At this point, we have seen the capital announcements, we have seen the information about the expected reduction in fossil fuels in some cases, but we don't have any information that we have seen yet on the public record about what the rates for power purchase are and who is paying the bill for that. This is in light of the infamous example in Ontario with the Liberal government there paying, in some cases, as much as 80 and 90 cents per kilowatt hour for green energy. We are not attempting to paint the government as necessarily doing that; we are simply asking for transparency. What is the rate being paid for power purchase? Is it a premium? If so, what is that premium and, ultimately, who is paying the bill?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will turn things over to my colleague, the Minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation to answer those

specific questions. I appreciate the member opposite advocating for his community. As far as capital plans, we will take his advice for our five-year capital plan as far as the things that he put on the table today for his community. I do want to get back to him, and I want to thank the Department of Finance for coming up really quickly with some numbers here. The member opposite was talking about how most of the debt that this government currently owns was done before he was of the age to vote. Just to clarify the record here, Mayo B, which was mentioned, was under the Fentie government and it was \$100 million for that project. Now, the Fentie and Pasloski governments — for a YDC loan, it was a \$39-million commitment. That was for LNG and other things as well. Also, from the Fentie to Pasloski governments, there was another \$40 million for the hospital. There are expenses that happen all of the time. The member opposite is correct when it comes to housing to the tune of about \$4 million and capital leases to the tune of about \$10 million. That does pretty much get up there pretty close — my math is pretty good here. That is getting close to \$200 million.

I will ask my colleague, the Minister responsible for Yukon Development Corporation, to answer the specific questions.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I believe there were a number of questions cobbled together. What I believe the Member for Lake Laberge was alluding to is the structure of the independent power production model. He also touched on our work at Yukon Development Corporation and the good work of the individuals who are leading some of our renewable energy projects. I think that for the most part these are great conversations to have throughout the Fall Sitting. Certainly, Yukoners have waited a long time to see an independent power production strategy in place. I will have an opportunity to talk a bit about what was in place when we started this work and some interesting things that we have come to understand as well — deficiencies and some flaws that we'll talk about.

So, really, there wasn't ever an independent power production. A lot of that work had some real challenges. I will probably save that for a later discussion.

Of course the IREI program — it is more complex than just speaking about is the ratepayer going to have an increased cost or are they not. When we do things such as replace the streetlights in Old Crow and we reduce the diesel use by 5,000 litres, certainly that doesn't lead to any increase to the ratepayer. There are a number of projects where we are really looking at trying to decrease our reliance on fossil fuel and then, as we fund some of these projects, they are two different entities.

The member opposite knows well from his work at YDC and YEC that there are discussions that will happen between Yukon Electrical — ATCO — that will proceed in the Kluane region or in Old Crow. They have worked with Yukon Development Corporation and Energy, Mines and Resources to be part of that dialogue around what is the most efficient model for us to purchase renewable energy and offsets. What we have looked to do is to ensure that we have a model that

does not put a burden on to the ratepayer and, at the same time, helps us move away from some of the current fuels. In a place such as Old Crow, you can imagine — it's not only the cost of the fuel, but the cost of the transport of that fuel when you are flying it in. The supply chain has a number of different areas. I know that the members opposite may be intrigued and I don't believe that they had come up with a solution on how one can actually increase your portfolio of renewable energy without putting a burden on to the ratepayer, but I believe that this is the model that we have been able to put in place and that is really because of the good work of the people at the Energy branch, working with the leadership at the Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Electrical and the Yukon Development Corporation.

Of course, once again, I don't believe the supplementary really — it sort of speaks to this area — but really we're talking about a policy dialogue and debate. I look forward to that conversation and I look forward to highlighting some of things that we have been able to unveil about the work that was done over the last couple of years on this IPP — really interesting facts that we should discuss so that people of the Yukon can know where we really were and where we really are now.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Mr. Cathers: If you will bear with me, I'm just finding my place in my notes again.

I would just note in the beginning that the Premier made reference to some debts at the tail end of his speech. It was somewhat interesting that, in referring to them, he made a couple mistakes in terms of suggesting that certain items were applied and affected the current long-term debt of the government. That includes that the Premier made reference to a loan to the Yukon Development Corporation and was forgetting that the loan was in fact provided by the Yukon government to Yukon Development Corporation specifically to avoid it affecting the debt cap, and the revenue from interest on that loan in fact goes as well to the Yukon government.

He also made reference to debt related to the Yukon Hospital Corporation but forgot that most, if not all, of the debt that he was referring to was actually paid down early during the last term of the Yukon Party government to avoid it being on the books.

Mr. Chair, with that correction, I would just note that on the IPP in terms of the cost — we're asking about the innovative renewable energy initiative. We received a bit of information in reply but we didn't actually get the key piece

of information, which is what it's going to cost taxpayers or ratepayers and who is paying the bill. The question remains: For all of the projects that have been undertaken by the government — some 10 projects under the innovative renewable energy initiative — what is the cost per kilowatt hour being paid, and is that being paid by the ratepayers or is it being paid by taxpayers, or is it a split between both?

Information on that would be appreciated because it is a question that Yukoners deserve an answer to.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I thought it was quite clear that there are a number of projects that are being financed — I think the first part of the question was focused on the IREI program, which is \$1.5 million that we are letting through Yukon Development Corporation. It focuses on a number of projects right now. We are looking at the capital expenditures of a series of different projects, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the good work that the people of Yukon Development Corporation are doing. I think that the Member for Lake Laberge wants to have an understanding of these projects and, of course, inevitably he is digging into a different area, which is the relationship between either Yukon Electrical or Yukon Energy.

The Teslin biomass is a fantastic program that is being put into place and we are trying to ensure that this community has a holistic approach. I know the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin is a big supporter of this type of work in his community. It is a \$400,000 commitment. There was \$75,000 provided in 2017-18, and then another \$325,000 in the 2018-19 budget.

The KDFN wind project is something that you might have heard the previous government speak about, but in order for that project to go forward, you have to have the mechanism and that is why we are talking about this IPP model being in place. We didn't have that in place, so now, of course, we are moving forward to be in a position where we can provide, though the Yukon Development Corporation, \$485,000 over the two-year period and then, as well, \$950,000. We are really getting behind the project, but making sure that the right tools are in the toolbox so that it can actually be done — not just announced, but you can actually move forward on this. The Member for Kluane and I were both at the groundbreaking this June. It was a great event, and I was happy to be there and share that day with him. I am sure that he was very excited to finally see this project get to a place where you break ground and start to build it.

On Kluane, \$581,000 was committed. Also, you probably have seen a bit of news, Mr. Chair, about Haeckel Hill. We took some aging infrastructure that was in place that wasn't doing what we needed it to do. We have been working with Kwanlin Dün First Nation on their project with the private sector entering a great joint venture. As of this year, there will be \$485,000.

I am also excited to talk a little bit about Southern Lakes. First is Carcross/Tagish First Nation — another project we're working on — and \$125,000 to wind data collection on Montana Mountain. We have had one year of data collection that was already in place. Normally to finance these wind projects, you need two years of strong wind data. We're happy

to partner with them. They are doing some of their own work on looking at how you can have appropriate transmission in place and how you can potentially look at a market, not only in Whitehorse, but also at a market potentially in Alaska. I think that, in my first couple of months here, the Member for Kluane asked me if we would be looking at the Alaska transmission opportunity. We've really deferred that work and are supporting the Carcross/Tagish Development Corporation to do that due diligence. It's not a big priority for us now — but certainly providing the expertise that they would need to understand what the capacity of the current mine is that does go from Whitehorse to Carcross and what upgrades potentially would be needed, based on the magnitude of the infrastructure project that could be in place on Montana Mountain. But once again, I am excited and happy to be involved in that.

Once again, Teslin street lights — this IREI funding agreement wouldn't affect, per se, the cost because we are really reducing the cost for Yukoners — say, \$47,000. LED — working with ATCO in Old Crow is a \$54,600 investment. It's just a great project. I also really appreciate the thoughtfulness of our teams when you take into consideration that sometimes there is concern over the brightness — knowing that they have the right filters on those lights so you can still see those amazing northern lights in Old Crow but yet not have to ship in over 5,000 litres of new diesel on an annual basis — and you take into consideration the cost for Air North.

This is, in many ways, a story of good, prudent fiscal management. It's a story of ensuring that these communities have less burden when it comes to the costs that they're dealing with, and also always respecting — I think the Premier has touched on this throughout his whole opportunity to speak to the supplementary budget. There seem to be some twists and turns where the story is looking to be told in a way where there hasn't been a respectful approach to the fiscal state of the Yukon's finances. What the numbers and the facts really are — that's what it is. It's something that I think is welcomed by many Yukoners.

Sorry to indulge, but it was interesting hearing a former conservative government today during Question Period talk about the fact that they don't want to see efficiencies in government. I would think that it would be something they would be looking to do with their senior managers on an annual basis but, for some reason, that's not the case.

But going back to the Yukon Development Corporation, we're also looking at biofuel. That's \$50,000 on biofuel.

Some of the other funds that have been taken into consideration when we look at models where we can have independent power production purchases — of course, we did the geothermal work — Yukon Geological Survey. Not only do they provide great data to ensure that we have a vibrant mining sector, but they also led some of the work on drilling projects in both the Member for Lake Laberge's riding, as well as in the Pelly-Nisutlin riding with Ross River — so two projects we're also excited about.

Once again, I think that the member opposite would remember, as he formulates his question, the structure and

language speaks to not being in a position, as I remember — and I apologize; I truly apologize. No disrespect to this important Chamber, but I don't have the language in front of me, because of course I didn't know I would be speaking to this particular topic today — but how we were not to be in position to put a burden to, I believe, onto the ratepayer. So it's kind of a tough situation — how do we move to renewable? There were some comments that alluded to other jurisdictions — great lessons learned — what happened in Ontario, what happened in other jurisdictions where it was almost an open market on renewable with a fixed cost.

What I can say to Yukoners — and I don't think I want to pre-empt now. The first commitment that we made is that the IPP model would be in place by the end of the calendar year. I once again commend all those who have worked on it — very significant work. We'll touch on the details of that work, but the bulk of it — the magnitude of that is extraordinary — but also to the fact that we understand that every dollar at the kitchen table needs to go as far as it can. Families are making sure that they can save where they can. We're trying to figure out — and I think our team and all the expertise that we have in the Yukon have come together to figure out a way that we can use specific resources that we have and how we ensure that the model that we use gets us to a place where we have those great renewable energy projects and, at the same time, we don't put that burden onto the ratepayer.

So that's the model. As much as I think it would be a great day to have a debate, I think there are other things — with respect to the Third Party, they probably have some questions. There are some other members from the Yukon Party caucus who want to ask some questions. I can say to Yukoners today and put it on the record that the model we're looking at doing is not about putting an extra burden onto the ratepayer, but we are building a model with all our partners that can put these projects in place. The member opposite can call me out later this fall if I've misrepresented the work we're doing, but I feel very comfortable. I think it would be prudent to ensure that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources gets a chance to complete that important work before we have a thorough and lively debate about the values and the value proposition we've put together on that at this particular time.

I hope that answers some of the questions. Again, I apologize for the lack of detail, but I think it is a bigger conversation in the near future.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just for clarity's sake, on the issue of the debt the member opposite brought up, I wasn't mistaken in the number; what I was mistaken in was what it was for. It wasn't for the LNG, but if you do go to the Public Accounts from the 2016-17 budget, the March 2017 new consolidated financial statements, there is a line item there still from the Yukon Party, which was the Yukon Development Corporation other long-term debt — the numbers are identical. It was \$39 million for LNG; it's \$38.7 million.

The only thing I was mistaken in was that this line item is not for the LNG plant but is part of the debt cap from the previous Yukon Party government.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier actually might want to look at the age of some of the debts that are still noted on the books, but spending a lot of time debating this is not going to really achieve much in comparison with the other priorities that we would like to get to.

I would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation for the response about the IPP, but unfortunately, in that response the key bit of information that we're still missing — which I hope to hear from the minister later this fall, based on his indication — is: What is the cost per kilowatt hour? If the bill is being passed on to taxpayers, then that is something that people have a right to know. In the case of whether it is a private sector entity or a First Nation development corporation or any other type of enterprise that is qualified as an IPP, it may be reasonable to pay a premium rate for renewable energy, but the key question is: How much of a premium, for how long and at what cost? That is something that I believe firmly the public has a right to know.

That is the case, for example, with the microgeneration program. We put in place the policy and the structure that does pay a premium for renewable energy. It has been a very successful program, but we were transparent about what the cost was per kilowatt hour and left people to judge for themselves whether they thought that the premium paid for home-generated renewable energy was a reasonable expense on behalf of government or not. This is an area where, before contracts are entered into and before the government spends too much more than the millions in capital it has already contributed, one would reasonably expect that there is a business plan or an operational plan for any one of these projects that has estimated costs and revenues. Otherwise, no one in their right mind would proceed down the road of spending millions of dollars on a project without having the faintest clue what its costs and revenues are expected to be. We look forward to the government, which did run on transparency, actually living up to that commitment and providing that information to the public.

I am going to revisit the area of cellphone service just briefly — I thank the Member for Watson Lake for drawing this to my attention — in the area of the request for expanding cellphone service to rural areas, including in the ridings of the Member for Watson Lake and the Member for Kluane and myself.

Another thing that reinforces our argument that government should do so is, in fact, the government's own draft tourism strategy, which noted on page eight in the area of infrastructure that: "Safe, reliable roads and community infrastructure are extremely important to visitors navigating Yukon. Maintain current assets while exploring opportunities for new and improved infrastructure such as pull outs, viewpoints, waste management, wireless technology and connectivity." All of this is an argument for expanding cell service to those areas.

I thank the Member for Watson Lake for pointing that out, as well as her continued work on this issue on behalf of her constituents.

I am going to return to another area that the Premier was not happy to see come up in Question Period yesterday and today — that being the memo from the Department of Finance to all deputy ministers, which was leaked to CBC.

We have seen it. It was a letter that was sent out advising departments to provide cuts across departments of one percent and two percent. Now, the Premier indicated earlier today that he hadn't seen the letter before it was tabled in Question Period or perhaps before it was on CBC, but according to the letter, it states very clearly that Management Board approved an ongoing one-percent reduction in O&M and directed ministers to work with their departments to achieve these savings beginning in this current fiscal year and made reference that the Management Board has confirmed direction to work toward achieving overall savings of one percent and directing departments to submit plans to achieve ongoing operation and maintenance savings of up to two percent. That information is there. Unless the letter is factually wrong, the letter very clearly refers to a Management Board decision and, of course, as the Premier knows very well, the members of Management Board are all — Management Board is composed of members of the Liberal Cabinet. The fact that the Premier, when asked about the letter, is refusing to respond to the policy content of it, the question on behalf of Yukoners is: Is government looking at two-percent cuts across all departments?

As a number of my colleagues have mentioned, that would have a significant impact on the Department of Education. As I mentioned earlier — and I am going to revisit again — if departments are being asked to look for cuts, what sort of cuts are being looked at? Are they looking at layoffs? Are they looking at reductions of services?

In the area of health care in particular, the growing pressures on our health care system due to an aging population and increasing costs are something that are a challenge. However, they are across the country a challenge. Every province and every single territory is dealing with increasing costs of the health care system. Now, the reason why those budgets keep going up — instead of other provinces and territories doing what seems to be the Premier's solution of just freezing the budget — is that other jurisdictions understand that if you don't fund those costs, there are very serious impacts within the health system.

A two-percent cut to the O&M budget for Health and Social Services would total over \$8 million in terms of its financial impact. The question remains, is the Premier planning on cutting funding for Health and Social Services by over \$8 million? If not, why did a letter from a top official direct all departments, including Health and Social Services, to look for ways to cut their budget by two percent? How will people on the wait-list for continuing care beds get the care they need if that budget for health is cut by two percent? How will wait times improve? How will wait times for individual procedures such as cataract surgery improve? For people who are looking for improvements to the medical travel program, how are those supposed to occur in an environment where \$8 million is cut from health care?

The average increase to provincial budgets across the country for health care has often trended in the neighbourhood of seven percent per fiscal year going back to the early 1970s, and this is a challenge for every single jurisdiction in the country.

A few of the things that contribute to the growth of health care costs are: the aging population; the cost of payroll increases for staff; increased costs such as, for example, the significantly increased cost of chemotherapy drugs that are both newer and more effective, but also substantially more expensive; the cost of medical equipment; the cost of modernizing health technology; the cost of health care infrastructure; and, ultimately, if you are focusing on improving quality of health care outcomes as a primary goal, simply slashing the budget does not achieve that end. Question number one is: Is the Premier actually denying knowledge of this letter that was leaked to CBC? Question number two is: What departments are on the chopping block for the two-percent cuts? Is it every single department? What do they plan to cut?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I stand by all of my statements so far. It was the first time that I saw that letter. Again, there is Management Board. The member opposite knows this. There are Management Board considerations that we are not to be speaking about here in the Legislative Assembly, and I won't.

It is very interesting how the member opposite read the leaked document and still is talking about a two-percent slash right across all departments when the letter itself stipulates exactly not to do that. That would be foolhardy to do that.

I don't know if the member opposite is just choosing to hear only parts of the argument that just help him with his narrative that he wants some cuts or that the only thing we can do is to do cuts. I have stood up in this Legislative Assembly and talked about what I saw from this letter, which is articulating the departments' views themselves about how to find efficiencies. I will tell you, from the corporations and individuals who have been texting me about this supposed leak and this supposed Scooby Doo and the mystery van solving this mystery — in the end, everybody is saying yes. The Yukon Party doesn't want you to raise taxes; they don't want you to find efficiencies. Again, at every path we are looking at there is a scrutiny here from the mystery van folks.

Ultimately, when I read this letter, I hear about a whole-of-government approach taking a look at efficiencies. If you can find efficiencies, guess what happens? You reduce costs to the departments.

The member opposite cannot get off that train. He is like a dog with a bone, Mr. Chair. He believes that the only possible way to reduce funding to departments is cuts — that's it. That is his priority. He can go down that road if he wants. When I read the leaked document, I didn't see "cuts" written anywhere. Those are his words. The Yukon Party keeps saying "cuts", and we disagree with the Yukon Party. We should not be cutting programs and services. They said you shouldn't put any money toward Education or Health and Social Services for full-time equivalents. We disagree. We need these programs and services and we need to hire the

people for the buildings that the Yukon Party committed us to. It is an interesting narrative. It is interesting that this is their new bone, and I will stand up and defend this one until the cows come home. I don't think they are going to get any traction on this one, in my opinion, because what I am hearing from Yukoners is, "Yes, you are looking for efficiencies. That's great. Keep looking for efficiencies. That is what you were told to do. That is what we want you to do." We will continue to do that.

Again, to have the departments work on a whole-of-government approach to find those efficiencies — who better to find those efficiencies than the good people who work for each of those departments, who care about the programs and services that they provide for Yukoners and who have the best knowledge?

I don't want to portray any incompetence here, but I had a letter from a public servant who had just retired, who said, "You know, I just retired from government after 30 years. I have lots of efficiencies I can tell you about. Now that I've retired, I'm going to tell you about those."

It's great. I said, look, we need you to feed into the review process and we need to hear from you. Tell us where you think that we can have efficiencies that won't — and this will dismay the member opposite — equate to cuts in programs and services, which is the narrative that he's trying to put out there for the Yukon public. I really don't agree with that type of politics, Mr. Speaker. I think that you can actually have efficiencies to reduce budgets but not cut programs and services.

To respond to the member opposite's first point with energy, yes, we are committed to good capital planning. That's the commitment that we will keep. Again, as far as the leaked documents go, we deal with an awful lot of decisions. We have a lot of processes that the members opposite might not be familiar with — Cabinet committees on priorities and planning being a whole other level of scrutiny put in there. The member opposite is familiar with the Cabinet committees on legislation, the Cabinet and Management Board. We have the DMRC as well making decisions and lots of documents that we are considering and lots of variables and options that we are considering. They have a piece of paper leaked and that's what they're going from. They say "cuts"; we say "efficiencies." That's the moral of that story, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier can attempt to parse words all he wants, but what the document actually said was "reduction". Apparently in the Premier's mind a reduction isn't a cut, but Yukoners are concerned. Again, the question that this government has been remarkably unwilling to live up to its campaign commitments around improving transparency on is when people hear that the government is looking at cuts, they want to know what's on the table. If the government is looking for imagined efficiencies in place, people want to know: Where is the government looking? Does the government see it as an efficiency to cut a program that they are depending on for whatever that program or service is? The Premier again can attempt to spin it all he wants, but the typical practice in letters of this type going to deputy ministers

— past practice has been to set their target for an increase to their O&M funding, not to see a decrease in their funding.

So they've had their targets slashed, and that is a cut to the budget that, in the case of Health and Social Services, would be over \$8 million in a department that is already strained and a health system that is already strained — both within the health system and the Hospital Corporation. They are already at a period of significant pressure due to an increased number of patients and an aging population, issues related to substance abuse in Yukon communities, including both chronic alcoholism and the growing opioid crisis that exists here, as well as across the country. All of those things are placing strain on our health system. There are opportunities for improving patient outcomes through investing in new technology and upgrading systems.

A few of the examples of these in the past include the investment in teleradiology, the MRI machine, the CT scanner and the replacement CT scanner, the 811 Yukon HealthLine and telehealth being expanded to all Yukon communities. These are a few of the examples of the areas where we increased funding when in office to invest in technology and focus on the quality of care and availability of services for Yukon citizens. Does the Premier really think you can cut two percent from health care and meet those growing needs? How does that relate to ongoing requests we've had from the Hospital Corporation during appearances, such as the request that they've had out for a few years already to update the Meditech system? How will government even contemplate technological improvements to meet needs of the Hospital Corporation or in other parts of the health system if they're looking at slashing the budget by two percent? If the Premier knows that certain areas or certain departments are not having their budgets cut, why will he not simply provide that information and clarity to Yukoners who want that answer?

I'm going to move on to another area here. When we talk about cuts to areas, we have to look to one of the most glaring examples of this Liberal government spending money on things that at best are non-priority items for Yukon citizens and that is, of course, the development of the new logo that moved the sun over one letter and was mocked on national news for the cost of that project. The cost of the logo and website we have heard was in the neighbourhood of half a million dollars, but the past information and cost estimates we've received don't appear to account for things that we've heard from government employees this year have been rolled out as a result of the implementation of the new logo, including costs of new signage to replace previous signage that wasn't in need of replacement, the cost of new letterhead — we had heard a commitment from government when this was launched that they would use up all the old letterhead before purchasing new letterhead. We have heard reports that letterhead, in fact, across at least some departments was not used. It was immediately recycled and new letterhead was ordered. We have heard about and seen new vehicle wraps and vehicle signage as well as name tags and clothing, all with the new logo on and, in many cases, clearly appearing to replace items that had the old logo and were perfectly

serviceable and functional. The question in that area is: What is the real cost of the new logo and visual identity? It certainly appears to be upwards of \$500,000 for the website, the visual identity and the logo.

As it relates to the website, while the long-term vision may be for a streamlined single website, in fact, it's caused confusion and frustration for Yukon citizens in the last number of months as people are forced to look at two different government websites and find that, in some cases, if there is a link from one to the other, those links don't always work. People are complaining that they're finding it even more complex than before to get the information that they're looking for.

The Premier mentioned in the spring that, I believe, 11,000 pages needed to be transferred from the website to the new site, so the question is: How many pages have been transferred? How many need to be transferred and how much more is this going to cost Yukon taxpayers on top of the bill that appears to have been run up in excess of the half-million dollar cost that the Premier referred to earlier?

Again, while government is doing this, people across the territory are asking the question: Why is government looking at two-percent cuts to the Department of Education, to the Department of Health and Social Services and, in fact, across departments, while they are simultaneously spending money on things that are, at best, nice to have? It really does not make sense — as another example of government being out of touch with the priorities of Yukon citizens through spending, such as the \$300,000 spent on the Financial Advisory Panel, whose recommendations they are cherry-picking from and, in many cases, choosing to ignore and simply going down another direction. As the Leader of the Third Party suggested — and I would agree — that it seems they may just be ignoring the report and going a direction that they intended to in the first place. It looks to me that, as much as there was information in the report that is useful and did, in fact, confirm much of what we have been saying about the state of the territorial finances, if government isn't going to do anything with the recommendations, it looks just like an exercise in trying to find somebody to hide behind and blame for the tough decisions.

I am going to move on to another area, which is the question of what Financial Advisory Panel recommendations the government is planning on following and which ones they aren't.

Last, but not least, there is the area of a project that was very much welcomed and wanted by the people of Faro, which was the plan to build the Faro RCMP detachment. As the Premier knows very well, that project was not only designed, but it was actually tendered and was stopped. We were only unable to award the project due to the federal component of that build going \$120,000 over the federally approved spending limit for that project. The Yukon government was prepared to proceed, but we ran into a challenge with getting the federal government to be willing to honour their commitment to the project if we did proceed with the project being over their budget. That project was put on

hold then, pending work by the federal government. First, we hear that it has been cancelled, then we hear that they are doing a reassessment of priorities even though the RCMP and the Department of Justice had fairly recently completed an assessment of the state of detachments and infrastructure, and then we hear this year that Faro is actually losing their RCMP detachment and being reduced to a satellite office — losing that operational capacity in their community — and that the Faro detachment is now not happening, despite being designed, and government instead is proceeding with an RCMP detachment in Carcross.

Now, I agree that the Carcross detachment should be replaced. It was, in fact, something that we had been aware of in government and were considering doing around this point in time, so I would not criticize the construction of a detachment in Carcross.

What does the Premier have to say to Yukoners who look at this decision and see that it appears to be a politically motivated decision, cancelling a project in the riding of the Leader of the Official Opposition and putting one in a community held by a member of the Liberal government? What does the Premier have to say to the people of Faro about why that decision was made, because it does appear to be a capital-P political decision?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, I think we're hitting a new low here.

The Minister of Education has answered this question. I feel like it is Groundhog Day here. She has answered this question before. The people of Faro were part of the stakeholders group. The whole conversation — maybe the former minister is so out of touch on this file that he is not following the bouncing ball. I'm happy with the progress. I'm happy with the minister and her responsibility here — and actually progressing on RCMP assets that the previous government didn't move forward on.

I think we're done there. The member has answered that question in the Legislative Assembly ad nauseam.

Let's go back to some other stuff here. It's just so fascinating — the narrative that is being created here.

I just finally figured something out, though. I think the member opposite didn't read the document that was leaked or doesn't understand the difference between reducing the rate of growth and cutting a budget.

Take a look again. In the document, they are not talking about drastically cutting a budget. They are saying to reduce the rate of growth. Is the member opposite saying that we shouldn't reduce the rate of growth — the growth that's unsupported by the amount of revenues that we take in? I just don't understand the narrative here.

Again, every household and every business looks at efficiencies, and what we're hearing from the member opposite is: Don't do that. Then we are hearing this very confusing narrative in which they are making it sound — maybe that's what it is. Maybe they are trying to make it sound — no, I wouldn't propose that. I couldn't see them stooping to that. But to clarify, I believe the leaked document does talk about reducing the rate of growth, which is different

from the narrative that we are hearing from the Member for Lake Laberge.

Let's go on to the visual identity as well. I'm happy to talk about this. Again, when we are talking about efficiencies, this is a great example. When you have a one-government approach to a new visual identity so that every individual department doesn't spend money — operations and maintenance money — on creating their own visual identities, their own logos and the whole nine yards, this is a cost-saving over the long range. Yet the Yukon Party, or at least the Member for Lake Laberge, is making it sound like this is a huge expense that is over and on top of — if you take a look at the long-range forecasts — and I'm sure he has, and he has seen in these long-range forecasts that operations and maintenance expenses are growing. They are not being cut by two percent, Mr. Chair. They are growing, but they're growing at an unsustainable rate. I think he knows that. I would assume he would know that, with his time spent in government, but it is a pretty confusing narrative that he's putting out here today. It is just interesting to note.

Now, let's go into some of the expenses. This is a great example of the whole of government working to find some efficiencies in the government when it comes to our visual identity. Time will tell and history will tell if this is a cost-saving or not, but it makes sense to me that, if one government is using a tried, tested and true logo through Tourism and Culture and using that as a whole-of-government approach to how we're going to move forward with all governments to one logo and one label, it is going to be a cost-saving in the long run.

He makes it seem like the Tourism and Culture logo was the old logo for the Yukon government, and he knows very well that it wasn't. Yet we see this narrative from the Yukon Party time and time again — trying to confuse the old logo for the Yukon as a whole with the Tourism and Culture logo; therefore, we just moved something small. Actually, the old logo had a gold pan in the middle of it. Remember that, Mr. Chair? I think you remember that. It had a whole theme with the Y and the K.

No, it was a completely different logo — not just moving the sun here and there or the O there. But I think he knows that. Again, it is interesting the narrative he is putting forward, knowing full well that it was borrowing from a tried-and-tested logo from the Tourism and Culture department that is an internationally recognized logo, and the cost-savings for us to use that as we move forward.

Our aim was to have a visual identity for the government and build upon the Larger than Life logo. This has given us a great opportunity for that and it will be a cost-saving. I am repeating myself because it seems like I have to for the member opposite.

External research and internal review showed that this was an attachment to the Larger than Life logo that was going to work. The contract — and we will go over some numbers. The member opposite asked for some numbers, and we will talk about the upfront money here. The contract with Outcrop Yukon to design the visual identity was \$76,880. As part of

the preparation work, we conducted a branding audit at a cost of just under \$40,000 — \$38,590. This was also with Outcrop Yukon. We also issued an \$8,465 contract to design templates. The total project cost was \$123,935.

Our old logo was more than 35 years old and was the only element of a visual identity that we even had. As a government, we have matured past just having that as just a logo. It didn't provide us with the tools and templates that we need to create a unified professional look for our government. Having visual identity standards and templates means that we no longer have to design public communications material from scratch every single time — a cost-savings, Mr. Chair. This is a way of curtailing the growth from all of the departments that we have seen from under the previous government. Again, it is an efficiency that we are finding from the departments, and I am so thrilled to be working with such a progressive approach with all of the departments in mind.

We are taking a phased-in, cost-effective approach to this. We will use existing material that has the old logo on them as much as we can in the transition — as much as we possibly can — again, a cost-savings, Mr. Chair.

Moving on, I am not sure if he asked about this, but I might as well do the whole gambit here for the visual identity and the yukon.ca branding. Our new website, yukon.ca, provides us with the platform to deliver on key government priorities, including the expansion of e-services right across the territory. We have identified the most popular tasks that Yukoners want to accomplish online through our web statistics and through our citizens feedback and user experience and testing. I am very proud of the government for the consultation levels that they went through to get this information.

The Executive Council Office 2018-19 contracts with the contractor Yellow Pencil were valued at \$25,129 for the initial development of the content of the design guide and staff training sessions.

Ongoing maintenance of the website will cost about \$75,000 per year, which is half, Mr. Chair — the member opposite is not paying attention to this, but we might have to repeat it to him later — that is half of what it cost in the past to run the old website. Maybe I'll wait for him to pay attention, because this is part of the dialogue here, the debate. I don't know if the member opposite heard that or not, but the costs now, as far as the maintenance of the website, are \$75,000, which is half of what it used to cost.

Here is another example of us finding efficiencies to curtail the growth of the government departments, and I think we're doing a great job of it. Again, I want to give that credit to the folks in Finance and ECO and the whole-of-government approach that we have had to finding these efficiencies.

Nowhere in this statement did you hear "a cut". You know, I don't think we have cut a program or service. We have a website — we have a better website. We have actually expanded, because now, as opposed to just having an old logo and just the logo as our only visual identity, we're now creating a unified professional look for the whole of government, having a visual identity with standards and

templates for a modern digitalized world at a cost-saving to government. I don't know if this will be lost on the member opposite, who seems to be too busy with some other conversation over there to pay attention to the answers, so I am sure we'll hear the questions again.

Mr. Cathers: I hate to disappoint the Premier, but I can multi-task and listen to him while reading my notes as well or talking to one of my colleagues. I heard exactly what he said, but unfortunately, Mr. Chair, the problem is that the Premier's explanations fall flat. The suggestion that spending money on a new logo, spending what the Premier just told us — \$123,000 just on the redesign and paying someone to look at government's existing logo — that is just not a good use of taxpayers' money in a year when you are literally sending out a memo to departments talking about ongoing reductions in operation and maintenance spending.

The Premier said no, they are still growing the size of budgets, they are just reducing the rate of growth. That is not what this memo says. The memo says Management Board approved an ongoing one-percent reduction in O&M and asked departments to look for a two-percent reduction. You can attempt to spin it all you want, but a reduction is a cut and Yukoners are wondering what is on the table. We know that there are growing requests and Yukoners know that when the Premier is talking about reducing the budget of Health and Social Services by two percent, he is talking about cutting the budget by two percent, no matter how he may try to spin it.

So the question is one that is important to people. We know Yukoners are happy to see Whistle Bend Place finally constructed — and congratulations to the staff involved in it, and I thank them for the tour. Along with hundreds of other Yukoners, I toured the facility and appreciated the many people who were actually coming up to me and thanking us for the work done on that project, at a time when, in fact, literally — in spite of the Premier conveniently forgetting it — one of his star Liberal candidates was trotting around with a petition, seeking a stop-work order on the construction of the 150-bed facility for Whistle Bend. The Liberals were, in fact, cheerleading a stop to construction of that facility. If they had succeeded, we would still be waiting for that project.

But the question, then, still remains in terms of both the waitlist for continuing care and within the hospital. We know from the reports of the now-retired chief of medical staff at Whitehorse General Hospital of the number of times that Whitehorse General Hospital was at or over capacity. It has been running at over 100-percent capacity on a number of occasions throughout the past year and a half-plus. That includes, according to the last report from the chief of medical staff, an average rate of 96-percent occupancy. The government has still not — unless they've changed something recently — provided the hospital with the resources to address the fact that the hospital is staffed based on an assumption of 75-percent occupancy. We've heard concerns from physicians. We've heard concerns from nurses. We've heard concerns, as well, directly from Yukoners who were affected themselves or whose families are affected as they are either in

the hospital waiting for a bed in continuing care or on the wait-list for continuing care waiting for a bed.

As I mentioned, one of my constituents recently contacted me and, despite needing to be placed in continuing care, he still had not heard when he could even expect that he would be off the wait-list and into the facility. We've asked the government — to no avail so far — for a timeline on when they expect to fill Whistle Bend.

Instead of the Premier focusing in the budget or in the budget speech or even in his responses in general debate on talking about what they're doing in these important areas of health care, we hear them talking about cuts to health care. The health care review is presumably aimed at finding those cuts and two percent cuts across departments. So it is our obligation — even if the Premier may wish to make ridiculous references to Scooby Doo and trivialize this issue, there are Yukoners who are very concerned with this and are feeling the health effects right now. It is our obligation on behalf of those Yukoners to seek the answers to the questions and to ask for a timeline. I would contend that it is the Premier's obligation and the Health minister's obligation to provide answers to Yukoners who are in need of beds in Whistle Bend or other health care services or treatment on what government is doing to address the situations they're facing.

For my constituent who has been waiting for two years for cataract surgery, this is a situation — again, I would remind the minister to not mention the name of the individual in this Legislative Assembly — where she is one of many across the territory who are on this wait-list and they don't want to hear talking points about visual identities. They don't want to hear talking points about a whole-of-government approach or the Premier claim that a reduction isn't really a cut. They want action and they want transparency from government on whether government plans to invest in improving the services that they need and when they plan to do so. That is unfortunately not what we're hearing.

I would ask the Premier if he would agree to call the Hospital Corporation to appear before the Assembly this fall and would also note in referring to the visual identity that the \$123,000 that was spent just on the design and review of existing government logos is money that could have been much better spent in a long list of areas, anywhere from expanding the facilities or resources at schools to increasing funding for our health care system. The very fact that the Premier is claiming that the memo that was leaked does not refer to a cut to department funding is quite simply arguing that black is white, because the memo was very clear about what, in fact, is being asked for.

Mr. Chair, I would ask the Premier in the area of the health care system — I'm going to point to a couple of areas that I just highlighted within the health care system. Will the Premier assure us that there will not be a two-percent cut to continuing care? Will he assure us that there will not be a two-percent cut to the Hospital Corporation? Will the Premier assure us that there will not be a two-percent cut to medical travel?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will give a little math lesson to the member opposite. He's talking about health. A two-percent savings on a 10.2-percent increase is not a cut. It's still a growth, so that answers his question right there.

Bed pressures is an interesting one. The member opposite was talking about bed pressures. Now, bed pressures were identified and funded by the previous government, but they weren't budgeted for, interestingly enough. They were funded, but yet that money was never budgeted by the Yukon Party. That's another pressure we found ourselves in that we had to budget for. You talk about increasing costs to O&M. There are reasons for these increasing costs, especially when the government funds these situations — maybe in an election year; I believe maybe even in an election year — but yet doesn't budget for it. There are teachers as well — the teacher hires that happened. These are increases to O&M pressures that we're dealing with.

Again, we keep on hearing the member opposite believing that we're going to take the budget and cut the budget by two percent when really what we're doing is reducing the rate of growth. So again, a two-percent — which the memo talks about — savings on a 10.2-percent increase, which is happening in Health and Social Services, does not constitute a cut in the budget. Now, the member opposite should understand that. I think he does. What we're hearing is that they're against —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: I think the Premier may be lost and looking at the wrong document because there's no mention of an increase in this memo that he's referring to. There's only mention of "cuts".

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order — I don't think there is one.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think you just took my fire from me. I don't hear a point of order there.

Chair's ruling

Chair: There is no point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you. I guess that's it then. Again, we're answering the questions. They don't like the answers, I guess. You know, again, looking at the long-range forecasts, I don't see a cut. I see budgets moving forward. The round brackets would mean decreases, but I don't see any decreases.

The O&M in all departments is increasing, so this narrative that the Member for Lake Laberge is trying to pursue is just not true.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier appears to have contravened Standing Order 19(h) of charging another member with

uttering a deliberate falsehood when he said that I'm attempting to do something that simply isn't true. I would ask you to have him retract that comment and apologize for it.

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, I'm merely pointing out a factually incorrect statement from the member opposite. I'm not assuming that he did it on purpose. I'm not saying he is trying to lie in the Legislative Assembly, which is what that Standing Order is for. I'm merely pointing out the fact that the member opposite is incorrect in his assumption that this document constitutes a cut in a budget.

Chair's ruling

Chair: On the point of order, I believe Mr. Silver has found the appropriate words to describe what he wanted to say.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think they might have a point of order still rumbling back there. They are still talking about your decision, I believe. I'll let the member talk if he has a problem with that.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I don't think there is a point of order. I thought the Premier had sat down and so I guess I'll ask another question here.

Mr. Chair, I think the issue here that the Premier seems to be misunderstanding — or he is choosing to use a narrative that is more convenient — is that in fact we are asking the question of the Premier, as I did repeatedly, about what is on the table for cuts. If indeed there are certain things which are of limits and that government is not prepared to consider cuts to, then he has an opportunity to state it. If they are not contemplating cuts to Health and Social Services, the Premier can roll that out. If they are not contemplating cuts to certain parts of Health and Social Services, like to continuing care or medical travel or to their funding to the Hospital Corporation, the Premier has a perfect opportunity to stand up and roll it out and say, "No, I recognize that the needs in continuing care are going to grow and we're prepared to in fact see an increase in that section of the budget." The Premier has an opportunity to say, "I have heard from the Yukon Medical Association and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association and health professions about the pressures at the Yukon Hospital Corporation and their needs for technology, and we're going to increase our investments in those areas." He has ample opportunity to do that and to relay those concerns. He has the opportunity to stand up and say, "I have heard loud and clear from the Legislative Assembly about the importance of medical travel. We remember that we voted unanimously for the Member for Watson Lake's motion to see a review of the medical travel program. We recognize that the program hasn't seen significant updates in over 10 years, and we're prepared to increase the support in those areas in recognition of what Yukoners have been asking for, and that area will not be cut."

He had a perfect opportunity to do that if he wishes to do so, but the letter that was leaked by a whistle-blower — the reason it was coming forward, I would assume, is that whoever leaked this had the same concern that we did in

reading what it actually says. I would encourage any Yukoners who are wondering about the content and hearing the Premier say, “No, no, no — we’re really going to increase the budget. We’re not really talking about cuts, it’s something else.” That isn’t what the memorandum actually says.

In any one of these areas, the Premier has ample opportunity to stand up and make clear what is and what is not on the table — whether there are areas that government recognizes, as we have, that there is a need for increases in those budget areas, not cuts, he has the opportunity to do that if he wishes to again engage in cooperative debate.

As I mentioned earlier, I did provide him with the opportunity to agree to have the Hospital Corporation appear as witnesses in the Legislative Assembly and if he would agree to that request, certainly when they come we could ask them whether their problems have gone away overnight or whether they are still facing the pressures of a high rate of the beds in the hospital being occupied by patients who should be in continuing care.

Another area we could hear from the Premier or perhaps the Minister of Health and Social Services on is if they are prepared to look at expanding the home care program to meet the needs we have heard from Yukoners in those areas.

All of those are examples of both the clarity the Premier could provide and the issues that are of concern to health professionals and other Yukoners.

The Premier can claim the government is being transparent, but when they’re not being transparent, unfortunately, that’s just a talking point.

In these areas the Premier can suggest that I’m like a dog with a bone or make references to cartoons on TV, but these areas are ones that people are genuinely concerned about and that people who are waiting for surgery they need or care within the health care system or a continuing care bed are genuinely concerned and genuinely worried about its effect on their lives. It’s not unreasonable for those people to ask of their government that they receive answers, including a timeline for when government expects to move people into the Whistle Bend care facility. Which people are likely to go first? Are people from Macaulay Lodge going before everyone on the wait-list? Is it a mix? How quickly do they intend, respectively, to be able to alleviate the bed pressure at Whitehorse General Hospital by moving people there who should be in continuing care to continuing care?

Second, how quickly do they expect to move people off the wait-list into the Whistle Bend facility and when do they expect the people currently on the wait-list to be fully into the facility?

Third, what are the timelines for moving people in from Macaulay Lodge? I will just note in wrapping up my comments that I know, of course, that new people will be added to the wait-list at some point in time, but the people who are currently there are asking for answers and they deserve them from government.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair’s report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 2, 2018:

34-2-68

Advocacy in Bloom — 2017/2018 Annual Report — Yukon Child & Youth Advocate Office (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-69

Yukon Liquor Corporation Annual Report — April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 (Streicker)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 2, 2018:

34-2-143

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Cathers related to general debate on Vote 51, Community

Services, in Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* —
Medevac (Streicker)

34-2-144

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with
Mr. Cathers related to general debate on Vote 51, Community
Services, in Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* —
EMS response by helicopter (Streicker)

34-2-145

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with
Mr. Cathers related to general debate on Vote 51, Community
Services, in Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* —
Grizzly Valley subdivision (Streicker)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 93

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 3, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 3, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to welcome into the gallery the Mental Health Association of Yukon board, executive director and members. In the gallery today is Fiona Azizaj and Martin Smith, constituents from Vuntut Gwitchin — thank you for being here. Alongside her are Donna Kisoun, my EA; Kelly MacDonald; and the Mental Health Association executive director, Tiffanie Tasane. Also — although they're not able to make it today, I want to just acknowledge them, given that we are doing the tribute today — there are the board members and the executive: Nathan Schultz, who is the chair; Kim Solonick, vice-chair; Lisa Beck, treasurer; Leah White; Darcy Tkachuk; and Stephanie Padfield.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: I would like members of the House to join me in welcoming a few constituents in the gallery here today: Gerard Tremblay — welcome — and interpreter, Amanda Smith; my lovely wife Sarah Gallina, and my father Peter Gallina. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Just a reminder to all members that, where possible, please speak into your microphones. I think we're still in the process of sorting out the new sound system, which appears to be working reasonably well, but if you are not speaking into the general area of your mic it may be difficult for other members to hear what you are saying and also for the general public as well.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Mental Illness Awareness Week

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise to pay tribute to the Mental Health Association of Yukon on the occasion of National Mental Illness Awareness Week. The Mental Health Association of Yukon is a volunteer organization that works to promote and improve the mental health of Yukoners. Before I talk about this organization and the good work that it does, I would like to touch briefly on the important distinction between mental illness and mental health.

Although these are terms often used interchangeably, they do not mean the same thing. Mental illness refers to the range of specific disorders that affect a person's mood, thinking and behaviour. There are more than 200 identified forms of mental illness. Examples include depression, schizophrenia and anxiety disorder. About one-third of people will experience one of these disorders at some point in time in their lives. Every one of us here in the gallery and in the Legislature is impacted in some way, shape or form, or we know someone who is directly impacted.

Mental health, on the other hand, is something that each and every one of us has some experience with. I personally prefer the term "mental wellness". Our mental wellness is at its best when our mental, physical, spiritual and emotional lives are in balance. We thrive when we have purpose in our daily lives, hope for the future, a sense of belonging and connection to our family and community, and an understanding of our place in the world. At some point in our life we will all experience challenges to our mental wellness. We can be thriving one week but suddenly find ourselves struggling the next. We are all on the mental wellness spectrum.

In order to meet the mental wellness needs of Yukoners, it's important that our government works collaboratively as a community with all of our partners. One of these partners is the Mental Health Association of Yukon. With its focus on education, awareness, advocacy and support services, the association contributes to the mental wellness of Yukoners while reducing stigma towards mental illness.

To help support the great work of the Mental Health Association of Yukon, we have updated their funding by \$42,000 to a total of \$100,000 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This funding helps the association deliver education programs, group therapy programs and host support groups and special events.

One of its key programs just happens to be starting here this week here in Whitehorse. Living Life to the Full is a six-week course that gives participants tools and skills to improve their mental wellness and quality of life. I urge anyone who is dealing with depression, anxiety or just the stresses of dealing with challenges or changes to reach out to the Mental Health Association of Yukon to find out more.

Tomorrow night, the Mental Health Association is hosting a very exciting event in partnership with Northwestel and our Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services branch. Actress and comedian Jessica Holmes, from the CBC's *Royal Canadian Air Farce* program, is giving a special presentation at the Coast High Country Inn on mental health. Ms. Holmes, a Bell Let's Talk ambassador, will talk about the importance of destressing and laughing at life's shortcomings, as well as her own experience of dealing with depression and finding work-life balance. Her talk begins at 5:30 p.m. Admission to this event is by donation, and seating is first come, first served. I look forward to seeing everyone there tomorrow evening.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff and volunteers at the Mental Health Association of Yukon for their dedication to improving the lives of Yukoners. Mahsi' cho.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 1 to 7, 2018, as Mental Illness Awareness Week. Throughout the week, a pan-Canadian effort is made to destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness about the importance of not only understanding mental illness, but promoting whole-body health and wellness.

One in three Canadians will experience some form of mental illness or substance addiction in their lifetime, and in the north, statistics are even higher. Due to a combination of factors, northerners tend to face a greater chance of being affected by mental illness themselves, within families or with their friends. We have higher levels of addictions, depression and anxiety here in the Yukon and across the north.

Governments, organizations and individuals do a great job across the Yukon of highlighting the importance of mental wellness. People are talking and people are taking action; however, the stigma is still there and there are always more steps to be taken to ensure we're all doing our part.

There are a number of events taking place this week to highlight Mental Illness Awareness Week in the Yukon and the minister did reference them. I encourage people to take part in the activities. It is a great chance to fundraise and raise monies for necessary programs.

I also encourage Yukoners to check out the Mental Health Association of Yukon's Facebook page to see their list of activities and events that take place throughout the year.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to recognize Mental Illness Awareness Week. This annual national public education campaign has been designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the reality of mental illness.

In 2016, Kids Help Phone announced that one in five Canadian youth from coast to coast to coast had seriously considered suicide and those numbers aren't any better or more hopeful today. Canada has entire systems in place to address physical illness, but we're still behind when it comes to mental health and illness. Mental health and illness must be considered on the same level of importance as physical health. One step toward that goal would be having a number similar to that of 911 specifically for mental health and illness emergencies. Toll-free numbers are great, but they fall short in that people can't easily remember them. Having an easily recalled three-digit number would be helpful, not just for mental health sufferers in crisis, but for the bystanders who might be able to more effectively help if they had a number they could easily remember and call.

One of my great heroes, Shane Koyczan, wrote a poem about this. It's called "152".

One in five

today one in five
wondered if being alive
was worth the cost
of another day
wondering if 2 in 10
wondered when
there was finally going to be
a 911 for mental health

4 in 20 wondered if the wealth spent on the self-decided
salaries of politicians
who claim the children are our future
could pay for it

maybe 1 of the 8
of the 8 in 40
quit wondering
and started making plans

maybe 3 of the 16
of the 16 in 80
feel like unrecycled cans
that are just easier to throw away

Maybe one fifth of 160
is easier to say than 32
because 32 is starting to sound like a lot

a toll free number is not enough
give us a number
everyone knows by heart
so the next time we see someone's world falling apart
we can do more than just stand there

because the scars we can't see
require different care than the ones left there by crime or
by accident
sometimes there's no hint
to tell you where it hurts
it just hurts

sometimes our minds are red alerts
you can't see
even when you look us in the eye
sometimes we cry for what others would consider no
reason
sometimes the treason we commit
is against ourselves

it's hard enough
trying to find who we are
amid the overcrowded shelves of pills
meant to manage how we function

sometimes the junction box is broken

and we miss the connections
that others seem to make with ease

imagine
if you threw away the 1
of the 1 in 5 keys
that could open the door
to the room the world forgot we were locked in

if kindness makes us friends
let compassion make us kin
don't let us get lost in the numbers again

illness is illness
sometimes the cost to heal it
is an ear willing to listen
sometimes a shoulder
volunteering to be a crutch

people are not a price to be weighed against your budget

1 in 5
is 2 much.

Applause

In recognition of National Family Week

Mr. Gallina: I rise in this House today on behalf of all members of this House to acknowledge National Family Week, which takes place the week prior to Thanksgiving each year.

The Government of Canada proclaimed National Family Week back in 1985, which makes this the 33rd year that it has been celebrated across the country. On August 30, 2018, the Commissioner of Yukon proclaimed the period of October 1 to 7, 2018, to be National Family Week here in Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I have a young, busy family that includes my loving wife, four children and my father, who lives with us, along with extended family and relatives. When I reflect on what family means to me, many thoughts come to mind. I think of the activities we do together — whether hiking on the trails, preparing meals, making gifts for friends and family, or snuggling by a fireplace and working on a puzzle or playing a game together.

There is learning — lots of learning — on many levels — as a child, discovering the world around us and as a parent, learning to cope and shape and guide.

There is conflict. In my world, conflict oftentimes revolves around inclusion and communication. Our families are the keepers and transmitters of our culture, language and what keeps our communities alive and vibrant. Families touch our individual and collective being, from the personal to the professional. It is within our families that we as individuals come to know our place in the world and to know ourselves as part of a larger collective.

Today, as I pay tribute to all Yukon families, as diverse and unique as they are, I want people to know that they are

supported and that there are many places to celebrate our family values as we grow together. This week, National Family Week, provides such opportunities. Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services is once again coordinating events throughout Yukon and has published a complete list on their website at www.manyrivers.yk.ca.

Local businesses, organizations and governments have come together for this special week. As you look through the schedule of events, organizers have embraced strong, family values. Free events this week throughout the territory include indoor and outdoor activities, family meals, games, cultural experiences, contests, various arts and crafts, counselling sessions and, yes, there are even pajama parties.

I would like to take a moment to thank organizers and sponsors. This is important to help Yukoners know who has stepped up to make this week special and also to help people understand the scope and value placed on families by these fundamental community stakeholders. I would like to thank the following: Government of Yukon; Ta'an Kwäch'än Council; Na Cho Nyäk Dun; Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; City of Whitehorse; Child Development Centre; Yukon Wildlife Preserve; Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services; Leaf Solutions; schools in Whitehorse, Teslin, Haines Junction, Ross River and Teslin; Whitehorse Public Library; Yukon Family Mediation Service; Yukon Child and Youth Advocate office; society of Yukon and Northern Focus Counselling; Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon; Standard Bus company; ATCO Electric Yukon; Fraserway RV; and White Pass & Yukon Route.

Thank you to those community members who have worked behind the scenes to make this week successful. Mr. Speaker, for Yukon to be strong and to thrive, we must nurture and support our families and our communities. Our families are the webs that connect us all.

In conclusion, I am inviting everyone to take some time this week to celebrate their family and to spend some quality time with their loved ones at home or at one of the many events being hosted this week.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today, I have for tabling the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition report, entitled *Living Wage in Whitehorse, Yukon: 2018*.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Pursuant to section 12(3) of the *Arts Centre Act*, I have for tabling the 2017-18 Yukon Arts Centre annual report.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 24: *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I move that Bill No. 24, entitled *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 24, entitled *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills for introduction?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House commends the Government of Canada for including the northern affairs portfolio as part of the mandate of the federal intergovernmental affairs minister, in recognition of the evolving role of the north in the Canadian federation.

Mr. Kent: I rise to give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all correspondence, including e-mails, received and sent by the Yukon government in relation to the recent consultation on amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act*.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to direct the Department of Education to communicate with staff and with the parents of children attending schools impacted by recent results of lead testing in water to:

(1) clear results from their school in comparison with the Canadian drinking water quality guidelines; and

(2) steps that are being taken by the Department of Education and Department of Health and Social Services to remediate current levels.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Whistle Bend Place continuing care facility

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today to provide Yukoners with an update on the Whistle Bend Place continuing care facility. The facility was substantially completed on August 15 and was open for tours on September 12. We estimated over 1,000 people visited throughout the day. I'm very pleased that we are on track to open in October 2018 for residents. The main contractor remains on-site, fixing minor deficiencies and completing landscaping work that can be done this fall. The remainder of the landscaping will be done in the spring.

There will be 150 standard beds available for use. At this time, given the waiting list in the communities and those in the hospital who need long-term care, we do not anticipate all of the beds will be needed in the short term.

We do not anticipate all of the beds will be needed in the short-term. The waiting list varies over time from about 60 to 80 and includes people waiting in the hospital. With approximately 50 people moving from Macaulay Lodge, we are estimating a high-end need at opening to be about 120. We know through our engagement sessions with our aging population that seniors and elders want to remain as independent as possible and stay in their homes and communities as long as they possibly can. We are working to fill the gaps in the continuum of services and supports that are available to Yukon. That is why we are expanding home care this year.

Our home-first philosophy is now fully integrated into our home care delivery. We are now providing the necessary supports to people with more complex needs on an as-needed basis. Our pilot from last year is now embedded in our operation, enabled through our new investment of \$1 million this year.

In addition, the new beds at Thomson Centre will be re-enablement and respite beds. Re-enablement will support people who need additional support and therapies to be at home. This will support people leaving the hospital and will also provide support that will prevent them from going into the hospital. In keeping with a person-centred approach, resident intake will occur four days a week with no more than three admissions per day. This will allow for a smooth transition as people enter their new home. We want to support every resident and their family as they move. We will move those from Macaulay Lodge last. This will take place at the end of the year and the beginning of next. We will keep the Macaulay Lodge open into the new year.

Strategies are underway to fill the 250 full-time employees required to staff the facility. We have recruited 70 percent of what we need to fully staff the facility and are ready to meet the needs of those waiting for room at the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. Recruitment strategies include hiring recruitment specialists and recruitment firms to attract health care professionals from other jurisdictions. We are working with our partners on strategies with respect to housing; we're working again with a peer rental campaign working with Health and Social Services. We're reaching out into the communities and, as a result, we have some short-term options that we are considering and looking to opening the Whistle Bend care facility in the coming months.

Overall, as a note for long-term care in the Yukon —

Speaker: Order.

Ms. McLeod: Today, I rise in response to the minister's statement regarding the opening of Whistle Bend Place, our territory's newest continuing care facility. We're happy to see this project moving forward so that Yukon seniors can continue to get the excellent treatment and care they deserve and rely on. I want to specifically thank all of the

staff from Health and Social Services, as well as Highways and Public Works for their hard work in getting us here today. It's a beautiful facility they can be proud of. I think that anyone who has been able to visit Whistle Bend Place and learn about the incredible levels of care and comfort that will be provided there would be embarrassed to call this place a warehouse, nor would one be able to call the unique, patient-centred care plan that this facility will offer a one-size-fits-all approach.

We look forward to seeing this facility officially open to welcome seniors, elders and others requiring complex levels of care through its doors; however, we still have some questions for the minister, most of which are with respect to staffing and staff housing.

Can the minister tell us when the facility will be fully staffed and how many staff are actually working there today? We're talking about staff who are not just hired, but how many have actually started the position. Will there be enough to run the facility by the end of the month, when the patients move in?

As the minister notes, there is an issue of housing for employees, but to what extent? How many rental properties were identified or secured through the expression of interest for rental accommodation her department ran? What are the short-term housing options that she mentions, and in the long term, how many Yukon Housing Corporation units are going to be allocated under staff housing to these new government employees?

On the topic of the expression of interest that she issued for rental accommodation, the government's website currently states that no bids were received. Can the minister confirm whether or not this is so — that no bids were received? Even more recently, we heard that the government has established agreements with a number of hotels to house incoming staff, but it sounds like not all hotels were initially included in the list the government was using. Further, this never went out to tender. Could the minister tell us how the government established the list of which hotels they would use and why they did it without going to tender?

This facility is one we can be proud of and we're happy to see it near completion. There's lots of work that still needs to be done and there are many questions that remain unanswered.

Ms. White: I want to thank the minister for her statement. We're pleased to hear that residents will begin to move into the Whistle Bend facility this month. This will certainly meet the needs of many Yukoners requiring a higher level of care, including those long-term patients who have been waiting patiently, or sometimes less patiently, in the hospital. Hopefully we'll also see the end of senior patients being transferred to community hospitals due to bed pressures in Whitehorse.

We're still concerned about the hiring and housing for staffing for this facility. With current low vacancies, high rents and housing costs, this continues to be a barrier for new health professionals moving here. It was mentioned in a

statement that was shared with us — and I quote: "A staff member working to assist potential employees obtain living accommodations, along with an expression of interest, was sent out to gauge interest in providing rental properties in Whitehorse. This resulted in some short-term housing options and some long-term options that we have turned over to the Housing Corporation."

With so many Yukoners, including some who have been here for decades, struggling with affordable or even available housing, this once again points out the need for concrete action by this government to respond to the housing crisis that is leaving Yukoners literally out in the cold. No mention has been made of a palliative care unit opening, which has been in the plan for the 150-bed facility. This has been an ongoing need that has not been addressed over the years, despite promises for that to happen.

Although there is a palliative care team offering amazing service and help, a hospital room that holds only a few visitors or family members is not adequate and it is not best practice for individuals requiring care at the end of their life.

Also not mentioned is the mental health unit. We know that in the Whitehorse Correctional Centre inspection report, it was recommended that the department revoke the statutory designation as a hospital. Without appropriate places to go for help, those individuals who might be in a mental health crisis are sometimes incarcerated at WCC for extended periods, even for minor nuisance infractions or while awaiting transfer to a treatment facility in another jurisdiction. Will there be a mental health unit opening in the near future that might relieve the pressures on the jail to be the hospital for these individuals? I am eager to hear from the minister on this, especially during Mental Illness Awareness Week.

It is great to hear about increases to home care and the implementation of the Housing First philosophy, and I'm interested to know whether the new services and programming will be available in all communities since we have heard from individuals and their families about the desire for seniors and elders to stay close to home and to live in their communities. Without a full continuum of care, there are still gaps that result in seniors being over-institutionalized — which, as we know, is the highest cost of health care — or in a care situation that is more than they would require.

Mr. Speaker, we congratulate the staff and the builders on opening this facility. I personally look forward to bingo days because calling numbers in this facility is going to be really fantastic.

Congratulations on the opening, but in our role, we will continue to ask questions that we think are important.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the members of the opposition for your comments today. Also, I would like to take this time to acknowledge the staff of Health and Social Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works for doing such a great job and keeping the project on time and delivering as required under some pretty tight timelines, looking at the key priorities that we said we would deliver on. I'm very proud of the accomplishments.

I also want to note a couple of things for the record on the recent history of this facility. We were very clear with the public in the last election that we would cap the construction at 150 beds. We opposed the previous government's plan to build a 300-bed facility and were very loud and clear about that.

Now, with regard to excellent care and treatment of our seniors and our elders, that's always our priority. It's always our priority to give Yukoners collaborative health care that they require in their homes and in their communities and, in particular, rural Yukon communities.

We knew coming in that the facility really didn't have any plans with respect to the operating costs. Those are things that we had to take into consideration as we advanced the project. Advancing a project of this magnitude in the Yukon — the biggest of its kind in Yukon's history — to take into consideration recruitment and retention strategies, housing, housing pressures, as well as delivering effective collaborative care was top of mind for everyone. It will always be and we will continue to work to that end.

However, it was a major feat and a major challenge. Without the efforts of our partners, without the efforts of the department, we would not be opening the facility today and being creative and innovative in addressing some of the concerns. I've highlighted some of that in my opening statement. It's very excellent work.

To the questions with respect to staffing and staff housing, we knew that we would be confronted with a challenge, given that we were recruiting 250 people for the Whistle Bend facility. Already, the Yukon was experiencing housing crises with respect to vulnerable populations and trying to be accommodating and address that.

We have taken into consideration the work of the Yukon Housing Corporation, the housing initiative group, Safe at Home, and the vulnerable people's groups. We have taken into consideration the implementation of the action plans that have been laid out for us — very well, I might add — and taken into consideration a balance — trying to balance the efforts of this government with respect to the shortcomings on the budget side of things with respect to programs and services. How do you balance if there are no resources set aside? Of course there are challenges, as noted by the Member for Watson Lake. The issue around housing for employees was a challenge, and there is no getting around that. We have taken some very proactive approaches, and that was to work with our staff and our partners to reach out into the communities to see what was available. I have to say that the department did a great job in addressing that.

The other matters with respect to palliative care and health care units — we said we would keep that on the agenda, move forward and make the adjustments as we implement and transition into the facility. Aging in place is a key priority, and that is a priority for this government. We are doing that consultation right now to address the needs in rural Yukon communities.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Children in care

Ms. McLeod: At the beginning of February, the Minister of Health and Social Services met with the child who made allegations of abuse within government-run group homes. For months, the minister and the Liberals plugged their ears and did nothing about this. It wasn't until after weeks of questions that they even launched an independent investigation.

Seven months later, the minister gave a half-hearted apology where she accepted no responsibility. The Premier tried to pass off this weak apology as courage. Real courage would have been if the minister took immediate action when she first met with the child. Real courage would have been, instead of denying wrongdoing for months, if she had actually believed the child and the whistle-blowers. Real courage would have been to accept responsibility.

Will the minister show real courage and apologize for doing nothing after she met with this child at the beginning of February and became aware of these allegations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: It is very interesting, coming from the member opposite with respect to children in group homes and work that has been happening recently. This government has taken some proactive actions to address some of the challenges. We have worked with our partners, and we have addressed the concerns. In fact, I have met with the youth in question. I have met with many of the youth, and I have gone out into the communities to look at some of the challenges. We have proceeded with the long-overdue *Child and Family Services Act* review. We have initiated the review by the Child and Youth Advocate's office.

We have hired an independent investigator to look at many allegations that have been brought forward. Only two of those allegations were found to have merit, and we were very proactive in addressing those concerns. Fundamentally, nothing was found historically. The issues that we found as I walked into this role as Minister of Health and Social Services responsible for children — there was not a lot done.

Historic issues and concerns, systemic issues with indigenous children in care — the highest rate of indigenous children in care, 70 percent — not a lot was done, and we have taken very effective and proactive action in light of the crises that we found ourselves in.

Ms. McLeod: One of the Liberal government's main strategies to deal with the allegations of abuse within group homes was to question the quality of the media reporting. In fact, the Justice minister went as far as to suggest that reporting was untrue. The Minister of Justice said that reports in the media — and I quote: "... are not necessarily the truth."

Now that the independent investigation has determined that the Minister of Justice was wrong, will she apologize to the media for suggesting that their reporting was untrue?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to the information that we received and the information that was brought to our attention, we acted very quickly. We responded and we addressed the concerns that were brought to our attention. We will stand by that. We will stand by the facts that were before us at the time

that these issues came to our attention, and we acted on it. We acted on it very efficiently and very effectively, and I want to say that we have taken the necessary steps to address the crises in question and we reduced the number of children in care by 40 percent. We looked at extended family care programs, we worked with our partners and, with regard to information that was brought to our attention, we acted with the information that we had at the time.

Ms. McLeod: We will try one more time. The Premier himself suggested that the media's reporting was untrue. On CBC Radio on April 25, the Premier was point-blank asked why his government hadn't taken action on the allegations of abuse and he suggested that the reporting was false.

In fact, his exact quote was: "While the opposition and the media deals with allegations, we as a government are dealing with facts." Well it turns out that the media reporting was accurate.

Will the Premier apologize to the media, to Yukoners and, most importantly of all, to the children for not believing these allegations?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the minister mentioned, we have taken a holistic approach to wellness. In her last response, she mentioned again the importance of understanding that families need a variety of supports to thrive. We are going to stick to the issues and we are going to stick to the work that this team does when we respond to these questions and these allegations from the opposition.

As we move from a system of apprehension to one of prevention and to addressing long-standing concerns within Child and Family Services, we are hard at work providing the preventive supports necessary to the families who are in need at these critical times.

Improving the provisions of mental health services in communities is a major priority for this government and for this minister, and I am very proud of the work that has been done with the mental health hubs that are open in Dawson City, Carmacks, Watson Lake and Haines Junction. We have created nine new positions for child and youth counsellors throughout the territory, and we are working with the staff at Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services counsellors, as well, in almost every community in the Yukon. We're partnering with the federal government.

We're doing more work in the first two years than we have seen in awhile when it comes to mental health and when it comes to dealing and working with children in care. I'm very proud of the holistic approach that the minister has taken. I'm very proud of the review that happened from the minute this became something that the minister was aware of. Again, from the beginning, this has been a systemic issue and this government is dealing with it.

Question re: School capacity

Ms. Van Bibber: This question is for the Minister of Education. The population growth in the territory is putting increased pressure on the schools. For example, we have heard from parents that the elementary schools in Porter Creek, Hidden Valley and Golden Horn are at or near

capacity. With Whistle Bend growing larger every year, there are going to be ever-increasing pressures on the numbers at these schools. What are the minister's plans to deal with overcrowding at these schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I thank the member opposite for the question because it's an excellent opportunity for us to talk to Yukoners about what is happening here. Of course, with the exception of F.H. Collins, which was a replacement school, there hasn't been a new school built in Whitehorse in more than 20 years. As a result, the population is growing — we have heard that. The economy is booming. People are wanting to move to Whitehorse and wanting to settle here.

We have growth not only in our employment — with something like Whistle Bend Place — but in other industries that are bringing people here to the territory. There are enrolment pressures at schools. We completely recognize that and agree. The department is working on a capital plan with respect to feeding the Education capital plan into the five-year capital plan of the territorial government — the larger version — to address these situations. I spoke yesterday about the fact that we are trying to purchase some portables for the purpose of dealing with some of those pressures but, so far, we have managed to speak with schools, with parents and with students and deal with the pressures we currently have here in Whitehorse. Long-term planning is the key.

Ms. Van Bibber: With respect to Robert Service School in Dawson City, we have heard concerns about enrolment pressures at that school. The expectation for population growth with potential mining activity in the region will create additional pressures on the school.

A year and a half ago, I asked the minister what plans, if any, the government had for additional portables at Robert Service School. At the time, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said he didn't know and would look into it and get back to us. Given that the minister hasn't provided us with an answer in a year and a half, I'm wondering if he could tell us today what the plans are to deal with enrolment pressures at Robert Service School?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: During debate yesterday, I had the opportunity to address a question about portables — in particular with respect to two schools here in Whitehorse but it applies, of course, in Dawson as well. The government put out a tender early in this year to attempt to purchase a portable, or more than one portable, and there were no responses to that tender.

As a result, we are working in partnership with Highways and Public Works for the purposes of assuming some funding so that we might be able to purchase more than one portable because we know these pressures are here. We have dealt with the situation at Golden Horn, which was the first school in Whitehorse slated to get a portable, and as a result, the enrolment for this year in that school is being dealt with, with some innovative ideas and some cooperation with the school and the school community, but certainly we hope to purchase some portables so they will be available for a number of schools here in the territory.

Ms. Van Bibber: We know the five-year capital concept has Holy Family listed. In the spring, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said this meant that a new Holy Family school would be built, but the Minister of Education contradicted him and said it wasn't necessarily the case, but wouldn't tell us what it meant. Will the Liberals tell us today why Holy Family is in the five-year capital concept? Are they replacing it? Are they painting it? What are they doing? Are they able to provide any detail of what work will be done on this particular school?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As we plan for the future needs of the school buildings, we're considering the enrolment pressures that are across all schools to ensure that we meet the educational needs of Yukoners. That involves, as I have said in my first two answers, intense pressure at the moment on the Whitehorse schools but certainly some pressures in our rural schools as well — particularly Dawson.

The government is developing a long-term capital plan, as I have noted, which includes all Yukon schools, to ensure that the buildings are safe and available for many years to come. We consider many factors in this work, including the changing demographics, the increasing student enrolment, which changes not quite from minute to minute but pretty quickly, and the safety and age of our school buildings.

With respect to the plan going forward, we need to consider all schools in relation to how they're going to appear as a priority going forward. Clearly there are some pressures in the Whistle Bend area. Clearly there are some pressures in the elementary schools as mentioned by the member opposite in her first question and all of those things need to be taken into account.

This is certainly a challenge, but it is not the worst problem to have with a growing economy here in the territory and our growing population.

Question re: Community nursing

Ms. White: For many years, Beaver Creek has only had one full-time nurse including during the busy summer months. In 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the employees union to ensure that there would be two nurses available in the community in the summer months and this did not happen in 2017.

Were there two nurses stationed in the Community of Beaver Creek this summer as was agreed to with the union?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. Certainly our priority is always ensuring that we have all of our community health centres fully covered and that we provide the highest quality care to all of our communities and all of the constituents of Yukon. We are working with the communities as noted.

We've looked at primary care, emergency care and staffing and ensuring that we have a combination of permanent and auxiliary-on-call nurses. We've certainly worked with the employees union on initiatives to improve the ease of recruitment in the communities and we work toward permanently filling the positions. An independent evaluation of service initiatives for Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek

was completed with the union in August of 2018. So we have been working with our partners to address the challenges in all of our communities and we know that is certainly a priority.

Ms. White: I wasn't quite sure if I caught at the end as to whether or not there were two nurses in Beaver Creek this summer.

Beaver Creek is not the only community to experience a shortage of nurses in the community health centres. This has been an ongoing issue in many communities, leaving community members with temporary nurses coming and going and permanent community nurses overworked. A quick look at the employment board shows us that there is an ongoing search for primary health care nurses in charge, primary health care nurses and community health care nurses — mobile — who must travel and work between communities such as Haines Junction and Mayo. Mr. Speaker, those communities are not exactly neighboring communities. Communities have dealt with the situation for far too long. What is this government doing to resolve the problem of the revolving door of nurses in communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I will go back to my opening comments. Clearly our key priority is ensuring that we provide the best possible collaborative care to all of our communities and we are working with our partners to ensure that happens. Yukon is not unique to the rest of Canada; there is a shortage in nurses across the country and we are working with our partners. We have arrangements with the union; we are attempting to provide options and being innovative and creative. We now have a physician in Haines Junction who will provide collaborative care and extend the care program needed for the citizens in that region. We are bringing specialized services to our rural hospitals. We are taking our best efforts forward, Mr. Speaker, to look at future service delivery and also looking at options. Certainly we will keep that in mind.

We did suggest and note that we would consider the options that come forward from the union and we are working with our partners there, and that came through in August from the recommendations. I'm happy to say that we are continuing to look for solutions and we will continue to look for primary care nurses as required in our communities.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that was "no" to two community nurses in Beaver Creek for the summer.

In its very first budget, the government announced that it would hire 11 mental health and addiction nurses to work in Yukon communities. A full year later the Premier announced that only five of the 11 positions had been filled. In response to my questions in March, the Minister of Health and Social Services claimed that she was proactive — and I quote: "By the end of March we will have all the positions filled in the Yukon."

So Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the 11 mental health and addiction nurse positions announced one year and a half ago have been filled?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased, of course, to rise today to speak to the mental health initiatives we have, which have not ever been offered to the Yukon before.

We said we would look at collaborative care and specialized care for our communities, and we are doing that very successfully. We are working with our communities. We have created four mental wellness hubs in each one of our communities. We provide child and youth supports in those communities through the mental wellness support team. We have the mental wellness support hubs in Haines Junction, Watson Lake, Dawson City and Carmacks. We are working to ensure that all of the services are supported, and I am happy to note that every one of our Yukon communities is supported by the model that we have in place.

Question re: Medical case management

Mr. Cathers: I have heard from a constituent on the wait-list for cataract surgery, and a number of my Yukon Party colleagues have also heard from constituents waiting for this procedure. Losing your vision or having it impaired has a major impact on quality of life. We have been told by patients and health professionals that the typical wait time is two years, and that wait times can be as long as four years for cataract surgery. We have heard that the wait-list may have grown to over 350 people. People in need of this surgery, in some cases, lose their ability to drive which, especially for rural residents, has a major impact on their mobility and even their ability to leave home. Will the government take action to reduce wait times for cataract surgery?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say to the member opposite is that it is a great question. We always look at ensuring that we bring the services to the Yukon as best we can. We will certainly take that recommendation under advisement as we work with the Hospital Corporation and we work with our partners to address the wait-lists that are there. In fact, I am happy to say that I have had that very discussion with the Yukon hospital board just three days ago around the specialized services and supports that we need to bring to the Yukon and how we reduce the wait-lists. It is a great recommendation, and we will certainly take it under advisement.

Mr. Cathers: Impaired vision can have a life-changing impact, and receiving cataract surgery in a timely manner is very important to someone's quality of life and their ability to function independently. This summer, I wrote to the Minister of Health and Social Services on behalf of a constituent who is waiting for this surgery. I received a polite reply from the minister, but what we have yet to hear is what concrete action the government will take to reduce wait times for cataract surgery.

My question for the minister is: What specific actions will the government take to reduce cataract surgery wait times and when will it do that?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will go back to my original statements and comments. We are working with our partners. In fact, I had that very discussion with the hospital board just a few days ago. We will work as best we can with the

resources that are available to us to address the challenges, and that is to reduce wait-lists for all the specialized surgeries that are required in Yukon.

In an effort to do that — bring the supports to Yukon — we will see an overall reduction in medical travel. That is always our objective: How do we maximize the services and facilities that we have in the Yukon? Mr. Speaker, I note that we have two rural hospitals that have not been fully utilized to their maximum capacity, and we are trying to address those pressures as well. We will work with our partners to address the pressures that we see. I totally appreciate the member opposite's concerns that he brought forward. As noted, we will take that under advisement as we go ahead and we prioritize the various wait-lists that we have.

Mr. Cathers: Impaired vision can have a life-changing impact, and receiving cataract surgery in a timely manner is very important to someone's quality of life and their ability to function independently.

We have heard that roughly 350 Yukoners are currently waiting for this procedure. The minister made reference to making do within the resources they had available in her last reply to me.

That brings me to a related topic. This week, Yukoners were concerned to learn of a leaked memo from the Department of Finance to enacting two-percent cuts across all departments.

Will the Premier and Finance minister commit to not having cataract surgery targeted as part of these two-percent cuts and, instead, to increase the resources available to cataract surgery?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The priority lists and the priorities that we have before us certainly can never be underplayed. It always drives what we do with regard to collaborative care in the Yukon.

The member opposite knows that very well. We will never cut funding to diminish programs and services to Yukoners. We will look at efficiencies as part of the health care review and the review of medical travel and the review of efficiencies in our rural hospitals. The review of efficiencies in specialized care that we bring to the Yukon is top of mind and at the top of priorities and things that we will certainly keep in mind as we advance this government and we advance the programs and services to maximize the opportunities for Yukoners.

Question re: Tourism development strategy

Ms. Van Bibber: The consultation for the tourism strategy ends today. Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Tourism and Culture this question but she didn't answer: Will the minister extend the consultation to all Yukoners beyond today — yes or no?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question and follow-up from yesterday's discussion.

Yesterday I spoke about the extensive nature of this consultation and that it really started in July 2017 when we started having discussions with all of the partners in the

tourism industry and related sectors like the arts, museums and heritage.

All of our partners — First Nation governments, development corporations and municipal governments — came together and charted a path for us and gave advice on how to put this consultation together. We have had extensive consultation throughout this last year and a few months. We have given a lot of opportunity to Yukoners to be heard. We facilitated many, many sessions throughout the communities. We have a committee of 15 individuals who have put together this draft on the Yukon tourism development strategy.

To my knowledge, I have not received any requests to extend this consultation.

Ms. Van Bibber: Another action item in the tourism strategy is — quote: “Review financial programs, incentives and supports to ensure they align with, and support, the strategy.”

As you know, the Liberal Cabinet has told the departments they must cut two percent. Can the Minister of Tourism and Culture tell us if this review of financial programs and incentives referenced in the strategy means that they will be cutting funding to the non-government organizations, such as the Tourism Industry Association and Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. We have done intensive consultation on this. As the member opposite is aware, there is a document that outlines what we heard. We are going to look at all of the proposals that have been put forward by our steering committee on the Yukon tourism development strategy. We will assess all of them and make the best decisions that we can with the information we have.

One of the things I would like to note is that we have never had data like this on tourism. We have gone to every community. We have such extensive information now that we have never had in our possession before. We have heard from Yukoners on a deep level. We trained facilitators to go out and provide facilitated consultation with Yukoners.

The evidence we now have will be very helpful to us going forward over the next decade as we move tourism forward in the most positive way.

Ms. Van Bibber: According to the government’s press release, this extensive consultation on the tourism strategy wrapped up at the end of March. The minister sat on the draft report and only released it on September 19. Can she tell us why this is only giving Yukoners two weeks to provide comment on it?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Not all of those facts are correct. I would like to again go back to the process that we developed together with all of our stakeholders and all the partners and just emphasize again that we took a lot of time to talk to Yukoners and we collected data that we have never had before. We certainly have taken a lot of time. The steering committee has had several meetings to discuss what they have heard. It was an incredible amount of work to sift through all of the 12,000 comments we received.

We released the draft. We came to a place where the committee came up with their most recent draft and we released it to the public. We released it to Yukon First Nations, our municipal governments and all our partners, as we said we would. We’re wrapping up today the final stage of that. What will happen next is that the steering committee will look at what they have heard through these last couple of weeks and will table a final draft tourism development strategy.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 313

Clerk: Motion No. 313, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow through on the review of the medical travel program that it committed to on March 14, 2018, which is intended to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners by:

- (1) confirming if work has begun on this review and provide an update on work completed to date;
- (2) committing to public consultations as part of this review; and
- (3) providing a deadline for completion of the review.

Speaker: I am just asking a question of the Member for Watson Lake. Am I missing a number 4?

Ms. McLeod: Possibly, but I will re-read it. How is that?

Speaker: Very good.

Ms. McLeod: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 313, which urges the Government of Yukon to: (1) follow through on the review of the medical travel program that it committed to on March 14, 2018, which is intended to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners; (2) confirm if work has begun on this review and provide an update on the work completed to date; (3) commit to public consultations that are part of this review; and (4) provide a deadline for completion of the review.

It was not long ago that I stood in this House and spoke to the first point highlighted on this important motion. In fact, a number of us spoke to the motion, and it received unanimous approval from all members of this House, and unfortunately we have yet to see action. I would like to reiterate to the government the importance of this review. We have already spoken in this House to the importance of this review. We have received the nod that it would go ahead and we have heard nothing since.

To the first point in the motion being discussed today, I urge the government to follow through with this review as they agreed to do in March of this year.

To the second point — to be transparent with the members of this House and to all Yukoners about the work they are doing on a review — I ask the government to confirm whether work has started and, if so, update us on the status of this work. This review is not going to be a small feat. It may take time and it will take input from Yukoners.

Medical travel is one small part of Health and Social Services but, to so many Yukoners and their families, it weighs very heavily on their lives: to parents of sick children who spend large portions of their lives booking appointments with doctors or specialists and booking accommodations, flying south and taking leave from their jobs to deal with illness; to individuals with chronic illness who at times feel they spend more time away than they do at home; to those who need surgery or procedures that they cannot get here in Yukon; to those from our communities who not only have to hop on a plane to fly south for an appointment, but must also make their way to Whitehorse first. This in itself has proven to be a hardship to many.

We have spoken about the trials of people and the burdens they face under the current medical travel program. We have also heard accounts from people who have a simple solution to avoid some of this burden or to cut costs. People have concerns that they are unable to claim medical travel if their travel doesn't begin from Whitehorse. Instead, they are told to return to the Yukon and fly from here again on a separate trip. Others have been told that they cannot take more than one child at a time for appointments and are rather forced to make multiple appointments and multiple trips.

Government employees and ministers are afforded the opportunity to tack on personal travel days to government-funded trips outside of the territory, but it seems some individuals on medical trips are not afforded the same privilege.

We know the government is looking for two-percent cuts in all departments, and that concerns us on the topic of medical travel. Are they looking for cuts to medical travel as well?

This brings me to the third point of the motion — committing to public consultations as part of the review on the medical travel program. There are so many aspects of the medical travel program that need to be reviewed and so many people who could contribute valid and responsible ideas based on their own experiences with the program.

This government committed to transparency and openness. They committed to working with the public. This was one of the most important initiatives being undertaken in all of government to Yukoners, and one can readily assume that they will be eager to take part in the engagement process. I certainly hoped that the consultation process would be more in-depth than an online survey.

Being the MLA for a community in rural Yukon, I have heard from many about their burdens experienced by those same constituents who are dealing with this medical travel

system. Rural Yukoners experience troubles that do not affect people in Whitehorse.

As I mentioned earlier, an individual from rural Yukon must first make their way to Whitehorse being heading south for medical procedures or appointments, and this often requires additional days away from home for travel, more bookings for accommodations and more expenses to cover from one's own pocket.

Imagine a senior with mobility issues: unable or without the means to drive, no family or friends able to help with transportation to and from Whitehorse, no public transportation and an unwillingness of government to purchase a plane ticket. These factors leave that individual in a very precarious situation, and we have seen it time and time again.

For someone who should be focusing on their health and well-being, travel predicaments should not be at the forefront of their worries, nor should they dominate their finances. An individual or family should be able to book medical travel without worrying how a single trip will place them into debt. An individual or family should be able to focus on their health care, not cancel a trip because they can't afford to finance a hotel room.

Finally, I would like to speak to the last point made in the motion being discussed here today — the importance of this government providing a deadline to the review. In order to ensure that this important work is completed and, further, to ensure it is completed in a timely manner, this government has to put a date on it. Putting a date on it shows that the government is taking this review seriously and, in turn, shows Yukoners that the government respects the need for this work to be done.

I urge the minister to initiate this review immediately. Do not roll it in with the departmental review where it will get lost — do a specific medical travel review. Show the program the importance and attention that it deserves. It is important enough to stand alone and not be at risk of being lost in the fray.

I would like to thank my constituents who have come to me to describe their concerns and their personal experiences, and I encourage all Yukoners to bring their suggestions and concerns forward during consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members to keep in mind that the medical travel program is a very important part of the lives of many Yukoners, and their experiences should help in shaping its structure and delivery.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, in starting, I just wanted to note something for the record — that is that the Order Paper that we were looking at is slightly different from the motion that the member opposite had made in this House not two days ago. I am assuming that we will go with the motion as it was read in the House two days ago. I just want to clarify that as we go forward.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: I had an opportunity to briefly consult with Mr. Clerk on this topic. I understand that there was basically a relatively minor editing exercise that took place between Mr. Clerk and the MLA who is moving this motion, the Member for Watson Lake. The wording that I have read out on the record during the proceedings today is the official version.

I have a document before me: No. 93, Order Paper of the Yukon Legislative Assembly for Wednesday, October 3, 2018. The subsection is: Orders of the Day, Opposition Private Members' Business, Motions Other Than Government Motions. This is (1) Motion No. 313. Then, the wording that I see on the Order Paper is the same as what I have read into the record.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: All I will note is that there is a slight difference in numbering. I think the intent and the content is virtually the same. I just wanted to note that because I was caught a little bit off-guard when I heard the number four, and I was trying to make sure I had not missed anything. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to make a couple of quick points. The first one is that medical travel is essential to Yukoners. I know how important it is. I think probably all of us in this Legislature hear from constituents about medical travel. I am going to also note that today I heard in Question Period important questions arising regarding services like cataract surgery and specialist services.

The minister rose and talked about how important it was to address all of those types of specialist service — not just cataract surgery but all of them. The note that she made, which I felt somehow got lost in the back and forth of question period, was that we do want to put an emphasis on them. In fact, that is one of the ways in which we can gain efficiencies, because if we're able to increase those services such that our citizens do not need to travel Outside, we can put more emphasis there while saving on the medical travel side. That is the type of work that I believe is being undertaken as a holistic approach and this is why it is important to look at it in the context of the whole of the budget around health and social services.

This is an excellent example of where we can find money from one area to support another. I see it as being very important that we see it in the context of that overall review. I don't take away from the notion that the member opposite has raised, that it is important; I don't take away from the notion that Yukoners would like to see some progress on this, but I also happen to think that there are lots of areas within health and social services that may support this and that is why I think it is important to see it in that context. I'll leave my remarks there.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to stand in this House to speak to the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake on medical travel. This government supports the medical travel program.

Everyone on this side of the House hears from Yukoners about how important it is to families and individuals across this territory. There is nothing more important to my community, which is the only isolated community in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to remind members of this House of what medical travel is and how many Yukoners it helps. Last year, the travel for medical treatment program assisted 3,409 Yukon residents with more than 7,153 trips both within and outside of the territory for medically necessary transportation. The program covers both air and ground transportation. In the past fiscal year, program expenses were \$14.29 million for both medical travel and medevac services both in and outside of the territory. "Medically necessary transportation" refers to a medical emergency or to those non-emergency services not available in the territory but necessary for the well-being of the patient.

Most jurisdictions do not have medical travel programs, Mr. Speaker. Of course, of those that do, Yukon has the most generous medical travel program for its residents, without any deductible or any co-pay requirements. The \$75 subsidy for accommodations and meals is the highest subsidy of its kind in Canada. It is important to remember that the purpose of the subsidy is to assist patients in the cost of their accommodation, meals, taxis and any other expense incurred while on medical travel status. Medical travel costs continue to rise and our government is working on a number of areas that will help reduce medical travel costs.

Yukoners no longer have to travel outside of their communities or territories to access some medical services. Access to a suite of orthopaedic surgeries is available at Whitehorse General Hospital, reducing the medical travel costs and providing those services closer to home. This is one example of an effort we have taken over the course of the last year.

Enhancing access to health care providers through telehealth is another example. Expanding remote patient care delivery and connecting individuals to providers virtually in their own homes using technology is the way of the future. We want to bring the services to the communities. The focus is to provide increased services to Yukoners in their homes and in their communities. We have enhanced and reorganized our Health and Social Services staffing to ensure we can provide necessary pre- and post-care for substance use, as well as counselling and mental wellness supports for Yukon communities.

Four mental wellness hubs provide services in Haines Junction, Dawson City, Carmacks and Watson Lake. These hubs provide specialized services in addition to supports provided by resident workers who live in the communities. As honourable members are aware, our government successfully negotiated a territorial health initiative funding agreement with the federal government. This agreement will see \$25.6 million flow to the territory over four years to support the well-being of Yukoners and to grow stronger communities.

The negotiations on a new health investment fund has achieved greater flexibility to determine territorial needs and greater annual allotment for medical travel than was previously noted and addressed in budgets historically. With this funding, we intend to build upon several successful foundational projects started under the previous THIF.

We also plan to begin new innovative projects focusing on building capacity of our health care system and offsetting costs for medical travel.

I appreciate the Member for Watson Lake bringing this motion forward. This past March, we debated a similar motion and we understand the member's interest in this subject. At this time, we are undertaking a comprehensive Health and Social Services review. The review will take a broad look at the programs and services offered by the Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, in light of this, I want to move an amendment to the motion.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Ms. Frost: I move:

THAT Motion No. 313 be amended by:

(1) removing all words after the phrase “medical travel program”; and

(2) substituting the phrase “as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review” for them.

Speaker: Thank you. The Minister of Health and Social Services has copies of the proposed amendment.

If those copies could please be distributed, I will have an opportunity to review them and will report back to the House as to form and content of the proposed amendment.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment to Motion No. 313 with Mr. Clerk and can advise that, in my opinion, the amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin:

THAT Motion No. 313 be amended by:

(1) removing all words after the phrase “medical travel program”; and

(2) substituting the phrase “as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review” for them.

The proposed amended motion would read:

It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow through on the review of the medical travel program as part the comprehensive Health and Social Services review.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the proposed amendment, it makes sense to look at the medical travel system, not by itself, but as part of a larger review that takes account of the range of services, both medical and other programs designed to provide Yukoners with access to the services they need. The comprehensive review will seek to find ways to contain historical growth to provide long-term sustainable health care and social support systems that continue to meet the needs of Yukoners. The review isn't

about immediate cost-savings or cutting programs and services, but is about identifying a plan to slow growth in our biggest cost drivers, working toward more sustainable health care and social services and improving service outcomes.

The review will build on work completed in, and recommendations from, the 2008 health care review, the 2018 clinical services plan and the 2017 Yukon Financial Advisory Panel report.

As a government, we are committed to engaging and involving the public, First Nations and other governments, and the non-government community, as well as staff and other stakeholders, in this review. We want to be able to capture their thoughts, experiences and expertise in these programs and services. In this way, we can identify potential improvements in the system to support the overall goal of ensuring that Yukoners live longer and healthier lives.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude and look forward to the comments from other members.

Ms. Hanson: I hadn't intended to speak to this at all, but I do think, that unless the minister or the government is prepared to suggest when this comprehensive Health and Social Services review commenced and will end, this gives very faint hope to anybody. It's a pig in a poke. It is really like Dave Joe would have said at the negotiating table many years ago: “That and fifty cents will get you a cup of coffee” — not worth much.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to this amendment, I am disappointed to see that the government has brought this forward. I think that the focus on the medical travel program that was brought forward through the good work of my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, is something — that we were directly responding to multiple requests from Yukoners who were concerned about the scope of the medical travel program and identified a number of areas to us where they believed improvements could be made. I have raised before — as have a number of my colleagues, including the Member for Watson Lake — areas where we have received requests from constituents and supported government taking a look at this specifically in a context of review of the medical travel program.

Our concern is that the comprehensive Health and Social Services review appears to be a cost-cutting exercise that ties into the memo that was leaked this week and released on CBC that identified the request from the government — from the Department of Finance, as approved by Cabinet — for two-percent cuts across departments, including Health and Social Services.

An exercise that appears to me to be aimed at cutting areas in health care and coming up with the rationale to raise fees in certain areas — merging that with a review of medical travel definitely loses the focus on improving how the medical travel program is serving Yukon citizens. For example, in the area of the out-of-territory per diem that is in place and the scope of the regulations — those have not seen any significant change since I was Minister of Health and Social Services,

which was the last time we amended those regulations. When we changed it from the out-of-territory subsidy available to Yukoners being available on day two instead of on day four, which was previously the case, and we increased the subsidy as well — although not as much as I ideally would have liked to at the time — that \$75 per day now, about 10 years after the increase occurred, goes even less far than it did at the time.

Just in touching briefly on a few medical travel issues I wanted to raise this afternoon on behalf of constituents — because I don't want to see the focus lost from the medical travel needs that Yukoners have brought forward. As I mentioned when my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, first brought this motion forward — without getting specific enough to compromise personal privacy, I want to make reference to a concern brought forward by a constituent of mine regarding travelling outside the territory for specialists appointments involving more than one child and the difficulty she faced in terms of the eligibility for a second escort. In the situation that she was dealing with, the specialist being visited only wanted the parent and one child in the room at a time and didn't want to have other children present. Seeing a situation where, as at one point was being contemplated, she would have to travel down there more than once with individual children is not an effective use of taxpayers' money, nor is it a very patient-centred, effective or compassionate outcome in terms of the program. Ensuring that there is enough flexibility to provide coverage for those types of cases so that someone is not left without childcare for an underage child who is Outside when they're travelling with more than one is something that I again encourage government to ensure is looked at as part of the review — a reason for ensuring that the review focuses on medical travel needs, not purely on cost-cutting and the bottom line.

I want to again make it clear to staff dealing with this that I am not intending to criticize them for applying the rules that are currently in place. I understand that in certain areas there is discretion on the regulations, and in certain areas the regulations are very prescriptive.

I believe — and I think it is fair to say that many of my colleagues believe — that we should ensure that the medical travel program is focused on and is structured in a way that provides Yukoners the assistance they need when they need it and to do so in a compassionate manner while recognizing the need to effectively use taxpayers' dollars and be responsible in doing so.

One other possibility that I want to mention is that government may wish to look at the fact that the current per diem structure is based on patients travelling as individuals but wasn't really adjusted to deal with the situation of a family travelling where the costs may be somewhat different in certain cases.

Another area that I want to refer to — as well as my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, also noted during earlier debate — is that the structure is prescriptive about the cities to which out-of-territory travel applies.

There is the possibility, it seems to me, that, through an adjustment to the regulations or a broadening of the cities to

where travel can occur, there may be some opportunity for reducing wait times, especially for certain procedures, by travelling to less heavily visited centres. I would note, as well that, the regulation itself predates the direct flight by Air North to Kelowna, so this is one obvious area where potentially including reference to Kelowna or leaving the ability to add other cities through some other mechanism — whether that is director discretion or ministerial order or some other format — would be an obvious way to potentially provide increased access to services for Yukon patients, increased options and a reduction in wait times.

If the medical travel program is not the focus but is an afterthought, as appears to be suggested by the government wanting to lump it in with the comprehensive Health and Social Services review — you are talking about reviewing this one program as part of the review of a department with a current budget in excess of \$400 million. It would seem to me that the medical travel program is very likely to get lost in that broader review and that the improvement of services that we are proposing would not necessarily occur, and would in fact probably not occur, if it is lumped in with that broader program.

As I mentioned during the earlier debate, I believe that the program should also allow flexibility for patients going to specialists not in the prescribed cities in a case where their physician believes it is appropriate and allow for medical travel to be covered to that location. There have also been challenges that I have had constituents report — related to people who are normally resident to the Yukon but who are Outside visiting family, or temporarily on vacation outside the territory — that the program wasn't designed to easily adjust to their needs. In some cases, that has led to a situation where, if they return to the Yukon, they would have their travel back down south again covered, and the return covered, but travelling in between cities — an example in this case, without compromising patient privacy, is another city in the southern mainland of British Columbia where somebody with coverage travels into Vancouver and faces difficulties in getting that approved. The program is in need of an update because, even when the regulations were amended when I was Health and Social Services minister, we did not do a comprehensive amendment at that time. We made some targeted amendments to make use of medical travel dollars that we had available to use and to increase flexibility, but it was a targeted improvement to the program, not a comprehensive review of its structure.

I do have to point out that a comprehensive Health and Social Services review seems to be all about cost-cutting and raising fees and not about improving the quality of care for Yukon citizens. Our focus, when my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake brought forward this motion on medical travel, was all about improving the quality of services for Yukon citizens who are patients in a cost-effective manner and being compassionate with the needs of their families.

I would also like to touch on one other case where a constituent of mine brought forward a concern about the difference between the travel assistance that is provided if

someone is a government employee on government business versus what is covered if you're a citizen and taxpayer who is out of the territory not on government business. I know the challenge of making those programs identical, but I would point out that, on behalf of the constituent who raised it with me awhile ago, if someone is going out of the territory with coverage for medical travel to a required appointment, they should not lose that coverage by virtue of the fact that they plan to, at 100-percent personal cost, tack on additional travel after that trip.

Just as with government employees, if they are required to travel out of the territory on business and they choose to add on a personal side trip at personal expense, they are able to do so as long as there is no cost to the taxpayer for doing so. Of course, ministers are able to do the same thing and have, on a number of occasions, tacked on personal travel outside the territory when they're going out on government business, including, as the Minister of Health and Social Services is aware, members of their caucus.

Again, this is an issue just of the taxpayers' sense of parity and fairness and the suggestion that there should be some flexibility to allow people to do the same type of thing that government ministers and government employees can do, as long as the cost to the taxpayer is absolutely zero.

Those are just a few of the concerns that we have heard from Yukoners about the medical travel program. I'm sure I'm missing other specific examples. I know I'm missing other examples that other Yukoners have brought forward to my colleagues, including the Member for Watson Lake, the Member for Kluane, the Member for Porter Creek North, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Member for Copperbelt South. We have all heard from constituents; we all care about seeing this program improved to address their needs, and I can't support the amendment to this motion and would urge the government to reconsider and withdraw the amendment and focus this review on the medical travel program, just as the motion passed earlier this year committed the government to do.

Ms. White: There are all sorts of concerns that this amendment draws forward, including the fact that we're not talking about a timeline. There are examples. I think that next week, my colleague and I and some others in this House will have been here for the last seven years — the stories we could tell, based on the fact of people depleting their entire savings because of medical issues.

I was just doing an Expedia search to figure out how much it would cost to stay at a hotel in Vancouver if I was to go on October 24 and wanted to be within walking distance — as a Yukoner, I figure 10 blocks is something we could probably handle. At this point in time, even with two weeks out, we're looking at close to \$300 for any hotel on Expedia, keeping in mind, of course, that it is a search engine. However, I could find a hotel that was under \$70 if I was happy to stay out in Burnaby, Port Coquitlam and further. What that would involve for a taxi or just even travel costs

into the City of Vancouver for those appointments would be exorbitant.

It's interesting to note that in the territory, if you have a sleeping condition, if you are required to go to a sleep clinic, the sleep clinic that a Yukoner gets sent to in British Columbia is located in Kelowna. It's fascinating. It's in Kelowna. That's the one you get sent to. You can get medical travel to get you to Kelowna on some flights because Air North will land there before they land in Vancouver because you can't go on multiple flights. On your way home, it's up to you to get from Kelowna to Vancouver to catch the Air North flight back from Vancouver. That seems a bit skewed.

I have a dear friend who was on a wait-list for a kidney transplant and is going to hemodialysis in Vancouver. Let me tell you that \$75 a day doesn't really cover the cost of accommodation there. It doesn't talk about the cost of the living in the city. I have another friend who actually had a kidney transplant. There were times even when it was super dire where her husband was denied medical travel to be able to see her prior or post-transplant. You can imagine what that might have been like.

I have a list of seniors, including a lovely senior who broke her leg and was flown out on a medevac and her husband wasn't sent along. Mind you, he was 84 or 85. The point is that there was no way to activate the medical travel. They had not been apart in 35 years, but that's just the way it was going to be because of the system.

When we're talking about medical travel and we're talking about the requirement of a review and having the ability to have people just talk to this issue, it's just as the Member for Watson Lake has said — it's about not getting lost. There were some interesting things in the 33rd Legislative Assembly, such as how we wouldn't cover the costs of medical travel from the community of Mayo to see a midwife. That was weird. That did eventually get adjusted, but that was after we talked about it here on the floor of this Assembly.

Whether we talk about the wording of Motion No. 313 or we just talk about the importance of reviewing medical travel just on its own, then we set a deadline. The reason why we talk about the importance of deadlines is because we have been talking about midwifery in the territory for probably 20-plus years because we have never set ourselves a deadline. There has never been a deadline about when we're going to be done that. The importance about asking for an end date and asking for that deadline and the completion of that review is so that people can see the end of it so that you know that you are going to participate and then you would see the finality of it.

When we talk about rolling this into a full Health and Social Services health review, as far as the public knows, it hasn't started. It's not on the engageyukon.ca website. We can't find it anywhere. It's not listed on the department's own website. It's not something that you can Google and find information about, so at this point in time, myself included, I can't figure out where it is, where it started or how I'm going to participate when it happens. This was talked about previously. When we ask about having a deadline, it's

important. When we talk about the medical travel program and having it reviewed on its own, it's because it is so unique in the realm of health care service.

Often people's first choice isn't to go Outside for those appointments and understand that for some people going to the big city isn't an adventure — well, it might be an adventure, but it's not one they look forward to. There are lots of people in the Yukon who, left to their own devices, would never leave and I appreciate that. Know that they are sometimes sent to Vancouver for an appointment with the booklet you can get online and it's the very first time they've been on a plane — you know, there's probably room for review.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you have gathered from the gist of it right now that we won't be supporting the motion and that we believe there should be deadlines. We believe people should be able to participate in this one part of the consultation about medical travel and we look forward to a time where people don't have to go into debt to get the healthcare that they need. With that, Mr. Speaker, we await the vote.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Let me begin by addressing the concerns from the members of the Third Party regarding a timeline and the importance of a timeline. Let me talk about the comprehensive review.

The comprehensive review will seek to find ways to contain historical growth in order to provide long-term sustainable health care and social support systems that continue to meet the needs of Yukoners. The review isn't about immediate cost-saving — and I note that for the member opposite — or cutting programs or services, but about identifying a plan to slow growth in our biggest cost-drivers, working toward more sustainable health care and social services while improving service outcomes. The review will be completed by the fall of 2019. So there is a deadline and we can talk about that further, but I'm just putting it on the record.

In speaking with the Minister of Health and Social Services — who has spoken to the amendment, so she is not able to get up again right at this moment, but I'm sure would be willing to talk to members opposite at some other point — the preliminary phases of the work have begun. That includes the research and analysis and the implementation of committee structures, so the work has begun.

Let me turn back for a second, Mr. Speaker, to talk with respect to the Member for Lake Laberge's comments. One of the things I heard him say was that he hasn't seen any significant change since he was the Minister of Health and Social Services in this area and I would like to thank him for acknowledging that. We note that there was a 2008 health care review and a 2013 clinical service plan, and I think we're looking to try to see some change. We saw under the 2017 Financial Advisory Panel final report that they suggested that health care be one of the areas that we look at and we agreed — we think it is a good area to look at. What I want to note is that the member opposite, the Member for Lake Laberge

himself just pointed out opportunities for improving wait times and he made suggestions of ways to reduce costs and wait-list times while improving services. That is an excellent suggestion.

I heard him speak about the constituents of the members of the opposition being concerned about medical travel. Let me suggest, Mr. Speaker, that all Yukoners are concerned about medical travel and that includes all of our constituents. I think it is an important issue. He spoke about the motion that was put forward by the Member for Watson Lake and we appreciate this interest in reviewing medical travel. We think it is important. He said that it is, of course, to increase the support. He ascribed an outcome or an interest. Why don't we also ascribe that to the Minister of Health and Social Services, who is looking to do a review of health care — that she, like all of us in this Legislature, is looking to improve the services for our residents? I think that is what we're trying to do.

Finally, I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for talking about the past seven years and her experience in this Legislature and concerns that when there are commitments put forward in the Legislature, in her experience, she hasn't always seen them followed through. I hope exactly that she takes us to account if we don't deliver. I am still looking for the ones where that hasn't happened. I am not trying to stand up here and suggest that we don't make mistakes — I think we do. I think all of us do, but I do think that once we have made that commitment it is our responsibility to live up to it.

Just to firm up, the deadline that the health services review is looking for is to be completed by fall 2019. It is our perspective that when you do it in a comprehensive fashion, you will find give-and-take important. I listed a specific example that we discussed here in the Legislature earlier this afternoon during Question Period where we can reduce the need for medical travel if we're able to improve the specialist services that are here, and that is a great goal.

I am confident that all Members of this Legislature would support that — that it isn't about trying to cut medical travel; it is about trying to improve the service outcomes for our citizens.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, seven nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the amendment carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 313 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion as amended?

Member for Porter Creek Centre on the main motion as amended.

Mr. Gallina: I'm pleased to speak to this Motion No. 313 as amended. I wanted to reiterate some of the comments that my colleagues had made in speaking to this important matter — to the importance of this review.

It is important to Yukoners — we have identified that as a government. We have committed to a comprehensive Health and Social Services review to be completed by the fall of 2019. We will follow through with this review. Health and Social Services is committed to engaging and involving First Nation governments, the public, non-governmental organizations, Health and Social Services staff and stakeholders throughout the review to capture both their expertise and their thoughts on potential system improvements.

I would like to make note that the Health and Social Services comprehensive review was first introduced through a recommendation of the 2017 Yukon Financial Advisory Panel report, which reads — and I quote: “Consider a comprehensive review of the healthcare sector akin to the one done in 2008 focusing on the factors driving costs and on the quality of the outcomes being delivered to Yukoners.” The review will undertake comparative jurisdictional analysis to assess cost drivers, including pharmacare, medical travel, physician billing and the national and territorial aging population.

I wanted to reassure Yukoners that the comprehensive Health and Social Services review is not a cost-cutting exercise. I know that this point has been made a couple of times, and I wanted to assure Yukoners that is not the case. Constituents have expressed to me that they believe that, as a government, we should be finding efficiencies. We should be finding ways to deliver services in the best manner possible. Medical services being delivered effectively affect all Yukoners.

A new territorial health investment fund agreement with Health Canada was recently finalized. It will see \$25.6 million in renewed funds over four years, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, to support the well-being of Yukoners and stronger communities. Territorial negotiations have achieved greater flexibility to determine territorial needs through a grant and a greater annual allotment for medical travel than previous years. Within this funding, we intend to build on several successful foundational projects started under the previous THIF, as well as to begin new innovative projects focused on building overall capacity and offsetting costs for medical travel. In this agreement, \$4.3 million a year will go toward innovations aimed at strengthening health systems and improving health outcomes. An additional \$2.1 million per year will be allotted to medical travel.

THIF activities align with our government's enduring priority that our people-centred approach to wellness helps Yukoners thrive. Investments will be targeted toward health care priorities, including improved mental wellness, aging in place and collaborative care. There are four main pillar areas for innovative funding. The first is training and capacity building. The second is collaborative care delivery models. The third is access and technology and the fourth is data and performance measurement.

Innovative funding must be used to strengthen health systems and improve health outcomes through health system innovation through the use of human resource approaches and increasing access to health care and quality through the use of technology.

Medical travel funding must be used to offset eligible medical transportation costs incurred by the territorial government and may include transportation, accommodations and meals for patients, as well as for eligible escorts.

Yukoners are fortunate to have a travel for medical treatment program in place. Most jurisdictions in Canada do not have medical travel programs. Of those that do, Yukon has the most generous medical travel program for its residents without any deductibles or co-payment requirements. The \$75 accommodation and meal subsidy is the highest subsidy of its kind in Canada. It is important to remember that the purpose of the subsidy is to assist patients with the cost of their accommodation, meals and any other expenses incurred while on medical travel status, not to cover all of the costs. Medical travel costs continue to rise, and our focus is shifting to how we can provide more supports regionally and to reduce this need.

In 2017-18, the travel for medical treatment program assisted 3,850 Yukon residents with 7,639 trips both within and outside the territory for medically necessary transportation. The program covers air or ground transportation.

Through THIF initiatives, I noted earlier our government is working on a number of areas that would help to reduce medical travel and provide increased services to individuals in their homes or in their home communities. The minister referenced that today in her ministerial statement.

THIF initiatives include enhancing access to health care providers through telehealth, televideo technology, expanding remote patient care delivery, connecting individuals to providers virtually in their home through the use of technology and expanding on the mental wellness hubs in our communities.

I'll make note that the last time medical travel benefits increased was in July 2006 and included a subsidy of \$75 per day beginning on the second day, and a mileage rate of 30 cents per kilometre. Previously the subsidy was at \$30 per day on the fourth day and subsequent days, and the mileage rate was at 18 cents.

In the 2017-18 fiscal year, the program's expenses were \$14,283,971 for both medical travel and medevac services within and outside the territory. The lion's share of the cost was for medevac itself. The subsidy to patients was approximately \$1.5 million in 2017-18. According to the *Travel for Medical Treatment Act* and regulations, travel must be for medically necessary services that are insured and cannot be provided locally. Requests for escorts are reviewed by a medical advisor to the program to determine if they are considered medically necessary.

All applications for medical travel must be certified in advance by a practitioner who is licensed in Yukon and forwarded to the travel for medical treatment program. The travel for medical treatment program pays airfare for the client and airfare for escorts when medically necessary. Patients and escorts may be eligible to receive a \$75 per day subsidy on the second and subsequent days while on travel status.

The Yukon health care insurance plan does not cover services provided in a private facility or for the purpose of clinical trials. Medical travel benefits are tied to those services insured by the health care insurance plan; therefore, persons who travel to receive services in a private facility or for participation in clinical trials are not eligible for benefits under the medical travel program.

The program also provides coverage for eligible Yukoners who require emergency medical transportation originating from or within the Yukon. Medically necessary transportation refers to a medical emergency and to those non-emergency services not available in the territory but deemed to be medically necessary and insured by the Yukon health care insurance plan, consistent with the *Canada Health Act*.

With the physician's approval and request, medical travel will sometimes cover a cost of an escort for individuals who cannot speak the language or have a disability and are unable to manage on their own. Increased local services could reduce this pressure as well.

Mr. Speaker, medical travel is an important matter to many Yukoners and constituents do bring medical travel issues to my attention. I am encouraged to hear the opposition also values the importance of this matter. Further, I think it's great to see that this House is working to come up with solutions for Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I will remind the members that our government is committed to review medical travel as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review.

We are happy to reaffirm that commitment today and I urge all members to support the motion as it has been amended. Thank you.

Mr. Hutton: I'm pleased to rise in this House today to speak to Motion No. 313 as amended.

For the benefit of my constituents and Yukoners listening in on this debate today, I will start by giving a brief history of a similar motion that was debated during the 2018 Spring Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

On March 14, 2018, the Member for Watson Lake brought forward Motion No. 45 that urged "... the Government of Yukon to initiate a review of the medical travel program in order to ensure it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners."

During debate, an amendment was proposed and was later withdrawn after Yukon Liberal caucus members discussed and agreed to let the Member for Watson Lake's motion stand.

This action confirmed that this Liberal caucus and government value the health and well-being of Yukoners by committing to include a review of the medical travel program in the comprehensive Health and Social Services review. I am pleased to stand today — and I see other members are pleased as well — on behalf of our government to reaffirm this important commitment to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive review that's currently being undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Services will engage and involve First Nation governments, the public, non-governmental organizations, Health and Social Services staff and stakeholders and rely on their expertise and input on potential system improvements.

The last review of this nature was the 2008 *Yukon Health Care Review* — 10 years ago. The comprehensive Health and Social Services review is long overdue. This Liberal government is taking one of the 2017 Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's final report recommendations to — and I quote: "Consider a comprehensive review of the health care sector akin to the one done in 2008 focusing on the factors driving costs and on the quality of the outcomes being delivered to Yukoners."

Mr. Speaker, medical travel is an ongoing issue for constituents of Mayo-Tatchun, and this component of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review is extremely important to them and all residents of rural Yukon communities. I have listened to many stories of the struggles from constituents in Mayo-Tatchun. Their struggles begin in the territory; they don't start when they get to Vancouver and don't have enough money. They don't have enough money to get to Whitehorse to start with. I have a couple who stays in the seniors home in Mayo and they both have different medical issues. They wind up with specialist appointments scheduled here. One is on a Monday; the other is on a Thursday. \$75 a day — you find a hotel room for me in Whitehorse for that cheap.

The point I want to make is that, for rural Yukoners, the system as it is today is inherently unfair to rural Yukoners. It

costs us more to get the same level of health care, even though the funding that comes to the territorial government is for all Yukoners.

I am really hoping that this compressive review is going to sort out some of the inherent unfairness that is in the present system. I am looking forward to seeing the results of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review when it is complete in the fall of 2019. I'll do my part to be a voice for my constituents to represent their concerns and to encourage them to be involved in the review for the benefit of themselves and our communities. I would like to thank the members of this House for the opportunity to speak to the motion as amended today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on debate on the main motion as amended?

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Member for Mayo for his revisionist history of the events that took place in March 2018. In fact, the government supported the motion without amendment — they did not withdraw their amendment and they did not make an amendment. It is an interesting take on events, in any case.

By amending this motion I put forward today, the government has effectively shown great disrespect, I think, for the people of Yukon by refusing to put a timeline in. I know the Member for Mount Lorne has indicated that it is the fall of 2019 when the overall review of Health and Social Services will be completed, but the government hasn't actually committed to that — neither has the minister, by the way. Yukoners will still be behind the eight ball on their medical travel and still refusing medical treatment because they can't afford the travel. Thanks for that, it is really appreciated and I'm sure Yukoners will appreciate what you've done for them.

Even though the government says it is going to be done by the fall of 2019, what does that mean to Yukoners? Will it mean that in 2019 we are going to see some relief for Yukoners? I don't think so. I think that, even if the review is finished in the fall of 2019, we're not going to see any action until 2020 or right before an election in 2021. I think Yukoners are really, really going to appreciate what you've done for them. Obviously, this is not my motion any longer, so obviously I will not be supporting it.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree

Mr. Gallina: Agree

Mr. Adel: Agree

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree

Mr. Hutton: Agree

Mr. Hassard: Disagree

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree

Mr. Cathers: Disagree

Ms. McLeod: Disagree

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree

Ms. Hanson: Disagree

Ms. White: Disagree

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, seven nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

Motion No. 313, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 288

Clerk: Motion No. 288, standing in the name of Ms. White.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to acknowledge that:

(1) high rent and food costs are making it more difficult for individuals and families on social assistance to find adequate shelter or purchase nutritious food; and

(2) an immediate review of the social assistance rates is required to accurately determine the real cost of living in Whitehorse and the communities.

Ms. White: There are a lot of reasons why we brought forward this motion today, and it's interesting, because it's like I have seen the future. I imagine there is going to be an amendment. I have made the suggestion that it include a date because at least then it is a bit more palatable than an unknown time.

The government has talked a lot about the booming economy and how well things are going for people in the territory, and I think that's fantastic. I do. I think it's great. I think that knowing that our vacancy rate is so low, that our unemployment rate is so low — some of those things are tied together, though.

We talk about rent. There are a couple of members of the House who are rural MLAs and they have rental properties in town. They are in this really lovely, unique situation that, where they rent, it's something that they can afford. Median rent — and it's important that we talk about what median rent is because I hate the median rent. The reason I hate it is because it includes all types of rentals. The average is always really low. For a long time the median rent was kind of like at the \$700 point, and I didn't know a single person who rented a place on their own for \$700. The median rent right now for all

types of rentals for August — and this is from Yukon statistics — is \$1,000 a month. Of course that's according to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

If you go on Facebook and look at Yukon property rentals, you find rooms for \$900 a month in people's houses. You find shared accommodation for \$1,000 a month. You find houses for upwards of \$3,000. So when I think about the median rent and it is \$1,000, I wonder who pays, living independently, \$1,000, because if we're talking about the single rooms in the basement of the Barracks, that would fall under \$1,000, but those are literally bedrooms with shared bathrooms and shared kitchens. I wonder what else might be under \$1,000, and I'm often at a loss. You have real conversations as people try to figure out where their housing can be.

It's also important to know that, when we talk about median rent, it doesn't include utilities so it doesn't include the cost of electricity or the cost of heating. I don't know if all members in the Legislative Assembly knew this, but if you collect social assistance and you get your monthly rental allotment and if you are in a unit that has utilities included — there are still some apartments that have electricity and heat included — your housing amount is adjusted for the summertime because social assistance says that your cost of accommodation should be less.

I would suggest that what the landlord does is that they amortize it over a year, so instead of spiking it in the wintertime, they have the same amount all year-round. What this does is it forces social assistance clients to find the money to pay their rent from other pockets of money that they have. In April of this year — it is going to come as no surprise — there was a zero-percent vacancy rate in Dawson City. We know that Dawson has an incredible housing crunch. In April of this year, there was a 3.4-percent vacancy rate in Whitehorse. Even that is pretty low.

When we talk about housing and the importance of making choices, an individual should be able to choose if they want to live alone or if they want to share a house with someone else. I think what we see in the territory now is that this is forced. There is no more opportunity to be on your own if that is what you choose. You are looking at shared accommodation.

I learned a lot of really important lessons through the Yukon Association for Community Living, which says that someone with a disability should have the ability to choose where they live. Whether they choose to stay with their parent or they choose to live with a roommate or whether they choose to live independently with supports — that they have the ability to choose. I feel that it should be across the board. The current social assistance rates as listed to the end of October — in Whitehorse, it is \$558 per month for a single person. Just let that sink in a little bit. In Whitehorse, if you are a family of four, it is \$917 a month. My sister has three kids, and they are a family of five. I can tell you that she is a wizard with budgeting, but that \$917 would be a hard amount for a person or a family who has to pay utilities and heating on top of that, which is provided by social assistance, and that

only goes up to a certain amount. In Whitehorse, it is \$490 a month from November to March in winter, and it is up to \$595 in Whitehorse if you are a family of four, from November to March. The reason why I draw attention to this is that, when I purchased my house in 2012, not knowing what my heating bill would be, I left it at the really balmy — the thermostat was set at 13.5 degrees for the daytime. It went all the way up to 17 degrees when I was home. I can tell you that I had toques, mitts and slippers for people when they came by, and I can tell you that I am glad that I left it like that because my heating bill for more than one month at a time during that time was up to \$900. I live in a 1958 duplex. Just so you know, if you wanted to rent one right now, you are looking at \$2,500 to \$3,000 a month. Mine has now been renovated so it doesn't cost me that much to heat it anymore, but if I was renting, my heating bills would be high.

When we look at the different sorts of housing and we look at the different ways that people heat, even if we were to talk about wood — under social assistance, you can buy wood with your heating money or you can actually try to go out and get it on your own, but there are a whole bunch of other limitations for that. I mentioned in response to the supplementary budget speech that the wood smoke report just came out and it targeted two of my areas. It targeted Range Road north and the Kopper King.

So Range Road north was cleverly named that after consultation in 2012, so that is the part of Range Road that goes past the Takhini Trailer Park, Crow Street, Swan Street, a bunch of condo corporations and then Northland Trailer Park is on the left-hand side. Then the Kopper King — everybody has driven past the Kopper King on the highway.

What those studies weren't able to take into account is that they could identify that there were high particulates, like dangerously high particulates, in the air in the winter, but what it couldn't take into account was the poverty that is within those places. When I talked about the very real life situation — there are people with wood screwed to the side of their trailers and they have plastic on the outside because they are trying to make a vapour barrier, right? You can imagine what it would cost to heat a trailer like that when it essentially is a sieve.

We know social assistance puts clients into hotels in the winter months. I have got a lot of experience with — I would call them long-stay hotels, but anything six months less a day and you don't actually have any kind of rights, either, under Corporate Services or under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. So maybe it's a longer stay hotel but not quite long enough so that you have any kind of power. You know, we have examples of hotel rooms in Whitehorse taking social assistance clients, taking a security deposit, taking the month's rent, evicting those people and then taking in new social assistance clients with the security deposit and their month's rent.

I can tell you that, because you are not in any kind of relationship that is protected under the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, you are actually out all that money. Then social assistance says, "We're really sorry, but that's it.

You're not going to get anything else for this month." But when I have asked why social assistance doesn't check out these hotels or why the social workers are not helping these people through this process, I get told that that is actually not within the responsibilities or the purview of the Department of Health and Social Services. That is a concern for me.

When we talk about these longer stay hotels, we're talking about a place with — if you're really lucky it will have a bar fridge and a microwave. If you're not lucky, it will just have a bar fridge and no microwave. If you're really not lucky, you won't have any of those things.

If you can imagine that a good portion of the money that you get from social assistance has to go to cover your accommodation, I guess the good news is that the Salvation Army has a three-time-a-day soup kitchen. So if you're a longer stay hotel client, you are most likely accessing the soup kitchens around town. With the closing of Sacred Heart, it means that there are very limited options. If you're a woman, you can go to Sally and Sisters on Wednesdays and you can also go to Victoria Faulkner, but if you're a man, then your only choice is at the Salvation Army. I would also like to point out that the Salvation Army has banned people, so you can't actually access their soup kitchen. But, hey, when you are paying for your hotel room and you can't afford food, there you go, so that is something.

There are really important numbers — well, I hesitate to call them "numbers". So just to put this on everybody's radar, although we'll be working October 23, there will be Whitehorse Connects. Whitehorse Connects is fantastic. The reason I mention it is because when we talk about the point-in-time count, which I am going to do now, a lot of the folks who I see all the time at Whitehorse Connects would be people who would get picked up by the point-in-time count. For anyone who is not familiar with what a point-in-time count is, it is a 24-hour period — it's a collection time — where there are volunteers throughout the community.

They have training, so it's not just people who are demanding information from others, but they go out into the community and have conversations — guided conversations — with people. The last point-in-time count we had in Whitehorse was on April 17 to 18. I was going to try to look for environmental information at that point in time, but I imagine at that point it was still probably 10 degrees at night — it wasn't very warm. It wasn't summer yet and it was still cold.

In that very specific time on the night of April 17 into April 18, at least 195 people experienced homelessness. So just let that set in: 195 people self-identified as experiencing homelessness at that point. So there is a difference, right? I mean, you always have to kind of figure out how this all works, but there's classifications of levels of homelessness. I say it that way only because it's a bit hard to get your head around the fact that we would even have a classification system, but you have to because there's absolute homelessness and there are others.

When we talk about absolute homelessness, we are talking about people who have no friends or families they

could go to; so we have 33 people at emergency shelters that night and 28 people identified as being unsheltered. This is another thing we should talk about: When you make those choices about where you want to be, for some people the Salvation Army is not the place they want to go; it's not an option. They would rather — it's called "sleeping rough" — stay outside, and people make their homes wherever they choose to be. On that night there were 28 people who were unsheltered.

Then we talk about "provisionally accommodated", which means that you've kind of been picked up by a system. We had 38 people who were in transitional housing, either Betty's Haven, the Salvation Army transitional units or the Yukon Adult Resource Centre. For anyone who is unfamiliar, the Yukon Adult Resource Centre is run by the Salvation Army — it's referred to as the "ARC" — and it's men who are leaving the correctional facility and then they're getting support from the Salvation Army at the ARC. I have talked about this a lot because I was in corrections before I got elected. There's no such place for women — just so you know, if you're a lady leaving corrections, you don't qualify for Kaushee's Place because you're not fleeing violence, and you don't qualify for Betty's Haven because you don't meet their requirements either. The only place you can stay if you are leaving corrections is the Salvation Army or you can go back to where you came from and often, based on what I've learned, it's not so great.

On that night, 15 people were staying at a hotel or motel on the night of the count. This is what we talk about when we talk about the hidden homeless — 56 people were staying at someone else's place. I think it's really important that when we talk about it, that we talk about that, out of those 56 people, some people were staying with strangers. If we don't think there is a sex trade in the Yukon, let me tell you: Unfortunately, there is. So out of that, there were people staying with people they didn't know. Out of those, 25 people were within the public system, so that could be the hospital, it could be the correctional facility, it could be detox — that could be any of those things.

So, when we take a look at this, some of these folks in the point-in-time count are on social assistance. When we talk about the point-in-time count, there were people who were picked up as being insecurely housed who have jobs.

If you can imagine the gargantuan work that would be included — because if you want to talk about the limitations of being able to get a job, how you smell is pretty important. I don't know if you knew or not that you can access the showers at the Canada Games Centre but you pay the daily rate. I believe there are shower facilities at the Salvation Army, but I don't know how that works. There are those challenges. Even at that point in time, there were folks who were working within those numbers.

Something that we should think about in those numbers is that 12 percent of the people who were identified were youth, so they were ages between 15 and 24. I also don't know if you guys knew, but if you're under the age of 15, you actually

can't stay at the emergency youth shelter; you're too young. Let's talk about vulnerable populations, shall we?

Out of those numbers, five percent were over 65. I mean, definitely what we hope for our parents and our grandparents is that they are not at risk of homelessness at that point in time.

Because there is training and because these are really compassionate people who go out to do it — and they often volunteer at things like Whitehorse Connects on October 23 — then they start to have other conversations. They asked people to identify their top barriers to finding housing. The first one was affordability. Across the board, the first thing that people identified was affordability. The second things that they identified were health issues, including disability, addiction and mental health. That's a pretty hard one to stomach. The third one was discrimination. That's also not very nice. I'm not sure if people in the House are aware that although landlords can't say they won't accept social assistance clients, guess what happens. Landlords can not accept social assistance clients. We see that's a form of discrimination right there. It doesn't have to be identified so then you can't do anything about it.

The other thing that was identified was poor housing conditions. I'm not sure if everyone is aware of how bad the bedbug situation is in the city of Whitehorse. Bedbugs are bad. Bedbugs are really, really bad, actually. To know that someone would choose to not go to a place because of the housing condition is an indication.

Out of all these folks who were surveyed, 97 percent of them wanted permanent housing. They just didn't want temporary shelter anymore; they wanted a place to call home, which I appreciate. It's one of the fundamental beliefs I have, that housing is a human right.

That's just accommodation and that's just the city of Whitehorse. I can talk about the city of Whitehorse because this is where I live and this is where I have most of my experience.

The Minister for Community Services tabled the annual living wage. Anyway, there was a document tabled today and they both bear talking about. In 2017, the Anti-Poverty Coalition undertook this task of figuring out what was the cost of healthy eating in the Yukon. I don't think it's going to come as a surprise to someone but it's different depending on the jurisdiction that you're in.

Everything gets compared to Whitehorse because Whitehorse was the cheapest. The Anti-Poverty Coalition hired volunteers or trained volunteers in communities to help them with this. They were across the territory. Anywhere that had a full-time store that was open all the time, then that community would have it. Carmacks has that fantastic gas station and grocery store. Watson Lake obviously has a grocery store.

We go like that — so if your community had a store that would qualify, then you would be on this document.

It bears mentioning that Beaver Creek doesn't have a grocery store. I have friends who live in Beaver Creek and their options are they drive into Alaska or they drive to

Whitehorse. Those are people who are able, but there are social assistance clients in Beaver Creek, so how do they eat? That's a question we should ask.

The cost of healthy eating in Yukon — I was trying to figure out the average weekly cost of a basic healthy diet for a family of four living throughout the territory. It was with the standardized survey tool, so people were given a list and they went to do the shopping so they could figure out what it was. What they found was that for Whitehorse, a family of four could eat healthy. They had really clear things. It was like the Canada Food Guide. You had grains, breads, fruit, vegetables, dairy, fat and sugar — I think that is what it was.

In Whitehorse, it cost \$274.78 a week; Watson Lake was \$348.86, although interestingly enough, all the trucks have to come through Watson Lake to get to Whitehorse, but it was still higher. Dawson City was \$303.56 a week; in Old Crow, our only fly-in community, it was \$524.00 a week.

It's important that we look at what social assistance provides. In Whitehorse, remember the cost was \$274; social assistance provides \$210, so there's a \$64 shortfall there. In Watson Lake, it was \$348 and, in Watson Lake with social assistance, you get \$231, so now we have just crested a \$100 difference. In Old Crow, the cost of healthy eating was \$500 and in Old Crow their food allowance is \$362.

What we're talking about is food insecurity. Food insecurity is real. I'm not sure — I would think everyone in this House is probably pretty good in the kitchen and you would understand that pre-made foods actually often cost less. If you're looking for a quick fix — for example, if I lived in a hotel room, I might be a fan of the Hungry Man meal. Really, over the long term, that's no good for me — if I had a microwave. If I didn't have a microwave, then there would be another issue.

The one thing that all this ties into when we talk about social assistance and we talk about social assistance clients is that the health outcome for people living in poverty is really bad. You suffer in education; you suffer in health; you suffer across the board. The further in poverty you are, the worse your health outcome is going to be.

We can look at all those. There are so many different things.

Right now, I am working really hard to help someone get dental surgery tomorrow. We're going to talk about dental emergencies, because social assistance will pay up to \$1,500 a year for dental emergencies. It sounds like it's an okay amount, but I can tell you that there are a lot of things that go over \$1,500. It's a limit. Social assistance will say, well, we're going to try to negotiate with your dentist to see if we can bring it down. We're going to negotiate; we're going to see what number we can do and what we can come up with. You think okay, I guess that's one option. Then social assistance will say, well, can you spread the treatment over two fiscal years? Well, maybe you could or maybe the emergency is such that you actually need the help now and it's going to cost more than \$1,500.

I still struggle with this. I don't understand why dental isn't covered in health care. If you don't have a mouth that

can handle chewing good, healthy food for you, then your health is going to be affected. Dental health and physical health are associated, but dental is discretionary spending within the Department of Health and Social Services.

I still struggle with this. I don't understand why dental isn't covered in health care. If you don't have a mouth that can handle chewing good, healthy food for you, then your health is going to be affected. Dental health and physical health are associated, but dental is discretionary spending within the Department of Health and Social Services.

One good indication is Riverstone Dental in the last number of years has done a free dental day. They set up a wall tent with a wood stove in it, which is really generous of them, because people wait for such a long time. They set that up and all their staff volunteer that day and they will do what they can. You can get a teeth cleaning, a filling or a tooth pulled and they will try to do one of those things for you. People line up in hordes. The clinic opens at 8:00 and people are standing outside by much, much earlier than that.

This hasn't even touched on disability. If you have a disability, you can collect an additional \$250 a month. It never changes — even if you your needs increase, it actually doesn't change. The fascinating thing for me is, if you have a permanent disability, it doesn't matter, because every calendar year you have to go to your doctor to get your form filled out so you can prove that you're disabled. It seems like a fascinating use of both a doctor's and a client's time. So \$250 a month and that doesn't change.

When we talk about incidentals, this includes things like toilet paper, soap and anything that's not covered by your food allowance and, for a family of four, you can get up to \$169 a month. Clothing — there is a clothing allowance that you can access occasionally but, for more than last year, there hasn't been a thrift store. If we want to know what the Salvation Army thrift store closing down did for people who live in poverty, let's just say it was really hard for them to get clothes. Whitehorse Connects filled in that gap when they could; places like Victoria Faulkner did — absolutely — and Kaushee's was taking clothes donations. The ILC was taking donations for teenagers. We're relieved that it's open now on Saturdays, the new thrift store.

What these things don't talk about is they don't cover things like cell phones or transit passes or winter clothing, medications. If you're on a medically prescribed diet — maybe you have, not a gluten intolerance, but maybe you can't actually eat anything with flour. If we think that you can afford that on these prices, that's crazy.

After you have been on social assistance for a set period of time, and if you should be so lucky as to get a temporary break — so maybe you take a temporary job — that then disqualifies you from social assistance and you actually have to start over. You have to go through that entire process again, including identifying your needs. There are fascinating examples in our community about people who are on social assistance with disabilities. They have disabilities, but they want to participate in community — man, do they want to participate in community. You know what? The system does

everything in its power actually to keep someone who wants to work down, because you can earn — it doesn't matter; it's not spread over a calendar year, but at a certain point in time, your earnings can spike and you will be disqualified from social assistance and you won't know until your next cheque is supposed to come in.

Even though we have people with disabilities who are trying really hard to be self-sufficient — even self-employed, for example — they get cut off, because they exceeded an amount for the year — it is not regarded. Just so you know, if you have a disability and you are on social assistance and you have your own business, you aren't allowed to write off any of your business expenses. Those are all part of your earnings. It all gets counted in the same thing.

This is something that people might not know: wild meat, wild game — if your family member was to give you a moose, that could be considered as income and could be used against you at social assistance. If you have a garden and you are able to grow fruits — not fruits, I guess; maybe tomatoes are fruits — if you're growing vegetables, that can be used against you and can affect your income. If you are a family of four and you have a teenager who gets a part-time job — let's say, in a fast food restaurant — that can affect your ability and your household income — your teenager, who you want to have a job because you want them to be self-sufficient.

When I am talking about this — with the distinct privilege of being here for a couple of years now, I have met people who fall within all of these spectrums. I have an example of a family, some with a disability, who applied for the furniture allowance. With special permission, you can get up to \$500 a year per person for furniture. Do you know how much a bed costs? It is typically more than \$500, but that is neither here nor there. So there was an application made for furniture, and they were both approved and got the \$500 furniture allowance. It got deposited into the mother's bank account and guess what happened the next month? She was cut off social assistance because obviously she had gotten a job, and it was the social assistance department that had written the cheques for the \$500 to get furniture, so she had to start again — that is crazy-making.

When we talk about a review, it is because this is a real-world thing — it affects people. There have to be times when there have to be exceptions to rules. What I am dealing with right now is with dental surgery, and that has to be an exception. There has to be a time when we look at a human and say, "Okay, well this is obviously a crisis point right now and so we are going to take care of this and see you through the other side." My colleague here told me at one point that, according to whatever financial wizard, I was supposed to have six months of all my bills saved up. I was supposed to have a six-month padding — six months of my mortgage, of my electrical, of my house insurance, car insurance — all of those things — six months of all of that stuff saved up. I have been doing this job for seven years, and I haven't got six months saved up yet — and I don't live lavishly, just in case anyone was thinking about that.

So many people live so close to poverty and something can happen. You get sick and you lose your job. You hurt yourself and you can't work for six weeks. What happens then? A lot of folks on social assistance never intended to be there, and there are so many things in the system that are designed to keep people down that I think we need to look at it. We need to look at it in a different way and figure out how, instead of being a hindrance or a barrier, it does become the hand-up that it was designed to be.

So when we talk about a review, there are a lot of complicated parts about social assistance and I don't even pretend to know half of them, but I do know if you have a disability and it's not one where you are going to grow a leg — you know, you're not going to have the disability anymore — then it seems weird to me that we just don't calculate that as a permanent disability and accept it, but we do ask people to go and get it checked out.

I look forward to hearing other people's thoughts on it. Like I said, I think I saw into the future and hopefully my colleague will put a time frame on it, which I would be appreciative of. I look forward to more conversation about the issue. I actually got an e-mail from someone who was in the gallery and saw the Order Paper and said, what about like a photo card from the government that would give you 10 percent off at a grocery store? Great idea. You know, when we talk about the City of Whitehorse, why don't we talk about making sure that people who are on social assistance or live below a certain income line, within poverty, have access to the Canada Games Centre? Holy doodle — you want to talk about seniors and health? You want to talk about using that facility? Let's get people up there in the middle of the day. Any kid should be able to access the Canada Games Centre. I'm going on a bit of a tangent, but it is my opportunity right now.

I owned the Midnight Sun from 2006 to 2009. I was there for the opening day of the Canada Games Centre and it took very little amount of time for me to realize that there are a lot of little kids who were hanging out at the Canada Games Centre because it was the safest place for them to be. I told the staff, I said, "Look, you can do one of two things. You can either keep chasing them away from stuff, or you can give them a job to do and let them in." Any kid should have access to the Canada Games Centre, no matter what their economic background is. That is something that we could work with the City of Whitehorse on.

Any senior should have access. I had a senior who had a locked shoulder and, through the ElderActive society, he was able to have a pass for the Canada Games Centre, and then something changed and he could no longer afford that pass and his shoulder locked up. He used to go to the "lazy river", but he couldn't do that anymore.

There are opportunities. I don't know the answers — I'm not a social worker. I do know people, though, and I know that, for the most part, they want an opportunity, right? Everybody's success is going to be different, but everybody deserves that chance to be successful, so I look forward to hearing what others have to say, and I look forward to a review of social assistance soon, very soon.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would just like to begin by thanking the member opposite for her motion and her passion and compassion on this issue. She has been stalwart in raising issues for those with lesser means and it is most appreciated. I was thinking back as she was presenting her perspective today on the motion. She talked about sleeping rough and I remembered back to a time — I think it was in 2009, right around now — when the Leader of the Third Party and then-Mayor of Whitehorse, Ms. Buckway and I and I think a young Morgan Wienberg did an exercise that was led by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition as part of their Poverty and Homeless Awareness Week to couch surf for, I think it was, four or five days. I remember Ms. Weinberg decided to sleep rough and so did I.

I remember sleeping out near the river for one of the nights. It was wet out; it was October, so it was pretty cold. I went with a friend because she had some experience, and she showed me how to dumpster dive and get some food and cardboard and to try to stay warm. Then I spent another night sleeping at the old Salvation Army, and it was way worse. So I'm echoing the point of our colleague, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. It was my first time staying overnight; I had volunteered often enough at the Salvation Army, but staying overnight there, what you found was that there was a lot of disruption, a lot noise. I didn't get one of the few beds in the back; you got the chairs; they line them up with each other and it wasn't a good sleep at all. Mostly it was because people kept coming in and things got very disrupted. In the morning, I talked with one of the staff members and I asked that person whether or not that had been a particularly disruptive night. He said no, that was pretty quiet. So you try to think to yourself, how could someone who is dealing with a lack of income or access to food or services or living close to the edge or dealing with a mental health issue — how would they be able to deal with it? Because after several days, I felt just completely beat up. It was hard.

So I would just want to start by acknowledging that the situation for folks who have lower means is incredibly difficult and hard to empathize with. To put yourself in those shoes is very difficult to do because, even in that moment when I was doing it for several days, I still knew in the back of my mind I had a complete social safety net back there. I had the comfort of understanding that it wasn't going to be for the long term for me. You know, I gained a better understanding — I could never gain a full understanding. I'm going to return to that theme later on in this discussion, because it's something that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King mentioned about the complexities of the system. It is a serious situation and I think we should begin by acknowledging that.

I would also like to thank the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and other organizations around the territory that do great work at trying to build more inclusive communities and more respectful communities and more dignity. They've been responsible for many groups. I think they were part of helping develop the Mental Health Association of Yukon, and I think

that came out of there. They also have done many of the reports I tabled today, and I am going to try to talk about those things. I would like to thank the member opposite again for noting that October 23 is Whitehorse Connects day. It's a great day to go and volunteer; it's a great day to meet citizens — Yukoners — who have a different reality from our own.

To begin with, I just want to comment a little bit on the motion. First of all, the first part of the motion talks about high rent leading to challenges for families on social assistance finding shelter. I think that's true. The cost of rent goes up. In fact, I think it's the single most pertinent driver here. Listening to the researcher speak on the radio this morning or yesterday, that was noted for the 2018 living wage report and food costs. Yes, of course. I read with interest the 2017 report put out by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition.

Food security is an issue — or food insecurity. As I looked at that report and it talked about the folks from Carcross buying food there, I mean, one of the realities I think for many communities that are close to Whitehorse is that they tend to use Whitehorse as their hub. Much as I shop for some things at Montana Services, I don't know how well-used it is as a true grocery store.

For me, I think the first part of this motion is just pointing out or stating truths. In the second part of it, I got confused, because it says that we need a review of social assistance rates in order to accurately determine the real cost of living in Whitehorse and the communities. I went down today to speak with the Third Party to just try to get some clarity from their perspective. The thing that they noted for me is that number one, they want to see the social assistance system reviewed and consideration given to the rates to deal with the challenges that we have here in the territory. Number two, if I heard correctly — and if not, I hope that they will correct me — is that the cost of living in Whitehorse and the communities should be the metric that we use rather than something like inflation or CPI as it's indexed to now, which isn't the best indicator for those people who are low income, so that there is a better notion. I had some concerns with the wording of it, but if that's the intent, I appreciate that intent.

Let me just move on then to sharing some perspectives on the low-income situation here in the territory. First of all, our government is committed to a holistic approach to reducing poverty in the Yukon. We are working closely with community groups and other governments to address the needs of all Yukoners.

Yukon social assistance benefit rates are, despite the concerns that are raised — there are many and I appreciate them — I think it's worth noting to begin with that our social assistance rates are among the highest in the country. Our earned income exemptions, which support people re-entering the workforce, are also greater than many other jurisdictions. I think the argument that needs to be made is whether or not they are adequate for the cost of living that exists here.

I will also note that we have higher benefit rates in our communities that are outside of Whitehorse than we do, and there's a real challenge in trying to understand those differences. There are higher costs some of the time for our

communities, but the biggest driver, which is housing, might be higher here, although we don't have full information on it. When I first landed in this role, I turned to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to try to get that information.

By the way, at that time, I knew that the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition had come up with their first report, the 2016 report, on a living wage. I asked that the Bureau of Statistics make sure to make as much data as we have available to the Anti-Poverty Coalition to ensure that they were getting the most robust information that we could. My perspective is that you undermine a democracy if you don't make sure that we're fairly informed.

I think it's worth noting that, as I alluded to earlier, here in the Yukon, our rates are indexed to inflation, so there is a way in which they are increased over time. That's one of not many jurisdictions with that indexing. I appreciate that the members opposite have put forward a suggestion that a better index than CPI would be the change to living wage.

Let me turn for a second and talk about food security. The motion talks about food, and I just wanted to mention a few things. I turned to the Agriculture branch to ask for a bit of information. First of all, agriculture has been increasing here in the territory. I spoke with the director and he said that — and I'm paraphrasing here, Mr. Speaker — more or less from 20 years ago to 10 years ago, agriculture doubled, and from 10 years ago to just a couple of years ago, it doubled again, and it is poised to make that kind of change one more time.

I know we have been making investments in the territory — for example, around the local food strategy — and we are trying hard to support the development of local markets to see locally grown food getting into those markets — investment in greenhouses and the production of market vegetables. Overall, the goal here — and that isn't always going to help those people who are lowest income, but what I have learned in dealing with very complex problems like poverty, which are very difficult to resolve, is that you have to treat the spectrum. For example, with housing — at some point here I'll talk about the need to address the spectrum of housing, because if what happens is that we get a shortage of lots — which isn't really where I see the lowest income going — but then that spikes housing prices and that then drives up rental housing prices, which drives up affordability. If we don't pay attention to the spectrum, we risk dealing with the challenges at a specific end of the spectrum.

The same is true with agriculture. The upside of this is that, if we focus on agriculture, we really get almost all the wins we can.

It's good for the local economy; it's good for food security; it's good for reducing our dependency on food that is arriving from Outside, which is good for transportation, which is good for the reduction of greenhouse gases. It's just good all-round to have good, locally developed, healthy food more accessible. I believe that's true for low-income Yukoners as well as all Yukoners.

Let me move to housing. In listening to the researcher speak about the report on the living wage — the latest; this is the third in three years — and also in reading the report itself,

it seems like the number one driver — or challenge, if you like — with respect to poverty is housing. I think I heard the member opposite discuss that and talk about affordability and the condition of housing as being number one and number four, from talking with those with lived experience.

In reading the report itself — and listening — it looked like the number one issue was housing. Let me discuss a few things around housing. First of all, with respect to social housing — no, let me just keep going this way, Mr. Speaker, because I will probably get it wrong.

Under the guidance of the housing action plan, we have undertaken strategic initiatives and partnerships to increase affordable housing in Yukon, and we have made commitments involving the mandates of several of our departments to improve access to affordable housing across the housing continuum — in particular, the lead is the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, but also the Minister for Highways and Public Works and me as the Minister for Community Services.

In this year's budget highlights, we included an overall \$40-million investment — it was \$39.7 million — in housing and new building lots, and this included \$6 million for affordable housing — allocated through \$2.4 million to a northern housing fund and \$3.6 million for a housing initiatives fund. I know, from speaking with the minister, that she is looking to leverage those funds as much as possible to create even more investment in affordable housing.

We're also committed to the Housing First approach. I recognize that our first buildout is happening now and it is 16 units. It happens to be right across the street from where I stay in town with my mother-in-law. I see the work ongoing and I hear it, and I'm very happy that we're there. I want to note this. This is our first time having Housing First, and I'm just really appreciative that we're getting there. I don't claim that 16 units will be enough, ultimately, but I think it is incredibly important that this initiative is underway.

This 16-unit Housing First building will have supports, and I believe this is one of the best ways to get at the hardest to house. There are other initiatives.

I was able to go when we were pouring the cement for the tiny home community — and that included moving the Steve Cardiff house just a couple of blocks away from the Housing First building. It is being led by Blood Ties Four Directions, who were really happy that they were involved.

I am going to move now to talk about social assistance. I just want to acknowledge that it is really important to tackle both the issues of food security and housing security. I agree with the member opposite that those are important issues.

Let me talk about social assistance. Let me do it by making some introductory remarks and then let me dive through the living wage report itself. First of all, income support services provide support for more than 1,000 individuals and families throughout the Yukon. Our social workers work with clients on multiple issues. The housing and Community Outreach Services team provides ongoing outreach and intensive supports to those clients who are assessed as having the highest needs. We have committed to

this important work through Yukon-specific initiatives such as the housing action plan for the Yukon, *Forward Together*, *Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy* and the Safe at Home plan. Some of these plans are led by us, and we support some where others have taken the lead. It is really important that, when you deal with the issues of poverty, you do a whole-of-community approach as much as possible because the solutions, in order for them to work — if you don't work together, you just cannot achieve the same amount as you would by working individually. That includes being supportive of those with lived experience to be involved in that decision-making and planning.

Canada's first poverty reduction strategy was released this last August and captured the complexity of poverty through three pillars, including: dignity, opportunity and inclusion as the second, and the third pillar as resiliency and security. We signed on to be part of that. An important aspect of addressing poverty includes ensuring that basic needs — such as safe, affordable housing, healthy food and health care — are met. That is how it was identified and we agree with that. We are working hard to ensure that Yukoners have more access to these services. Having said that, we understand and I understand that issues related to poverty are extremely complex and that more has to be done in order to fully address the very real, systemic barriers and issues that people face.

First, let me talk about that complexity. I thought that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King articulated it quite well. She discussed clawbacks, disabilities, changes, discrimination and a spectrum of issues. The system is complex. There are a lot of issues to try to address. When she talked, she used the phrase "crazy making", talking about when you come into the system and you see that there is a lack of flexibility.

We want to ensure that there are exceptions and we build in that flexibility — that we still need some tests of fairness, dignity, inclusion and security, and I know that she would be supportive of that.

By the way, she also mentioned the determinants of health. I have had conversations directly with Dr. Brendan Hanley, who is our chief medical officer and he has said the same thing to me — that if you're looking for determinants of health, one of the most significant determinants is income.

Let me turn now to the report — the 2018 living wage report — because if I understood the intent of the members opposite, it is really about trying to use that as an index, rather than CPI. There is some great stuff in that report and I would just like to go through it here today.

Their first recommendation is to renew and implement a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for the Yukon. We agree with this and, again, when we had anticipated and taken a look at the review of Health and Social Services, we saw that within that review, that we felt this was the right tool to use to look at poverty, treat it as part of that and ensure that our social support system continues to meet the needs of Yukoners. So a comprehensive review will offer recommendations related to programs and services offered for low-income Yukoners. This may include the modernization of

the *Social Assistance Act* and regulations to allow for alignment.

I heard the Member for Watson Lake express her concern that these things would move too slowly. Respectfully, I saw that there was a 2008 review of our health care system and there were eight years in which the Yukon Party had the opportunity to make some of those changes as part of those recommendations. I understand that it is a difficult problem. I understand that it is complex, but I didn't see those changes come. I heard members opposite discuss that they hadn't changed in their time, or since their time, I think it was. I agree that it is challenging, but I think the right place to start is a review; however, the review that we have been anticipating all along was part of this overall review — again noting that there are relationships for social assistance along with other issues that we face. We had thought the correct approach was to treat it holistically, to allow for alignment of the Yukon with other jurisdictions and to ensure that the program operates according to the national best practices that are relevant to the Yukon.

The second recommendation in the 2018 living wage report was to invest in social and affordable housing to reduce homelessness and wait-lists for social and senior housing. Under the guidance of the Yukon Housing Action Plan, we have undertaken strategic initiatives and partnerships to increase affordable housing in the Yukon and we have made commitments involving the mandates of several of our departments.

We talked about this year's budget and money that we had put in there and the \$6 million specifically for affordable housing. I know that the minister will be coming back at some point with announcements about ways in which that money has leveraged. I'm just letting that go. I've already discussed the Housing First initiative and others. We are committed to investing in social and affordable housing. I think that a review will help us to understand whether that investment is significant enough, and we will continue to work with our partners to see the continued investment in affordable housing. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation to continue to expand on that.

The third recommendation out of the 2018 Living Wage Report was to develop a comprehensive transportation strategy for Whitehorse — well, that, of course, is a municipal initiative. I know that they have recently done a transportation strategy and I know that I sat down personally with the mayor and gave support on that. I appreciate that they're moving forward with it and am happy to continue. We just signed our memorandum of understanding with the Association of Yukon Communities last week and, with that, we talk about our principles and how to work together, and I think they are the right lead. I am not trying to abdicate responsibility; I just think that's the right jurisdiction and we will work supportively.

The fourth recommendation by the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's living wage report talks about subsidization of public transit passes. The one thing that I can say about this —

again, it is a municipal jurisdiction — is that we are investing money in public transit. We have announced that \$13.3 million over the next 10 years will go towards public transit within the City of Whitehorse. Generally, that's for capital investment, like buses. I hope that these will be buses with lower operation and maintenance costs. As we get into the future, we're going to see ones which rely less on fossil fuels and that may lead to a reduction in their operating costs. Certainly they don't have to put money towards that capital infrastructure because we're able to provide it. Hopefully that then can translate into the opportunity for them to have the means to be able to support it as they are able.

The fifth recommendation is talking about minimum wage. Specifically, it suggests increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. This year our government committed to a minimum wage review and this past spring I requested that the Yukon Employment Standards Board conduct a review of the Yukon's minimum wage and provide advice to myself as the minister and to us as Cabinet on any recommended changes to minimum wage rates. That is underway and it's nearing completion. I was in contact with the board this week because I passed them the living wage report to make sure they had it in their possession. They wrote back to say thanks and that they already had it — that's great. I want them to do that work.

I also want to state that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been working diligently not to direct them. I want them to do that work and to come back with their recommendations, so I am not standing up to say one way or the other what their recommendations should be. I will state for the House that, in their last letter to me, they indicated that they thought they would be done toward the end of November, so I'm looking forward to getting those results by the end of next month.

The sixth recommendation was to enhance the Yukon child benefit by increasing the annual maximum benefit and to tie increases to inflation to the CPI. The government's new poverty reduction strategy includes initiatives to reduce poverty through the Canada child benefit program. There are a number of ways in which we support families with children. One of those ways is by reducing costs associated with childcare. This helps parents to overcome barriers to employment imposed by childcare responsibilities and to re-enter the labour market. High quality, accessible and affordable childcare is a priority for our government. More than \$4 million of the \$7 million in funding under the early learning and childcare bilateral agreement is being used to improve the accessibility and affordability of children in care in the Yukon.

With respect to early learning and childcare, as a result of this finding, we have taken a number of steps, including increasing the amount of the direct operating grant that each childcare program receives, moving forward with the development of culturally appropriate curriculum, creating an early childhood education bursary program to provide Yukoners with funds toward early childhood education studies, and increasing the financial support toward childcare

fees available to grandparents who are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren. So we do agree.

If I can just again focus for a moment — when the lead researcher of the report put out the report, he talked about those two issues as being key: the cost of affordable housing and the cost of childcare. I do think it's important that we continue to work on those fronts. I know that we have a social housing evaluation underway. I know that we are currently providing over 700 social housing units for Yukon families, including seniors and non-seniors in communities across the territory. I know that over 100 households receive rent supplement subsidies from the Yukon Housing Corporation across the territory.

I just want to again say thank you to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for their work on developing the living wage report. One of the things that I will note for us is that this is the third report. The 2016 report listed the living wage as \$19.12 an hour. The second report from last year listed it as \$18.26 an hour. This current report lists the living wage — here in Whitehorse, anyway — as being \$18.57 an hour. One of the several reasons that those things move around is that, of course, our minimum wage has gone up somewhat over that same time.

There has been inflation over that same time. There have been changes to the costs of food. There have been the programs that I was discussing. For example, the Canada child benefit program assisted in bringing those costs down. There are ways to change those costs.

I will note, as the lead researcher noted today, that — and as I have said here in the past — a living wage is a different thing than a minimum wage. I will just make that statement. Of course, if the minimum wage goes up, that will have an effect for those who are earning the minimum wage and that will bring them closer to a living wage.

I said that I would talk a little bit about the complexity of the situation. As the Member for Takhini-Kopper King described the situation, she talked about how complex it is, even to begin with, whether that is because of the circumstances and the situation of those people but also because of the system itself. We completely agree that there is a need to review the program to try to ensure that it is adequate for our citizens and to work toward addressing the issue of poverty broadly here in the territory. It will need to be part of a broader strategy, of course — that must be clear now — because of all of the pressures that we have discussed. We want it to always be fair and maintain dignity, inclusion and security of our citizens.

I had a conversation with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, and she asked, if I was going to propose an amendment, that I please add in it a specific date. I, unfortunately, did not prepare that ahead of time. I am going to propose an amendment, but I will stand up and say again that the review of our health care system, including the review of social assistance and social assistance rates, has begun. It hasn't made the Engage Yukon site yet because that is yet to come. It is the internal work that has begun. The information that I have received from the department is that they are

working toward the fall of 2019 for completion. I want to acknowledge that it is a large task.

I would like to respond a little bit to the Member for Watson Lake. Her comments that the Minister of Health and Social Services hasn't stood up and said that yet — well, I'm hopeful that we will get that here when she does speak to this motion. It's not some desire to shy away from talking about it. I read from her speaking notes. I assume that it's fair to come out.

The other thing I want to talk about in response to the Member for Watson Lake is that, yes, after you do a review and you articulate something — if, for example, what you decide is that you have to do some amendments to legislation, well yeah, that does take time and there are processes. I wish that government could move faster. It isn't always the case. I think there are necessary requirements for us, especially in a legislative process that we have built, that require the diligence of time and the responsibility of all of us to weigh in on these things, including the ability to engage Yukoners.

Yeah, governments take longer to get at them. That doesn't take away from the desire to see change and the desire to make improvements. I will just say that my experience in working with the government — and, of course, I have a closer relationship with those who are on this side of the House — but my sense is that all people in this House have integrity and are working hard to try to improve the lives of Yukoners. I really don't think that it comes down to partisan politics about whether or not we wish to improve social assistance for Yukoners and the lives of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move:

THAT Motion No. 288 be amended by:

(1) removing the words after the phrase “Government of Yukon to”; and

(2) substituting the phrase “ensure the government's income support regime is reviewed as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review” for them.

Speaker: The minister has the requisite copies for distribution. If a page could please distribute the copies, I will review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment to Motion No. 288, as proposed by the Minister of Community Services, with Mr. Clerk and can advise that the proposed amendment is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes:

THAT Motion No. 288 be amended by:

(1) removing all the words after the phrase “Government of Yukon to”; and

(2) substituting the phrase “ensure the government's income support regime is reviewed as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review” for them.

The proposed amended motion would read as follows:

It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure the government's income support regime is reviewed as part of the comprehensive Health and Social Services review.

Minister of Community Services, on the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I won't speak for too much longer on the amendment. I have spoken for some time on the original motion. I want to just discuss for a moment, from a high level, what we have been trying to do here. The members opposite had asked for a review of medical travel. We agreed, but want to do it as part of this overall piece. The members opposite have asked for a review of social assistance rates with a different way to index them. We agree, but we want to do it as part of this overall piece.

I believe in my heart that all the people here want to see these reviews done. I sense from comments by the members opposite that their concern is that there is no definitiveness to it and that the scope is too broad. It is our goal, though, to try to see this review through, knowing that the scope is broad and wanting to see it in a holistic fashion. Even as I heard the Member for Takhini-Kopper King talk about the need for flexibility, one of those ways that you create the flexibility is to see improvements in one area by adjusting another.

For example, when we talked about trying to have better health outcomes for those citizens, we said, "It's not good to put them in acute care if what they need is continuing care." Even though there's a cost to continuing care, it's a cost-savings from treating them through acute care. We said that dealing with our citizens in a way that keeps them healthy in their homes costs money and you have to invest there, but it saves you from dealing with continuing care. There are ways in which we can create both a better system, in this case, for social assistance and find the ability to provide more service or opportunity because we've generated a better system that is more flexible.

However, I appreciate that the members opposite may not be supportive of this amendment. I hear their concern. I want to be respectful that their perspective may be different, but I believe that overall we are seeking the same thing; we're just using a different tool to get there — that is our desire.

I thank the members opposite for the suggestion. I didn't get it out of the motion itself but through the conversation with them, which is that they believe that the living wage as an index is a better tool for —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Sorry, maybe I have that wrong. Whatever the suggestion is about how to index social assistance so that it is doing a better job, we are open to those suggestions. That is fine. It's great that it can come in as part of the review. I would never try to prescribe it. I would look to let the review do its work and let those people who are involved with the review do that. But I think there was a good suggestion there.

Doing this is also following the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Panel report — something that the members opposite have been asking us and encouraging us to do. We have also stated that, through this, we hope to improve social assistance.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to start out that I want to be respectful, but I am frustrated. I'm not frustrated with the misunderstanding that I think is at the base with respect to the minister opposite's comments with respect to what my colleague, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, and I in putting forward this motion are speaking about with respect to any suggestion or linking of social assistance to the living wage. That wasn't the intention. The intention or the discussion was that at least with the living wage you have a means of determining how that shifts over time. Just as he said, there are different factors that play at hand.

What we're talking about is rebasing social assistance so that when it's indexed as it is right now, it's indexed based on a wholly inadequate base to start with so there's no correlation between a living wage and income assistance. It's the methodology that we're talking about and getting a better methodology for establishing it.

Quite frankly, though, my frustration is much deeper than that. In 1975, I started working as a social worker in Prince Edward Island.

Two years later, I worked on a diocese and social justice committee report as a social worker working for the province on social assistance rates. We have been talking about keeping people poor in this country for decades. We have had provincial and federal governments do piles and piles — you could fill this Chamber with the reports that have been done on poverty in this country. We had all parties of the Canadian Parliament in 1985 commit to eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. We can study these things to death. We've done it.

In this Chamber, there are people who attended, in January 2010, a session with Senator Hugh Segal — a Conservative senator who, along with Art Eggleton, a Liberal senator, had done a landmark report on poverty in Canada. It was to launch the social inclusion and poverty reduction strategy for the Government of Yukon.

Poor people are still poor eight years later because we're talking about it. We're not even paying attention to the studies that have been done. The cost of poverty in Yukon, December 2010 — the price tag of poverty at that time was between \$71 million and \$93 million a year. That's equivalent to 5.2 to 6.8 percent of the gross domestic product. You can sit around and talk about if it's a nanopenny here or there to increase somebody's allowance. These are fundamental structural things. There are costs to us keeping people poor. So you can go on and say we're going to have another working group that is going to do another study but, in the interim, people are poor and they're not living in a situation where they can make the choice to take advantage — and I fully agree with all the initiatives that we're trying to do as a territory in increasing local food security, and there are some amazing things going on around this territory, but if you're in poverty, you can go to

the farmer's market and buy food there. You can barely make it to the food bank to access food there.

To suggest that putting it off for yet another — this is ignoring — and I'm trying to be respectful. I understand that the members opposite, for the most part, are new to being legislators but you are not new to being Canadians. You are not new to understanding the realities that people are facing every day. The fact that people demonstrate that they're not aware of the work that has been done by so many dedicated people over the years in this territory — at least over the last 15 years. That shouldn't be coming out in two years — by now, in terms of understanding and incorporating — but to suggest that we need to rebase and start all over again with the same studies — I will imagine that I can go back and I will look at those studies and they're going to say the same thing that I have read over the last 25 years or more in this territory.

I'm frustrated that we're being asked to ignore the realities, the everyday realities of people today. If there had been a modicum of seriousness from the member opposite, he might have suggested that there be a review of an interim rate increase pending the outcome of this comprehensive review, which, as he has indicated himself, is no guarantee — there is no guarantee being given — that this will be completed within one year. So that is faint comfort to someone who is living in real poverty in this territory.

If the minister and the minister responsible for Health and Social Services and the Minister of Finance were serious — when we talk about 1,000 people who are living on social assistance — maybe they would be looking at really serious systemic change. Maybe they would be embracing the proposals that have been put forward across this country and including from the Conference Board of Canada that actually suggested that Yukon, as a government, consider — because of the size of us, the scale of us — being a Canadian experiment in basic income. Again, Senator Eggleton and Senator Segal — five or six years after the report when they realized how frustrating it was to see neither the federal, nor provincial, nor territorial governments making any concrete movements to eliminating aspects of poverty — came out — pretty radical for a Conservative Senator and a Liberal Senator to come out fully endorsing basic income and taking away the stigma of income assistance because, for god's sake, there is stigma associated every time someone has to apply — and reapply, as my colleague said — when you have a permanent disability and you are told to go back year after year after year to prove that you are still permanently disabled.

So I'm frustrated, Mr. Speaker, because I am hearing the same things I've heard in this Legislative Assembly for almost eight years. That hasn't changed.

I am going to continue to press, with my colleague, for government to actually say, "We're going to do this and we're going to do this by..." then. Until then, it is empty words — simply empty words.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague for that. There are times when I think that those are big shoes that are one day

going to need to be filled, and I'm going to have to do a lot of reading if that's something I'm going to try to do.

When I look at what this will change — I'm just going to put this on the record now, because when the vote comes forward, I want it to be known that this is not the motion that I wrote. I appreciate the intent but, when we talk about putting it off into the future — maybe by the fall, this time next year, the review will be done and then there will be changes, and then we're talking 2020. If we talk about the ability to be fluid and flexible and to move quickly — as far as government is concerned — do something, we'd be looking at doing something sooner rather than later. I just want it to be on the record that, when it gets pulled up in the future and it's got my name on it, the motion has been changed. That was not my motion. I do thank the minister for his comments and I know his intent is good, but we come at it from two different angles.

I'll leave it at that.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, seven nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the amendment carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 288 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion as amended?

Ms. McLeod: I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward this motion. It is kind of hard for any member to stand in this House today and

not be able to acknowledge that prices are rising. Rent is higher than ever and is reflected, not only Whitehorse, but in rural communities. Costs of food and other necessities have been increasing and Yukoners are worried about the impending cost of food, goods, fuel and services with the implementation of a Liberal carbon tax. The carbon tax is going to hit all Yukoners in the pocketbook. It is going to create hardships. This government has yet to disclose to Yukoners how the rebate structure will look, how it will affect their finances.

During the election, the Premier promised that Yukoners would not lose their hard-earned money, that 100 percent would be rebated back to their wallets. Then, earlier this year, we heard him flip-flop on that promise. There is talk of the government undertaking a full review of Health and Social Services this year, although we may need to remind government that it's October. We are running out of year. We also know that the government is looking at cutting departmental budgets by two percent. Is Health and Social Services going to be caught up in that cut? I certainly hope not. There are many areas that would benefit from a departmental review to ensure programs and services are up to date and serving Yukoners to their full potential.

Today we spoke about a promised review of the medical travel program. It is getting lost in the discussion, and I don't want to see this discussion on social assistance rates get lost in that departmental review, but clearly government sees it differently. Perhaps the government could still separate out these programs, could still initiate some early reviews, because it is completely up to the government's ability to do that. Even though they have amended these motions to really mean nothing, they can still serve Yukoners by moving these forward in advance of some future airy date of when this might come to some kind of fruition and we can ensure some proper consultation, we can ensure proper oversight and evaluation of any reviews.

The government should undertake a review of social service rates now to ensure that the people are able to cover basic costs for everyday items.

As I have said — and it should be no surprise that I think this can move ahead of the full review, because we have nothing on that — it's up to the government. I will not be supporting the government's new motion. I think it is rather astounding that government has decided to take this avenue to treat opposition members the way they are.

So thank you for that and good day.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am honoured to stand up today to speak to the issue before us. I would like to acknowledge that we do want to see the review proceed. There was never an indication that we did not want that to happen — very much so. I think it is a good idea and we want to see it through. When we look at advancing, of course, the changes, we're doing that now with respect to policy changes to try to address some of the opportunities that we have and appreciate the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing the motion forward. It not only offers us an opportunity to have a robust

discussion about the care, about the equity and transparency for all citizens of Yukon — I most certainly want to see adjustments and amendments brought forward to reflect the rural communities. We know that, of course, nutrition and nutrition baskets in our communities — disparities for sure.

We know that there hasn't been a review of the income support processes for quite a long time. We will consider through this process and make sure that we tie it into the review that we will be conducting in the coming weeks and months.

I noted that my colleague from Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes noted that the review was going to be concluded in the fall of 2019. We are still shooting for that target. We want to work together to support vulnerable Yukoners and low-income Yukoners. We want to work with our partners and our stakeholder groups.

It is imperative that we consider where we are in the north and we know there are unique circumstances in the north. Our remoteness factor is huge and the cost of living is huge. So there are many aspects that affect us — many unique challenges — but we can look for local solutions. We can work together to highlight some of the opportunities. We have a few areas that we have been focusing on within a short period of time, trying to make some accommodations and adjustments within the policies that we have in place right now.

I appreciate the points that have been brought forward because they are real issues.

We see it every day. We see Yukoners come. I know for a fact — first-hand — what it takes to live in Vancouver for five months while you're taking care of your ailing father, for the community and the families to come together to raise resources, because we don't have the resources or the system is not able to provide. I absolutely recognize and appreciate that. There is no doubt about that.

Cost drivers are significant. Cost drivers that affect us with building, with building infrastructure, housing, transportation — real insecurities in the north. We know that the Nutrition North Canada program is one of the big issues in our communities. You still go to the community and pay \$14 for a jug of milk and you expect a parent on income support to provide nutritional food baskets to their children. That isn't the reality. Absolutely, we must take that into consideration.

On August 21, 2018, there was a report released, *Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*, outlining how the federal government intends to reduce national poverty by 20 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2030.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Frost: Exactly the point I wanted to make: There are national initiatives happening, yet we have unique circumstances in the north, in particular, and in remote areas of the north. We appreciate the efforts and the complexities around the three pillars that have been put on the table for us to consider. Dignity, opportunities, inclusion, resilience and security, as it affords all jurisdictions an opportunity to address the different facets of poverty throughout our country.

I particularly applaud the efforts of the federal government, because it goes far beyond poverty; it goes beyond inadequate income. It includes components such as food insecurity, social exclusion and inadequate housing. We know that first-hand. We have communities that have never been considered in the national housing initiative strategies. There are 14 indigenous communities in the Yukon that have not been given any resources from the previous government to address housing challenges and that's significant. It's significant because housing is defined as a human right; it's fundamentally wrong if you don't provide services and you have over-crowding. Those are some of the complex issues.

Collaboration with local partners and stakeholders ensures that we must work together and we must listen to Yukoners. This is important work that has to get done to reduce poverty, reduce our strategies around how we measure, reflecting the realities of our unique circumstances in each one of our communities.

The approach that the federal government is taking with respect to the vision released — those are things that we have to consider in terms of the parameters of our discussions regionally. We also have established a comprehensive review, as recommended by the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, to consider options.

Health and Social Services is growing. We know that we're spending more than we're receiving. We have to find ways to contain historical growth, but we also have to look at sustainability of our health care systems and social support systems that continue to meet the needs of Yukoners where they are.

This review isn't about immediate cost saving, nor is it about cost cutting, as perhaps indicated. It's really about identifying a plan to slow the growth of government but also to ensure that we adequately meet the needs of Yukoners — ensuring that sustainable health care and social services and improving service outcomes are our key priorities.

As indicated, the review will be completed by the fall of 2019 and we will consider all programs and services within the review. That's imperative. I don't intend for us to do a review and not put any action around it. As we know, we need to consider how and what we do with the recommendations that come before us. We're committed to engaging and involving all of our partners, including Yukon First Nations, the public, non-government organizations, our staff and our stakeholder groups to capture their expertise. The member of the Third Party noted she has significant history in Yukon and significant experience that would lend value to what we do going forward and that's exactly what we intend to do.

We have an independent expert panel that will provide feedback and strategic advice to the department on ways to improve program efficiencies.

Now, where I wanted to take us is that what we've done, Mr. Speaker, most recently with some policy adjustments and some new funding that we've received is to try to reduce some of the burden on our families and on our single parents to provide more funding for childcare fees, childcare services — also making that available to extended families — extended

family care programs — and grandparents who are low income or who are on pensions, raising their grandchildren. That, Mr. Speaker, has never been considered in the history of the Government of Yukon. We expect grandparents on minimal income to raise their grandchildren — multiple grandchildren, I might add, in some communities — to be the primary caregiver and not give them the support. Why? It is because they didn't fit into a policy. A minor adjustment to some policy and directives internally allowed that to happen. That's one initiative.

The universal childcare has a number of benefits, including making childcare more affordable for low-income families and improving a child's cognitive and developmental processes with the supports that they require. As we know, we have some children within our communities who don't have one-on-one supports. We are working with our communities; we're ensuring that the families have the supports that they need. Affordable childcare is a priority for our government. Not penalizing parents who are on income support — taking away the resources that they are getting in and clawing it back when they are getting child tax credits? Is that acceptable?

What I want to note brings us to social assistance rates. As of July 2018, the average monthly benefit rate for a one-person household in Whitehorse is \$1,332. It is adjusted for the communities. We know that through supplements it goes up to as high as \$2,900. Is that sufficient, as noted, when you have rent of \$1,000 and food baskets with a jug of milk for \$14? Before you know it, it would be gone and there would not be a lot left in the piggy bank for clothing and such or extra-curricular activities. These are things that we have to consider. I am not in any way downplaying the stories that we have heard and the concerns that have been brought forward.

It is a vision of this government to provide transparent, fair and accessible services to every Yukoner — every child deserves that. Our effort to ensure that every Yukoner lives with dignity and pride is top of mind for everyone. It certainly is for me as the minister responsible. Embedded within the vision that we have in terms of three priorities, we appreciate that social and income security reflects the realities of today. We need to be adaptable to the trends and the challenges of the future, and we need to reflect accordingly.

Understanding these trends and challenges includes discussions that have to be had with our stakeholder groups and other governments. Not only does this have to be raised at the national level, but we need to really look at innovative solutions from the Yukon — look to progress, look to our own programs and services and look at ways to focus on our long-term quality of life. We have made some efforts through implementation of the housing initiative plan through Safe at Home, ensuring that we provide families with subsidies when they are not able to afford rent. Their rent supplements — we just increased that by \$200,000 and that allows us to give families a little more support.

We know that the Yukon income support program continues to have one of the highest rates in Canada, but we're hearing that, although it is the highest in Canada, perhaps it is insufficient in some of our communities that have a high cost

of living and where accessibility to food is difficult. Of course I want to commit that this is what we will consider as we advance the comprehensive review, and we will ensure that it is a part of the mandate and it is a part of the consideration.

In fact, what we do want to do is make sure that we incorporate in that process those organizations that have been actively involved in poverty reduction strategies: Safe at Home, initiatives in our communities with organizations that have lots of experience and that also have a lot of knowledge — and the knowledge-keepers will be a part of this process.

The results of the project will inform us and our critical thinking and our policy approaches as we move and advance the government in the interest of all Yukoners. We do need to balance our budgets, but we also need to ensure, as we do that, we provide the most effective supports and services to all Yukoners and that every family, every child and every grandparent who is raising their grandchildren without the supports are considered. Balancing low-income, vulnerable populations with the complexities of our growing economy and our economic factors that we consider — those are things that we certainly need to tie into the comprehensive review, and we aim to do that.

I would like to conclude my comments by saying that I appreciate the comments and the feedback given today. We will certainly take them under advisement and ensure that we work to address some of the concerns and look for relevant solutions that better support Yukoners through their ability to thrive wherever they reside in this territory. The comprehensive review, as noted, will be completed in the fall of 2019. I look forward to continued dialogue with Yukoners.

Mr. Gallina: I just wanted to elaborate on the comprehensive Health and Social Services review that the minister was speaking about. The minister did reiterate for the Member for Watson Lake on a time commitment. The review will be completed by the fall of 2019.

I also wanted to make note that the Health and Social Services comprehensive review was first introduced through a recommendation of the 2017 Yukon Financial Advisory Panel final report. I know that we had spoken to this earlier, but there are times when it's brought to our attention as a government that there were recommendations made in the Financial Advisory Panel and their recommendations and we have — there are times that it has been brought to our attention that the Financial Advisory Panel has made recommendations, and some of them we have considered and some of them we have not considered as much as others think that we should have.

In that Advisory Panel report, it suggests that this government consider a comprehensive review of the health care sector akin to the one done in 2008, focusing on the factors, driving costs and on the quality of outcomes being delivered to Yukoners.

Further direction was received by Management Board in 2017 to proceed with a comprehensive health review focusing on the factors driving costs, the quality of outcomes being

delivered to Yukoners and with an emphasis on ensuring cost efficiencies are fully explored.

The comprehensive review will seek to find ways to contain historical growth in order to provide a long-term sustainable health care and social support system that continues to meet the needs of Yukoners.

Speaker: Order, please.

The time now being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

Debate on Motion No. 288, as amended, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled October 3, 2018:

34-2-70

Yukon Arts Centre 2017/18 Annual Report (Dendys)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 94

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 4, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 4, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes which have been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 247, Motion No. 248, Motion No. 249 and Motion No. 250, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motions have been taken in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have the unique privilege of introducing to the Legislative Assembly and to Yukon the newly minted Chief Election Officer of Yukon, Mr. Maxwell Harvey. Also with Mr. Harvey today from that office — and no stranger to the Legislative Assembly — is Mr. David Wilkie.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I have the privilege of introducing to the House today Chuck Shewen, Gord Zealand, Bryce Bekar, Geoff Wooding and Jonas Smith here to listen to the proceedings today. Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is my absolute pleasure to welcome to the House today Mr. Fred Smith, Ms. Marj Hlady and Christine Klaassen-St. Pierre — all former teachers in our profession here in the territory. I hope they will be here for our tribute in a few moments. Thank you very much for being here.

Applause

Ms. White: Merci, Monsieur le Président. C'est un grand honneur d'avoir l'occasion de remercier un de mes professeurs. Alors, Christine Klaassen-St. Pierre était mon professeur durant mes 8^e et 9^e années, je crois. C'est quelqu'un qui a fait de grands changements pour moi. C'est quelqu'un qui m'a dit que je pouvais être n'importe qui, ce que je voulais, et me voilà.

Christine Klaassen-St. Pierre was a powerhouse in Education, straight through from when I had her in junior high until she became the vice-principal at F.H. Collins. She is still taking her role in education seriously when she is doing things

like the gender diversity or Bridging Gender Divides workshops.

Not only did she change my life when I was 13 and 14, but she continues to do so.

Alors un grand merci, et ce fut un grand plaisir de l'avoir ici.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to welcome some of our CBC folk here. I'm sorry that I don't have everyone's name, but I know that we have retired Tim Kinvig; I know that Karen Vallevand is here; our own Janet Moodie; and, of course, up in the gallery, we have Nancy Thomson. If we could welcome the folks from CBC, please.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: Also from CBC is constituent Chris Meger. Welcome to the gallery today. Also, Susan Simpson, a constituent of Porter Creek Centre and part of the Cabinet team — welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of CBC North 60th anniversary

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today to pay tribute to an institution that has had an enormous impact on our communities. This fall, CBC North is celebrating 60 years north of 60. It has now been an incredible 60 years since dedicated personalities took to the airwaves to share local stories and 60 years since it began connecting our communities and cultures with each other and the outside. The quick rise of CBC in the north speaks to how important its work has been and continues to be to our communities.

The CBC northern service first launched November 1958 when it took over CFWH here in Whitehorse. Between 1958 and 1959, CBC North expanded beyond Whitehorse to Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, Aklavik, Dawson City, Watson Lake, Churchill, Fort Nelson and Goose Bay.

It continued to grow from there. In three short years, CBC North was broadcasting from across the Canadian north. It also quickly moved into offering broadcasting in indigenous languages. In 1960, only two years after it first took to the air, it hired its first Dene and Inuk broadcasters. While CBC North has spent the past six decades sharing northerners' stories, our history is rich with stories of them as a public broadcaster. Elders could tell you about the first time they heard a CBC radio broadcast in their own language. Northern families could tell you how they crowded around their black and white TV sets late into the night to watch CBC news or hockey that had been mailed up days earlier from the south.

Of course, in 60 years, the country's northern broadcaster has faced challenges in an ever-changing media landscape but

throughout, they have kept reporting, kept programming and kept sharing the stories that matter to northerners.

For six decades, CBC North has shared the stories that get to what northerners value, provided reporting that keeps northerners informed and holds us politicians to account.

Of course, it's not only politics that matter to northerners. CBC North has also played an integral role in promoting northern culture, languages, arts and sports. My first interview ever on CBC North was about quilting. Every two years, CBC covers the Arctic Winter Games, which brings young northerners together — since 1970.

It even tries to forecast the weather. CBC North reflects our attitudes, opinions, stories, ideas, values, quirks and creativity. It shares our languages — English, Gwich'in, et même le français. CBC North offers us information analysis about the north, in the north and from a northern perspective. It has spent six decades connecting Old Crow to Watson Lake, Whitehorse to Yellowknife, to Iqaluit to the world. Congratulations, CBC North.

Félicitations pour vos 60 premières années au nord du 60^e.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to congratulate CBC North on their 60th anniversary. I feel as though I would be correct in saying that most of us who grew up in Yukon likely have been listening to CBC for most, if not all, of our lives.

We have come a little way since 1923, when the first radio transmitter allowed Morse code to be sent between Mayo and Dawson City. During the Cold War, American and Canadian forces monitored the airwaves with military signal corps and one was stationed in Dawson City. A young signal corpsman, Chuck Grey, had his equipment stationed on the second floor of the Pearl Harbor Hotel, which stood beside the Palace Grand Theatre.

Chuck owned a gramophone, tons of old records and a one-watt transmitter. He hooked up the transmitter, dropped a wire out the window and went on the air. "This is Dawson City radio — enjoy the music" was heard. It reached all over town, but not as far as Bear Creek. Radio sales boomed. Dawson was ordered by Ottawa to cease and desist. The wire came back into the room. There was such an outcry, as now citizens knew they wanted radio. Ottawa backtracked and, not only that, they sent along a 100-watt transmitter — and CFYT was formed.

CFYT stood for Canadian Forces Yukon Territory. I remember our main radio announcer, Wee Willie Anderson, along with many volunteers would operate our local airtime — tapes with stories and, of course, much music. Wee Willie married my grade 1 teacher, Miss Gownlocks — I'm really dating myself here.

When CBC Northern Services came north in November of 1958, we had arrived. The first network-linked radio station operated by CBC was in Yukon. Wee Willie moved to the Whitehorse main station where he hosted a daily western roundup show. Names like Ted North — who sent our stories

Outside to the main network — Cal Waddington and Les McLaughlin were instrumental in keeping our old stories preserved and, at the same time, alive. Terry Delaney was a sports voice and he quickly expanded and started reporting on major stories. He interviewed Senator Robert Kennedy after he climbed Mount Kennedy in the St. Elias Range. He personally covered the 1964 Alaska earthquake and the final run of the *SS Keno* to Dawson City — such exciting times. In 1972, the Anik satellite was launched and we in the north got CBC TV.

Yukoners to this day rely heavily on CBC to stay up to date on current events, news, sports, weather, the happenings about town, as well as music and talk shows. Sixty years — CBC radio covers the gamut: live Twitter feeds, Facebook and instant coverage that brings Yukoners up-to-the-minute news coverage from reporters.

News coverage and investigative journalism are an important service that the media provides to our communities. As a democracy, freedom of the press is paramount. Investigative journalism plays a large role in shedding light on important issues such as the recent stories journalists broke on issues within group homes in the territory. These stories can and do affect societal concerns and changes. Highlighting issues can create discussion and make people aware of issues outside their homes and workplaces.

Thank you to all who work in front and behind the scenes on a daily basis to deliver these services. These folks become part of our lives whether we personally know them or not. We wish CBC continued success and, as it enters its sixth decade of serving Yukoners, well done. To all the CBC employees, past and present, for their efforts over the last 60 years in bringing news and entertainment to all Yukoners, thank you.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise today on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus to pay tribute to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The CBC is indeed a Canadian institution that brings us together from coast to coast to coast. The CBC is Canada's public broadcaster, and as we daily watch the erosion of independent media around the world, the importance of an independent national and regional media equipped to provide the lens of critical thinking to the events of the day has never been more valuable. It has been our venue to tell our stories as Canadians for more than 75 years, and here in the Yukon, we now celebrate 60 years of CBC Yukon.

The interior walls of the big red CBC building in downtown Whitehorse are a veritable history of who's who in Yukon's early broadcasting history, as well as random players in Yukon's civic and political life.

As we celebrate CBC, we must also recall that, despite the brave face and yeoman efforts of CBC Yukon staff, CBC continues to be under assault.

Just a few years ago, CBC staff and supporters across the country and in this House wore black armbands as an act of solidarity in support of the almost 400 job losses that were being implemented that year, with total number of jobs cut in

excess of 1,000. These were real cuts that have had real consequences in small towns across the nation, especially here in the north. Locally, we have seen fewer positions based in Yukon compared to just a few short years ago, with more programming emanating from our sister territory. Who has not expressed exasperation at yet another replay of CBC programs, all as a result of the cumulative impacts of cuts to the CBC?

As we celebrate 60 years of CBC Yukon, we must also continue to fight to stop more cuts. Tell your MP and the abundant visiting Cabinet ministers and others visiting the Yukon about the real consequences of the cuts to Canada's public broadcaster and demand that they re-establish their commitment and funding to our national and regional public broadcaster, because, as others have said so eloquently here this afternoon, CBC North has been a lifeline across Yukon for generations. It has provided the platform for many Yukon musicians to launch their careers and it has linked us as a community, from Old Crow to Watson Lake to Beaver Creek and all the places in between. We salute the early pioneers of CBC Yukon as well as the stalwart women and men who work on our behalf to keep all Yukoners informed and entertained.

As we move forward into the next 60 years, let us continue to press for increased recognition of this national institution to Canada and to Yukon and for that recognition to include increased funding to allow for more Yukon programming — programming that speaks to us in the Yukon and about us to the world.

Applause

In recognition of World Teachers' Day

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise to pay tribute to Yukon's educators in recognition of World Teachers' Day, which is celebrated every year in over 100 countries on October 5. This year's theme, chosen by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, is "Teachers, the heartbeat of public education".

World Teachers' Day heightens awareness and appreciation of our teaching profession and is a day to acknowledge educators dedicated to preparing our children for their futures. Here in the Yukon, we have great respect for our educators and the critical role that they play in the lives of our most precious resource: our children.

We ask a lot of our teachers, educational assistants, principals, administrators and other school staff in this evolving world of learning. Here in the Yukon, across Canada and around the world, teaching and learning practices are rapidly changing — the influence of technology, the emphasis on experiential and student-centered learning, to name just a few.

Our educators — particularly those in rural schools — are well on their way to meeting those challenges and our students are the beneficiaries. Our educators are seen as leaders in our communities. They play a vital role in encouraging our students to achieve their best. They carry an enormous responsibility in their ability to influence the futures of our young people, their self-esteem and their thirst for learning.

The Yukon curriculum focuses on literacy, numeracy, communication, critical thinking, personal and social skills, finance and career education, all integrated with First Nation ways of knowing and doing. Imparting knowledge is one thing, but the critical role for teachers in this millennium is how they teach and the atmosphere they create for learning to develop self-confidence, curiosity and foster lifelong learning.

I know we can all remember a grade teacher — someone who showed us they cared, challenged us, shaped experiences and helped us formulate ourselves. In fact, there are some of those teachers in this room with us today — teachers who changed people's lives. A personal connection with a teacher can transform a student's life. Every day, educators help students exercise their imagination, cultivate their interests, discover their passions and learn to experience the world.

One of the true privileges of my role as Minister of Education is that I get to spend time with our youth, and I can assure you that the future of the Yukon is bright. I also had the pleasure of meeting our new teachers a few weeks ago and I can report that we are fortunate to have them joining the ranks of our Yukon educators to bring life to our curriculum and communities.

There are, of course, too many teachers here in the territory — great teachers — to name, but I would like to recognize just one of our outstanding teachers, who has spent his 38-year career in our school in Mayo. In addition to our professionals, I would like to thank all those who take a role in education — take that role on. I know probably everyone in this Chamber and many, many others in our communities have taught a class or a course or a skill or coached a sport or led training in some topic or another.

On behalf of all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, it is my pleasure to recognize and to thank all our teaching professionals and educators. Your work is vital to our healthy and happy communities. Thank you. Merci. Shaw nithän.

Applause

Mr. Kent: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to our Yukon teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and substitutes to recognize all they do to contribute to the knowledge of our children and the betterment of our communities.

World Teachers' Day is a great time to highlight all that teachers do. It's more than teaching kids their multiplication tables or how to correctly punctuate a sentence. Teachers help young people explore their minds to find and build on their creativity. They nurture ideas and teach the importance of critical thinking. They build character and encourage free will. They teach children about goals and willpower, healthy activities and healthy minds.

Often it isn't difficult for a person to teach basic addition to a child, but to do it in a way that fosters excitement and enthusiasm instead of just memorization — that might be a little bit harder. But that is the job of the teacher, to take the important things and make them interesting and exciting.

Teachers play a very large role in our children's lives. Their jobs are anything but easy.

As we celebrate World Teachers' Day tomorrow, I would encourage parents and guardians to take a moment to thank the teachers in their lives and their children's lives — not just on the day, because the work that they do should be appreciated throughout the year and they should know it.

When I was preparing this tribute today I was thinking of my son, who is in grade 1 and his teacher, Nicole Merrick, out at Golden Horn Elementary School. Then those thoughts turned to my grade 1 teacher here at Selkirk School in Whitehorse — now long retired — Mrs. Churchill. Then I asked the Leader of the Official Opposition — his grade 1 teacher was Mrs. Judy Ratcliffe and, of course, Wee Willie Anderson's spouse, Miss Gownlocks was the Member for Porter Creek North's grade 1 teacher.

As the minister mentioned, there are teachers throughout our lives who mean so much and we all remember them and we remember them fondly.

Again, thanks to all educators across the territory. Your dedication and commitment are valued more than you know.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to pay tribute to all teachers and those who support them. Teachers and education staff are remarkable individuals. They are tasked with not only educating their charges in the curriculum of the day, but they help shape the child they see into the adults they will become.

Early childhood educators teach their small charges everything from A to Z, not just the skills needed in kindergarten like learning the alphabet and numbers, but they teach important things like covering their faces when they sneeze. They set the stage for what comes next.

Elementary school teachers are an even mix of educator, mind reader, problem solver and negotiator. They diffuse meltdowns, they teach reading and math, they offer high-fives and hugs as required. They set the stage for lifelong learning.

It takes a special sort of person to teach high school because, let's be honest, teenagers are equal parts charming, thought provoking and frustrating. In this day and age, high school teachers are competing with the Internet and electronic devices to catch and hold on to short attention spans and they do, which is a testament to their skill.

Language teachers not only share words but culture, and what a special gift it is they have to share.

To those educators working in advanced education, you see students nearing a point in their educational journey where careers are launched or maybe the push that they need for further education.

I, like many, can still name every teacher I ever had and, as I get older, I make sure to tell them just how important they were and the impact they made on my life because I want them to know what they did or what they do is important.

I look at my friends who themselves are now teachers, and I realize that this next generation of learners is pretty

lucky. I can't wait to see which of them grow up to be teachers.

To all of you who have answered the call to be educators, we know that your job isn't always easy, but we do know that what you do makes a lasting impact on those who are lucky enough to cross your paths. To the teachers I was lucky enough to know as a student, thank you for helping to shape me into the adult I have become, and to teachers both past and present, thank you so much for what you do each and every day.

Applause

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I noticed that we had a couple of people join us. Please welcome retired CBC broadcaster Doris Bill and her daughter Cheyenne Bradley. I would also like us to welcome Ruth Carroll.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have for tabling two legislative returns arising out of questions from the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin on October 2, 2018.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Pursuant to the *Hospital Act*, section 13(3), I have for tabling today *Yukon Hospitals — Year in Review 2017-18 — A Journey Together* and the *Yukon Hospital Corporation Consolidated Financial Statements* for March 31, 2018.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 23: *Lobbyists Registration Act* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 23, entitled *Lobbyists Registration Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 23, entitled *Lobbyist Registration Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 23 agreed to

Bill No.19: Electoral District Boundaries Act — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 19, entitled *Electoral District Boundaries Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 19, entitled *Electoral District Boundaries Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 19 agreed to

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to contribute financially to the creation of Yukon university.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Ross River Dena Council wildlife management

Mr. Istchenko: There has been a lot of confusion regarding the rights and responsibilities of Yukon hunters looking to harvest animals in the Ross River area. The Ross River Dena Council issued a notice in June stating that the non-Kaska hunters would be required to apply for a permit from them to hunt moose or caribou in the area. In addition, RRDC would be closing the area to hunting on September 15.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get right to the point here and ask a question that is on everybody's mind.

Assuming that Yukoners are governed by the Yukon *Wildlife Act* and the 2018-19 hunting regulations, are Yukon hunters still legally permitted to hunt in these game management zones, and is there a legal requirement to comply with the restrictions put forward by the Ross River Dena Council?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be honoured to speak to the question posed by the member opposite. I will start by perhaps reminding the member opposite that we have regulations in place that govern how we enact our laws in the Yukon and the Yukon *Wildlife Act*, in conjunction with the procedures set up and established for us under the self-government agreement with respect to consultation and engagement with our indigenous communities. Yesterday on the floor of the House, we heard a motion with respect to working with our indigenous partners to better reflect indigenous knowledge-keepers of the land, and it is very important that we keep those things in mind as we engage. However, it has been noted right from the very beginning of this discussion that the laws of general application apply, and we have made that noted in

newspaper articles and advertisements and in specific meetings, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Istchenko: In a letter addressed to 113 Yukon hunters and three Yukon hunting advocacy groups, the minister stated that whether or not hunters choose to comply with the RRDC request is their decision.

Can the minister confirm whether or not there will be any legal recourse or reprisal for hunters who harvest a moose or caribou this season from an open management zone in the Ross River area?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Perhaps the member opposite knows well the response to the question he's asking. As a former Minister of Environment, he knows the laws of application apply in these jurisdictions — in particular, the jurisdiction he has mentioned. I would like to say to all Yukoners that the laws of application apply. We have processes in place in the Yukon that allow us to engage collectively with the indigenous keepers and the people of the land who have been there for generations. That is our obligation. Duty to consult is defined under common-law decisions. We want to ensure that every Yukoner experiences healthy and happy outings as they proceed across the territory.

With regard to wildlife management, there are procedures in place that govern, and that is well advertised in our hunting guidelines that are distributed to every hunter who accesses and comes in for a hunting permit.

Mr. Istchenko: According to reports from CBC, what was said to Yukon hunters in this letter was very different from what was discussed with the Ross River Dena Council.

It was reported that what was stated in the letter came as a surprise to the RRDC. In fact, it was suggested that the content of the letter was completely different from what the minister told the First Nations.

Can the minister tell us if the information in the letter to the hunters is the same information that she had been telling the Ross River Dena Council? If it isn't, why is she saying one thing to one group and something else to the Ross River Dena Council?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thanks to the minister responsible for her clear answer here today on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

As members opposite either know or do not know or recall, the Supreme Court of Yukon directed that we do have a duty to consult with the Ross River Dena Council on hunting within their traditional territory. In doing that, this government has the courage to do so. I'm very proud of the minister personally meeting with the Ross River Dena Council to sit and listen to the concerns regarding conservation and wildlife management in their traditional territory. We are working with the Ross River Dena Council to develop an approach to wildlife management in their traditional territory as it is our legal obligation, as the members opposite know.

We are providing financial support, as well, to the Ross River Dena Council for participating in the north Ross River game checks station and bridging funding for the Ross River Dena Council game guardian program as well.

The best wildlife management occurs when scientific, traditional and local knowledge work together to inform decision-making, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're committed to do. That's what we are doing. We'll continue with our approach of considering the health and the well-being of wildlife in the territory as a whole.

Question re: Permit hunt authorization

Mr. Cathers: In May 2017, my colleague, the Member for Kluane, tabled a motion calling for an independent audit of the Yukon's permit hunt authorization system to address concerns with its effectiveness for Yukon hunters.

This July, after over a year of the Official Opposition calling for the review, two serious errors were discovered in the permit lottery system, forcing the government to finally admit that a review was needed. It's unfortunate that it took those errors to convince the Liberal government to realize that a review was necessary, but we're glad they have committed to it.

We've heard through media an announcement that an audit is coming, including next steps and a group retained to do it.

In the interest of openness and transparency to Yukon hunters who are looking for this information, can the minister tell us: What has been done since July to follow through with this commitment and what are the next steps?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to start by acknowledging that we have members in the gallery today from the Yukon Fish and Game Association whom we have consulted with. We have met with them. We have met with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the RRCs. We have met with our community members to engage on this issue, recognizing that it has not been easy. It has not been easy on Yukoners. There has been confusion historically around the human processes of producing applications, and errors have been made. We know that, historically — corrected — and the transition from a handwritten data process to one of the electronic — we knew there were errors. We called and we took responsibility.

I want to say that I recognize and appreciate the frustrations of Yukoners and the hunters. I apologize sincerely for the inconvenience. However, we took the necessary steps to fix the data errors and to ensure a fair and accurate permit hunt authorization lottery moving forward. That's what we have committed to Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: The errors that occurred in the permit system this summer caused a lot of confusion and resulted in many Yukoners losing out on valuable hunting opportunities through no fault of their own. It affected my constituents, and I know my colleagues in the Yukon Party also heard from constituents affected by this.

My colleague, the Member for Kluane, over one year ago noted to the government that there were problems with the permit lottery system that needed to be looked at.

We hope that this issue would now get dealt with sooner rather than later to ensure the same issues do not occur next hunting season. Has money been budgeted to pay for an

independent audit? Has a contract been signed with an organization we hear is facilitating the review? When will the review begin? Can the minister please tell those in the gallery and other Yukon hunters who are looking for answers what the next steps are that the government is going to take in this area to fix the problems that occurred and prevent them from happening a second time?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To the point, problems with the lottery system — imagine that. It has been there for quite a long time and the member opposite raised it a year ago. It existed prior to that. We're doing something about it; we're taking action and we're hoping to address the issue in the coming weeks. We recognize and appreciate the frustrations of Yukoners. The errors occurred; we acknowledge that and are moving forward.

We have contacted every individual who was impacted, and we are making some adjustments as we go forward to manage the system. We are looking at a third-party independent review, which will result in a more robust, transparent permit hunt authorization process. That was happening long before this issue. We have always known we would transition as we go through our regulatory and policy adjustments through the department — always looking for efficiencies, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're doing. We will continue to engage with all of our stakeholders as we proceed, as we have done up to this point. We have notified the public, we will work with the Fish and Game Association, but, more importantly, we have an obligation to work directly with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board, as defined under chapter 16, the regional RRCs and our indigenous partners.

Mr. Cathers: I'm glad the minister has now indicated that a third-party review is being done, but we and Yukoners would like to hear more details on how that will occur, who will do it and when that will happen.

When the Member for Kluane brought up the idea of an independent audit over a year ago, at that time the minister indicated that improving this system was not a priority for the Liberal government. We're glad that they have now decided to make it a priority, and if they had made it a priority earlier, perhaps the issues this summer could have been avoided. We are glad they're committing to take action now. The Member for Kluane's work on this also included calling a motion that we hoped to debate yesterday, had time permitted.

The question I have for the minister is: When will the minister provide us with more details with respect to the review? If the government knows what next steps it will take, will it be open with Yukoners, tell them what they're going to do, who is going to conduct the review and when this process will begin?

Hon. Ms. Frost: A priority of this government is to look for efficiencies in the system, to eliminate human error by working with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, neutralizing transparency and looking for true and accurate data and the upload of the data so that there are no errors in the future. Those are things we're doing, Mr. Speaker. In addition, we

will continue to engage all our stakeholders, as I have indicated.

We are in the process of securing an independent review party to take a robust look at the permit hunt processes and ensure in the future that we consider improvements. That will be done in consultation with Yukoners.

As our Premier noted, we will do that as defined under the laws of application, under the Constitution, obligations under Crown decisions, obligations to consult with our indigenous partners and the indigenous knowledge-keepers — to keep in mind that we always have to take a process going forward with conservation and conservation ethics in mind as the top priority before harvesting, before we look at an effective co-management process.

Question re: Wildlife management

Ms. White: Yesterday, the CBC reported that the moose hunt has been closed for the season in some areas near Faro, as the harvest limit for the season had been reached. This is an example of how accurate harvest information can inform wildlife management. Yukon hunters and outfitters know that proper science-based wildlife management is essential to ensure healthy populations into the future. Good population management requires good data, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister indicate if accurate harvest data for last year's hunting season is available to both the public and to outfitters?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to advise the member opposite that I don't have that information, but I would be happy to table that once I speak with the department and get the information on the accuracy of the data.

Ms. White: That's unfortunate, because I can tell the minister that the answer is no. Accurate data doesn't exist. In fact, Department of Environment employees have been directed not to share the data for last year because of problems in the transition from paper records to electronic records.

Long-term trends are essential to consider when it comes to game management. They give a big-picture view of the health of animal populations for decision-makers and for the public. In 2016, the Department of Environment had prepared a harvest pattern report that looked at harvest trends over the last three decades. Given all the issues with the harvest in Ross River this season, this would have been an important piece of information. This report has yet to be released.

Can the minister explain why the harvest pattern report has yet to be made public two full years after it was prepared?

Hon. Ms. Frost: That is a great question. I would be happy to get back to the member opposite with the specific details on the report. I don't have that in front of me, but I can note, as presented, that, as always, harvest data patterns over decades help us to define scientific assessments and knowledge — as well as looking at the information that we get from our resident hunters and the indigenous hunters — to redefine how we look at conservation and conservation ethics as we manage the declining resources.

We know, as a note with the point around Ross River, that the information has been collected since 1998 but permit

hunt authorizations on the Finlayson caribou herd have been effect as advised by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board in conjunction with the stakeholders. We have seen a decline in those numbers from almost 5,600 to less than 2,700 this year, triggering a need to look at accuracy of data, local traditional knowledge and practices and the integration of the knowledge-keepers into an effective process — and, of course, always engaging with the stakeholder groups and the partners like the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the game association.

Ms. White: After the hunting and lottery fiasco earlier this year, we now have unreliable data that can't be disclosed and a critical report collecting dust for two years without ever having been made public.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that concerns have been brought to us regarding the management of the Department of Environment. Yukon has already lost many highly qualified specialists, including species biologists, because of it, and the situation does not seem to be improving. This week the Respectful Workplace Office is conducting a workplace assessment of the Fish and Wildlife Branch because of the concerns expressed by employees. It would be extremely interesting to see the results of the employment engagement survey for this branch, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister indicate how long management has been aware of these problems and what is the plan to get this essential department back on track?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is clear that we are taking a proactive approach with all of our departments. We are always looking for efficiencies.

At this moment, I would like to recognize the staff of the Department of Environment for doing such a great job. A lot of them have dedicated a lot of their lives and, knowing that we have some staffing challenges within the workplace with respect to some of the expertise as identified, we will work to ensure that we have solid expertise within the department. Those are things we will be working on going forward, Mr. Speaker.

We are looking at the performance evaluations throughout government and we check in, look at efficiencies and always look for improvements and that's what I commit to Yukoners — to do just that. I will not speak to any specific issues with respect to staff relations or matters that are happening within the department; however, I will speak broadly to say that we will look for all efficiencies necessary to ensure that we provide the best services to all of Yukon and all of the clients that access services through the Department of Environment.

Question re: Mining legislation

Ms. Hanson: Earlier this this week, the government announced it would postpone or altogether drop the amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act* that were expected this Fall Sitting. The proposed amendments were limited in scope and didn't come close to fulfilling this government's obligation to develop successor legislation, that is, modern mining laws to replace old federal laws.

In fact, the “what we heard” document clearly stated that the feedback from First Nation governments is that the government should — and I quote: “... work with Self-governing Yukon First Nations to implement their Final and Self-government agreements...” This includes developing successor mining legislation.

Now that the minister has backtracked on these amendments, will he commit to honouring First Nation agreements and develop modern successor mining legislation as also required by the devolution transfer agreement?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for her question today touching on two points, one being the potential QMA amendments that were identified this summer. In that particular case, we went through a 45-day engagement process looking at — in the early stage of taking this role, I heard from First Nations that there was an interest in pursuing options to enable mineral exploration and potentially the production on specific interim protected lands, so actually the process was driven at that particular time by First Nations.

We heard loud and clear — I spoke to the media — that this was something that needed a lot of work. There was an interest for more clarity, and so at this particular time we felt it would be most important to be respectful of the industry, learn from that expertise and also listen to our First Nation partners and continue the good work that we are doing at our MOU table.

I will wait for question 2 and 3 and then I will divulge a bit more of the successes of our MOU table, our work plan and some of the things we’re working on to ensure we have a great industry and a great relationship with our First Nation governments.

Ms. Hanson: The piecemeal approach to amending the *Quartz Mining Act* has been tried by this government and their predecessor. It clearly doesn’t work.

The government’s inability to get support for these minor changes is an indication that it’s time to abandon the pick-and-choose approach. Developing successor mining legislation is the only way to modernize our mining laws from laws that are outdated and inconsistent with 21st century Yukon. It will require courage and it will require that this government stand up to those in industry who want to keep things like the good old days and it will require this government to build partnership with those in industry who understand that working with First Nation governments is the way to go forward — yet it seems this government is again afraid of their own shadow.

Why does this government not have the courage to work with industry, First Nation governments and stakeholders to develop modern successor mining legislation?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the question, not so much the tone. We will continue to work on our work plan that was co-developed with First Nation governments and we will continue to look at the priorities that they have laid out, the priorities that we’ve laid out and the timelines that are there. The member opposite touched upon the obligations under the devolution table. There was a devolution working group that

worked on a list of priorities through the Council of Yukon First Nations. At the top of that list was renewal of the *Lands Act*, understanding that the *Lands Act* is the foundation of legislation when it comes to some of the resource development.

We’re going to continue to have conversations. We’re going to respect the priorities of the chiefs when it comes to how we look at the *Lands Act*. I am going to work with my colleagues to hopefully gain the support to move some of that important work through as a first step and, at the same time, we’re going to support an industry that is really thriving. It’s so great to be out in Thistle Creek or Coffee Creek and see young Yukoners and multiple generations of Yukoners working — parents knowing that their children can come home and get a job.

At the same time, I am not going to take advice from the Leader of the Third Party when it comes to any economic issues. What we’re going to do is support this and I’m going to be respectful to our partners, which we said we would do from the start.

Ms. Hanson: We’re two years into this government’s mandate and there is no sign that they intend on fulfilling their obligation to develop successor mining legislation. That has become more and more clear. They are not even talking about reviewing the fees and royalties regime, despite the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel highlighting the need to do so. The panel was clear. Yukoners own the territory’s natural resources. It recommended — and I quote: “... a comprehensive review of resource-sector policies, with a particular emphasis on ensuring fair and efficient royalty rates, fee structures...”

Now that the government has pulled their amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act*, what will it take for this government to fulfill its obligation to work with First Nation governments, industry and stakeholders to develop successor mining legislation, or are they simply waiting for another court case — keeping in mind it’s not only the CYFN that is represented when it comes to indigenous rights in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We are absolutely going to continue to work with our partners. That is what we committed to do. That is why our MOU table is heralded across this country, across the territories and across the provinces and even into North America as the way to go forward and to do good work. The output to that will build trust — the foundation of what we need. We know that when we walked in, the foundation had cracks in it. We’re going to fill the cracks by our actions to ensure that this economy is strong. I am going to continue to respect the work plan that has been provided to me.

I am going to congratulate the Premier on chapter 23 and the implementation of that and the distribution of royalties as we move forward and, in a progressive manner, as we look at new projects across the Yukon, we will sit down with First Nations. We will understand their needs on a socio-economic perspective and we’ll see if there should be other distribution based on our end of the deal. That is what we’re going to do and we’re not going to take advice from the Third Party leader

when it comes to the economy, or even, in this case, First Nation relations.

Question re: Permit hunt authorization

Mr. Istchenko: Whether it is to put food on the table, to continue family traditions or to teach our children how to respect and live off the land, hunting is a way of life for many Yukoners. Hunters are some of the greatest conservationists, as they have a vested interest in ensuring stable animal populations year after year.

We know the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board exists, in part, to ensure wildlife populations in the Yukon Territory remain healthy. It does so by addressing population concerns through proposals to the Minister of Environment. These proposals are created based on scientific evidence, input gathered from hunting and fishing organizations, renewable resources councils, our local Yukon First Nations and the general public.

Can the minister confirm whether or not a proposal to address any concerns of the Finlayson herd has come to the Fish and Wildlife Management Board?

Hon. Ms. Frost: There are some great points raised in that last question and I am going to talk a little bit about that — about hunting as a way of life. Hunting is a privilege.

Our first priority is looking at conservation — conservation ethics, conservation management and our duty to consult around co-management of the resources we see declining. For 20 years, we have seen a decline in the Finlayson herd. We have data that verifies that.

Structurally, the community in question — perhaps the MLA for the region would know this, having served that community for a number of years. Generally speaking, they have not had a lot of voice in co-management on their respective territories, and that's exactly what we aim to do. The Premier has identified that as well; that we have a judicial decision that defines what we do and how we engage.

We have heard, through this process — in July, I travelled to Ross River and met with members of the Ross River Dena Council who expressed their extreme concern regarding the health of the Finlayson herd. The member noted that observations are very important as part of co-management — hunters and the users of the land — and need to be considered in decisions.

Mr. Istchenko: Less than 24 hours before the start of the 2018 hunting season, draw permits for the Finlayson caribou herd were cancelled with no prior notice. The reasons given were concerns with the health of the population. The minister claims she had to make a last-minute decision because, according to her, the first she heard of these population concerns were from the Ross River Dena Council in July of this year. However, the Ross River Dena Council has been raising issues with moose and caribou populations since November 2016, so the minister has had two full years to gather evidence and allow for a proper Fish and Wildlife Management Board process to be followed. Instead, the minister took no action until it was too late.

Why did she ignore all this information when she first heard of these concerns almost two years ago and wait until absolutely the last minute to make a decision?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Perhaps I might turn that question around to say what we heard from the Ross River Dena Council was something we took very seriously. Perhaps I might want to ask the member opposite to tell the House what efforts the previous government made to get harvest information from the Ross River Dena Council or look at cooperative management or integrate other input. Sure, we have had some time. We have worked with the Ross River Dena Council and we will continue to work with them in good faith to ensure that they have a voice at our table and that they have a voice around resource management in their traditional area.

I made the difficult decision to use the authority entrusted to me under the *Wildlife Act* regulations to set the numbers of the Finlayson herd to zero for non-resident hunters in 2018-19. The member opposite had that opportunity during his tenure here and nothing happened. Now we are working with our partners. We are collecting data. As noted, we had a checkstop there to give us some accuracy to work with the resident hunters who are on the ground in the territory and to work with the First Nations.

Mr. Istchenko: All right, let's reiterate: hunters understand that, when animal populations are threatened, government-mandated restrictions can be put into place to reduce pressure on the animals — they know this. This is usually not a problem, nor is it controversial as long as due process is followed, Mr. Speaker, and the evidence is provided ahead of time to show why a specific area is being protected. Now, we have established that the minister spent the last two years sitting by and doing nothing with this, only to skip the proper due process. There are some other serious questions. Yukoners need to know what will happen next. Will the Finlayson caribou hunt be cancelled for residents next year as well, and has a regulation change proposal been crafted or submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Management Board for this specific herd, or will the permit process continue to be dictated by a kind of ad hoc political intervention? Hunters want to know.

Hon. Ms. Frost: No ad hoc process — perhaps that was the way of the past. The future tells us that we have an obligation to consult and engage. The interim temporary measure was put in place because we listened to the community and we listened to the concerns that were brought to our attention with respect to the population, taking into consideration the decline over the last 20 years and the opportunities for us to look at a consultative process within the next year, as we indicated — an interim temporary measure to allow us to continue the consultative process with our stakeholder groups, and we will do that, Mr. Speaker. We will look at the opportunities via the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, chapter 16, as well as our duty to consult with our stakeholder partners as defined for us under the laws of application.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 22: Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018) — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 22, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Pillai.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I move that Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 22, *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, for the Legislature's consideration.

The *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and the *Forest Resources Act* provide legislative frameworks for the protection and management of our lands and forest resources. Recent court cases involving the illegal construction of the 17-kilometre access road in the McGregor Creek area have tested certain enforcement provisions in these two acts.

These technical amendments have been developed in response to this recent court action. The amendments will close enforcement loopholes and send a message to deter violations of Yukon's land and forest acts during resource development and other activities.

These amendments are technical in nature, and we are not proposing policy changes or new regulatory regimes under these acts. There are different fines and penalties in the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* as well. The *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* enacts regulations under two different sections of the act. Some regulations have a maximum penalty of \$5,000 for offences, while other regulations enacted in a different part of the act have a maximum penalty of \$500.

The recent court cases involved offences under the land use regulation. This regulation is enacted under the section of the act that allows only the lower of the two penalty amounts and there was no ability for the Government of Yukon to seek higher fines.

This amendment will streamline the act by making all regulations subject to a \$5,000 maximum penalty. This will remove confusion and improve the administration of the act. It will also support the Government of Yukon's commitment to protecting Yukon's natural resources.

There are different English and French versions of section 21(j) in the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*. During drafting, it was discovered that the French version of section 21(j) of this act did not align with the English version. Currently the French version speaks to regulations for supervision,

management protection and use of the surface of territorial land. The English version, however, speaks only to protection, control and use of the surface of the territorial land.

The French version is broader in scope, which means that, as currently written, there is a greater power to make regulations under the French version than the English. We do not believe that this difference was intentional and we are proposing one small amendment to resolve this issue. We have changed the French version to match the English version.

Also, previously we had no ability to seek reclamation orders in the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act*. We are also proposing an amendment to the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to add a new provision that enables a court to issue remediation orders to a party found guilty of an offence. The act currently has no such provision. What this means is that the Government of Yukon is not able to seek these orders in court proceedings and thus has to bear the cost and responsibility of all remediation or reclamation work. Currently, there is no ability in the act to order a guilty party to bear this responsibility. This amendment outlines the remediation orders that may be sought in a court of law. Ultimately, it is up to the court to decide whether remediation orders should be issued. This amendment, however, provides the court that option. This provision is found in many other acts, including the *Forest Resources Act* and the *Wildlife Act*, concerning the definition of "harvest" in the *Forest Resources Act*.

Finally, our last proposed amendment is to the definitions of "forest resource harvesting" and "timber harvesting" in the *Forest Resources Act*. Currently these definitions both read: cutting and removal of any forest resource or timber. A recent court interpretation was that both the cutting and the removal of forest resources of timber are required for the definition to be met. This interpretation means that, if an individual cuts down trees without a permit but does not remove them, they are not guilty of any offence. This interpretation has an impact on the Government of Yukon's ability to protect Yukon's forest resources. The amendment we are proposing here is relatively straightforward and changes the word "and" to the word "or", and the definitions would now be "cutting or removal or both". What this means is that a permit would be required for cutting forest resources or timber, removing or both.

In conclusion, I am confident that these amendments will contribute to increased protection and better management of our lands and forests. I would like to thank the many staff members within the Government of Yukon who have made these amendments possible. I would also like to thank the members of this Legislature for their consideration of this bill, and I look forward to our discussions around these important amendments.

Mr. Cathers: I am rising to speak to these amendments as our critic for the Sustainable Resources division of Energy, Mines and Resources.

I would note that we understand the nature of the amendments and that it is, in fact, largely restoring power and

the ability to fine someone for infractions in a manner that the government previously believed they had prior to a court decision. Our caucus doesn't have concerns with that part of the legislation.

I would just be remiss if I didn't note that we are a bit disappointed to not see more work being done, or announcements being made on the next steps to deal with some of the concerns that we have heard from the Yukon's wood products sector and firewood cutters and fuelwood haulers — the concerns brought forward to members of our caucus, including many to the Member for Kluane who has many constituents in this area. I note that there are issues around long-term tenure and wanting to see that process made easier under the act.

We have heard concerns, as well, around stumpage fees and the high cost of them — as well as, from those affected by it, that they believe that, if money from stumpage fees wasn't being used for the construction of roads into logging sites done by the Yukon government, allowing operators to do it themselves would be more cost-effective in their view.

There are local concerns with getting wood close to the community and the challenge in some cases of having sites not designated yet for firewood cutting near communities.

As well, the minister will be aware that there are concerns from Yukoners who looked at what happened in Fort McMurray and saw what happened in Telegraph Creek, as well in other communities in British Columbia. There is a growing concern and growing recognition by some within the Yukon community about the risk that is posed to communities when there is a heavy fuel load near communities, especially dead trees, and even the existence of a large swath of unbroken boreal forest near communities can be an issue.

Of course, the argument on the other side of that, as the minister well knows, is that Yukoners also prize very highly our wilderness environment, including our forests, for its beauty as well as its ability to serve as habitat for wildlife populations. I recognize that dealing with that particular area requires discussion and consultation with the public, but I would just note that people who have seen the impact of wildfires in the communities are recognizing that this can be a challenging topic at times, but one that ultimately Yukon communities and all levels of government need to be involved in — considering what steps are most appropriate for those areas to reduce the risk of wildfires and whether and when firebreaks or even sections of deciduous forest interspersed in the boreal forest can be effective ways to reduce the risk if a fire occurs. Some of those matters, I know, are not necessarily legislative in nature. I just wanted to raise them at this point in time since we're discussing the *Forest Resources Act* in part.

Moving back to the *Forest Resources Act* and issues under it, one of the issues that has been heard from commercial operators both large and small is the concern about the YESAA process and the feeling from some that the rules aren't entirely clear — that the goalposts move somewhat and that the YESAA process sometimes leads to inconsistent results that some feel do not reflect necessary changes — but, in fact, simply an inconsistent process.

There is also concern within the woodcutting sector that the legislation isn't always as user-friendly as it could be and that steps could be taken. Now, I recognize that the minister at this point in time was probably dealing in a very targeted manner with the legislation, trying to respond to a court decision, but we would appreciate it if the government could look at those areas, recognize the concerns that are out there and recognize, as well, that the *Forest Resources Act*, as with any new piece of legislation that is significant in scope — and of course, that legislation, as the minister knows quite well, came through the successor resource legislation working group. So there were changes that were agreed to at that point, with the best intentions of all parties.

I think it is fair to say that the effect of that legislation is probably different in some of its details than anyone anticipated during the development of it. We, of course, were in the position of actually implementing the legislation after it came through the successor resource legislation working group process. I'm not attempting to point fingers at anyone in this regard, I simply see it as a case of the legislation following the process that took roughly five years through the successor resource legislation working group until the point the act was finalized and tabled, and then subsequently regulations were developed, if memory serves, about two years later. Over the span of roughly seven years, the legislation and its regulations were developed and brought in. In some cases, I think the effects of those were unanticipated.

Again, we're trying to reflect what we've heard from Yukon woodcutters and those in the fuel-wood sector of the economy and loggers, that there is some room for improvement.

Really our primary objective at this point would be to remind the government of this and draw it to the minister's attention.

We had hoped that, whether today or in the near future, the minister would be in a position to take action on these issues and announce next steps to hear from the public and the sector and make some of the changes that Yukoners directly affected by this legislation have been asking the Member for Kluane, other members of our caucus and me for. I am sure the minister has heard some of those concerns as well.

With that, I will wrap up my comments. We will be supporting this legislation and recognize the targeted nature of it, but I hope the minister will take those concerns and suggestions seriously.

Mr. Hutton: I am very pleased to rise today to speak about Bill No. 22, *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*.

I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, for tabling this bill. The two pieces of legislation that this bill proposes to amend are ones that provide the legal tools for government to protect and manage the lands and forest resources of our territory. As I have said before in this House, the Yukon is filled with some of the most pristine land in the world, and it is our duty to

protect and manage our lands and forest resources responsibly for the benefit of current and future generations.

Recent events have made it clear that our current tools are not strong enough, especially when it comes to dealing with violations of these acts. Last year, Yukoners were shocked to learn about the illegal construction of a 17-kilometre access road in the McGregor Creek area, north of Carmacks. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, I was particularly disturbed to learn about this access road, as were many of my constituents. The access road was built without going through the appropriate environmental assessment process and without receiving the required authorization.

This kind of activity is unacceptable and penalties must be enforced and realistic. Unfortunately, the enforcement mechanisms in our legislation currently lack the clarity and strength to appropriately address this kind of violation. This was made clearer when our government took the offending parties to court for violating the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and the *Forest Resources Act*. Throughout the court proceedings, several statutory challenges were identified in both acts.

The *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* allows for regulations to be enacted under two separate provisions of the act. One section has a penalty structure with a maximum fine of \$500 per day while the offence is committed or continued and the other has a maximum fine of \$5,000 a day while the offence is committed or continued. The defendants were charged under the land use regulation, which has a lesser penalty structure, and so there was no ability to impose the maximum fine for this case.

The *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* does not have a provision enabling the court to issue remediation orders to a guilty party, which means that the guilty party is not liable for restoring the natural resources that were damaged due to the offence.

The definition of the term “harvesting” was interpreted by the court to require both the gutting and removal of forest resources or timber. As the defendants only cut but did not remove the forest resources, they were found not guilty.

Bill No. 22 contains four amendments in response to the statutory challenges identified in the court proceedings. One clarifies that the definition of forest resource harvesting and timber harvesting in the *Forest Resources Act* includes cutting or removal or both by changing the definition from “cutting and removal” to “cutting or removal”.

The second is adding a provision in the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* to allow a court to issue remediation orders for resources damaged due to an offence. The third ensures that all regulations enacted under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* have the same enforcement regime, with a maximum penalty of \$5,000 per day the offence is committed or continued. The fourth ensures that the French version of section 21(j) of the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* matches the English version.

In September of 2018, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources sent a letter to all Yukon First Nations and transboundary First Nations, including the Inuvialuit and

Tetlit Gwich'in, Klondike Placer Miners Association, Yukon Chamber of Mines and the Yukon Wood Products Association, informing them of the proposed amendments. We want all Yukoners and all users of land in Yukon to know about the changes we are proposing.

Unauthorized environmental disturbances like the one at McGregor Creek are a serious concern for the people of Mayo-Tatchun and a serious concern for our government and all Yukoners. It's vital that any resource activity in our territory follows our legislation, respects other land uses and upholds strong environmental management so our land and resources are protected for future generations.

These proposed changes will strengthen our legislation to encourage better compliance with the law by sharpening our enforcement tools. That's why I'm happy to offer my support for this legislation.

Ms. Hanson: I want to start by offering my thanks to the minister for introducing this *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, as well as to the officials who provided a very good briefing the other day on these amendments and the rationale behind them. It was good to have the technical briefing because, as the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has outlined, the need to make these amendments became crystal clear to all Yukoners over the course of the last number of months as we watched in shock that people could actually have the audacity to think that they could go into any area in the Yukon, quite frankly — in this particular area, it was the traditional territory of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation — and simply build a 17-kilometre road without a by-your-leave from anybody.

I have to say — there was an article by Chuck Tobin in the *Whitehorse Star* where he captured, basically, slick lawyering on behalf of Coyne and Goepfel, the two accused and the ones who eventually pled guilty to relatively minor offences.

It was the minor nature of the fines that the government was able to see applied in this case that caused the outrage, Mr. Speaker — the fact that people could willingly and knowingly cause damage to land that they had no right to be on and do that with the audacity that they had the right to be there just because they were engaged in an activity that they were pursuing.

We were pleased to see that the proposed amendments will, in fact, address some of the concerns, such as having the previous language with respect to what was harvesting or not harvesting. If they had been “harvesting”, they would have been subject to a \$150,000 fine. That's quite a difference when we get to the total. I think they paid \$1,200 for the total fine here. We have no idea because the legislation as it was previously structured didn't require or didn't provide for any remediation, so we now have the Government of Yukon on the hook for remediation that is not minor in consequence in terms of replacing what some would call “overburden” — the vegetative matter that was bulldozed aside five stream crossings and stabilizing the permafrost that was exposed. I'm not sure we asked the question, but we're unsure as to the

impact on a trapper's cabin which then potentially has impact on a trapper's livelihood.

This was a situation that certainly brought to clear relief the importance of the territorial government taking action to ensure that there cannot be and should not be any future situations of this nature occurring. We were told, and take it as fact, that there are very few occurrences of this scale that have come to the attention of Energy, Mines and Resources. This is in fact a rare event. On a small scale, in terms of other issues that occur where people have ventured onto land that they have no right to be on without permission — we can all go across lands and do things as long as we're not destroying it — but that's a more frequent occurrence. We hope what these amendments will do is both provide the tools to the government officials to ensure that, where there are violations, that they do not have to stand back and feel badly, as people who represent the Government of Yukon, that they don't have the right toolkit to put in place requisite or appropriate sanctions when and if individuals choose to be so flagrant in their disregard for Yukon's environment and for its laws.

Quite frankly, there are lots of slick lawyers out there, and it's best to make sure that we don't allow for the playing — as we saw the playing of our legislation — against common sense. Common sense says, "Man, these guys made a huge mess," and we as Yukoners were forced to stand aside and watch it happen and were not able to do anything concrete.

We are pleased to see this legislation. It will be yet another tool in the toolkit of those officials we ask to serve us in the field.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker; we will be supporting it, of course.

Speaker: Is there further debate on second reading of Bill No. 22?

If the member now stands, he will close debate.
Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Member for Lake Laberge as well as the Leader of the Third Party for their comments and perspective concerning this piece of legislation. I certainly would get into a longer conversation — or at least try to address more fully some of the questions for the Member for Lake Laberge when we get into Committee of the Whole.

As the member will remember, there is a process that takes place concerning these acts — and I'm speaking directly to the *Forest Resources Act*, where there is a trigger to do a review. We can discuss that in a more lengthy way during the Committee of the Whole. I think that's the place where we can respectfully capture the comments made by the member, and it will be a platform for us to speak to groups like the Yukon Wood Products Association, First Nation governments and others — but I'm also sincerely interested in hearing what the fallout has been from some of the successor legislation, taking into consideration that the member opposite was there during the creation and understood the initial intent and then the

things that have played out that may not have exactly met the mark that was originally focused on.

Also I do appreciate the support from the Leader of the Third Party on this. It was — I guess "sad" would be the appropriate word — devastating to somewhat understand that the successor legislation did not have the teeth — or there was a way for the individuals who had caused this damage to find a loophole. We've committed to both Selkirk First Nation as well as the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation that we would work through a process to come up with an appropriate reclamation plan and then to conclude and get that work done.

We can talk a bit about it during Committee of the Whole, but it is an extraordinary amount of money to bring in an engineering firm, set the terms of reference, define the scope, and then go back to try to bring those areas 17 kilometres back to where it was prior to the illegal impact. Those are hundreds of thousands of dollars that get put on the shoulders of Yukon taxpayers. With that in mind, I think it is good that we are going to move forward on these important amendments and that we do have legislation that will give us the tools in our toolbox to deal with making sure that bad actors in the resource industry are dealt with appropriately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will move to the next stage for a vote.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 22 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Ms. Hanson: I have some very broad questions with respect to finance, and I am mindful that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources won't take my advice but I'm hoping the Minister of Finance will answer my questions on financial matters.

I'll start off with pretty general ones. It was noted in the — I'm going to refer a fair amount this afternoon to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel final report because, as we have sort of skirted around this for the last year, there are some selective aspects of the report that are referred to or discussed, and others that are not, and there are some overarching issues raised in the report that are of general interest and do affect how the finances of the territory currently and going forward will be structured.

I wanted to start off just in the very broad picture with respect to the note in the report on page 118 about the territorial formula financing agreement — that the renewal is set for next year, which is 2019, so we're on the cusp of that. I would be interested if the Minister of Finance could provide an update to this House on the discussions and negotiations with Canada on that. I note that one of the things that the Financial Advisory Panel had suggested was that the Yukon government work to try to develop a partnership approach with the federal government to explore changes to the TFF to reflect some of the unique nature of Yukon's demographics — and, in particular, they were focusing on the issue of health

spending. I am hopeful that the Minister of Finance can update this House, since 2019 is just around the corner.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. There is a lot in there to unpack. As the member opposite can recall from my first year in my role as Premier, I was elevated to the seat of chair for the Council of the Federation. It was trial by fire right away, working with the other premiers in all things pan-Canadian framework. Also, we were negotiating, not only issues from the First Ministers' perspective, but also from the health ministers' perspective in that particular round where we had ongoing conversations and successfully lobbied to have health conversations brought to the table on that federal level with the Prime Minister and with the premiers, also taking in the health ministers as well.

At that time across Canada, there was a very interesting debate about the responsibilities of the federal government based on the federal *Health Act*, and there were differences of opinion from the federal government's perspective and the territorial and provincial perspective, taking a look at different jurisdictions with Quebec leading a charge on looking at the difference in percentages that the provinces, compared to the federal government, pay for health care in the provinces. It was quite a thorough conversation and sometimes a very contentious conversation as far as the obligations.

As far as our government goes, it was a unique conversation. We have these agreements with Alberta and British Columbia where we are really lucky to have the quality care that we have when it comes to our biggest issue — when it comes to quality of care being equal to the rest of Canada — in the Yukon, and that is access to medical travel and being able to get to the hospitals that we need for the services that aren't provided here in a smaller jurisdiction. To be able to be in a position where you want to advocate for an increase in funding and the differences therein of a per capital or base plus — those differences in that particular conversation aren't that big in effect, but we want to make sure that we're on the same side as Alberta and BC with their huge considerations when it comes to these types of funding.

It was an interesting place for us to be in. I think we did a very effective job of working with our partners to have a united voice.

As you recalled, Mr. Speaker, when the press release came out there was a united front among all of the provinces and territories at that time, and slowly jurisdictions left that united front after the press release, leaving our jurisdiction in a really unique situation. We did effectively help Alberta and BC in a narrative and showcase how important that relationship is to the Yukon. We get first-in-line services when we are medevaced into those jurisdictions.

We were also very effective in not being the last jurisdiction to leave those negotiations. When we did, we renegotiated a new THIF funding program — the territorial health investment fund — and we breathed life into something that was set to expire. Not only did we do that effectively, Mr. Chair, we also had the ability to increase the local flexibility when it comes to how we spend our THIF money.

That was renewed and there was also, like I said, the lack of strings that were attached to that, and I think we did a good job of extending it. The numbers aren't in front of me right now, so correct me if I am wrong, but I think it was \$24 million or \$26 million negotiated into the THIF fund. I will get that number for sure, but I think it is around there.

We were effective in that, and also per capita costs have gone up, so having a conversation with the federal government about how that relates to this unique jurisdiction — it is always an interesting conversation, whether it is with the Treasury Board or with the Department of Finance or any of the other ministries responsible for northern affairs. Things like the effects of carbon pricing — making sure that when we negotiate with the federal government that any revenues being collected by the federal carbon pricing mechanism don't negatively affect our federal transfer.

These are the ongoing conversations. We have been very effective at making sure these things didn't happen. We were very effective at increasing our THIF funding with no strings. There were also some technical issues in the THIF funding, and I would maybe ask the members opposite to speak about that technical funding directly to the Minister of Health and Social Services when she has an opportunity to be on her feet in the Legislative Assembly. Again, we were able to negotiate those and make sure that these changes and others weren't to negatively affect our federal transfer.

Further, on the TFF renewal, we negotiated to have an additional \$1 million to \$2 million added because of this technical change that I mentioned earlier. Ottawa also reversed course in that pursuit when we lobbied them. Sometimes these are accounting errors to the federal government, and to us it is a difference of millions of dollars. Being able to advocate for that — it is always good to have a positive relationship with Ottawa when negotiating to get those monies back into our coffers. We did successfully reverse that course after we lobbied for it. Again, there was no impact to the TFF from carbon pricing. That effect, if we did calculate it, would have been to the tune of about \$4 million to \$5 million annually. If we were taking the revenues collected from a federal carbon-pricing mechanism and returning all of that to Yukoners, it is not revenue for us. Even the money that we spend ourselves on that carbon-pricing mechanism is going back to Yukoners and Yukon businesses, so it's being able to work with the ministers and with the Prime Minister's office to renegotiate and to make sure that our federal money stays untouched when we're looking at these other initiatives from the federal government.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister. I guess I'm still looking for some clarification with respect to the TFF. Over the last seven or eight years, the territorial funding formula arrangements have resulted — the means or the way it has been transferred or indexed, we've seen indexing that has gone, according to Public Accounts, anywhere from six to eight percent down to two to three percent. We saw forecasts leading into 2016 that the territorial formula financing agreement was not going to be at robust levels. I understand the general nature of how this is structured in terms of the

comparative with the provinces and blah, blah, blah — the elements that generally make it up. What I'm looking for is some sense of what kind of indexing going forward for the five years of the next formula funding arrangement that we're going to have — the financing agreement with Canada. Has that been fixed or has that been discussed? That certainly gives some sense of what certainty there is in funding going forward regardless of the other kinds of arrangements you make with Canada for the side agreements on THIF or other kinds of recoverables or project funding that comes up, and it has an impact — or should — in terms of the purpose of this review with respect to the necessity of beginning to look at own-source revenue.

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

Long story short — and not to get into the complicated nature or the algorithms — some of that updating will be fixed with the budgeting process moving forward into the mains. What we saw with the forecast and the index — we had a downward projection because of the expected spending of other provinces and territories. We were expecting more spending from those provinces and it just didn't happen. We were also expecting our population growth to be more in line with those other jurisdictions.

Both of these things relate to the forecasting for indexing for the TFF. But as we move into the next indexing or the next time that we have a forecast through the main budget, we should see those numbers more reflective of the reality. There was less spending in the jurisdictions. We expected more spending than actually occurred, basically — if I wasn't clear on that.

Ms. Hanson: The Minister of Finance in the last Budget Address spoke about the importance of the Department of Finance and enhancing its central agency role with the expectation — at least the way I had understood it, and I ask him to correct me if I'm incorrect — that Finance would be working with all departments to ensure that there was sort of a standard approach with respect to strategic planning and operational planning across departments and agencies.

I would ask the Minister of Finance to confirm that is correct and to answer the question: Will strategic plans and the subsequent operational plans for all departments and agencies be completed prior to the beginning of the fiscal year 2019? Will they be published online?

I raise this because, in terms of openness and accountability, we see that it's the practice in other jurisdictions. You can go online, you can see what the government department says it is going to do and when it is going to do it over the long horizon and then operationally over that year.

It's not rocket science. I know that there have been sporadic initiatives within Yukon but then there is no consistency. It was my understanding that the Department of Finance, with that central agency role, would be providing that consistency in terms of direction to departments and agencies so that citizens and members of this Legislative

Assembly can have a sense of what government departments and agencies are doing with the monies that have been voted by this Legislative Assembly. That then forms the chain of accountability.

Hon. Mr. Silver: When we did first sit down with my Deputy Minister of Finance, we had a very frank conversation about financial oversight when it comes to decisions made in the Legislative Assembly — I know that it seems like a tagline, but evidence-based decision-making. The privilege to have a conversation with the deputy minister as well as with my deputy minister of Executive Council Office about what that looks like — what overall financial scrutiny looks like in processes — that was really important to me and to this team.

Right off the bat, we put money in the budget for 11 FTEs within the Department of Finance to really bolster up that department so that, as it works with the Management Board Secretariat and as it works on a whole-of-government approach, it has the financial capacity on a timely basis — and that's the big thing about government — to check in with the departments as we go from Cabinet Committee on Legislation to Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning, before we even get to Cabinet and before we even get to Management Board, to make sure that financial scrutiny is there.

It is quite a task. In the past, you saw some job descriptions and titles and then responsibilities that actually put some people in the Department of Finance in a conflict of interest of sorts, and it didn't help for the morale in that department — that is for sure — to be able to bolster up that department so that it actually has the ability to, not only do the financial scrutiny of a budgetary cycle, but also to be able to work on a whole-of-government approach when it comes to really important files like, for example, capital spending.

I'm really proud of the work that the Department of Highways and Public Works is doing when it comes to how we work with the Department of Finance to align federal funding, to make sure that the dollars we are spending prioritize — this is a tricky balance — the need for infrastructure, the needs of other governments and other communities in the Yukon and what they believe are their needs, and also take a look at the constraints that are given to these federal dollars when it comes to waste water or when it comes to vertical and horizontal infrastructure or different considerations for retrofits and making buildings better, as opposed to just re-building those buildings.

The Department of Finance has done an awful lot of work to really be able to have that leadership capacity to start leading. There have been several major initiatives advanced in our efforts in the areas of accountability, in the areas of reconciliation, in the areas of sustainability as well. Through those efforts we've secured financial agreements on cannabis with the federal government, we've delivered on a five-year capital plan, which gives more certainty to industry and to advancing reconciliation through the signing of the chapter 23 implementation agreement. There has been a lot of work being done by the abilities of the financial team.

It is interesting, on a yearly basis, to go back to these meetings. This is currently the only jurisdiction in Canada

where the Premier is also the Minister of Finance. To go to the First Ministers' meetings — and then to go back as the Finance minister to the financial ministers' meetings — I recall the first time we went — that was before our first budget — and the second time going back and just seeing the capacity building, not only here as we create budgets, but on a national level as well where we can go in there and hold our own, as the smallest jurisdiction in Canada, with a financial team that gives me the confidence to be able to hold my own with the other financial ministers right across Canada and to lobby and advocate for a greater share of a cannabis excise tax and doing so based upon the confidence that I have from the department itself within these new hires.

Another part of that success of that building of capacity that the member opposite is asking for is mid-year fiscal and economic outlooks being set in stone, so to speak, so that people are used to them coming out. Making decisions by services now — that's the most important piece there that's new to this government as well. They are service-based decisions. All financial people in all of those individual departments are feeding into a mothership of finance, and we're making our decisions based on services, which brings us to the performance plans.

Again, planning on our priorities, making decisions based on services, is an extremely important part of a growing concept of the performance plan updates. Last spring we issued the first performance plan that detailed our commitments to Yukoners, that outlined a path forward to deliver on those priorities. Then, within this fall's update, we're now taking extra steps to make that a little bit more robust process. This report is including an update on the work being done right across government. It measures our performance based on key priorities and outcomes and some new evidence-based indicators of the Yukon's long-term well-being.

We're expanding upon those evidence-based indicators and we're doing it upon models that you'll see in other jurisdictions right across Canada. I'm very proud of the departments — both in ECO and in Finance — and how we're actually taking a long-term view in how we're performing. It's important to us that we involve more people in those conversations, and over the next year we are going to be engaging more with Yukoners to make sure that we're measuring what matters the most. That's what it's all about — these matrices about how you measure are extremely important.

The reason I'm bringing this up again is that this wouldn't have been possible without the extra human resources that we put into the Department of Finance. Again, this is bean-counter stuff, Mr. Chair, but it is extremely important. It really is. It is boring stuff to some people; I find it fascinating. I'm a systems kind of person, and to have the matrices available and be able to actually take a look at the evidence and be able to look back but also to look forward is extremely important to this government.

Again, that work of a whole-of-government approach is a lot of work. It's interesting to watch the different departments

come together on a new approach. You can set a mandate and you can start with a political campaign that then turns into a mandate, and you're so impressed with a government that has the ability — direct from the deputy minister level to the assistant deputy minister level — to implement a mandate from the beginning, but it is that course of behaviour on a daily basis in every single department so that when you have a change in political direction, that is where the nuances come in.

To have a financial department that has the weight to — through Management Board Secretariat and through working with a whole-of-government approach — take a look strategically at how we're moving forward and how we're spending the money, that frees up ministers and deputy ministers to really work in partnership to get into the individual departments to find out how we change the thought process to services and the thought process to a different government. It truly is interesting work, and I'm proud of the endeavours of the Department of Finance for that.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Premier for that; however, I am still at a loss to know whether or not there will, in fact, be publicly available strategic plans and operational plans for each department and agency. The Premier successfully goes to Ottawa, or wherever, and lobbies and gets additional money into the Yukon — great. But what we need to know, as elected members of this Legislative Assembly, is not only that you got the money, but how and where it is being spent and against what goalposts. That's the broad strategic thing.

I can get the big long statements, but what we have are 30,000-foot performance indicators that are not in our strategic plan and it clearly is not in the operational plan, and it makes it very difficult to back into and say, "Deputy, you're accountable for this."

I'm looking to see those accountability measures, indicators, so that when and if we morph from our current rather constrained approach to Public Accounts in this territory into the more robust nature that exists in every other jurisdiction — save Nunavut. I say this because two of the members from the Liberal caucus and I attended the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees annual general meeting last week in Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island is an interesting case example. They have a population of about 158,000, which is huge because for years it was 140,000. That's kind of interesting. They've seen a surge in population, but they have a budget of about \$1.9 billion. We're verging on \$1.5 billion.

Mr. Chair, PEI has their own Auditor General, and their finance committee is robust and expected to meet with every department and agency and hold them to account — not on the political numbers, not on any of that kind of stuff — just as the Auditor General and the finance committee in every other province at the federal level does, to hold the public service to account for delivering on what this Chamber here ultimately decides when it, by whatever means, votes the budget to be apportioned among the departments and agencies. That's the accountability. When the Premier says that he's kind of a wonk or a policy kind of person, I can tell

you that I have 35 years of being a policy wonk. This is my passion. I want us as a territorial government to mature into provincial-like status — not just call ourselves provincial-like, but demonstrate it.

That's when I asked the question. It's not about spending somebody else's money; it's about being internally accountable for it because, quite frankly, we're not raising any real money, so we might as well make sure that we're pretty clear about how we're accountable for the monies that are being transmitted to us on behalf of all Canadians.

When I asked the question about strategic planning, it's not to be vexatious; it's really because I fundamentally believe that, unless you have those accountability provisions in place, then we can have — as we've seen time and time again when we have our episodic Auditor General reports — a chapter on a department and you get deputy ministers coming before you and saying, "Oh, yes, in 2007 — no, we didn't do it but we didn't do it again in 2011 when the Auditor General came back. Oh dear — in 2013, we haven't got to it. 2017? Whoops. We're going to get on it. We're getting to it. Trust us. We're getting on to it."

Well, that's unacceptable from any business perspective and it's clearly unacceptable from the perspective of public resources. Our job is to steward these resources. That's why I'll keep pushing this question until I get an answer that I like, which is that it's going to happen. I think that, as a transparently accountable government, the Liberal government will want to see that in place and you'll want your citizens and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to be able to key in to the Department of Highways and Public Works or to Energy, Mines and Resources and see what their strategic plan is and see how they're going to operationalize that and who is accountable for what.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is great conversation and it is a great debate as well. I now consider myself a political wonk as well — a policy wonk as well.

I don't know if the Leader of the NDP and I — and I say this very respectfully — are going to ever agree on whether or not this government should have its own — like Prince Edward Island, for example — internal auditing system. Here is why: We do have the Office of the Auditor General, and that is paid for by the feds. With that being paid for by the feds, it is an opportunity. Now the member opposite can argue that it means that we are limited, and I think she said in her statement that the Office of the Auditor General reports are sporadic. At the same time, therein lies a little bit of the great position of being a territory with province-like responsibilities. You can have these situations where the federal government still does provide services for you and you don't have to pay for it. That is not bad.

I think we will agree that, when you take a look at the last two years, we have done an awful lot more. In the sense of audits, we always have been publishing internal audits that are funded here, but we do have the federal government as well, so there are two. That has always been the process here in the Yukon, but within the last two years' mandate, I will disagree with the member opposite. I think we have made a lot of

progress. I think Yukoners have seen a lot more from the get-go. From the very first change that we did, there is a new oversight when it comes to a scrutiny of politically motivated decisions focusing more on evidence-based decision-making by invoking a Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning — right away with that. This is a level of scrutiny that offers exactly what the member opposite is looking for — a concrete example of another process that allows us to be pertinent with the spending of others' money.

I would argue that every government spends others' money. We just happen to have a lot more of Ottawa's money than we do from the taxpayers of our region. I think we do a lot more. The first year, we made changes. The budget is being integrated with performance planning, and that is a new step as well. I do agree that the first iteration of the performance plan was a high level. It was up at the 30,000-foot level, but again we are working as quickly as possible to make sure that this process becomes an assessment tool that we can use on a yearly basis — on a monthly basis — moving forward.

We are working on the next iteration for the next year as well. I will give you a little background on the performance plans. This is a great place to have this conversation, because in giving what we think is a good background and what we are moving forward in gives the members opposite an opportunity to critique that plan and to hold us to account.

As you know, Mr. Chair, the fall 2018 performance plan is organized into five guiding principles for government and divided into eight subcategories: health, education, safety, housing, jobs and the economy, environment, government-to-government relations and the responsibility of government — all the departments and all of the issues. The fall 2018 near-term performance measures were identified primarily through development activity updates and also data sets.

This is, again, tangible evidence that we're using. The long-term indicators were identified with the assistance of the University of Waterloo-affiliated Canadian Index of Wellbeing and are primarily drawn from publicly available Statistics Canada resources — never been done before. This type of planning and priorities and assessment has never been done in the Yukon government.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing — or the CIW, for simplicity's sake — offers 64 indicators of well-being, 24 of which have comparable data available in the Yukon now for Yukon, so we're moving forward. We're going to get more as we go through the month and the years. The tool is adapted from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Better Life Index and has been used by a number of Canadian municipalities, some provincial agencies and non-profits to support equitable and people-centred policy-making.

The CIW measures the well-being and progress. They're being developed recognizing — and this has been a long, ongoing debate in this Legislative Assembly — that indicators like the GDP alone are inefficient or they're insignificant, I should say, as far as reflecting the social well-being of a society or a region. The intent is to try to flex the picture a

little bit more when it comes to how well we're doing, so it's just not a consideration of the GDP.

The performance plans provide all orders of government in the Yukon, as well as community groups and the public, with regular information updates on various dimensions of social well-being. To conclude that thought, the performance plan is one component of a broader initiative to move Yukon toward comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based and results-oriented governance. Other efforts would include the transition to service narratives in the budget process and training on results-based outcomes as well.

You need to have a plan; you need to have an assessment plan; you need to make sure you're assessing yourself along the way. I believe that using the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and its 64 different indicators, as we get to that, is a good pathway forward. The member opposite is asking for concrete examples. From including C2P2, as we call it — Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning — as another oversight, whole-of-government financial scrutiny when it comes to the new hires therein, the performance plans every year being more in-depth — this is what we're doing to prove to Yukoners that we are good financial managers of their money.

Ms. Hanson: With respect to the Minister of Finance, I'm thrilled to hear that there's a Cabinet Committee on Priorities and Planning, but that's inside baseball. For the most part, that doesn't matter to the citizen and, quite frankly, to members of the opposition, the back bench. That's not in their purview, either.

What I'm talking about is: When all that wonderful work is being done, I expect central agency functions to be done like that, and then I want to be able to see the results, which are tangible results that say that, based on the direction we have, operationally, this is what we're doing in Energy, Mines and Resources, Community Services and Health and Social Services. I want to be able to see it so that I, as a Member of this Legislative Assembly, can see what commitments have been made operationally. This buck stops operationally at the deputy level and flows down. That's where I want to know how the government awards, rewards or doesn't for performance, because we talk about performance-based management. We want to know that somebody is making a commitment to see certain things delivered.

Part of it is whether or not they're doing it in conjunction or collaboration in a whole-of-government approach. If you have a rogue deputy, that's not helpful, but if you're building a culture where they're working together, that's something that you start to measure.

What I'm asking for is not — I mean, I appreciate it; it's very helpful and it's encouraging that this kind of thinking is going on, but I just will go back to my question, which is: How is that manifest in terms of what's publicly disclosed on the website for each of the ministers, including the Minister of Finance? They step back and they say it's Community Services over the next five years, and this is where we're going and this is how we're doing it in an operational — breaking it down. Then, whether it's Public Accounts, through looking at the Public Accounts when we get them — if the

Public Accounts Committee ever acted as a finance committee to do that kind of review — he can say to the deputy, who is accountable to that Public Accounts Committee, so not the minister in that context, but the deputy minister: “What have you done?” He can say, “Because this is what you said you were going to do with it and this is what we’re holding you to account for.” I mean, we will have the argument or the discussion — whatever you want to call it — about an expanded role of auditing in this territory, but there is a need for accountability regardless of who is — and we have that responsibility as Members of this Legislature on both sides. But you need the tools to be able to do that and that’s what I’m looking for.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think we’re getting on to things that we can agree upon. I would make the argument that we’re sitting here in the room that has the power of the purse. It is provided within the Legislature and it’s provided with the scrutiny given by opposition members when we go line by line in departments talking about the budgetary numbers. We can have a performance plan that didn’t mix the indicators of what we want to do, and it’s the job of the opposition and of the ministers here responsible to explain in the Legislative Assembly how we’re effectively using that money as well. We want to deliver on accountability and we are going to be working on the next iteration of the performance plans and the operational plans. Those things feed in.

We also want to hold our deputy ministers accountable for the department’s finances and the department’s performances when we’re looking for efficiencies, for example. These indicators that we’re talking about — the 64 indicators — they’re going to help us with those decisions. That’s more transparent. Then we use our time here in the Legislative Assembly more effectively. It’s conversations like this that are effective, less political and just more to the point of where we should actually be focusing our attention, making sure that the scrutiny of the House keeps us to task when it comes to our job of showcasing, on a short-term and a long-term basis, to the public through our performance plans what our goals are.

Again, it is this House’s responsibility to have that oversight. If there is another jurisdiction that does something specific as far as more scrutiny that the member opposite would like us to direct our attention to, I would be more than interested — actually, I love this stuff, right? If there’s a particular jurisdiction that she feels has an oversight — and again, we’re going to disagree on the audit system with the size of this government and then with the financial crunches that we have. So if there’s something past the Prince Edward Island model, then that would be something interesting. The reason why I bring it up again, Mr. Chair — the Prince Edward Island model — is that I believe that the member opposite would come back to her example that she started her conversation with, which was the auditing system in the Prince Edward Island government.

This system that we are implementing right now with the performance plans and with the internal changes of how we are doing our system is based upon a template. It is based on a

model — a Scotland model — and it is something that we believe works and we are going to continue to move forward. I would encourage the member opposite, as well, to take a look at that Scottish model and that’s the direction we are going in.

Ms. Hanson: The distinction I would make is that in this room, we are here as politicians; we are here in a partisan forum. I’m a New Democrat. There’s a Yukon Party and there are Liberals — surprise. Once you go into a finance committee or the Public Accounts Committee, ostensibly at the federal and provincial level, you’re supposed to shed that. What you’re looking for is value for money. Has money been spent that this partisan political entity, the Legislative Assembly, voted on? Have you spent it in the most effective and the most efficient ways? How can you demonstrate that? It is not about whether not you agree or disagree with the decision made in this Legislative Assembly. I don’t care and that’s not the point. It is that you got the money and you said you were going to spend it on XYZ. I want to know that you spent it on XYZ and not ZZZ. That is where it is important to be able to, once this entity here — us as a whole — vote by a majority a budget to a department.

We have had the political debate by line item here, but it is the after-effect and the accountability by the public service of the Government of Yukon to ensure that it is spent in the most effective and efficient manner, providing true value for money for all citizens. That’s our role as stewards of the Legislative Assembly and I think that, across this country, is what occurs.

We get ourselves caught — and that is the unfortunate part and why I keep coming back to this conversation — because we need to move on beyond the debate about this year’s budget, but we’re going to get the Public Accounts and we need to be able to say, “Against what do we measure the effectiveness of the spending of that \$1.3 million last year?” That is what I am looking for when I ask the question about how we will measure that.

If the Public Accounts Committee was to say to the deputy minister for Energy, Mines and Resources, “We would like you to appear as a witness with respect to the Public Accounts for your department and we would like to ask you some questions,” — because that is technically in our purview, we need to know what he said he was going to do with that money. That is really what I’m getting at.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think there is more we can agree on than what we will disagree on this. I will agree, this is a partisan Chamber, absolutely — sometimes more partisan than other times. I also agree that in provinces they do have Public Accounts that do hold the deputy ministers and the governments to account for adhering to a budget and adhering to a performance plan.

I don’t agree that we need to put that much money into an auditor system similar to the provinces yet. However, what I will say is, I think we can do more with our Public Accounts. I think we can do more with our Public Accounts Committee. I don’t see a problem with an increased accessibility to the public accounts from the Public Accounts Committee. I am

willing to work with the members opposite as far as what that looks like. It can't hurt to have an all-party committee having that scrutiny to keep the deputy ministers to account. I am definitely willing to continue that dialogue with the members opposite, and that is another example of a maturing government — being able to use the opposition and all-party committees to do more in our obligations to Public Accounts and also to the people of Yukon.

For the record as well, when the Office of the Auditor General was up here this year, we were very open to that conversation within the Public Accounts Committee. That is the good news. You have a government that is willing to do more in that area. I guess I will leave it at that, at this point — good question and a good conversation.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Finance for that response. It is a conversation that I too have been having with the Office of the Auditor General over the course of the last four or five years — about how you transition in terms of the role of the Public Accounts Committee to actually acting like a Public Accounts Committee and not occasionally meeting to occasionally review an audit chapter of the Auditor General's report that he tables — he does it twice a year but we get one, if we're lucky — that really doesn't represent the kind of accountability that I believe is necessary for a robust and effective public service. Having been a public servant for a very long time, I can tell you that it is important to be held to account.

I appreciate the Premier's comments. My reason or rationale for raising the parallel between the budget level of a province like Prince Edward Island and the establishment of their auditor and here is to say that I think we need to get our heads around beginning to think about greater accountability to the extent that we can evolve the role and the functioning and the time committed to getting our Public Accounts Committee resourced, because it will take an additional resource — at least one — to provide the kind of supports to the committee in order to do the effective working with departments to hold those Public Accounts meetings. You just don't walk in blindly because then you will find that your chair is put in a very difficult position. Failing or absent adequate prep, you can fall easily back into partisanship and that's where the chairs at the federal and provincial levels have to work hard to keep their own members in line and for the government members to keep their members in line. We know it's the opposition who chairs and the government is the deputy chair at all these committees.

That's an important thing that we need to keep in mind. I think it's a signal if we can get the public seeing that members take this accountability part of their jobs very seriously and not the arguing back and forth in here so much. When we get out of here and you go in front of that committee and you say to the public service, "How are you doing and what are you doing with the resources that Yukoners have entrusted you with?"

I appreciate the Premier's and the Minister of Finance's words on this, and we will certainly be looking forward to

finding ways that we can, with our colleagues on the Public Accounts Committee, see this role morph.

I would like to move on, if I may, Mr. Chair. I said at the outset that I was going to ask a couple of questions with respect to the Financial Advisory Panel. I just want to come back. It's a general question because it's in general debate that we can talk about negatives as opposed to positives in terms of numbers.

I wanted to ask the Minister of Finance, more in his role as Premier, with respect to a noteworthy decrease in O&M in Energy, Mines and Resources. It has to do with the \$17.8-million decrease in funding for the type 2 funding agreements with respect to Faro and the care and maintenance. I ask this because as a whole-of-government issue, it's of huge significance. This is one of the seven type 2 sites that Yukon has responsibility for, with the federal government ostensibly paying for it. Now it has gone through a number of different iterations in terms of management structures, from the get-go when it was originally set up with an arm's-length entity being responsible outside of government — short of a special operating agency, short of a Crown court, but another entity with a view that would minimize political interference — whatever.

We all know that's not where we're at. We do know that we spent \$400 million — "we" collectively. You and I and every Canadian has spent \$400 million. My question to the Premier is: Is the government conducting an internal review in terms of the lessons learned of the last 15 years with respect to how prospectively, as Premier, as the Finance minister, he will be holding what his expectations are because he, as the Premier and as the Minister of Finance, will be dealing with the Government of Canada going forward on these matters?

This is only one of seven. The others are not nearly the scale, but there are other arrangements to be made. I think there are a number of lessons to be learned from this. I would ask the Premier whether or not there will be any conducting of an internal review or if we are just going to wait to see if the Auditor General does something.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will just start right off the bat by saying that this is the type of review that I would love to see, for sure. If it pleases the members of the opposition, I am going to give a brief update to the concept of that Faro transfer to Canada — and then I will invite my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, to speak as well.

The Faro transition to Canada — the responsibilities for the Faro site have been transferred to Canada — a question asked by the members of the Yukon Party, I believe, during a briefing on the status of FTEs within that transfer. I will say that, under the draft transition agreement, Canada agreed to fund up to four full-time equivalent positions and the related infrastructure requirements to support Yukon's ongoing role in the project until a water licence is issued for the remediation project. Continued funding will be subject to a review and approval of the parties and linked to the revised Faro governance model under the review with Canada. In addition to the four full-time project staff, Canada also agreed to provide funding for up to four full-time equivalent positions

for a period of two years to allow Yukon to redeploy existing project staff within the Government of Yukon at our sole discretion. The redeployed project staff are currently working with Assessment and Abandoned Mines on type 2 sites.

Canada also agreed to allow Yukon government to redeploy up to four existing project staff to fill vacancies in the type 2 unit, subject to the approval of an annual detailed work plan. The Faro briefing note is also going to be something that we can speak a little bit more to and we can update it as time goes on and more information comes in.

I believe there was also a question that was asked as to whether the Yukon has initiated a lessons-learned retrospective from its experience with managing the Faro site. This is a question that was asked by the NDP in the briefing as well. As was mentioned here today, \$400 million has been spent on the site and a closure plan has not been decided upon. This question is not only related to a review of Faro, but also to a review of our approach within major projects — past, present and future — and is as it should be. This is all about ensuring that Yukoners and taxpayers are not left with potentially huge costs. This may be helpful — I believe that this will be helpful as we work with Canada on other type 2 sites in Yukon.

We're working with Canada on a review of the Faro governance. Before April 2019 or a future date agreed to by parties — but that's the hope right now — the parties will develop a new governance model for Faro, specifically. We also spoke to our recent decision with British Columbia on their review of major projects — Kotaneelee well, Wolverine mine. There are a whole bunch of different issues there as well. Suffice it to say that it is something we're very interested in, and we believe it will help with the overview and the scrutiny moving forward, and we will make sure the taxpayers' money is being spent wisely and we're not left on the hook.

I will let the minister responsible maybe talk more specifically on that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will today, for the prudence of the process, give minimal context and stick to the line items that are here.

Just to start, there are certain areas of advice that I would take. There are other areas of advice that I do take from the Leader of the Third Party. When it comes to this particular topic, I think that, with her experience of dealing within the federal public service and her extensive experience of sharing work and collaborating with the Yukon government, she would have extensive experience on how some of this stuff becomes more cumbersome and is sometimes not as efficient as it should be to deliver programs as they should.

With that in mind, that's really the story we're dealing with here. My critic for Energy, Mines and Resources from the Yukon Party, the Member for Copperbelt South, would also understand the challenges of this particular file. I do respect the question concerning the internal review. I think that it is something where, when you have a challenge that has taken place, you would look to do that. Really, the change in governance is not due so much to problems; it's about taking a

look at opportunities and resourcing our abandoned mines in the best and most effective way.

The department has done a fabulous job. I want to commend the individuals who have worked on this project. It is a beast, as we all know, and we have these other obligations to clean and reclaim mine sites. I look at those in two ways: we have an obligation to Yukoners to make sure that these sites are cleaned up, and we have to take into consideration the health of Yukoners, but we also have been left with an economic opportunity and an opportunity for Yukoners to become very experienced when it comes to reclamation-type work.

I would say there are three different principles, at least, that I took into consideration in my role. The Premier gave me enough room to work with my deputy minister and our team to take into consideration, first, the health of Yukoners. That was really key as we started to make decisions. We knew we were in a position where we wanted to see this project cleaned up as quickly as possible. Secondly, when you go back and look at the history of the mine site and the project and its impact on First Nations in the area, specifically the Ross River Dena Council — and even if you go back and read through the royal commission on impacts to that nation and then you look at how the reclamation work was rolling out — we felt that there was a real obligation to ensure that Ross River was at least gleaning, at this point in the continuum, as many economic opportunities as they could — and also respecting the other Kaska nations and self-governing First Nations.

The third, which actually connects the two, is how we ensure that Yukoners and Yukon companies had the best benefit, and that has been something that the government has wrangled with over the last number of years. How do we get that local impact to this extensive spending on cleanup?

When you look at the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* and at the opportunities and leverage we have with working with Ross River and understanding that the history of Ross River, for the most part, as a development corporation has been to work specifically with local drilling companies — their own development corporation. We felt that having that approach, by stepping back and having Canada — and, of course, we were at the table with Ross River and we were at the table with our own team. I had the opportunity to fly to Ottawa and sit at the table with Chief Caesar, and we wanted to ensure that Ross River was happy with what was going to play out.

The work that was done in the early stage by the Yukon government was extensive. I think our team has learned a tremendous amount — stuff that is applicable — and they can use and transfer that knowledge to the work on the other type 2 sites. I think it can make us more agile in our work and approach to the other type 2 sites. Really, the financial line item here is just where we were in a process and, at this point, providing that money back.

Of course, when you're co-managing a project like this with Canada, Canada has an obligation to Canadians — and in that, Yukoners — to ensure that the spending they do and the

transfer agreements that they provide and their spending also meet the test of transparency and accountability.

I would seek the knowledge of the Leader of the Third Party if I'm not as clear about the accountability on the spending of Canadian money, but I think there are some practices there as well. We walked away from this learning, but really we walked away from a role within this to ensure that the project was done as quickly as possible. I don't think there is anything wrong with that. I thought it was a very professional decision for the team to make, and we still deal with the regulation responsibility on this.

I'll just finish by saying that this is a quote from Jack Caesar upon the release of the contract. He said — and I quote: "I am very pleased with Ross River Dena Council's meaningful involvement in the procurement of the Interim Construction Manager for Faro Mine. Finally, we are coming to a place where we can put the shovel in the ground and start the important remediation process. These are exciting times: working with Canada, Yukon Government and the new interim construction manager, Parsons, we see something for our younger people to be excited about."

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Ms. Hanson: Before I move on to my next line of questioning, I just want to comment, if I may, on the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources' accounting of the background on the Faro mine site. I think the view that he expressed is one perspective. I think there are other perspectives, and I think that is why I would suggest that a review audit or something is necessary, keeping in mind that the federal government had established FCSAP — the federal contaminated sites action plan — that expires in 2020, with the idea that big, ugly places like the Sydney tar ponds and Faro would be cleaned up with the money that had been specially identified by Treasury Board and Cabinet to achieve that end. I can only reflect back to my direct experience, which expired in 2007 when I retired. At that time, I was told by the joint table that we would have a closure plan in 2009 — 2011 perhaps, if I stretch it.

The overall amount of money in terms of forecast was equally daunting, but I guess my concern is that, unless and until we learn where we deviated, the perception may be out there within the federal realm that Yukon can't manage. That is what we need to find out. We need to be very brutal, if necessary. We need to go back into our systems and find out why things kept changing, because we are going forward with six-plus of our own ones that are creating — as we see in Public Accounts, we have our own little contaminated sites that we are creating, whether it is Highways and Public

Works, which has more contaminated sites every year, or the Wolverine mine — or, or, or — in addition to the six that we are working with Canada on and the variations on the theme there.

On page 94 of the review that was conducted last October and published last year, one of the options that was put forward — and I want to raise this one because it is one that the Finance minister has sort of referred to in various ways.

I want to get him to be a bit more precise, in terms of what's intended here. The option that was identified there was to conduct a comprehensive review of all departments and programs to ensure that government activities are appropriate and achieve value for money. It dovetails with one of the boxed comments that the panel had captured, which was to do a Nielsen-like task force on program review. Having lived through the Nielsen task force program review in 1985, I can tell you that would be interesting, but it had specific parameters and it had expectations.

The panel used as the example the existence of some Yukoners raising concerns regarding the existence of whole functional areas of government. They talked about the operation and maintenance cost in the Oil and Gas Resources branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources exceeding \$3.5 million. They go on to posit the expression about whether or not this regulatory cost is warranted, given the issue of oil prices remaining low in the foreseeable future, et cetera.

To be sure, the panel, they said, had no position on whether or not this spending had benefits that exceed the cost but was illustrative of the need for broader systematic review.

My question for the Minister of Finance is: Is the government doing this broader systematic review of all government programs and services, or is it limited? I'll ask that question first.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll be quick on this one. In a nutshell, yes, we are going to continue past Health and Social Services when we do comprehensive reviews. We're starting with Health and Social Services, as it is the lion's share of the budgetary considerations, and hopefully we'll learn best practices as we go through that.

One investment that was asked for and that we're moving forward on now is in Finance, and that is a program review and evaluation. That should be from the Financial Advisory Panel. That's supposed to be something that we continue to do all the time. That's another subset, I guess you could call it, of reviews that we're doing. The director has been hired in that pursuit and is working on the policy as we speak, but to answer the overall question, yes.

We're not stopping at Health and Social Services. There are other things that are going on currently in context to the particular option that has been outlined by the Financial Advisory Panel.

Ms. Hanson: Just on that, the panel refers numerous times to a review of health and health care, but the Premier has expanded to Health and Social Services. Could he confirm that the focus of the review is health or Health and Social Services, the department as a whole or all related health? Is

there a terms of reference for this review? When will it be posted so that citizens and members of this Assembly will have a clue as to what is the scope of the review?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have to say it was an interesting process, as far as the scope of the Health and Social Services review. Not only is it Health, but it also is Social Services and it is also the NGOs, the non-governmental organizations, of which the government has hundreds that work in partnership with Health and Social Services to provide those services.

I have to tell you — to be quite frank and honest, I was a bit concerned at the sheer magnitude and size that was presented for this review at the beginning. However, based upon the Financial Advisory Panel's report, which really determined the direction, spending on social services does help efficiencies on health services as well, so it's hard to parse these out. It is probably a better review if we put them in together. We listened to the department and to the professionals therein when they promoted a Health and Social Services review and also a review of the non-government agencies and organizations that help us inside that. To answer the question, it is both but, again, it is based upon the recommendations of the Financial Advisory Panel.

Ms. Hanson: Yes, if the minister could just do that, because it's one thing to say we're going to do a review, but against what? We heard the Auditor General say that there was some confusion. In terms of funding of societies and the funding that various departments were setting out, they had different expectations and different criteria. We were told in the context of that Public Accounts Committee hearing that departments were getting their act together and that Finance was going to play this coordinating role to ensure that Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works and Health and Social Services wouldn't all go out and make more work for entities receiving funding and there would be some consistency in terms of reporting.

That is on the giving side, but there is also being able to have some rational expectations of what government is funding. As I go back to my earlier comments with respect to performance indicators within government, if you have those, it is a lot easier to then be able to say what our performance indicators and expectations are for those we fund externally. I'm looking to get a sense of what the scope of this is and where and when we might see the terms of reference that will guide this large review.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will pass this off to my Minister of Health and Social Services to review some of the phases that go into this planning. As far as the specifics about the terms of reference, I don't think we actually have a date set yet, but the minister can kind of walk through the phases of the process for the member opposite.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to provide a little more context. The comprehensive review is looking to seek efficiencies and also looking at historical growth in order to provide some long-term sustainability around health care and social supports but also looking at efficiencies. It is not really about cost-savings or cutting programs and services; it is

about identifying a plan going forward. The review will be completed by the fall of 2019, and we will consider all programs and services within the department that are funded. As noted, there are many, many NGO groups that are funded as well. It's really about maximizing the resources and ensuring we provide efficiencies and services.

We are committed to the engagement process involving First Nation governments, the public and non-government organizations, which would be our stakeholder groups and our non-government groups that we fund through contribution agreements.

As well, we will look internally and look for efficiencies. We know that historically there were assessments and reviews done already, so we are taking these things into consideration as we look at the recommendations from the advisory panel — the 2008, 2013 and then, of course, the now-new objectives and mandate. Further direction received from Management Board is to proceed with a comprehensive review focusing on these factors around driving costs, the quality of the outcome being delivered to Yukoners and emphasis on ensuring efficiencies.

With regard to the review — the review will undertake a comparative jurisdictional analysis to assess cost drivers, including pharmacare, medical travel, physician billing and, of course, yesterday we talked a bit about aging and aging populations. We are taking those things into consideration as we look at the Financial Advisory Panel and the cost drivers and trying to ensure efficiencies.

There are specific phases that obviously we need to go through as we advance the project and we work with our expert panel. We have an independent expert panel that has been appointed to assist and provide a neutral lens on all of this so it's not influenced in any way politically, but trying to give as much credence to transparency and working with our stakeholder partners and seeking necessary input and feedback. Analysis is really important. We look at, obviously, patient care and we're working with our hospitals as well. We have three hospitals and we're really trying to look for service delivery efficiencies in those hospitals and bringing the specialized supports.

The funding within the department needs to obviously be carried out in such a way that we provide the same services in rural Yukon as we do to residents in Whitehorse, or easier access to services from here to Vancouver, from here to the communities. We now have two hospitals in rural Yukon that we're going to try to maximize.

Phase 1, which is the government-to-government engagement — obviously a lot of preliminary research and analysis will need to happen with regard to implementation and the committee structure — and the member opposite raised some of that and those are things that we're working on internally.

With regard to the second phase, that is to continue the research and begin some staff engagements and looking at producing some internal reviews and looking at efficiencies — as we know, there are many, many sections of health. Each one of those needs to be reviewed as carefully as possible so

as not to jeopardize service delivery, but who knows better than the staff who are on the ground? We really need to take the effort and the due diligence there. That will be the second phase and that will conclude in January. I'm hoping that the committee will be able to do that.

We also have an internal team that we refer to as — well, there's the management team of team players — so specialized supports from within that will look at the analysis, and that's a whole separate phase unto itself that will feed up. The work is already happening. It's not to suggest in any way that we're trying to influence the outcome. It is just doing the work and the due diligence so we're not stopping a process that is moving forward, so collecting the data, collecting the information and using our partners through the Canadian Institute for Health Information. We have been feeding information up to them for many, many years and we have never really maximized or used that to efficiently design programs and services.

We have seen some anomalies and differences and we really want to give the analysis, the research and the information to the committee so that they don't spend as much time doing that work. That would be the second phase.

In February to May, we hope to continue research and, of course, drafting the proposals and begin the public engagement process, so that will be the third phase. Finally, the final report will be presented and, at that time, I'm sure we would look at sharing much of that information, but there is obviously a lot of great experience, as well, from members of the opposition who perhaps have had hands-on experience or some really great analysis that has come through the Legislative Assembly. Those are things that we want to hear and we want to ensure they are tied into the process.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for that. I just wanted to ask two questions to perhaps clarify. She referenced the independent expert panel. Has that already started? Has an independent expert panel been appointed and when did they start? She referenced a number of previous comprehensive reviews, like the 2008-09 health review *Taking the Pulse*, which was the response to it. There was also the roughly 2009-10 *Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*, a huge investment of time and energy by community organizations and individuals, as well as government across the board.

We ask NGOs and we ask community members to invest a heck of a lot of time and energy into these things and at some point it is like crying wolf. That is why it's so important that the scope and the expectations or the outcomes that government is seeking are transparent or open, so that those who get involved can weigh whether it's worth investing their time and energy into yet another government review.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the follow-up. I note that there has certainly been a lot of research that has been done. I just want to make a note here that what we don't want to do is waste people's time and waste the resources that we have. We want to maximize opportunities, do the analysis, get the work done and provide Yukoners really clear direction on, I guess,

our vision and our objectives on how we seek efficiencies, and that is what we intend to do.

With regard to the expert panel, we have gone out to bring in the expertise and experience in health and experience in Yukon — the experience to help us, to guide a process that is transparent and fair and allows for necessary input into the process. I would certainly take the recommendations under advisement and bring that back to my colleagues and we would have an internal discussion and determine then the next steps around how much and what we share and when is the time to share. We don't want to create uncertainty for Yukoners. We want to create certainty. That is our end objective. As soon as we can, as soon as the work is completed, we will certainly be happy to share that.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for that. I would like to move on, then. The panel had some very interesting observations in their final report with respect to options for the government with respect to increasing revenue. They got the two balances. One is that government wants to avoid spending restraint — which they opine in their report at several points that that's not necessarily the most effective or efficient way of getting to the endpoint that you're looking for — combined with the fact is that Yukon, as a government, continues to decrease its own-source revenue as opposed to increasing its own-source revenue, if I recall over the years. I would have to go back and look, but if we're at 87 percent now, we decreased at one point in terms of year-over-year — we just keep going down. That's not particularly reflective of mature government in terms of our dependence on our federal counterparts.

They made a comment on page 97 of the report that the territorial formula financing system, which we talked about earlier, ensures that territorial governments can fund public services comparable to southern Canada but at tax rates that are 30 percent lower than southern Canada. It's a huge bonus for us as territorial citizens, which most of us don't take into consideration. So taxes at roughly Alberta's level, which are far below average, they say, and are sufficient to maintain public services in the territory comparable to the average across southern Canada, which is the comparability thing we were talking about earlier this afternoon, with the section 36(2) kind of provision.

They talk about the notion that, if we want to avoid spending restraint measures, which have, in some jurisdictions, backfired, quite frankly — austerity doesn't necessarily boost your economy; spending often does. Raising revenues is another option they talk about, and they identify on page 97 a number of tools that are available to government. They went on to highlight potential areas that governments could consider, and that's what I would like to discuss with the Minister of Finance this afternoon.

I'm just quoting here where they say, "There are a variety of fines and fees that should be reviewed in Yukon. Of total government spending in Yukon, barely over 5% is funded by user fees. This leaves the burden of providing public goods to taxpayers generally, and limits the incentive of users to appropriately utilize the services being provided. Low user

fees are also not generally a feature of the territories generally, with NWT funding about 10% of consolidated government spending with fees and Nunavut funding over 17%. Nationally, the average is just over 13%. If Yukon matched the same 10% share of spending funded by fees as seen in the NWT, which would still be among the lowest in Canada, it would raise over \$60 million..." That's a significant amount of money.

I'm not the financial forecaster here; I'm simply reflecting what the Financial Advisory Panel reported in their report. We hired them as experts and that's what they say. I'm not disputing their numbers.

We have had this conversation in here and the fact that camping — they talk about the potential there. They talk about looking at and trying to make them comparable so that we are not gouging people, nor are we providing scarce resources — people who can afford to can pay. We have clearly heard the Premier as Minister of Finance say that his government is not interested in introducing a sales tax. I understand that. They talk about other measures on page 99 of the financial review. They talk about some of the measures — whether or not the territorial government should be reviewing property taxes and consider using some of the incremental revenue to increase municipal grants. These are all legitimate areas for discussion. I think that we need to be having that discussion whether or not there is action taken. At least you scope out what the costs, benefits and risks are in pursuing any one of the options that were identified by the panel.

They talk about the reality of what we are spending in terms of alcohol and drug services — support services — the fact is that last year we spent about \$10.4 million to deal with the effects of alcohol and drugs in this territory. I will admit, Mr. Chair, that I haven't looked at the report tabled by the Minister of Community Services, but I can warranty that the revenues from alcohol and tobacco taxes will be in excess of \$23 million this year. The year just ended when the report was tabled.

They talk about the potential for raising alcohol and tobacco taxes in order to support additional community and drug support programs. They talk about other tax changes, other revenue sources, and the other one that sort of struck me — because I have heard it at many meetings, whether it is AYC or it is tourism association meetings — is that they talk about the experiences in Alberta, British Columbia, Alaska and Manitoba — provinces across this country — where there is a hotel tax. Alberta charges four percent, BC charges two percent, Manitoba charges five percent and in Alaska it goes between two and thirteen percent.

They say the revenue implications for Yukon are not trivial, nor would they materially affect the health of the tourism industry. That is a statement from the panel. A conservative estimate is possible. If there were 2,500 rooms at 60-percent average occupancy, which we know in the Yukon these days is a very low occupancy rate — try to find a hotel in the shoulder seasons or the summer season here — that is over a half-million occupied hotel nights in the territory in a year, which is a low estimate. A modest two-percent hotel tax

would raise roughly \$1 million. When we have a government that is talking about efficiencies and looking at ways to offset costs and increasing costs, what my question is and will be is: What means will the government be using to review and assess these options?

Before I step down to let the Minister of Finance identify which of the variety of revenue-generating tools that the panel identified as being available to it — has the government analyzed? Will they release the analyses that they've done?

The final one that I wanted to point out was on page 104. They make the comment: "Not everyone pays the same taxes on fuel. Off-road commercial activities in areas such as mining, tourism, logging, sawmills, hunting, farming, fishing and trapping are exempt from the territory's fuel tax. There are also exemptions for fuel used for heating. For the 2017-18 fiscal year, such exemptions cost the Yukon government roughly \$4 million. Some exemptions may be defensible on equity grounds — especially for heating fuel in remote communities or on fuel used for traditional hunting, fishing, or trapping activities. But exempting fuel used in certain commercial or industrial operations may be less defensible... 'a tax exemption is a subsidy.' To the extent that there is a strong public policy argument to subsidize any particular industry, a more transparent (and less distortionary) way to do so is by providing a direct cash transfer rather than incentivizing the burning of fuel."

They talk about the option of reducing the number of fuel tax exemptions to commercial activities — broaden the fuel tax base and charge the same tax rate on fuel use regardless of the commercial activity. That is one option that they talk about.

I haven't touched on all of the options being presented by the panel, but I think it's important, as we talk about government finding efficiencies and the experiences of many people who have worked in government at any period in time — that has generally equated to cutting, restraint, not staffing, putting freezes on, and those are effectively cuts. Cumulatively, over time, they have effect.

We have to look at both sides of the ledger: The management of the existing resources and how we look at optimizing revenue generation. I'm looking to the Minister of Finance to set out for this House the basis upon which the government — or the analytical lens that it's applying to these various options that the panel has put out for discussion, because I believe that many of the people who invest the time and energy to respond to and participate in this review did so in good faith, thinking that these would be taken seriously. I'm hopeful that we'll have a serious conversation about them. Not all today — this will take time. I don't expect an instant answer on all of them, but I think it's important to be informed as to the kind of lens that will be applied to them.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

There's a lot there. There are lot of things to consider. It's a comprehensive report; that is for sure. We are starting with a four-pronged approach: the review of the Health and Social Services to start with, increasing efficiencies and effectiveness

of delivering services, getting out of the business of doing business and a fee review.

Now, we've talked in the Legislative Assembly a lot about getting out of the business of doing business, the effectiveness and the efficiencies and the review of Health and Social Services. I will expand more on our fees review, but suffice to say, before we get into some of those other areas of recommendations from the Financial Advisory Panel, that as far as the fuel exemptions and the fuel collection, we have the fuel-oil tax sellers that are basically tax collectors for us. We will have to go through the review, first and foremost, of the effects of the carbon-pricing mechanisms, because we are effectively asking them to add on another part to their job when they collect money. We are going to wait for the results of that new obligation through the fuel-oil tax to sellers before we move forward on an official review. Suffice it to say, there have been many conversations on this particular topic with the association that represents all of the fuel-tax collectors. We have had internal conversations with Finance about this particular section but no official review yet. The carbon tax is broader based and, because of that broad base, we want to see what it looks like before we move on.

I will go into the \$60-million figure that the member opposite quoted from the Financial Advisory Panel as far as — that could be amount of money that we could earn through a fee review. I would say that the dollar value is definitely at a macro level. They grossed up a lot of percentages to get to that number, and reaching \$60 million would be, to say the least, a burden to Yukoners. With that being said, we are moving forward on the review; I agree. If you take a look at the total government spending — the member opposite talked about nationally — we are at 13 percent when it comes to the fees generated. Northwest Territories is currently at 10 cents on every dollar that they earn. We are at five cents. Right now, we are at half. Most fees and services haven't been raised in 15 years in the Yukon.

We did see that was one of the recommendations from the panel, and our government has conducted a preliminary review of all fees, fines and the sale of government goods and services. Through the Financial Advisory Panel's public engagement, Yukoners were not supportive of certain things and more supportive of other things, but I think that this is one of those areas where we really need to take a look at new revenues being raised through fees or fines — lessening the need for us to curtail government investment, basically. That is something we are keen on and moving through at this time. This is in response to the direction — I mean, there were a lot of different ways that they thought we could go, but we believe that this is probably the most pertinent step within the four pillars. That is the last piece of those four pillars that we want to move on. We're in that process right now, trying to figure out which ones are the most important to look at, based upon socio-economic status, based upon need of services versus luxury — those types of things. That work is going on right now and there is more to come on that, but it is definitely something we are working on.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Finance for that response. My comment would be that if you have built a table and you have four legs, you want to make sure that they are all of equal strength, and so focusing on one and not the other, we can't just simply do cuts or restraint to make a healthy economy — we need to be generating revenue as well.

I would like to go on to — there was reference and I believe there was a question from the Official Opposition the other day with respect to the federal government's imposition of the cap on our total borrowing by the government and its Crown corporations. The recommendation made by the Financial Advisory Panel was to index the Yukon government's borrowing limit to increase along with the size of the economy, because they say that, although borrowing limits may be sensible, as the Yukon economy grows so does the government's ability to responsibly carry and service debt.

If we are talking about an economy that we are saying is going to grow, if the forecasts that the Minister of Finance — if he has confidence in those forecasts — then has the Premier and the Minister of Finance had conversations with the Government of Canada with respect to indexing the government's borrowing limit to increase along with the size of the economy? Their comment was that the indexing formula could reflect some moving average or other mechanisms to ensure that the economic volatility — which this territory is subject to, we know that — does not adversely affect the government's fiscal planning.

What kinds of conversations has the Yukon government had with the federal government with respect to indexing our borrowing limit to some function — I'm not an expert on this, clearly — some function of the size of our economy?

Hon. Mr. Silver: In a nutshell, we definitely have raised this concept with Minister Morneau on a federal level. There is an irony in increased economy and how it relates to the federal transfer, but we have not made a formal request therein.

Ms. Hanson: I would like to turn to page 111, which is the review of resource sector policies. Again, this is where the panel makes the statement that Yukoners own the territory's natural resources. It talks about the Yukon government and various First Nation governments managing these resources on behalf of Yukoners and that — having a full claim to the value of those resources. They make the point that I think is often misconstrued, that royalties are not taxes. They are how the owners of a natural resource extract its value when extraction and production is done by another party — a mining company.

An ideal system is one where any producer that would find it profitable to extract a resource absent a royalty system remains in operation under the royalty system. Royalties should not be the cause of any particular producer shutting down operations. Then they go on to say that the current fee structure should be viewed less like a royalty and more as an administrative fee to recover certain costs associated with necessary support functions of government.

One of the things that — and they point out the costs and that the gold fee — they're referring to placer gold fees — is

expected to net \$255,000, which they say is way less than what we're spending related to the activity. They say there may be scope to review, even modestly, to cover such costs. But they also go on to say that a more comprehensive review may be in order. We talked about doing a comprehensive review of Health and Social Services, because that's a major expenditure. Now they're talking about an area where it should be a revenue generator for the territory in both the placer and the quartz mining sector.

They talk about undertaking a comprehensive review of resource sector policies, with a particular emphasis on ensuring fair and efficient royalty rates, fee structures, permit and licensing costs, tax exemptions and minimum work requirements, because — they go on to say — the current system in Yukon is one with potentially questionable equity implications with such a low royalty. There are two concerns — and this is really important — one is overextraction of the resource where even inefficient producers may find it worthwhile to operate; and two, the resource value is captured by producers rather than the resource owners — Yukoners as a whole.

They say the current royalty system is equivalent to the government transferring the value of extracted gold to producers, that is, that it is equivalent to the government optimally extracting some share of the resource value that Yukoners own and then providing a government transfer to miners on the order of potentially millions of dollars to the extent that is acceptable to Yukoners on equity grounds — then the case to increase royalties diminishes. But even if this were the case, the government could commit all royalty revenues to a fund for use on community-related initiatives in particular communities.

There are a number — and they go on to point out, just as they did with user fees and other revenue-generating mechanisms, that Yukon, for example, compared to other jurisdictions, Yukon placer royalties are low. They compare us to BC or Alberta or Alaska.

They say that simply increasing the per-ounce royalty rate is not the only — and indeed perhaps not even the advisable — option. There are alternatives that do not put at risk placer mining. What they do suggest, and what I am asking the Minister of Finance for, is that the appearance would be that the government has precluded that conversation, because to assume that a discussion means a simple increase without looking at the options — for example, they do a really interesting comparison of the current royalty regime here to an alternative that has been used elsewhere.

My question for the Minister of Finance is: At what point, as part of its comprehensive review of government policies, will the Government of Yukon be undertaking the comprehensive review of resource sector policies with a particular emphasis on ensuring fair and efficient royalty rate fee structures, permit and licensing costs, tax exemptions and minimum work requirements as the options set out by the Financial Advisory Panel?

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is not the first time that we will be discussing the differences between the NDP and this

government, as far as royalties, as it relates to how we can move forward in our communities. Of course, I will go to what we have done. I will first start with the four pillars that we are moving forward on. As far as the Financial Advisory Panel goes, we are starting down that road. The member opposite did bring in some other mining-related issues that, of course, we would be willing to look at.

When it comes to royalties, I did a tour of Victoria Gold the other day. It is just fascinating how much work has been done there over the summer. There is a video out right now that is available on the proponent's website. Even that video doesn't show the progress to date. Within the last couple of weeks this thing is getting going and they are on track to produce the first gold bar by pretty much this time next year. That particular mine is projected to turn out on a yearly basis 200,000 ounces of gold.

We have Goldcorp as well — that's another mining corporation that is moving forward to go into production by 2020. It will be relatively equal in production size there as well. We have a lot of different productions going on, and we have lots of conversations through the MOU from the minister and the First Nations on priorities when it comes to how we can all work together in mining. When you take a look at the ounces coming out of quartz mining compared to the — I think it was 80,000 last year that came out of the placer mining association, Yukon-wide. All the placer miners together produced 80,000 ounces.

You take a look at the fact that most of the placer families live locally in the Yukon — they are in our schools and they pay income tax here. They are usually the first families to give the shirts off their backs in times of crisis. We have taken a focus on increasing the share of the royalties on quartz mining with the First Nation governments because that's where the lion's share is going to be.

I believe the member opposite did talk earlier today about antiquated mining legislation. There are a lot of conversations being had right now at a community level with First Nation communities and mining individuals — placer mining individuals and quartz mining individuals. It has kind of been a low bar as far as those conversations and that understanding of the different perspectives when it comes to really interesting files like Bill S-6, in going through the changes for section 49.1 and having the First Nation chiefs all in a room together with the mining proponents and seeing how dialogue for the first time, it seems, happening, where both are looking at an overburdened First Nation government when it comes to some overlap in some policies and not necessarily anything that's necessarily addressing more environmental stewardship, but just more overlap and having what could have been a very contentious conversation turn into a really congenial conversation and one that actually helps bridge gaps in the communities.

I would say that when it comes to the placer royalties, this is an issue that would divide my community of Dawson City, without a doubt. The last thing I want to do is invoke policies that are going to divide our communities, especially when we've done so much in the last two years to bridge gaps and

to get people in a room and to start really good conversations. You have this modern legislation, federally constituted and protected under Section 35, which is modern and sophisticated.

And we do have, Yukon-wide, a lot of work to do to modernize legislation from education and to modernize legislation right across the board, and having a conversation about how, as we work together as communities, we can actually move forward in a progressive way and unite these communities through legislation as opposed to litigation.

Now, rushing into successor legislation based upon placer royalties would be devastating to the relationships in my community, anyway. That is not to say that we are not listening to both the mining communities — who have a desire to make sure that our legislation holds up in court — we are also working with First Nation communities that have a willingness to sit down for the first time and have conversations with mining executives and placer miners. I have had the chief tell me in Dawson that the last two years there were pretty much the most conversations, outside of regular agendas like an annual general meeting with agendas — actual conversations, Yukoner to Yukoner, Klondiker to Klondiker — on the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. They were hard conversations when it comes to wetlands, hard conversations when it comes to a lot of files in the mining camp where the First Nation has not been in the conversation.

We are working together; we are working on policy and legislation that unites communities, and I think this is where we are going to disagree at this point as far as royalties to the placer industry go.

That is why my focus was coming to an agreement on how resource royalty sharing will be calculated under chapter 23 of the final agreements as a joint priority from the Yukon Forum — a joint priority from the Yukon First Nations and ourselves through the mining MOU. We're going to focus on those joint priorities, and we're very close to finalizing agreements with a lot of self-governing First Nations. We have lots of working groups going on from the Yukon Forum — 16 different working groups — dealing with issues that are coming from the First Nation community with us. I think we are seeing an awful lot of progress — we really are. I'm not just saying that.

The Financial Advisory Panel's report, in discussing First Nation fiscal relations in the Yukon, included specific considerations when it comes to First Nations with the current resource revenue-sharing agreements. We're focusing on chapter 23; we're focusing in on quartz, which is the lion's share of the royalties, and we are willing to put a better share — I think for a long time, the territorial government bickered and argued over those percentages, and to what end? It just caused more of a contentious relationship; people's muscles were tense and people's heels were dug in because of these concepts. Increasing that share also increases trust as well. That is where we're moving forward. I'm happy with this relationship and I'm happy with the new relationship. As far as chapter 23 goes, 50 cents of the first — I don't need to go

into the details of the agreement. That is something that we all know and understand, and it would just take up more time at the end of the day here.

I respectfully will agree to disagree on the placer royalties with the member opposite.

Ms. Hanson: Regardless of whether or not we have a personal disagreement about this, I'm just reflecting what the Financial Advisory Panel said in its report. I was asking the Finance minister to reflect on the government's position on that. This is not me, as the NDP, saying what the scope of that would be. It was exactly, word for word, what the Financial Advisory Panel said — as it had on many other subjects. As I said last year when they appeared before the Legislative Assembly, the good thing is that they actually did reflect the broad range of interests of the territory that are necessary. They may be provocative at times, but we need to have the conversation. We can't simply shut them down. They are out there.

Based on the Finance minister's segue — there are a number of issues, but given the time — he mentioned the work, and we all were there last year, I think, at the grand opening of Victoria Gold. We have heard through the media, and he has obviously heard first-hand, the progress that is being made there.

Based on the forecast production for Victoria Gold that he just mentioned there, what royalties will be accruing to the territory that will be available for sharing through the MOU? Starting with, say, 100,000 ounces next year, how much royalty will be coming to the territory that can then be shared with Yukon First Nations in 2019-21? What is the forecast for royalties that we see flowing to the territory as a result of that one mine?

As he mentioned, we have hopes for others coming online. In line with that, the panel did note on page 115 that many Yukoners expressed concern about the relatively high number of fly-in and fly-out workers at large-scale mining operations in Yukon.

I believe there are 400 or more workers at Victoria Gold, if I'm not incorrect.

“The income taxes paid by these workers will, for the most part, accrue to the province of their residence, not Yukon. To address this problem, the NWT has implemented a payroll tax that is levied on worker incomes in the territory. For residents, such a payroll tax could be deductible from Yukon personal income taxes paid. This would mean no increased tax burden for Yukon workers, but a portion of out-of-territory worker earnings could be appropriately captured by the Yukon government...” in lieu of the services and everything else that we provide, particularly roads.

They said the option was to explore the possibility of a Yukon payroll tax on out-of-territory workers at large-scale mining operations.

I've seen Mr. Halliday's reflection that perhaps it should be expanded to other out-of-territory workers, but certainly the focus in the Northwest Territories has been on those workers who fly in — in their case, to the diamond mines.

Does the Minister of Finance have a ballpark forecast on royalties that will start accruing to the territory when production is ramped up to whatever amount —100,000 or 200,000 ounces?

Has analysis been done on the potential revenues and the implications of implementing a payroll tax? I know the Northwest Territories, when they did it, did a broad-scale consultation on options that Northwest Territories could consider. It was an engagement with the public and with stakeholders. That was a number of years ago.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess, just as a general statement, that there are plenty of great recommendations in the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's final document, but they are exactly that — they are recommendations. It's going to take this government to decide how we implement. We have made a decision on a four-pronged approach to start with.

I will say that the payroll tax concept is intriguing. We have been having internal conversations on it. At the same time, we are not at the point right now of discussing what kind of committee or what kind of way we're going to move forward on a conversation for this. It is an intriguing conversation. It may trigger a referendum in Yukon, according to our legislation, and so that's an interesting part of that conversation as well.

I can see the member opposite's opinion of that particular legislation, but as that legislation is a reality, it may actually trigger a referendum, depending on how it is done. That's an interesting concept and it's something that is very intriguing.

I do have to give credit where credit is due to Victoria Gold. With over 400 workers in that camp, the amount of Na Cho Nyäk Dun citizens and Mayo citizens that are working in that camp and Yukoners that are working in that camp is quite impressive, but it does give you pause to think about the others who come in and fly out. That is a concern.

It doesn't help our GDP when individual workers are taking their money home to other jurisdictions. It is great to see us helping out a Canadian economy, especially when we spend so much of Canada's taxes here with our budget, but my job as the Premier is to try to keep as many of those dollars as we possibly can here, recycling in the Yukon. That's definitely what we are doing with our fees and services review. That is also something that is really intriguing as far as the payroll tax concept when it comes to that part of the Financial Advisory Panel.

As far as the breakdown of how much money would go here and there, it is so hard to speculate right now. Mining companies give projections, which are exactly that — they are projections. It is so hard to speculate; I really can't give a forecast by project, but we will get back to you as far as a total forecast based upon their numbers. There are a lot of different companies that are not at production right now, so that's just it. We have Goldcorp projecting to be in production by 2020, whether or not that happens. We have BMC Minerals projecting and we have Alexco making some decisions. We have lots of different companies that are further away than Victoria Gold. We are very hopeful that Victoria Gold gets off

the ground by this time next year, and at that time we will be able to give those hard numbers.

Again, as far as the calculation goes, it is written out. If the members opposite want to sit down, I will give more work to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as far as a breakdown or analysis of how that royalty share is implemented between the governments. Then we can have that conversation. It is a pretty straightforward calculation. We do a royalty forecast in total every year, so we can share that as well. It is so hard to predict what those royalties will be as far as ounces are to start with.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Silver that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: 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 Tuesday, October 9, 2018. I wish all members a happy and safe Thanksgiving weekend.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled October 4, 2018:

34-2-71

Yukon Hospitals — Year in Review 2017-18 — A Journey Together and Yukon Hospital Corporation Financial Statements (March 31, 2018) (Frost)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 4, 2018:

34-2-146

Response to oral question from Mr. Hassard re: tourism and culture initiatives — *Copyright Act* (Dendys)

34-2-147

Response to oral question from Mr. Hassard re: tourism and culture initiatives — safe workplaces (Dendys)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 95

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 9, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Clerk of the Assembly | Floyd McCormick |
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| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 9, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of several tributes to Fire Prevention Week, we have several visitors here in the gallery and I would like us to welcome them — first of all, Mr. Chris Reynolds, a firefighter with the Golden Horn Fire Department and a member of the special operations medical extraction team; Mr. Dave Welin, the Carcross fire chief; Mr. Jeff Boyd, the deputy fire chief for Mount Lorne; Allan Koprowsky who is the ADM of Protective Services; and welcome to Whitehorse's new fire chief, Mr. Michael Dine and also Mr. James Paterson, who is the Yukon fire marshal — if we can welcome them.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: It gives me great pleasure to ask everybody in the Legislative Assembly to help me in welcoming a couple of SOVA alumni — we have Kerry Barber and we also have Rebecca Manias. Thank you very much for being here today.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Fire Prevention Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm honoured to rise to pay tribute on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to Yukoners who are protecting their families and communities by making fire safety and prevention activities a priority.

It's Fire Prevention Week, Mr. Speaker. From October 7 to 13, Fire Prevention Week draws our attention every year to the basic but essential steps each of us must take to ensure the safety of our families in the event of fire.

Here are three simple calls to action for each of us to reduce the risk of fire and be prepared in the event of one: (1) look for places where fire can start — take a good look around your home, inside and out, identify potential fire hazards and take care of them — simple; (2) learn — learn two ways out of each room, make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily and are free of clutter — easy; and (3) listen — listen for the sound of the smoke alarm. You could have only minutes to escape safely once the alarm sounds. Go outside a safe distance from your home or

building and where you have planned to meet with your family — no problem. Look, listen and learn — something we can all do to make our homes, families, schools, and work safe.

To all those folks participating in Fire Prevention Week, I want to say thank you: teachers and daycare providers and their students who practice fire drills and look, listen and learn and every Yukoner who tests their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly, who keeps the chimneys clean, who makes an emergency plan to get out in case of fire and who tests that plan a couple times a year with everyone in their home.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Yukon fire service, which protects our lives and property from fire. This year we had a fire at the Whitehorse solid waste facility. It lasted just shy of 100 hours, and all of the surrounding community fire teams came in support.

This year, Lower Post was devastated by wildfire and the Watson Lake firefighters went and supported that community.

Our firefighters keep us safe, and they will be the first to tell all of us that fire prevention is what is critical — look, listen and learn. It is always best to prevent fires from starting. Our lives depend on it and on being alerted quickly to a fire and knowing how to get out fast. Thank you to everyone who is participating in Fire Prevention Week activities. Together we make our communities safer.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition during Fire Prevention Week to pay tribute to the hard-working men and women who make up our municipal and community firefighting departments across the territory as well as those in Wildland Fire Management. I would like to make a special mention of and welcome those who have joined us here in the gallery today.

I would like to thank each and every one of the full-time and volunteer firefighters across the territory for the work that they do to keep our communities, families and homes safe. They provide structural, vehicle and wildland firefighting as well as a broad range of other fire-suppression duties that are essential to our safety and also public information. Firefighters deal with hazards such as flammable liquid and compressed gas leaks, auto extraction at accident scenes — they rescue people in a variety of situations — and also assist in other rescue operations and hazardous materials incidents as required.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the Yukon Fire Marshal's Office for their role in fire safety in the Yukon and would like to mention specifically the work that they have done in the Ember Fire Academy offered by Protective Services. This is their fourth year offering the program, which offers an intensive program to women to allow them to experience firefighting. Not only does it provide the opportunity to gain new skills, but it promotes an interest in firefighting to all.

Another initiative is the work that has been done with the fire scenario trailer, which allows trainees and volunteers to

experience what it is like to be inside a structural fire and be better prepared in the event that they must one day deal with the real thing. The trailer operates on propane and has a series of obstacles and stairs to help firefighters practise navigation through a fire situation. It can be towed to Yukon communities and provides hands-on training and experience with fires in small, enclosed spaces with, of course, important safety controls in place.

Fire personnel in Whitehorse and the communities continue to provide fire safety education as well to Yukon students and the general public. The theme of the 2018 campaign, as the Minister of Community Services noted, is: “Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere.” Fire prevention is a great opportunity for Yukoners to take some time to make sure they are fully knowledgeable in fire safety and to make sure they are fully equipped to deal with a fire.

Make a plan, check your fire extinguishers, talk to your kids to make sure they are aware of what to do in the case of an emergency and plan for an emergency escape route. Know that, when it comes to fire in the home, there is often little time to act.

Thank you again to all of our municipal and community firefighters, both past and present, for the work that they do to keep us safe in our homes and our communities.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to acknowledge this, the 22nd annual Fire Prevention Week in Canada. Today we wish to pay special tribute to municipal and community firefighters in fire halls across the Yukon.

A number of weeks ago, there was a fire truck parked at the Takhini arena, and I am not an expert, but it looked like it was emptying its tank across the parking lot. If you have never seen this before, it’s impressive. The spray easily went the length of the building and the mist in the air was creating small rainbows, but what was even more striking was the small human standing off to the side with eyes the size of dinner plates, talking to the firefighters. I cannot imagine how this small person’s life path has now been affected. I feel like, on this day, the fire crew was guaranteeing that they would have a new recruit in 20 years’ time or so.

Whether we talk about the oldest department in the City of Whitehorse or one of the 16 community volunteer fire departments with nearly 225 volunteers, we know that the staff and volunteers who have taken on the task of keeping the neighbours safe each and every day deserve our thanks.

Thank you to those special people — the firefighters — who run toward danger when most of us run from it, saving both hearts and homes through their efforts.

Thank you very much.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon School of Visual Arts

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of all of my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to

the alumni artists from the Yukon School of Visual Arts in Dawson City, commonly referred to as SOVA.

A retrospective exhibit of artwork created by 28 of SOVA’s alumni is currently on display at the Yukon Arts Centre public gallery. These works were not created when the artists were studying at SOVA but they were made since they’ve moved on into their practices. The exhibition is open until October 13. If you haven’t had a chance to see it, I highly recommend that you do so.

Congratulations to each and every one of the 28 artists who have been included in the exhibit. You are a demonstration of the success of SOVA.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, art is profoundly important and integral to both our culture and our society. It adds vibrancy to our lives and to public spaces and gives form to ideas and to opinions about the world around us. Art has been a part of our way of living and is deeply connected to the human experience. It allows us to learn about ourselves and about others.

Art is meant to move people. Whether it be inspirational or a question of something, an excitement, a contemplation or even an anger, art moves us and connects us and connects our hearts and our minds. Of course, art cannot exist without the artist who created it. To have an exhibition of art on display that was created by a group of individuals who studied art here in the Yukon is truly an exceptional thing.

Dawson City is a special place and it is a unique location to learn and to study. SOVA is a result of a visionary partnership between Dawson City Arts Society, the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation and Yukon College. This collaboration has resulted in over 10 years of students coming from all across the country to learn and to be inspired about our landscape, our culture, our history and our people. This inspiration has been given form through a wide variety of disciplines and media, and the works in the exhibition showcase a different set of techniques, ideas and subjects.

The artwork in the show is not all there is. All sorts of great work is being made by SOVA alumni locally, nationally and also internationally. It is wonderful to see so many students who have studied at SOVA for their foundational year in arts training to have continued on with their field of study and, in many cases, are now professionals in the field they have chosen. Many in the show recently completed their arts degree, several are pursuing their masters and one individual is working on her PhD. The impact of the SOVA programming on the territory is impressive.

The Government of Yukon is fortunate to have two SOVA students with us in the gallery today. We’re lucky to have two who work for us in the government as well.

Kerry Barber is a multimedia producer, and we also have Tamika Knutson, who was just appointed as an arts advisor for the Government of Yukon. A former student of SOVA, Aubyn O’Grady, is now the new program director at SOVA. Congratulations to Aubyn. How incredibly awesome it is to have an alumni right now running the program. She is also one heck of a wrestler as well.

SOVA and the students who study there enhance Dawson's reputation as an innovator in our cultural field. I would like to acknowledge the dedication, innovation and hard work of SOVA's governance council and all of the teachers and the administrative staff. They provide guidance and the space where creativity can be explored and experimented with. I am truly inspired by all of the alumni artists and look forward to seeing what new experiences, passions and talent all SOVA graduates will share next.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling a legislative return responding to questions from the Member for Lake Laberge during Committee of the Whole general debate on October 2, 2018.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Adel: I have for tabling the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees, dated October 9, 2018.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 25: *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act (2018)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 25, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 25, entitled *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act (2018)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 25 agreed to

Bill No. 26: *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 26, entitled *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 26, entitled *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 26 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to host community workshops in every Yukon community to explain changes to the *Societies Act* and how they will affect local societies and associations.

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

THAT the chair and CEO of the Yukon Hospital Corporation do appear as witnesses during Committee of the Whole prior to the end of the current Fall Sitting.

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

THAT this House supports economic reconciliation with Yukon First Nations as a means of achieving a more prosperous and economically vibrant territory for all.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Kent: Last week, the CBC made public a leaked document indicating that the Liberals wanted departments to make two-percent cuts to their operating budgets across each and every department. As we mentioned, that would mean a \$3.6-million cut to Education. When we asked the Premier for specifics about where he is going to cut this \$3.6 million from Education, he was quite cagey about it and actually dodged the question, so we will give him another chance to tell us exactly what cuts are being contemplated by the Liberals for the Department of Education.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would encourage the members opposite to read the leaked document that they keep referencing. In that document, we spoke about how the departments themselves are looking for efficiencies internally to support a whole-of-government approach — but then again, the woeful inaccuracies that we're hearing in this Legislative Assembly — well, they are truly troubling, to say the least.

Let me explain to members opposite what "efficiency" really is. It is about looking at reducing government waste and duplication. It's about curbing government inefficiencies and reducing unnecessary steps that make it difficult for Yukoners to get the services that they need. It is about removing frustrations that get in the way of delivering services to taxpayers and it is about considering the possibility that there are government activities right now that may not be providing the value to Yukoners that it needs to.

As the members opposite talk doom and gloom about cuts to services, we are looking at efficiencies and we continue to challenge the opposition. What we're hearing is: Good — it's

good that government is taking a look at efficiencies and it's good that the departments are looking to see how they can curb the expenses that are occurring in this Yukon government. As we do know, we spend more money than we earn and we need to wrangle that in.

Mr. Kent: Last week, we heard from a source that, as part of the Liberal cuts to Education, they are slashing the budget for substitute teachers. Substitutes play an important role in the day-to-day operations of a school. They cover teachers in a multitude of circumstances and schools depend on them. We have heard Holy Family has been asked to cut their budget for substitute teachers in half.

Does the Premier believe that cutting the substitute teacher budget is appropriate?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm not going to speculate as to the sources the members opposite are speaking about but, again, from this internal document and from any presentations that we have done, these are not the words of the territorial government. They are the words of the Yukon Party. They keep on talking about cuts. Now they're talking about cuts to substitute teachers. This is not something that is being contemplated right now by this government.

What are being contemplated are efficiencies. We're trying to find efficiencies and we want to manage differently from the previous government. The previous government had a trend of spending more than it earned, and that was very concerning to Yukoners. So Yukoners are not interested in this irresponsible approach to running the territory and we are looking for efficiencies.

The Financial Advisory Panel said to act quickly and you won't have to cut programs. If you act quickly, you can actually find efficiencies, and so that's what we're doing. We're looking for those efficiencies. Think about the human hours put into processes, the duplication of services, the overtime required for a government to use politically motivated decisions as opposed to evidence-based decisions. That's extremely costly, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're doing, and it's through the improved capital planning — it's just one example — as one of the main reasons why the government was able to table a fiscal plan that included only a small deficit this year, much smaller than what was forecast in 2017.

I would ask the Yukon Party: Did that come with cuts? The answer is no, it came with efficiencies.

Mr. Kent: So the CBC made public a leaked document that shows the government is looking for two-percent cuts in each department. The Premier claims he is looking for efficiencies and we all know "efficiencies" is just another word for cuts. If the Premier was truly looking for efficiencies, then maybe he shouldn't have spent over \$500,000 on a new logo that nobody was asking for or over \$120,000 to spray mist into the air in Dawson City or \$160,000 in sole-source contracts to a Liberal lobbying firm based out of Toronto.

Does the Premier really think that it was appropriate to spend money on those things while he was looking for

\$3.6 million in cuts in Education, starting with cutting the substitute teacher budget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The opposition can continue to bring speculation into the Legislative Assembly and we will work on facts. We will work on evidence-based decision-making. I can just see their Twitter feeds right now — something about a confirmation or something. It's uncanny how this media has become a digital stain in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make the efficiencies that we need to curtail the spending that's happening. Imagine the pressure applied to Department of Health and Social Services when, out of the blue, they found in the news that they were to build a 300-bed facility. Imagine the redrafting of a new Peel plan because the political wing didn't like the report, or having a gutted financial department and decisions being made outside of Management Board. These are the things that we're trying to curtail. It's the efficiencies of a whole-of-government approach that we're working on, on this side of the government — decisions being made on evidence and planning, projected O&M and capital expenses over a five-year schedule as opposed to one year at a time, keeping all major budgets to the mains and leaving supplementary budgets for unforeseen expenses.

I will just do a little math for the members opposite. If a government department is growing at 10 percent and if it is asked to look for a one-percent efficiency, that government is now growing at nine percent. A cut would mean about 12 percent. Just for the record: efficiencies are not necessarily cuts. It's quite a different narrative from what the Yukon Party would have you believe.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Cathers: We've heard that Yukoners are already feeling the effects of the Liberal cuts that the Premier denies. As my colleague noted, the Premier asked to find \$3.6 million in cuts at Education. We've heard that at least one school has already seen its substitute-teacher budget. We know from a leaked Cabinet memo that they've asked Health and Social Services to reduce its budget by two percent.

I think everyone realizes that government can be more efficient in some areas, but governing is about making choices. The Premier chose to spend \$3 million of taxpayers' money on a new cannabis Crown corporation instead of allowing the private sector to take the lead. Meanwhile, he has told the Department of Health and Social Services to find two-percent cuts in their budget, which means a cut of over \$8 million in health spending.

Will the Premier at least tell us what is on the chopping block in Health and Social Services?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's an interesting narrative. If we take a look at the leaked document, it was asking for one percent, and at the end, it said possibly two percent, but of course, the Yukon Party, in their wisdom, decided to go right for two percent and that means cuts.

Really, it's only the Yukon Party that's talking about cuts right now. It's interesting because it was the Yukon Party that presided over the largest growth in government in history. It's

interesting to hear that they do not see any way in which this government can get more efficient. To hear the suggestion that the government is running perfectly and at perfect capacity and that there's no room for improvement — well, I don't understand that.

I simply refuse to agree with the members opposite. I believe that it's our job to consider how the government could be working better — better for the people it serves — for the people of Yukon and we will continue to do that.

Again, the woeful inaccuracies that we're hearing in the Legislative Assembly are truly troubling, to say the least.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier's talking points are contradicted by their own Financial Advisory Panel when it comes to the situation that this government inherited on taking office.

Again, we're referring to the leaked memo that came from the Premier's own department, the Department of Finance, which asked for two-percent reductions — i.e. cuts.

Another area of questionable spending by the Premier was spending over \$500,000 to create a new logo and website. Who in the Yukon was asking for that? At the time, we pointed out that Yukoners would rather that taxpayers' money be spent on their priorities, including health care, highway safety and so on. That's still the case today now that the government is looking for cuts in health. It appears that for every one dollar that the Liberals spent on a new logo and website, they're looking to cut \$16 from Health and Social Services — again, according to the leaked memo from the Premier's own department.

Will the Premier go back to the drawing board and abandon the very idea of cutting the budget of Health and Social Services by \$8 million?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's so interesting that the member opposite uses an example that shows efficiencies by doing a whole-of-government approach when it comes to our visual identity and our website and focusing on Yukoners as opposed to on government. This is a cost-saving in the long run, Mr. Speaker. Every single department working on a departmental level to do logo and branding — that's a big expense. Having a one-government approach with an identified logo that works internationally, nationally and locally — that's smart and that is a cost-saving, Mr. Speaker.

I don't hear a lot of people complaining about the fact that we're looking for efficiencies. What I'm getting in my e-mail and on my phone and from just talking to Yukoners on the streets is: "Good — this is taxpayers' money; we want to make sure that you're spending it as efficiently as possible." Right now, we are spending more money than we are earning, and that trend has been going on for years. Now, the Yukon Party does not like that, but it's true. They don't like the fact that we can find efficiencies where they couldn't and therefore they assume that we're going to make cuts everywhere, but again, this is a narrative. We love this conversation in the Legislative Assembly because it allows us to talk about a whole-of-government approach. It allows us to talk about the efficiencies that we're working on, and it's great to have an opportunity to talk about getting rid of inefficiencies, reducing

unnecessary steps and removing frustration that gets in the way of delivering services to the taxpayers of the Yukon.

Mr. Cathers: Again, I have to point out to members that, when you look at the facts, including the report compiled by the Premier's own Financial Advisory Panel, their talking points fall apart. The fact of the matter is that the Premier is making choices here. He has chosen to spend \$3 million of taxpayers' money on a new cannabis Crown corporation that we could have done without. They have chosen to spend \$500,000 on a new logo and website, but they still haven't fully disclosed the costs of things such as new vehicle signs and personalized memo pads, so the cost is, in fact, probably higher than that. The Premier chose to spend \$120,000 literally spraying water in the air, hoping for ice in Dawson City. We have seen the sole-sourcing of \$160,000 in contracts to a Liberal lobbying firm in Toronto, and the Premier chose to spend over \$100,000 on new luxuries at the Cabinet office, such as iPads and cellphones that didn't need replacing.

Why is the Premier telling Yukoners to tighten their belts and looking for cuts in Health and Social Services, but seems to have no shortage of money for Liberal perks and pet projects?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The inaccuracies, Mr. Speaker — first of all, not my Financial Advisory Panel, an independent Financial Advisory Panel — and \$300 million in marijuana had to be purchased. It wouldn't matter if it was through our government or a private sector. New computers for a new administration happen every time there is a new administration — so keep it coming. I'm saying to the members opposite, "Keep it coming." We will put our record up against a botched F.H. Collins build where the private sector had to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars doing tendering for a project that the members opposite knew they were going to scrap anyway.

We don't hear people pining for the old ways of divisiveness in the mining industry. We have a booming economy. We have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and we are looking for efficiencies. Pass the bar nuts, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Salvation Army programming

Ms. Hanson: The Salvation Army Centre for Hope has been open for nearly a year. The Yukon government signed an agreement with the Salvation Army covering the period from September 2017 to March 2020 that will see the Yukon government paying the Salvation Army over \$3 million. In that agreement, the Salvation Army commits to providing emergency shelter, meals, transitional housing and a safe drop-in space and programming environment. The agreement speaks to the fact that the Salvation Army is the only community emergency shelter and drop-in space. Because of this, it states that programming will be accessible to all community members.

Can the minister explain what has happened to the drop-in programming that was to be provided for individuals using the Salvation Army?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the great question. Certainly we had high hopes for our relationship with the Salvation Army. The objective of the Salvation Army and the build of the Salvation Army was something that this government didn't really have a lot of control over. What we did have control over was the programming, and we attempted to tie into the operation and maintenance transfer payment agreement with the Salvation Army some critical outcomes and some timelines, along with some deliverables. In doing that, we have provided some pretty clear instructions and direction with the Salvation Army — and some check-ins as well — to ensure that they are meeting the obligations of the agreement that we signed in good faith.

We are certainly having some concerns around service delivery. We are working with the Salvation Army and, of course, our stakeholder community to ensure that the services that we had hoped would be delivered under the Salvation Army are delivered on time, with the supports as identified: emergency shelter, transition and day programming.

We committed to seconding a staff person on-site at the Salvation Army for six months and I would be happy to respond to the supplementary.

Ms. Hanson: I too, as MLA for downtown Whitehorse, have heard concerns from nearby residents, businesses and concerned citizens that a lack of programming and lack of access to the new building during the day leaves individuals with nowhere to go and no meaningful activities to participate in. By now, we would have expected that community organizations and groups would have been invited to actively collaborate with the Salvation Army on a range of services to offer programming, activities or classes, to name a few.

Instead, we hear from neighbours and citizens who see a beautiful, new building being underutilized, individuals being required to leave between meals and scant programming.

Mr. Speaker, what exactly has the minister done to make sure the Salvation Army is delivering on their commitment to offer meaningful programming, as agreed to in the \$3-million contract signed by the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the Salvation Army and the agreement — as indicated by the member opposite, we have some commitments — some major commitments. We have some pretty clear concerns raised from the community that have been brought to my attention, as well as the member opposite. While hearing the concerns that are being brought forward, we are working with the Salvation Army.

We will continue to work with our partners to address the concerns that are brought to our attention. We have looked at the contribution agreement, and we obviously have some terms within the agreement that gives us flexibility, and that's what we're working with.

If for some reason the commitments are not met, then we have some obligations there as well to ensure that Yukoners are given the best possible service. The Salvation Army, as it was designed and built by the previous government, was

there, and we have one shelter in the city and we cannot afford two shelters. So we really have to work hard with our stakeholders to make it as efficient and as effective as possible. We're having a bit of growing pains there and will continue to work with our partners and look at reducing some of the concerns that are brought to our attention.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate the minister's response in this instance. When I raised this question in the summertime, I was told did I want to get involved in offering programming. I don't want to get involved in offering programming; I don't want to be volunteering at the Salvation Army when I know that the government is spending \$3 million to have the Sally Ann deliver those programs on behalf of all Yukoners and to do so with respect — to respect the individuals and work with the individuals who present themselves at the Salvation Army.

Some people want to be engaged, but individuals should have a choice on whether they want to leave the building for the day or to participate in meaningful activities or to access other services. The only choice now is to leave the building. Instead of seeing a real "Centre of Hope", neighbours and businesses are seeing more conflict and social problems. The community wants to be supportive, but many feel the government has washed its hands by simply writing a cheque to the Sally Ann.

At what point is this government going to insist that the Sally Ann deliver on the expectations set out in that contribution agreement?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To the point the member opposite makes, we are insisting that the Salvation Army delivers. That's exactly what we have written into the contribution agreement. I would like to note that concerns have been brought to our attention, exactly as they have been described. I'm not shying away from that, nor is this government. We are working with our partners and, if for some reason they are not delivering, we will ensure that they are held up to the highest standard possible, and that's to deliver the services to the clients the building was built for.

With regard to the funding arrangement, the language that was written into the contribution agreement is pretty explicit and clear that they must deliver the services. If they choose not to do so, then we have a problem on our hands, and that is to look and review efficiencies of service delivery for Yukoners.

I will hold the Salvation Army to the standard that we have set for them. Those are the tools we have in our toolkit. We will work with our community partners. I would commit to the member opposite that we will ensure the Salvation Army delivers, as we require. If not, we will look at some alternatives for service delivery for our clients.

Question re: Francophone high school

Mr. Hassard: Regarding the design/build tender for the francophone high school, the government issued an addendum on September 27, which is just 19 days before the tender closes. In the addendum, the government added three companies as restricted parties, essentially meaning they were

no longer eligible to be part of the process to bid on the school.

Included on this list was Kobayashi and Zedda Architects, or KZA, of Whitehorse. KZA stopped working as the YG agent on this project back in the early spring. Highways and Public Works officials told the CBC in late August that KZA would be able to bid on this tender. We are curious: Why did the minister decide to eliminate KZA from contention, and why did he wait until the 11th hour to do so?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really thank the member opposite for the question. As the member opposite knows, the government has taken a step back from awarding — we had an issue with the standing offer agreement. We have taken action on that front. We have also taken a look at how the contract was going forward and made a decision that a contractor who worked on the initial design on the contract was not eligible to be part of the evaluation team going forward. That was a commitment that I made to the industry at the very outset of this contract. I am following through on that. It is an industry standard. They were the initial designers, and they are not entitled to bid on the actual construction of the job.

Question re: School replacement

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Education said that the department is shopping for as many as five school portables throughout western Canada. The Liberals promised during the 2016 campaign to support local businesses and contractors, but now we see another job potentially going to an Outside firm. Why are the Liberals shopping outside of the territory instead of focusing on having those portables built locally?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The information that I have been provided is that there are no local manufacturers of portables. These are items that you generally purchase complete, and there are no local manufacturers. In the event that I am incorrect about that and there are local manufacturers, clearly we will speak to them.

Mr. Hassard: I am not sure that the minister understands, but I know that at École Émilie Tremblay they were built locally. The tender for a portable to be built at Golden Horn Elementary School received no bids earlier this year when it was put out. We have heard of a number of different reasons from local contractors why this was the case. I am curious if the minister has asked for an analysis as to why no bids were received. If so, how many contractors were contacted as part of that analysis?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Unfortunately, there appears to be a lot of speculation about that. If the member opposite is aware of a company that builds school portables that we can entertain or discuss that with, then absolutely — I wish they would come forward with that information. It is not something that I have at my fingertips. It is certainly something that I will ask the department to investigate — if they are aware. They will presumably contact your office for that information.

Mr. Hassard: It has been done in the Yukon in the past, so I am pretty sure that if the government was willing to

look at the contract registry or speak to a few local contractors here in the Yukon, they would certainly find someone willing and able to do it.

Mr. Speaker, would the government consider using the CFTA exemptions to ensure that this work is done by local contractors rather than purchasing the portables from Outside firms as suggested earlier by the Minister of Education?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am pretty sure that the member opposite is aware of our one-government approach and of the conversations that happen between departments in trying to resolve and solve these issues on behalf of Yukoners — and in particular, four Yukoners.

I will also take the opportunity to remind the members opposite and all local contractors that a tender was put out in April 2018 for portables — for the building of portables or the purchasing of portables — here in the territory. I certainly hope that if they have information that will assist us in this endeavour, they would provide it to us.

Question re: Francophone high school

Mr. Kent: The francophone high school tender is currently on the tender management system. The minister first mentioned that the school would be ready in 2019 for students. However, the five-year capital concept suggests that the school will now be completed in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Can the minister tell us what month and year the building will be ready for students and teachers to move in?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As the member opposite certainly knows, there is an awful lot of planning and a lot of work to be had on the French language school. At the current time, our timeline has not shifted, and we're going to work very hard to make sure that we meet the deadlines we have said that we would meet. We're working with the French community. We don't even have a designer/builder yet. I'm sure that once all of these pieces are in place, we'll have a much better occupation date, but at the moment, we have every intention to work very hard to meet the deadlines that we have imposed upon ourselves.

Mr. Kent: Hopefully when the minister is on his feet to answer this next question, he can tell us what that timeline is and reaffirm for Yukoners what month and year the building will be ready for students and teachers to move in.

When the budget was originally set for this project, it was \$27.5 million. Obviously a number of factors, including steel and aluminum tariffs as well as inflation, will have driven these costs up during the delays in getting the building built.

Can the minister tell us what the revised budget is for the francophone high school?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I will remind the member opposite that we're currently in the midst of a tendering process, and I'm not going to prejudge what that tender comes in at. I'm going to wait for the experts who are bidding on this project to come up with the best price for the Yukon people and then we'll take a look at the budget at that point.

Mr. Kent: The Minister of Education and perhaps even the Minister of Highways and Public Works have suggested on the floor that the total budget for this project is

\$27.5 million. What I asked in my previous question was if that budget has been increased as a result of inflationary pressures or new steel and aluminum tariffs driving the cost of those building materials up.

Can the minister tell us if there are design changes, given those inflationary pressures? Will Canada increase their portion of the funding to meet any revised budget if the design remains the same?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm very happy to address this issue on the floor of the House today. As the member knows, we have put a contract out to build the francophone school and those bids have not yet come in. I'm very glad he recognizes that we're in a very interesting environment right now. With steel tariffs, we have a trade war going on between one of the largest economies on the planet and just about everybody else. I have no idea what impact that's going to have on our local construction projects — and there are a lot of them. We're doing an awful lot with the budget we have been provided. We have a \$280-million capital budget that has been set for the next five years and we're going to make that money go as far as we possibly can.

In this erratic trade environment we are in, things happen, so we are going to handle the money as best we can. We're going to give as much money to local contractors as we possibly can through our tendering improvements we're making, and we're going to make sure that we get value for the Yukon taxpayer. We're going to do all those things and, at the moment, Mr. Speaker, the budget for the school is \$27 million. We have contingencies in there and we will see in the coming months whether or not those contingencies are enough to handle this erratic trade environment we find ourselves in.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of government private members' business.

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of government private members to be called on Wednesday, October 10, 2018. They are Motion No. 91, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North; Motion No. 315, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun; and Motion No. 319, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 20: *Societies Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 20, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is my privilege and honour to speak to Bill No. 20, the new *Societies Act*, which will replace the current *Societies Act*. This bill will provide major improvements in governance and operational framework, making it clearer for societies. It supports this government's priorities to reduce red tape and to enhance the availability of online services. Currently, we have about 800 societies registered in the Yukon. Societies and their volunteers contribute greatly to what makes the Yukon such a wonderful place to live.

We have recognized for some time that the current *Societies Act*, which was created more than 30 years ago, is outdated. The current act met the social and business requirements of that time when the population of Yukon was smaller and most societies played a less significant role in the lives of Yukoners and Yukon communities. This bill has been developed with input we received during our very well-attended public engagement last fall that included two open houses and multiple conference calls with people from across the Yukon.

We asked societies and other stakeholders to share their thoughts and perspectives on the existing *Societies Act*, its regulations and how the framework is implemented. We then asked them to consider examples of modern societies legislation from other jurisdictions. More than 90 people from a wide range of organizations participated in these sessions and we received 30 written submissions. People told us about their challenges with the existing act and what they would like to see in new legislation. They also offered ideas for streamlining processes while maintaining transparency and accountability. We used this feedback to develop policy options and then put them out for public comment.

After the thorough initial engagement, the second round of feedback was shorter. What we heard back was that we were on the right track. In addition to the input and feedback we received, this bill is informed by modern societies legislation elsewhere in Canada, including the new British Columbia *Societies Act*. We have arrived, however, at what is very much a Yukon product.

The new act will reduce red tape by enabling societies to take on the responsibility for incorporation, governance and operation of their organizations. Virtually all processes regarding the creation, governance and operation of societies are set out more clearly in the new act. Intervention by the government as the regulator will be limited to more serious matters, such as breaches of the act and regulations.

While at 166 pages, the bill is long, it provides clearer guidance to societies and covers many areas on which the old 23-page act was either silent or unclear. The proposed act will be more effective and easier to use. Wherever possible, it is written in plain language, making it easier for anyone to read and understand. This is important for our societies,

Mr. Speaker, because they come from such a wide cross-section of our community.

The regulations, when developed, will further provide clarity, certainty and a reduction of red tape for our societies. I would like to present some of the highlights of the proposed act. Mr. Speaker, member-funded societies are a new category under the proposed act. What we heard during the public engagement is that a one-size-fits-all model doesn't work. In the current act, the same rules apply to all societies, whether they are a social club with a few assets and little income or a large, non-profit corporation that provides significant goods and services to stakeholders. The new category of member-funded societies will not be able to receive government funding or public donations and will be much less regulated than regular or larger societies.

The society creation process remains unchanged for the most part; however, a society can now be created by just three people instead of five. We heard that, especially for small, member-funded societies, fewer founders are sufficient. The requirement for at least three directors, one of whom must live in the Yukon, will still help to ensure transparency. The new act will also help us to move toward using digital communication and, eventually, a completely digital registry.

Under the proposed new act, all directors must meet certain requirements, such as being at least the age of majority, not being bankrupt, following conflict-of-interest guidelines and acting with honesty, good faith and due diligence. This bill also allows the board of directors to appoint officers to whom operational decisions may be delegated.

With respect to dissolving a society and winding up its affairs, Mr. Speaker, the current act sets out different processes by which a society may end. It is short on specifics and lacks the clarity that this bill provides. The direction the bill provides will help societies dissolve. For example, it provides clear guidance on how to make sure that all debts are cleared and when to appoint a liquidator. This bill also lays out clear rules and processes for liquidating a society's assets when dissolving the society.

A society's circumstances may change, so it provides clear direction for how a dissolved society can be restored to active status. Under the proposed new act, the registrar will have a limited role in the dispute resolution process. As in many other jurisdictions with modern legislation, the registrar will focus only on complaints that relate to alleged violations of the act and regulations.

A society's members and directors will be responsible for handling disputes regarding its constitution, bylaws, governance and operations. Disputes of this nature will now be settled in court if all other alternative dispute-resolution options fail.

Mr. Speaker, as is the case with the existing legislation, the proposed act requires annual general meetings, annual financial statements and the election of directors. Of note, Mr. Speaker, this bill supports contemporary electronic communications and records systems. If societies permit it in their bylaws, they will be able to make sure of digital and

electronic forms of communication. This opens the possibility to participate in meetings remotely via telephone or through an online platform. The proposed act will fully support a digital registry once the technology is in place.

We heard from societies that paper documents are cumbersome to create and require filing and storage space. If they are lost or damaged, recovery of these documents may be difficult or impossible and any amendments require further paper forms.

Last year, we launched the first phase of the Yukon corporate online registry, commonly known as YCOR. This allows societies to access relevant information and print their certificates of compliance. We are now working on the next phase that will allow societies to file various reports online. To improve accountability and promote transparency, bylaws, constitutions and lists of directors and their contact addresses will be available to the public via the societies registry. Members of a society will have access to some society records kept at the societies' records office, including minutes of directors' meetings — unless bylaws state otherwise — as well as membership lists.

We heard during the public engagement that societies need clearer direction regarding finances, contracting and employment within societies. The bill sets out conflict of interest guidelines and requirements for clear documentation of payments made to directors, including any contract arrangements. It also allows regulations and bylaws to set limits on these payments.

In addition, there are now clear terms for appointing officers, their qualifications and guidelines on their activities. As is the case now, funders will be able to require financial statements and related information as a condition of funding. We know that the current legislation does not allow societies to easily make major changes to their governing structure, amalgamate with another society or settle legal disputes when they need to deal with complex matters. Societies will now be able to make these types of major changes, if approved by their membership and approved by the court, when required.

Under the proposed act, societies will have ownership of and be responsible for the documents filed in the registry. The proposed legislation provides clear rules on what must be in these documents.

As many societies can attest, with current legislation, the way to get government approval for new or revised bylaws can be long. Many delays have resulted from our outdated legislation, and the common law and legal requirements associated with it have been cumbersome. I know that some societies have been frustrated with these delays.

With the proposed legislation, societies will be responsible for the content of their constitutions and bylaws and file them in the registry. These documents will no longer require approval by the registrar. The registrar will continue to oversee the operation of the registry. This will include confirming whether societies have filed the documents that are required under legislation, but will not include commenting on their contents. However, as I noted earlier, these documents

will be available for viewing by the public, including the funders.

The standard bylaws in the existing regulations are not consistent with what is required in the current act. Regulations will contain a standard set of bylaws that comply with requirements of the new proposed act that can be adopted by societies, if they decide not to draft their own bylaws from scratch. We will assist societies in developing bylaws.

During the public engagement, we heard from a number of societies created in other jurisdictions that operate or wish to operate in the Yukon. Many of these are large national organizations. The current act contains requirements that may duplicate or add to the home jurisdiction's requirements for reports and reporting periods. This creates an unnecessary burden for these societies. The current requirement to provide bylaws separate from their umbrella organization is regarded as repetitive and unrealistic. We understand and are sympathetic to these views. As a result, we are moving governance of extraterritorial societies to the authority of the *Business Corporations Act*. With this change, we are also providing these organizations with flexibility regarding naming rules. They can register in the Yukon using an alternative if the name in their originating jurisdiction cannot be used in the Yukon.

I know that there have been discussions as to whether a new *Societies Act* would include the regulation of social enterprises, which are enterprises that have two goals: to achieve social, cultural, community, economic and/or environmental outcomes and to earn revenue.

The question of whether, or how, to formally recognize and regulate these unique organizations in the Yukon requires its own initiative. Our view is that social enterprises would be better regulated either through the *Business Corporations Act* or under separate legislation, so we have provided the opportunity for that — or indicated that under our act here. The same holds true for non-profit cooperatives. Our view is that these types of organizations would be best governed by the *Cooperative Associations Act* and regulations, changes to which would require a separate initiative. We anticipate that it will take at least another year before the new *Societies Act* can come into effect. During that time, regulations must be developed, receive public input and be approved, which will then allow for the proposed new *Societies Act* to be proclaimed. Once the regulations are in place and the act is proclaimed, we will provide societies and stakeholders with resources and training to assist with the transition to the new legislation. I heard a motion today in the Legislature discussing that, Mr. Speaker.

New societies legislation will provide modern-day governance that meets the needs of modern Yukon societies and the people they serve. I thank the officials from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Justice for their work in preparing this bill. I know it was a lot of work, and I appreciate all of the effort that they put in.

Ms. Van Bibber: I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 20, entitled the *Societies Act*. This introduced piece of

legislation has expanded from a 23-page act to 166 pages to replace the existing *Societies Act* with a new framework. Apparently it is supposed to be simpler and quicker, but we will have to wait on the feedback from current societies that have to re-register and newly formed societies to adequately judge if this is so.

Although longer than the current act, this proposed new act is supposed to be easier to read for the average person. The technical language that largely makes up the current act will be replaced with plain language. My concern with this is that often people are not as quick to dig into longer legislation. In an effort to reduce red tape, it may seem the opposite to the average Yukoner.

I do agree that the actual changes within the act will, in fact, make it easier to follow, as it reduces a number of requirements of a society. According to department officials, it will reduce red tape and be clearer. Clearer processes are always welcome in any interaction with the general public and groups that have to register their actions with government.

The move to allow three people as opposed to five people to incorporate a society is new. These three people will now be the core of the set-up and only one has to reside in the Yukon. This alone will make it easier on groups to form a society. From this organized group, directors are elected by the members and make decisions. The need to provide a constitution, bylaws, physical addresses, a list of directors and their addresses, and the fiscal year-end financials is still required, and this information can be accessed by the public. But it now has lengthy wording to clarify any misunderstanding that might arise. In many cases, more information is good. My hope is that the lengthy wording will not be off-putting to the reader rather than being helpful.

The section on dispute resolution is being added to provide methods to address problems that may arise within an organization. This may be a helpful tool for those who may experience issues that are not easily settled. The registrar will only intervene on violations of the act and regulations as opposed to internal conflicts between members.

The portion on governance in operational matters remains largely unchanged — adding modern communication technology to a society's ability to do business if they so choose. Also, if they wish to add to their bylaws proxy voting and electronic participation in meetings, they can also do so.

One big change is the role of the registrar and access to information. It is still to oversee the operation of the registry of societies and ensures they are in compliance, but now societies will have ownership and responsibility for documents, constitutions and bylaws and ensure they are properly filed. The registrar will not review and will not need to approve filed documents.

I do wonder if this will quell some of the problems that individuals have when they attempt to register a society and their application is declined a number of times, often for simple reasons such as whiteout on a paper or an explanation of purpose being too vague. I suppose it will either alleviate some of the red tape and the wait or create further problems down the road without a final approval by a single designated

body. A template is available for those societies that do not want to write bylaws. A complete set of bylaws that meet the requirements of the legislation will be available. This is particularly helpful for the average Yukoner, who won't know the first thing to start in drafting bylaws.

Members of the public will be able to access the following information for each society via the registry: a society's constitution, including the name and the purpose; their bylaws; location of the registered office; the list of directors and their contact information. The public also has access to societies' financial records. Only members of a society can have access to the list of registered members, minutes of a meeting, copies of resolutions and accountant's reports regarding financial statements. There are defined areas that are not publicly available.

There is a new addition of member-funded societies. This is where a society is registered; however, it does not receive public or government funding grants or donations. They exist solely for the benefit of their own members and therefore have fewer restrictions.

There is a worry about special-interest groups such as hate groups. However, we were assured there are avenues to address these. By their purpose or bylaws, the society could be refused legitimacy or the Human Rights Commission could address issues should they arise. We were told there are safeguards in place to deal with adverse situations that might arise.

Under the heading finance, contracting and employment the new act sets out requirements for clear documentation of payments to directors and contracts issued by these directors.

Social enterprises and non-profit cooperatives cannot become societies under this registry, as a social enterprise by its nature is hoping to achieve social, cultural or community changes and earn revenue. These are best regulated by the *Business Corporations Act*. Non-profit organizations are best regulated by *Cooperative Associations Act* and regulations. The anticipated timeline for this act to pass is during the 2018 Fall Sitting and, at this time during the 2019 Sitting, the regulations will be introduced. The act is to receive assent in the Assembly; then regulations will follow a year hence. I look forward to seeing draft regulations.

The changes to the *Societies Act* did not lead to many questions or concerns. However, I am quite puzzled as to why consultation did not go out to the communities. I am told that communities did, in fact, ask to be consulted on this new legislation, but were told individuals would have to call in to provide their thoughts and input, and I'm not sure a call-in method would be the most efficient method of consultation for either party. Groups often have questions, and what better place to ask then in a group setting?

I would encourage the minister to ensure that communities and all other parties who identify their interest are properly consulted on the regulations. I look forward to seeing how these changes will, in fact, help those seeking to form a society in the future and perhaps help to guide those who may be currently finding the process daunting and hard to understand. I would encourage those interested to ensure that

the government is aware of your interest so you too can make your voice heard during consultations on the regulations.

I would also like to thank the officials who have worked and continue to work on the legislation and who took the time to give us a briefing on the *Societies Act*.

Mr. Gallina: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*. This new societies legislation will provide a modern-day governance that meets the needs of Yukon societies and the people they serve. I am going to take some time today to touch upon some of my experience in the non-profit sector working with and for societies. I will reiterate some of the important points made by the minister responsible and highlight the key elements in this proposed act that I believe are important for Yukoners to understand, especially those working with a society here in the territory.

Currently, there are about 800 societies registered in Yukon. Societies are the lifeblood of this territory and support all Yukoners in one way or another. Yukon societies provide valuable programs that contribute to the territory's unparalleled quality of life. Whether through family and children's support services, special events, athlete development, industry representation, cultural celebration or lifelong learning, the societies list goes on.

Working for societies is where I first took steps to establish my career here in the territory. I volunteered with Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and the Yukon Convention Bureau, and I gained employment with each of these non-profit societies. Societies afforded me the opportunity to provide a service to the community, gain invaluable experience and make lifelong friendships. I am aware firsthand of the challenges societies face in balancing the delivery of the mandate as set by their membership, coupled with the administrative considerations of fundraising, reporting and ensuring compliance with legislation. As the minister responsible has pointed out, the *Societies Act* being proposed and debated today will reduce red tape and allow societies to take on the responsibility of incorporation, governance and operation of their organizations. Almost all of the processes with respect to the creation, governance and operation of societies are set out more clearly in the new act.

The proposed act may seem long at 160 pages, and it does a very good job of clearly guiding societies and covers many of the areas on which the current act was not clear. I believe the proposed act will be easier to interpret and more effective as, wherever possible, it was written in plain language. In reply to the Member for Porter Creek North, technical language is being replaced with plain language, and this is an important element to assist Yukoners to understand and work with the new act. I also understand that the Department of Community Services is working on a plain language guide to help societies navigate the new act.

There are a number of considerations that I would like to touch upon in the proposed act. The creation of a society: this process is essentially unchanged, except that societies can now be created by just three people instead of five. The

creation of a society requires that incorporators submit the following to the registry: a constitution, including the name and purpose of the society; bylaws; physical address or registered office for the society; list of directors and their addresses, and the fiscal year-end of the society.

When we look at ending a society, the proposed act sets out clear rules and processes on how to liquidate a society's assets.

With matters of dispute resolution, the registrar has a limited role in the dispute resolution process and will focus on alleged violations of the statute and regulations. Most disputes, particularly those involving societies' bylaws and operational matters, must be settled by the disputants and can be done in courts if alternative dispute resolution options fail. The registrar or another complainant can apply to court for the appointment of an inspector to investigate alleged wrongdoing.

Looking at governance and operational matters, except for some updating of modern communications technology, governance matters and requirements for societies are largely unchanged. The legislation requires annual general meetings, annual financial statements and election of directors. Societies may, in their bylaws, allow proxy voting and electronic participation in meetings. Members will have access to society records, including — unless the bylaws specify otherwise — minutes of directors' meetings.

Now I will talk about the registry, the role of the registrar and access to information. Societies will have ownership and responsibility for documents filed in the registry, and the registrar will take a less intrusive role in the proposed legislation compared to that of the current act.

The registrar will not be inspecting or reviewing documents that are filed. The registrar's role will be to oversee the operation of the registry itself. Societies will be solely responsible for the content of the constitutions and bylaws they adopt. For societies that do not wish to write their own bylaws, a complete set of bylaws that meet the requirements of the legislation for the content of their constitutions and bylaws will be made available.

Members of the public will be able to access the following information of each society via the registry: a society's constitution, including the name and purpose of the society; the society's bylaws; the location of the registered office for the society and a list of directors and their contact addresses. The public will also, via the society's records, be able to access the society's financial statements. Members of a society, but not the public, will have access via the society's records to additional information, such as registered members, minutes of meetings and copies of resolutions and accountants' reports regarding financial statements.

For finance, contracting and employment, the proposed act sets out the requirements for clear documentation of payments made to directors, including contracting arrangements, and allows regulations and bylaws to set limits on these payments, clear terms for appointing officers and their qualifications and guidelines regarding their activities. Financial statements will require clear documentation of any

financial activity not contemplated by the purposes of the society, as set out in the society's constitution. Financial statements will not be filed with the registrar but must be filed with the society and be available to members of the public for viewing, and funders will be able to require them as a condition of funding arrangements.

For entities other than societies, there have been discussions as to whether the new statute would include regulation for social enterprises. Societies' legislation is not targeted or suitable for such structures. Similarly, there have been discussions about non-profit cooperatives, as these types of organizations would be best regulated by cooperative association acts and regulations.

The last thing, Mr. Speaker — member-funded societies are, as other members have pointed out, a new category under the proposed act. The creation of new member-funded societies will not receive public donations or government funding.

These societies will focus on benefitting their own members. They will also be subject to fewer restrictions regarding organization and governance, records, access to information and distribution of assets.

Mr. Speaker, a final note that I would like to make before I close is about public engagement and how it shaped and created the guiding principles of this proposed act. Last fall saw two popular open houses take place, along with conference calls with multiple people across Yukon. More than 90 people from a wide range of organizations participated in these sessions, and 30 written submissions were also received. This feedback was used to develop policy options and then put out those options for public comments. After the initial round of engagement, a second and shorter round of engagement took place, and input from this engagement suggested the community was supportive of the policy options being proposed.

As I have stated earlier, societies are the lifeblood of this territory and support all Yukoners in one way or another. I am encouraged by the proposed act being presented today and feel as though the act will provide societies and their members with the necessary direction to operate effectively and more efficiently than within the current act. This will ultimately lead to better services and opportunities for Yukoners.

I would like to take an opportunity to thank the officials from the Department of Justice and the Department of Community Services for their work in preparing this act for debate here in the Legislature and in serving Yukoners.

Thank you very much.

Ms. White: To start off, I would also like to echo the thanks to department officials who gave us the briefing and for those who drafted the legislation.

To start off, we were told by the minister that 90 people had commented and there were 30 submissions received by the department. I will point out that on the engageyukon.ca website, when you go to the "Summary of feedback for

improvement to societies legislation” and click, it goes to a dead page, so it’s not found.

Mr. Speaker, I have had problems initially with my ancient iPad and I thought maybe that was it, but I went to my government-issue computer and did the same search and went to the same dead website.

One of the reasons that I just highlight this is that there has been some mention from community members that there was no consultation out in the communities. I do appreciate that there has been mention of the ability to have conference calls. I get that, for some people, conference calls are effective but, speaking from my own personal experience, I can tell you that trying to have a complicated conversation over the telephone is not the most effective way for me to communicate. I would have liked to have seen the feedback and just what was there — both the first time and the second feedback — because we talked about how that was successful but there were no numbers included.

I do appreciate that my colleague over here from Porter Creek North did highlight one of the concerns and questions I had for the officials as we were getting the briefing, which is around member-funded societies. We were assured that hate groups would not fall within it because, if it contravened any other legislation — for example, the human rights legislation — they wouldn’t be — what my concern was — given credence of having the society. I would have concern that you can have a society even if we didn’t agree with it — in terms of hate speech — and that it could still exist. The good news is that it can’t.

I do appreciate that we’ve talked a lot about the example of bylaws that a society can follow. There is the example of bylaws that would meet the requirements. I’m going to flag my concerns, because the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* also has an example of applicable rental agreements that landlords can follow. I flag that concern because, although those exist, it does not mean that the agreements that have been written by landlords do actually need law.

One of the concerns I have is that this is complaint driven. So if there’s a concern, to know that a society will have to go to court to fund that is of concern.

I feel that there are times — we talk about the safety net of having government offices or someone who would know those things. You would hope that you would be able to go there prior to getting to that point.

To know that you would have to fund a court case is a bit worrisome because, really, it is going to be the worst-case scenario. I’m not talking about anything that would be vexatious. If that was the case, then, by all means, they should fund the court, but if it is a legitimate concern with a legitimate problem, then I think that there should be other means of being able to do that problem-solving.

I look forward to going through the debate with the minister when officials are on hand, because I’ll have more questions about how this is supposed to look. I appreciate the comments from the floor so far, and although we may have a different perspective, I don’t disagree as a whole.

I do think that the motion that was put forward today, also by the Member for Porter Creek North — there’s validity about making sure that people and communities understand how the new *Societies Act* will affect them.

I did also ask the question about whether cooperative housing would be included. It is not — although I did flag that there is an issue with cooperative housing because it seems that it is an entity on its own. When it possibly goes rogue, there will be problems.

Like times before, although the previous government, not the current government — when we were debating the *Condominium Act, 2015*, I flagged concerns based on the worst-case scenario because, having been a fly on the wall to those scenarios, those are some things that we have to think about. For example, how do you solve the problem if it’s the worst ever? How would you address this if it went completely off the rails?

One of the things with the *Condominium Act* — and I did actually ask this, and I’ll seek clarification when we have the officials here — is: How many proxy votes could one person submit? The reason I ask this is because, if one person can submit an unlimited number of proxy votes, there is then the ability to sway how things will go without members present. The reason why that’s a concern is that, worst-case scenario, a board can be overtaken whether or not the membership realizes it.

I’m not a conspiracy theorist by heart, Mr. Speaker, but I have seen some fairly wild things in the Yukon, so although the questions sound like they might be coming out of far field, they’re actually coming from lived experiences of people. I have questions about the number of proxies, and I don’t need the answer now. It can wait until the officials who know that answer are here.

Although we might have examples of bylaws that will meet the requirements, it’s going to be complaint-driven, so it’s making sure that people understand what their rights are under the new act and legislation. I look forward to conversations around the creation of regulations and what that’s going to look like in that timeline — as to whether or not we see the ability for government to reach out to communities to have those further discussions, in whatever way that communities highlight what is important to them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Committee of the Whole debate on it when the officials are present in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Istchenko: It is a privilege today to rise in the House to talk about the *Societies Act* a little bit. I was listening to the other speakers in the House today, and I want to thank the minister for his comments.

I had a chance to read through it. I have been an active member of societies in my community for 30 years or so, and I have seen legislation come and legislation go and legislation be changed. I know how difficult it is.

I did read through this legislation and it is simpler, with more pages, but this weekend when I was out, I brought it to the attention of many community members — that the

Societies Act has changed. It has gone from — “How many pages is it?” I said. They said 23 — some were 25, some were 24, but they knew what it was. I said it has gone to over 150 or 160. That’s just great — typical government. I’m like — well, hang on a second. I did have a chance to read through it and it does explain itself a little bit better and it’s a little easier to understand.

The question I have with this legislation, which is a valuable question, is what my fellow colleague brought up — that now this needs to be brought to the communities, it needs to be explained to the communities, and the communities need to understand this.

When they bring this legislation to the communities and hold community meetings and bring those — and I call them “volunteers”, because those people who are on these societies are just volunteers trying to make a difference in their community. When you bring them to this meeting, they are going to complain to you about a lot of things other than the *Societies Act*. They’ll say, “Well, that’s great that you did this, but do you know how hard it is to deal with the lotteries act or the liquor licences when we have a function?” There will be all this other stuff that will come into it.

I think we need to have a whole-hearted conversation in our communities with our societies and our volunteers in our communities — you know, this is great that this has been done and it explains it a little better, but I think sometimes the interpretation of the legislation and how it is put across by some of the staff who bring it out is not what the communities think it should be. I think this is probably a great opportunity. I know I have worked with the minister before to try to get out and have a conversation with some of our service organizations, but if you actually get out and listen to some of the service organizations, I think you would find there are a lot more issues. They will be satisfied with some of this, but you will find that there are other issues out there that maybe we can see.

I listened to the Premier talk about a whole-of-government approach, so maybe the different departments that hold things that apply to societies can get together and try to make it easier too.

On that note, I will thank the members opposite for listening, and I look forward to the future of this legislation.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is really my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*. I am very proud of all of the bills that our government has brought to the floor of this House to debate during this Fall Sitting. I am, however, perhaps most proud of the three more substantive acts. I know you are not supposed to have favourite children, but the three more substantive acts, through their drafting, debate and ultimate implementation, will improve the lives of Yukoners — in particular, in their interactions with government. The *Societies Act*, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Coroners Act* have far-reaching impacts on the lives of Yukoners. They are modern, comprehensive, long-overdue pieces of legislation designed to provide clarity and modern practices for Yukoners. It has been my honour

and pleasure to work on all of these bills, having worked with each of our current laws through my former legal practice.

My experience with the current *Societies Act* is also extensive, and I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work on this bill to date. I have worked with our current act in many ways. Like many of us here, I have been a member of a society. I have been a member of a board of a society or a director of a society. I have worked on drafting bylaws and have even, on occasion, been counsel to the registrar of societies, to name but a few opportunities that I have had. I have come to this project with a critical eye. I have been most concerned — and I appreciate the minister responsible for his leadership on this particular project as well as his generosity of spirit in dealing with ideas that have come from every corner of the Yukon with respect to this. Pretty well all of us are involved with a society or are a member of a society or have been in the past, but I have been most concerned that our new legislation provide for certainty, clarity and modern processes for the Yukon public.

At first glance, Mr. Speaker, one might not think that the new *Societies Act* will reduce red tape, and we have heard a couple of those comments earlier today. Reducing red tape for Yukoners is a key goal here and for the groups that they regulate and join. One might think that because the act is considerably longer than the current act, but it is not about page numbers. Improved legislation is sometimes about certainty and often about writing everything down.

That is how Yukoners will have this certainty, so it did take more pages to write everything down to provide clear direction and help for those who join societies. This is the case here, of course. Our current act isn’t very long, but it also doesn’t provide the tools or the guidance or the direction that our new *Societies Act* does.

The new act is designed to meet the needs that were expressed by Yukoners and Yukon societies and others who participated in the extensive engagement phases. One of the common themes we heard was the request to streamline the process while maintaining accountability and transparency, and those are absolutely critical goals. Make it simpler, make it certain, make it so that people can understand it, but maintain accountability and transparency where necessary so that those who decide to form societies for particular purposes have a responsibility, understand what that responsibility is and take it on willingly.

There are key elements of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and you have heard many of them, but I will take a quick opportunity to reiterate: more than one society or more than one kind of society will be permitted here under the new legislation; three people can form a society, as you have heard and the new act will permit digital communications and records systems — this is critical. We heard from individuals in societies — we all have that experience as well — where paper record-keeping is sometimes what often trips up a society or causes individuals perhaps to not want to take on certain roles because that can become an onerous task. This is designed to help the communication between societies and their members but also to help the record-keeping systems.

There is an opportunity to support a direct registry system, which will, of course, assist and reduce red tape. There are requirements for the appointment and qualifications of directors and officers to provide clarity and certainty — one of the three key goals along with modern practices.

There is clarity for how to wind up or dissolve a society. That is a critical issue now because we have all heard there are many, many societies. We also know of versions of societies here in the territory that do very similar things. There is an opportunity for them to amalgamate or an opportunity for one of them to wind up and the members to join another. For them to have those conversations with some certainty around how one might do that is something that is built in here.

The dispute resolution will be the responsibility of societies, members and directors — again, it's their responsibility to take on that role. There is significant change to promote transparency and accountability as the availability of societies' bylaws, constitutions and lists of directors can be and will be provided online on the societies registry — much clearer opportunities for all Yukoners to have access to that information, not just those who can walk into the office and make that request.

The new act will require better and specific financial record-keeping and contracting, the employment rules around who can have contracts, who the society can contract with and how their employees can be dealt with — all will provide guidance and certainty to societies.

There will also be the addition of specific rules and guidelines for conflict-of-interest behaviour by directors. This is not something that has been provided before and certainly something that societies will be supported with.

There is a clear opportunity for the conflict of interest to be set out so that later societies know how to deal with a particular matter that might arise. There is also accountability of societies by requiring financial information as a requirement for funding, which has been a problem in the past. The idea is to provide the certainty and clarity for what societies are required to do — in particular those that are seeking external funding, whether from government or other programs.

The act contains guidance and a process to permit the amalgamation, as I have noted, of societies. It provides clear direction for information that must be provided to the society's registry. Those of us who have been involved in societies in the past know that, even if we have clear bylaws and a clear constitution, there are many grey areas around what kind of information is needed to be provided to the societies registry. Nobody wants to be offside of that kind of information, so there is clear direction here.

Societies will be responsible for filing their bylaws and we have heard this, but it really bears repeating — filing their bylaws and their constitutions with the registrar — but the registrar does not need to approve those documents. The backlog of those, unfortunately for the registrar and for many societies in the territory, has been a times extensive, and that certainly holds up the work of the individual societies. They think they have passed a set of bylaws, but not until the

registrar has approved them are they in effect. So there is a real period of time with a real effect on societies about which rules they are operating under, and that is not fair to anyone. This process alone will significantly improve the work and the activities of societies and reduce red tape.

I just want to take a moment to take the opportunity to thank all those who informed this work by participating in the public engagement for this bill. They came to meetings and they provided feedback, comments and advice. I would also like to thank the minister for his leadership on this particular project. It was not a small undertaking by any description. I would like to thank all of the members of the Yukon public service, particularly those staff at the departments of Justice and Community Services, who worked truly tirelessly to bring Yukoners this new act through many versions. In the end, this act will, despite its page count, clarify and modernize the process for the initiation, the governance, the operation and the winding up of our many Yukon societies.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this. I look forward to further debate on Bill No. 20.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on second reading of Bill No. 20, *Societies Act*?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would like to begin by thanking all the members who rose to speak to the act today and for their comments about the importance of this act and the importance of societies to the Yukon. I thank everyone that we were on the same page there.

I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I will get a response regarding the proxy votes question. I know we had some healthy discussion around proxy votes and I look forward to that conversation.

Of course, it's always true within a society or any organization that the members come out as a group to vote in some new direction or some new executive. I have seen it happen as well. When it happens and it's done by the rules, I think of it as democracy in action. I think that's what we want to try to capture here — how not to unfairly empower one group over another.

Also, I apologize for that link being down. I went and checked it as we were speaking and then immediately contacted the department. I'm sure I will hear shortly. We obviously want to get the information back to Yukoners, especially now as people might look back to see how that public engagement unfolded.

Let me just talk about a few things. First of all, to the Member for Kluane, none of us are going to hide from the fact that it is a longer act. It definitely is. I remember when I first got it, my eyes went wide at that moment. I was like — wow, okay. I also started asking questions about how we will help people to navigate this longer act. When I first read it, I also agreed that it is written in plainer language. For those of us who are not conversant in legal terminology in acts, this will be an easier read. But I also asked the department to make

some efforts to provide tools to allow the public and everyone to navigate the act. They did provide a highlights document or a guide. I checked the link and at least that link is still active on the engageyukon.ca site. That is the way that we are working to try to assist.

I think that it's also true that certain sections of the act will be applicable. For example, a member society is only applicable to those folks who create those sorts of things. I think it will be great for those groups who are getting together to form a book club and they want to be able to open a bank account. Now they can do it because it's enabling within the act. But I don't think that will have any impact on our societies that contribute so much to the fabric of the Yukon. They need not pay attention to that section. I just think: let that go.

I do agree that we need to get to our communities to talk to citizens. I will mention a couple of things. The first one is: I just went back quickly to try to add up. I know that I have personally made over 40 trips to our communities in our first couple of years here in this role. That's not counting beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. I think that's sort of an unfair way to count. I'm sure if I added that in, I would be way over 100. I mean to communities outside of my own riding and outside of Whitehorse.

One of the things that I have taken to doing, which won't cover everybody, but I asked to take a list with me of the current engagements that are underway each time I go, for example, to an Association of Yukon Communities quarterly meeting.

I hand them that list — “Here are the items that we are engaging on right now” — and I say, “Anytime you would like to engage on any of these topics, please let me know. You can set the agenda about what your priorities are.” I do that just to make sure that everyone believes that they have an opportunity to raise questions and to contribute.

It's also true, though, that I think we're doing a lot of engagement. We have been seeing a lot of feedback from Yukoners. With that also comes that issue where not everybody is able to comment on everything, but I really do appreciate that there are folks who may want to get information. Regardless of what happens with the motion that was raised in the Legislature today, I do encourage all members of this Assembly that, if they know of a community or group that wants to get this information, by all means, please pass it across. We will do everything we can to try to make sure that we're getting the information out. What you really want in the territory is that everybody is engaged so that they can contribute as they wish. It's terribly important.

I think that our goal is to try noting that the act is longer than it previously was — which is not saying a lot, really, because the act was silent on so many things — in how it exists now. These things that we're trying to bring in are improvements. We want Yukoners to understand the act, to be able to know what's in there, so we are going to do our best to support that, as I said, through guides and other methodologies. I'm always open to talking to communities if there's information that they want.

Thanks also to the Member for Porter Creek North and her comments about — and for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — for talking about bylaws. What I want to say is that I have asked that it isn't just one boiler plate — one set of bylaws that is prepared, but that there are several sets of bylaws that are prepared that cover a range of possibilities for our societies. That's not restrictive. In other words, those templates are there to support our societies, should they wish to use them, but they also have the empowerment to choose their own bylaws, should they wish.

We will also be providing them guidance on how to stay onside with respect to other laws, but this was the single biggest concern we heard from societies — that we were trying to tell them too much. It was too much big brother-ness, and we said, “Okay, let's step back from there.” Instead, what we're going to do is try to assist them so they are able to create bylaws that work for them and then they will stand on their own. If a member contests them, then they'll work through internal processes to try to sort that out and they will always have, as an ultimate recourse, the courts, if they wish to go that route.

Finally, the thing I want to say is that, even though it is longer, the main thrust that we are trying to provide here within this act is the ability to provide clarity — clarity for societies, clarity for members of the public, clarity for everyone in the territory — because there have been a lot of unanswered questions about how things will resolve if things do go, as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King mentioned, off the rails. It is that sense of clarity that will provide those assurances for societies about how we will navigate if things do not go well. We have built on best practices from across the country, including helping to identify where social enterprises should fit and including acknowledging where cooperatives should fit. There is still more work to be done, of course. There always is, Mr. Speaker, but it is a great step forward.

I would like to echo the comments of all of the members who spoke in thanking the departments. It was a lot of work. I know I got cornered at the Canada 55+ Games by our French drafter. He mentioned to me how long this act was, and I provided my condolences and thanked him for his hard work.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to Committee of the Whole and getting into further debate.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.
Mr. Gallina: Agree.
Mr. Adel: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.
Mr. Hutton: Agree.
Mr. Hassard: Agree.
Mr. Kent: Agree.
Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.
Mr. Cathers: Agree.
Ms. McLeod: Agree.
Mr. Istchenko: Agree.
Ms. Hanson: Agree.
Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 20 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Chair, I had just one other question that I wanted to ask the Minister of Finance — as the Minister of Finance, in terms of the overall budget — which was a question with respect to a matter I raised earlier in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon with regard to the Salvation Army. The question that has been asked of me a number of times is: Who owns the property and who owns the building the Salvation Army — the new building that was built and opened last year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That deal was struck a couple of years ago. The property and building are under the ownership of the Salvation Army.

Ms. Hanson: One last aspect to that: Is there any reversionary interest if there's a lack of fulfillment of obligation with respect to contracts entered into with the Government of Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As far as I know, no, but the contract will be renegotiated on a one-to-three-year basis, based upon obligations of the services therein, and that conversation is as the minister responsible spoke to in the Legislative Assembly today during Question Period.

Mr. Hassard: I have some questions for the Premier as Minister of Finance. We'll start with some USMCA questions. Last Tuesday, the Premier stated that his department had read through most of the details of the new trade deal with the United States, Mexico and Canada.

I'm curious — since they have already gone through most of the details a week ago, can the Premier provide the opposition parties a briefing with officials on this new deal?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am trying to come up with some interesting ways of saying the United States-Mexico-Canadian agreement, but if they would just change "United States" to "Yankee", we could just call it the YMCA, and that would probably be the easiest way of remembering the acronym.

On September 30, the Minister of Global Affairs Canada announced that Canada, United States and Mexico had reached an agreement — a modernization of the agreement formerly known as NAFTA — and now we have the new USMCA. We have been in direct contact — I believe the day that we were asked the question in the Legislative Assembly was the day that the Prime Minister phoned. Our officials have remained in close contact with Global Affairs Canada to review the new agreement and its significance to Yukon. As I was speaking in the Legislative Assembly, all of those reviews had already been completed, but we just weren't up to date with it in our briefing notes in the Legislative Assembly — just to correct the record.

In partnership with the other territories and provinces, we have been providing lots of input to Canada on the *North American Free Trade Agreement* renegotiations. We have provided representations at all negotiating rounds and remain in close contact with Global Affairs Canada to address issues of significance to Canadians but most specifically to Yukoners. We have shared relevant consultation information with the chamber of commerce to ensure that Yukon companies were aware of opportunities to voice their concerns on Canada's trade actions, including retaliatory tariffs and trade remedies. As all of this stuff was hitting the media, the message that we were sending to the business community and that was being sent from Ottawa to the premiers was that regional conversations are so extremely important. We have provided representation at all of the negotiating rounds, I am happy to report, not only on a new deal, but a modernization of that deal. The agreement includes a new digital chapter that governs important aspects of e-commerce and digital trade,

recognizing the economic growth opportunities of this important sector. The modernized intellectual property and telecommunications chapters incorporate industry and technologies like biologics and 5G services that didn't even exist 25 years ago. The agreements contained under a new customs administration and trade facilitation chapter standardize the customs procedures, compelling parties to digitize and simplify customs procedures for traders. A new small and medium enterprises chapter recognizes the fundamental role of SMEs in maintaining economic dynamism and competitiveness and compels robust cooperation between the parties to enhance commercial opportunities for those SMEs.

I think that is about all that we have for notes right now. If the members opposite would like a formalized briefing or a return, I can get something set up and give them an official legislative return to get us up to speed — if that is not enough information for the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: I didn't realize I asked such a technical question. I asked if the opposition parties would be provided a briefing. We have received a briefing throughout the process, so I guess I will ask it again.

Will the opposition parties be offered a briefing?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, certainly.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that. Are there any timelines on when that might take place? It is very easy to say "sure", but that might be seven years from now, and that is not really acceptable.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The thing is, it was just asked for now. I can't tell the member opposite when that would be, but I will talk to the officials and we'll set something up as soon as possible and we will contact the member opposite's caucus and also the Third Party, if they are so interested and it looks like they are.

Mr. Hassard: I thank the Premier for that.

Last week, the Premier talked about how he had received a report by the end of the day Monday from his department going through all the different components of the agreement. Would he be willing to provide the opposition with a copy of that report?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Like I said, we could do a legislative return. There was no official report, necessarily. It was a reporting of the department that we had, but again, if the briefing that we provide is not enough, then we can always do a legislative return. If that is not enough, we can sit down and talk and see what specific questions or unknowns the members opposite are looking for.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate that, and I said "report", because your quote actually — what you said — and I quote: "I had a report by the end of the day yesterday from intergovernmental relations..." That is where I got that idea.

Moving on — the Premier also stated that the Prime Minister thanked him for reaching out to Alaska on behalf of Canada during the trade negotiations. Is the Premier able to provide us with a little bit more detail on what his efforts in reaching out to Alaska included — when they took place and what presentations were made?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We spoke in the Legislative Assembly a couple of times about our engagement. The NAFTA file specifically started with my role as the chair of the Council of the Federation, going to Washington with the other premiers and starting negotiations there. That is when we were basically asked by the federal government if we could reach out to other jurisdictions. I don't have a formal briefing on that right now, but I will say that we have spoken with lots of different representatives — all the representatives in Alaska — whether it be Sullivan, Congressman Young or Senator Murkowski. We have had those conversations. The topics of conversations that we talked about are no surprise to the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

We talked about getting our resources to market. We spoke about just the quality of roads, including the Shakwak project. There are lots of regional conversations about how we can better our engagement with communities like Juneau. When folks show up here from Juneau — the mayor and the representatives from that community — to talk about better tourism opportunities, we sit down and we speak about the importance of a better conversation with NAFTA as well.

The conversations are always ongoing. Our focus is on getting our resources to market. Our focus is on highways as well. I don't have a briefing on all of the different meetings, but we are always reaching out to our counterparts in Alaska. I think we need to do a better job of engaging with a large market to our west and the north. We have great opportunities to do more work with the Alaskans. I want to give a shout-out to Highways and Public Works for their engagement with our Alaskan neighbours. We don't pick up the phone and just say we're going to talk about one specific thing; it's usually a bigger conversation that encapsulates everything. You call about NAFTA and you end up talking about Shakwak specifically.

In this case, we were very successful in identifying pots of money that the American government — the Alaskan government — can access. Our Department of Highways and Public Works worked in partnership with Alaska to try to put some more money into Shakwak funding. We are always reaching out to our Alaskan counterparts. Our focus has been on commodities. We have had conversations about grocery routes, fuel distribution and different things like that. It's always a pleasure to be able to talk with all of the different representatives. It's an honour to sit down and have a conversation with Representative Young with his almost 70 years of experience in the political foray and also his connections within oil and gas. It's a real pleasure to be able to talk very frankly with that individual.

Mr. Hassard: The question was with regard to what the Premier said in the Legislature, that the Prime Minister phoned him and thanked him in particular with regard to dealing with Alaska. I don't think that highways and getting resources to port are necessarily parts of what would be considered in the NAFTA agreement or USMCA. Was there anything in particular that is specific to this agreement that you've spoken with Alaska about?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, getting our commodities to market is an extremely important part of trade conversations. Access to ports, access to highways — with what we do currently right now, which is commodities — only can help to solidify trade opportunities moving forward, so highways are an extremely important conversation of NAFTA. Our commodities and using the ports in the United States — that is an extremely important conversation as we talk about an overall theme of utilizing those borders more extensively.

When we speak to the House of Representatives or the Senate, our conversations are about how important Canadian trade is to the Americas, to identify the states with which we are — I believe it is 40 of the states — the number one trade partner, and we are in the top five of almost all of the other states.

Having a conversation about aerospace technology coming out of Prince Edward Island or the trade in vehicles moving back and forth between the American and Ontario border, and having conversations about softwood — whether it be in BC or in other jurisdictions — it is really important that we reach out to the jurisdictions that we talk to the most and have a conversation about how important trade with Canada is, to support Canada specifically. That's what we do.

The member opposite knows that we don't export a lot in the Yukon, as far as materials. We have had experiences with windows, we've had different smaller scale operations where we're involved in trade, but the most important thing is to reach out to the partners in our jurisdictions and have conversations with them about trade with Canada and how important it is.

The emphasis and focus when we were in Washington was — trading with Canada is like the insulation in the attic. You don't know it is there but, once it has gone, you will really realize it has gone. Be careful about what happens in those negotiations because a lot is at stake, a lot of trade is happening with Canada that people don't really realize.

Also, the members of the House of Representatives and the senators — they are key relationships for all of us premiers. For us particularly, I would say, Alaska is extremely important and so that's where we focus our attention.

Mr. Hassard: While I agree that highways and getting our goods to market is very important, I think it's important as well for people who are listening to understand — is the Premier saying that highways and getting goods to market were part of the free trade agreement?

Hon. Mr. Silver: When we speak to our counterparts in Alaska, we need to speak about things that are going on now. We have ongoing conversations about Shakwak funding. We have ongoing conversations in tourism when it comes to the ports of Skagway. We have conversations about getting our resources to different ports as well. These are starters. These are ways that we can start conversations. This is building up a rapport.

To say that this is our conversation about NAFTA — no, that's our foot in the door. The conversations are about every region in Canada, about us representing Canada and all the commodities, and about the free trade that we have between

countries and urging the representatives in the jurisdictions that we have partnerships with and that we have a good rapport with to have a better understanding of the importance of trading with their number one trade partner in Canada — conversations about the difference between trading with Canada and with Mexico and our options to go international. These types of conversations are going on in every region in every single jurisdiction — whether it is Nova Scotia talking about their number one export of blueberries or Prince Edward Island having a major share in aerospace technology. I don't think most Canadians would even know these are the number one trade exports. So just to increase the conversations about every jurisdiction and how important trade is between our two countries, that is what we were doing. Using our conversations on Shakwak, using our conversations on commodities, tourism and the things that we already have common goals on and common dialogue on — it's our foot in the door to have a bigger conversation about jurisdictions that do an awful lot more trade than the Yukon does and also maybe with a view toward how we can get involved more as a jurisdiction to have more trade opportunities with those jurisdictions.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure if the Premier is not understanding the question entirely or if he is just kind of dodging it. My original question was — the Premier stood in this Legislature and said that the Prime Minister had called him yesterday to thank him, in particular, on the conversations he had with Alaska in regard to the trade agreement, so I'm asking: What conversations were had with Alaska? What items were discussed that are directly related to this free trade agreement?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe I answered the question. I will reiterate to the member opposite that the conversation is about Canadian trade with America. When we're being thanked for going out to our regional partners to have the conversation about Canadian free trade with America, that's the conversation — about how important Canadian free trade is with America. That's the conversation. We start with conversations that we are both versed in, conversations of mutual concern and, from that, we talk about how important Canadian trade is to America — and, in this case, Alaska, because we were asked by Ottawa from the get-go, from the first Council of the Federation conversations where Yukon was chair, to please go out as a region and speak about the importance of Canadian trade with America. So when the Prime Minister thanks, not only me, but every other premier on the phone — it wasn't just me on the phone. That would have been interesting but, no, it was every premier. He thanked all of us for going out to our regions and having that conversation with our counterparts in the regions that we are closely aligned with. Free trade means a better standard of living on both sides of border. That's what the conversation is — it's about how we can make our standard of living better. When we talk about trade, that's what we're emphasizing.

I don't know how much clearer I can be than that. There are lots of different things that we can start conversations on and, from there, we pivot to the conversation about national

trade with another nation, but those conversations are happening at the regional level.

Mr. Hassard: I still don't think the Premier has answered the question about what is specific to the Yukon that has been discussed. He talked about trade with Canada and the US, but nothing specific to the Yukon. I guess we'll try asking that question to the staff when we get the briefing, and maybe we'll get a little more detail.

Last week, the president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce raised concern about the fact that steel tariffs were not going away as a result of this new deal. I'm curious if the Premier has raised the concern with federal colleagues about these tariffs remaining in place.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't know if the member opposite is going to get any more conversations about specific trade with the Yukon to Alaska than what we have talked about here. The member opposite knows that we have very limited commodities and resources that we make in the Yukon to trade, so I'm not sure what he's looking for there. Again, to reiterate, I have been very clear that the conversation was on a national basis and we had a national conversation about the different jurisdictions, whether it be uranium in Saskatchewan, which does get traded to the United States, or softwood lumber, or the cars going back and forth across the border in Ontario — cars go back and forth upward of 25 different times per car — and how important that relationship is.

Those are the conversations that we are having with Ottawa. I am not sure what the member opposite is getting as far as what we talked about in specific trade between Yukon and Alaska. The member opposite knows that there are not a lot of commodities that are manufactured in the Yukon, so I am really not sure what he is getting at. If he could be clear about if there is a specific commodity that he wants to know if I talked about, please put it on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Otherwise I am not really sure where he is going with this line of questioning.

I do have a letter that was penned by the interim Leader of the Official Opposition back on June 11, 2018, where he asked the same question that he is asking today — and I quote: "Specifically I am requesting that, for government contracts that use steel, you implement provisions that would ensure contractors who bid on these jobs are protected from fluctuations in the price of steel resulting from the current trade war between the United States and Canada. Similar provisions are often used for the price of fuel and allow protection for the contractor from financial losses caused by volatile prices. Such a measure would send a strong signal of support to the local business community."

We did respond to the member opposite, and in responding we talked about how, on May 31, 2018, the United States announced the imposition of the tariffs on certain products like steel and aluminum. In response to these measures, Canada stated that it will impose reciprocal tariffs on the import of steel, aluminum and a range of other products totalling \$16.6 billion. The Government of Yukon notified the three chambers of commerce in Yukon of the public

consultation and encouraged Yukon businesses to provide feedback on proposed tariffs. We remain in close contact with Canada to receive updates and information where it can become available. I will quote from the letter: "We recognize the potential impact that tariffs may have on pricing of materials, particularly steel coming from the United States as a result of Canadian tariffs that may be applied by the federal government. Each tender let by Yukon government is examined on an individual basis and bidders have the ability to adjust their proposed costs based upon market conditions. I would like to assure you that Yukon government construction contracts include clauses from the Canadian Construction Documents Committee documents stating that taxes or tariffs added to materials prices at the point of entry will be paid by Yukon government. We will continue to include those clauses in our construction contracts. In the coming months, contractors submitting bids for Yukon government contracts will take market price into consideration when putting in bids."

Mr. Chair, as you know, NAFTA negotiations have concluded with a new deal, the USMCA. The hope is that these tariffs on steel and aluminium will be figured out next, and we are hoping that this does happen. I did respond to the members opposite's question in writing, and I hope that satisfies his question here today as well.

Mr. Hassard: The Premier says that there are very little exports from the Yukon. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, Yukon exports \$103 million worth of goods to the US and \$2.5 million to Mexico.

I think that would be significant enough that the government would know what those items are that are being exported. They would know what to talk to the US government about, particularly Alaska as our neighbour. The Premier has said that he wants more detail on what I'm asking. Well, I am asking about \$105 million worth of exports from the Yukon, which in my mind, is quite significant.

Hon. Mr. Silver: When you quote such a high number, that is one thing mostly and that is drilling in Mexico. We export drillers and drilling to Mexico. When we were asked as well at the Council of the Federation, "Where would you like to do the next international conversation?" The conversation was: Do we go to Mexico or do we go to Europe? Our biggest export is drilling and drilling technologies and it's right now in Mexico. That was our suggestion — that is where we would go. Out of that number, if the member opposite would like a bigger breakdown as to what exactly we do export in Canada, I would be happy to provide that for him.

As far as specific conversations with America, again, we get our commodities to their ports and that is really important for Canadians. It is really important for our economy. We do have conversations about our commodities, and when you take a look at the lion's share of what we do export, we're very proud of the drilling technologies and the drilling individuals who leave here and go to other countries and represent well the Yukon in those jurisdictions.

Mr. Hassard: So then maybe the Premier could tell us what are some of the bigger items that make up that \$103 million to the US?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Gold and copper.

Mr. Hassard: Here is a question then: Has the government done an economic analysis of what the impacts of this new USMCA deal will have on Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have already read through the modernization of the deal, which is a good benefit to everybody. Again, this first NAFTA deal was created before the Internet was — so lots of different modernizations we have spoken about at the table here. We don't expect any more tariffs passed on steel and aluminum, and, on the contrary, we are hoping to see those get dropped in the coming months, hopefully — not years, but months — and the retaliatory ones from the Canadian perspective being lifted as well.

That would be the next process. As both countries go through the agreements and take a look at the ramifications and implications therein, we will have a better understanding of what that means specifically for Yukon. But we don't expect any more tariffs. We expect this relationship to prosper and to move forward. One of the hard points that Canada had to take was in dairy. As the member opposite knows, we don't have a dairy industry here exporting to other jurisdictions. As far as any of the new trade deals, the implications of that will be felt as we move forward.

We expect the tariffs that the member opposite is worried about to hopefully be the next part of this process of seeing those become relaxed and allow trade to truly be free.

Mr. Hassard: Can the Premier tell us how much the retaliatory tariffs have cost Yukon or are there any ideas on that yet?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Can the member repeat the question?

Mr. Hassard: I asked if the Premier could provide us with some information on how much the retaliatory tariffs have cost Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We don't have macro-level statistics on that now. We're taking things on a contract-by-contract basis, as I spoke to in one of my original answers here as far as the tendering process and how that works out and also through coding from the letter that the member opposite asked about.

As far as domestic exports, mineral production — when I said “mineral production”, the eyes got really big next door and I don't know why. That represents the lion's share of our total merchandise traded. I could get into the specifics of vegetable production, live animal and animal products if the member opposite wants. There is the production of chemicals, which is interesting, or plastics and articles therein, rubber and those types of things. But really, the next biggest thing is works of art. There are collectors in the Yukon of types of things like pieces of antiques. Optical, film and cinematography are up there, as well, at close to about \$1 million therein.

Again, the member opposite knows we don't have a huge amount of things that we export, but those are some of the

things that we do. The lion's share shouldn't be a surprise. It's about \$60 million, year to date, for domestic exports — again, gold and copper.

Mr. Hassard: I was talking about the retaliatory tariffs, which are tariffs that are put on goods coming into Canada — not things that we're exporting, but things that are actually getting imported.

Another question with imports: Can the Premier tell us what the dollar amount is on goods imported from both the US and Mexico into the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think I was clear in the messaging, of whether it be the original tariffs that have been put on the American people by the Americans of goods coming in from Canada, mostly for — I shouldn't say mostly for — and the retaliatory tariffs here in Canada to the tune of the number I quoted, which was \$16.6 billion. Both of those are the result of negotiating the new deal on NAFTA and, now that we have a new deal on NAFTA, that's the next conversation for the two countries: How do we relax both the retaliatory tariffs and the original tariffs that were escalated due to a negotiating process for a new deal? Now that we have a new deal, the hope is that these will get relaxed. Again, they were part of that negotiating process; they were happening in real time over what seemed to be years and years but turned out to be about a year and a half of those negotiations.

Whether it is the original tariffs put on the American people by the Americans or the retaliatory tariffs here in Canada, it is our hope — and we're hearing from Ottawa that negotiating a relaxation of those tariffs is the next step. That's what we're looking at right now.

In this world of protectionism, it's an interesting tactic to be putting these tariffs on, but the good news is that I think what it's doing is forcing the federal government to not be complacent, to look for new markets and to make sure we're getting our Canada-wide, or national, resources to other emerging markets and not be so reliant upon the American government and trade therein.

It's always good to have a good rapport there. It's also good to be able to sit down with our Mexican counterparts and talk about the trade that happens from here to Mexico. Again, people think about the tactile physical things of an actual commodity but, in the Yukon's case, when we're exporting services to different countries, that's a really important piece of it as well.

When we have a look at the trading partners of America — to answer the member opposite's question — and merchandise that is imported and exported between Yukon and the United States, we have numbers that are year-to-date right now, so the total amount of merchandise trade to date to Canada — one second, Mr. Chair, I'm just qualifying data. So the imports to date that are imported to Yukon in total merchandise is just over \$34 million — to be specific, \$34,219,816. Of that list, mostly it is live animals and animal products to the tune of about \$25.5 million.

Other than that, there are smaller items, including rawhides and skins, machinery and machinery appliances and electrical equipment to the tune of about \$4 million. In the

optical, photographic and cinematography category, we're actually importing a little bit more than we're exporting, so that's \$1.1 million. Those are pretty much the lion's share of those numbers.

But again, whether it is domestic imports or exports, I will be happy to give the comprehensive list to the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: So we've heard that there may be some impacts with costs of pharmaceuticals. Can the Premier tell us if this is, in fact, the case — if this new trade agreement is going to impact the price of pharmaceuticals coming from the United States?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Pharmaceutical costs were definitely identified as an issue but haven't been quantified yet. There is not much more to tell the member opposite except that those numbers are not in.

Mr. Hassard: Can the Premier tell us how often he meets with the Governor of Alaska? When was the last meeting and does he anticipate when any future meetings may be with Governor Walker?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would be happy to meet with Mr. Walker at any time.

Mr. Hassard: Unfortunately I'm not Governor Walker's secretary. I won't be setting those meetings up. The question was — okay, maybe this is a better question — when did the Premier last meet with Governor Walker? We'll start there.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I haven't met with Mr. Walker.

Mr. Hassard: It's interesting considering the Prime Minister is congratulating him and thanking him for talking with Alaska.

Anyway, another question — not in regard to Alaska — can the Premier tell us when the next First Ministers' meetings are to be held?

Hon. Mr. Silver: In the context of trade negotiations — governors don't negotiate those, by the way. But I will say that I haven't met with Mr. Walker. I would love to meet with him. That would be a fantastic meeting. I have met with all the other representatives, I believe — Sullivan, Young, Murkowski — as I mentioned here in the Legislative Assembly — again, under the auspices of conversations with the trade negotiations.

I'm not sure if the dates for the First Ministers' meetings are public yet. Suffice it to say they will be happening before the New Year.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Chair, during the spring session, we spoke a little bit about the government's plan to add more value-driven contracts rather than using price-driven contracts. A Procurement Business Committee was struck in May of this year to help this process along and continue consultations with industry associations, First Nation development corporations.

As the minister stated that he expects the government to have the panel's recommendations implemented by the end of this year, can the Premier give us the status of the work being done by that committee and whether or not this work is on track to be completed by the end of 2018?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Chair, could the member opposite please repeat the question for me? I'm sorry, I missed it.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Chair, it's a good thing I wrote these questions down. During the Spring Sitting, we spoke a little bit about the government's plan to add more value-driven contracts rather than using price-driven contracts. The Procurement Business Committee was struck in May. The minister stated he expected the government to have the panel's recommendations implemented by the end of the year. So can we get an update on the status of that work and is it on track to be completed by the end of 2018?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member opposite for the question this afternoon. There's no issue nearer and dearer to my heart these days than procurement.

I can assure the member opposite that, right now, we are in the process of finalizing our procurement improvements for the territory and implementing the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel. We took action on all 11 Procurement Advisory Panel recommendations to improve procurement. As the member opposite has noted, we have standard clauses in our value-driven procurements that give points for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge. Since June 1, 2017, we have tendered 157 value-driven procurements with these mandatory clauses.

We are investing in ongoing skill development, with more than 100 employees enrolled in a professional procurement certification program. We have partnered with the Organizational Development branch to create a procurement training framework to ensure procurement is conducted by staff with appropriate expertise. We are examining how economic analysis can be used to improve our sourcing strategies and to understand our impact on the economy of the territory. We continue to meet regularly with local businesses and industry associations and host well-attended annual events that connect our staff with local vendors. Approximately 200 vendors attended each of the reverse trade shows and approximately 125 people register at the industry conference each year.

We have created a procurement business committee made up of industry representatives and met three times over the summer and will meet again in October. The member opposite referenced that himself and I thank him for that. The committee includes all First Nation development corporations and a half-dozen industry associations and chambers of commerce, and the discussions have provided a lot of valuable information to this government.

We are adding five more members of the private sector to the Bid Challenge Committee, which deals with dispute resolution. This will help the committee to respond more quickly to challenges.

We are doing an awful lot to improve procurement in the territory.

As I have said before, implementing all the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel has not fixed procurement. This is going to be a subject that has to be

continually refined and improved over the coming years. This government is committed to doing that, and I am sure that the people of the territory have already seen those tangible improvements and will continue to see them over the coming months and years.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I was remiss to not include the Mexican import and export numbers for the member opposite, but I will share those with him and his team now.

When we're looking at Mexico, domestic exports — when we export to Mexico, to the tune of — and these numbers are year to date, so not a complete year. Total merchandise trade so far to Mexico is to the tune of \$613,180. That is just basically two numbers. We have \$1,750 worth of rawhides, skins, leathers and fur skins and articles therein that are heading down there. The rest of that is \$607,000 in base metals and articles of base metals.

When we are taking a look at what comes up here from Mexico, it is just one item and it's for \$9,464. That is for machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipment or parts therein, which could include sound recorders or reproducers or television imaging or sound orders, reproducers or such types of articles.

Mr. Hassard: The Premier previously stated that it was mostly drilling, but, in fact, now he's saying that it's \$607,000 year to date for base minerals. Is there no drilling in that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Not this year.

Mr. Hassard: Back to the previous question — the Minister of Highways and Public Works talked about the committee that I talked about, but he didn't actually say whether or not they were on track to have this work completed by the end of 2018.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite — I should have said earlier — for repeating his question. I'm sorry to make him go through that process. I won't make him do it again this time.

We are on track to make our commitment to implement those recommendations of the panel by the end of the year.

Mr. Hassard: With regard to adding more value-driven contracts rather than just price-driven contracts — and I'm not saying that one system is better than the other by any means. I certainly understand the rationale behind it.

Has the government done any analysis to determine if they expect to know how much extra this is going to cost on a yearly basis, to do contracts this way rather than being strictly price-driven?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I will endeavour to get him an answer to that question, as I don't have my officials here to guide me. This question is fairly technical. I'll find out and get back to him.

Mr. Hassard: For someone who preaches about evidence-based decision-making, I thought that would have been a pretty easy one. I thought he would have had that evidence.

Anyway, speaking of evidence-based decision-making, let's talk about the new government website for a few minutes. Can the Premier tell us how many pages still need to be migrated to the new website?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is worth noting that we're now talking about line items in the first budget, not even this current budget. But I'm happy to continue on general debate here when it comes to questions from the members opposite.

The new website does improve access to government information and services for Yukoners throughout the territory, and the new mobile-enabled website focuses on the needs of the public and means that we can continue to expand online services for Yukoners. By creating a single website, Mr. Chair, we are providing a better experience for the public as well as decreasing costs, and we're also reducing the bureaucracy.

Since we have launched yukon.ca in February — with 180 pages at that time — we have added another 1,700 pages, including emergency and safety information, campground and recreational pages, government events listings and a directory of government buildings. All departments are working to migrate content to the new site, focusing in on pages that serve the needs of citizens. Not all of the 11,000 pages estimated in the spring will be migrated to the new site. As part of the launch of yukon.ca — it is to ensure that content is relevant, up-to-date and focused on meeting the needs of citizens who are increasingly looking for government to deliver more e-services online.

Since we launched yukon.ca, we have gathered more than 450 feedback forms and are continuing to adjust to meet the public's needs. I think those are the numbers that the member opposite is looking for, as far as migrating those pages. Again, there were 11,000 pages estimated in the spring that will be migrated to the new site.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Mr. Hassard: Would the Premier be able to provide us with some timelines on when he feels — or what the cost-recovery time is in regard to the new website?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would assume that by the end of this year it would already be paid for by the cost-saving of having a whole-of-a-government approach when you take a look at the visual identity and the website together, but as far as a complete analysis of that, I don't have that available right now. I am assuming it's not years and years. This would be something that would be a cost-saving within the year, if not already.

Mr. Hassard: So then a quick question on that: Does the Premier feel that assumptions are evidence-based decision-making?

Hon. Mr. Silver: No.

Mr. Hassard: I would hope not.

Can the Premier tell us when the old site will be shut down?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We're definitely not pushing for the old website to be closed, because that would cost more money to have a team shut that down. We talked about the 11,000 pages that are being sent over. That will be done in a timely manner. It is worth noting as well that, not only is this a cost-saving, it is also better access for devices when you take a look at how we designed our new website. Therefore, more Yukoners can be engaged when we are doing our engagement processes.

Mr. Hassard: Moving on, can the Premier confirm the status of seismic upgrades to Yukon schools for us?

Hon. Mr. Silver: At this time, no, I cannot.

Mr. Hassard: We have seen the school revitalization list, and notably absent from that list, I think, is the Ross River School. Can the Premier confirm whether or not there are any plans for renovations or rebuilding of the Ross River School?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the Minister of Education has answered this question in the Legislative Assembly previously. She talked about a plan for assets — not just schools, but RCMP buildings. I think this conversation has been had a few times in the Legislative Assembly, and I don't think we have anything more to add at this point. I will offer the Minister of Education an opportunity to have this conversation during general debate on the supplementary budget.

Mr. Hassard: I don't believe that we have confirmed whether or not there are any plans for renovations or the rebuilding of Ross River School, so maybe the Minister of Education can provide us with an update on that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I understand it, we are talking about the Ross River School and seismic mitigations to Yukon schools. I can assure the member opposite that, as far as the Ross River School is concerned, we are keeping a very close eye on that facility and making sure that it is safe for the staff and students of Ross River. The engineer was up there in February of this year to make sure that the school was safe, and I have been assured that it is and that we are keeping a close eye on it. That may put any fears the member opposite may harbour about the Ross River facility, which I am sure he is well aware of — that it is safe.

As he knows, it has been settling due to the freezing and thawing of the permafrost in the region for many years. A number of structural repairs have been done and interventions have been made over the years. We now are looking at what to do with this facility in the long term. As the member well knows, maintaining and managing this facility is fairly expensive, but we are willing to do that in the short term to make sure that the staff and students are safe.

As far as seismic mitigations in the school — that was an earlier question the member opposite was asking about and it is a good one too, Mr. Chair.

As the members opposite know — I'm sure they well know — in 2010, Highways and Public Works commissioned a seismic screening of 27 school buildings on behalf of

Education, and that report assigned hazard ratings to individual schools and identified eight buildings that were at medium or high risk in the event of an extreme seismic event. Then in 2013, Highways and Public Works commissioned a second, more in-depth analysis of the eight buildings identified in the screening report. Just last week, Mr. Chair, the members opposite asked about this report. It is on our website. They were asking what happened with that. I went and asked about what happened with those reports — it was 2013 they commissioned a second, more in-depth analysis. This was done and seismic repairs were completed by Education and Highways and Public Works in the summer of 2014. This work included the installation of seismic restraint anchors and cabling as well as the relocation of items that could fall from height and other similar measures. Structural work was also carried out in some schools, which included reinforcing structural elements, adding bracing and upgrading exterior entrances.

The report, though, also asked for a bunch of work to be done by the end of 2015 — November 2015. I asked what happened with that work and apparently nothing. I don't know why. We were looking into this and I was surprised — shocked — that the report would have asked for this work to have been done and for me to find that nothing had been done. Lo and behold, we took office and I am now, thanks to the questions from the members opposite, being made aware of this deficiency and this lack of work by November 2015, so I'm asking the department to resurrect their work and start to make some progress on the work that had languished for almost three years. I'm not sure why.

Mr. Hassard: So the third time's the charm here. I'm going to try this one more time: Can the minister or the Premier confirm whether there are any plans for renovations or rebuilding of the Ross River School?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The minister has been very clear that the school is safe and that the safety of our kids in all of the schools is a priority for this government. We will have to continue to work with Ross River Dena Council to identify future plans, but I believe the member opposite has had his answer from the minister when it comes to the Ross River School a couple of times here in the Legislative Assembly. I don't think there is anything new to report and I think that question was answered.

This is interesting with the seismic report and good information to come from the member opposite. It's really great to have all the ministers providing information here at general debate of a supplementary budget and having a conversation spilling out past that. Sometimes I feel bad that my Deputy Minister of Finance is here ready to answer questions on the supplementary budget, but I'm happy to have the team here answering all these questions.

Mr. Hassard: I can certainly remind the Premier that we could dig up some questions from a previous supplementary debate and I'm sure it would not be a whole lot different.

Can the Premier update the House on the status of negotiations and work plan for the Nisutlin Bay bridge?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will allow, if it pleases the Chair, the Minister of Highways and Public Works to answer that question, but I would be happy to compare records on supplementary budgets.

I believe I have said this before in the Legislative Assembly — sometimes I would just list all of my questions for the sake of expediency and just have them all on the record, hopefully not having a minister that would have a 20-minute response each time, but that seemed to be the status quo before. I would relish an opportunity to compare my time in the supplementary debates to the tactics used by the Yukon Party.

I believe my minister is ready with an answer to that question.

Mr. Hassard: I think that my questions have all been very short and to the point, so I think that for the Premier to say that may be a little bit unrealistic.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am more than happy to talk this afternoon about bridges. We have a lot of them, as the member opposite well knows, and they are expensive. In the interest of providing information to the members opposite, I'm sure — and to the public, because that is really who we are serving here this afternoon — the territorial government maintains 133 bridges in the territory. Last year, in 2017-18, we allocated \$15 million to bridges and bridge repairs out of a total transportation budget of \$72 million.

Investing in our bridges is exceedingly important. As we were saying about the Nares River bridge in Carcross, that bridge was a bottleneck to the provision of goods and services from port facilities in Skagway to the territory. Improving that infrastructure was vital to the provision of goods into the territory, and one of the problems we were having as a government was dealing with legacy treatment of First Nations in the territory. It took a lot of work with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to build up enough trust to allow them to allow us to contract out that bridge contract in their traditional territory. We worked very closely with the First Nation and, I believe, got a really good result down there.

I know that this model is now playing out, and we are working with the Teslin Tlingit Council to find out how they see the bridge in Nares playing out and what we are learning from that. We will use all the knowledge we get as we move forward into the new bridge procurement in Teslin. We are working on that, and we are working with the First Nation in Teslin and, of course, the community as a whole. As those negotiations and talks progress, we will have more information for this House.

Mr. Hassard: I believe that is pretty much the same answer that we got last spring. Maybe in a shorter version, the minister or the Premier could update us on what progress has been made in these negotiations.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my answer just a few minutes ago, we are continuing to build a project in Carcross. It is vitally important to the territory and to the people of Carcross. That is, from all accounts that I've heard, going relatively smoothly. We're keeping an eye on it. We're seeing how it works for our government, for the Carcross/Tagish

First Nation and for the contractor involved. We will take the lessons learned from that project and use them to work with the community of Teslin in the next procurement of that major project in that community.

Mr. Hassard: It almost makes a person think that there hasn't been any progress made.

Since the Nisutlin bridge never made the five-year capital concept, can the minister or the Premier provide us a bit of an update on when the Nisutlin bridge may be considered for renovations, rebuilding or whatever the case may be?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for flagging the five-year capital plan. It's an important piece of our procurement improvement process that this government has implemented over the last two years.

It was introduced to make government's plans for construction and infrastructure projects more transparent for Yukoners and those in private industry. The five-year capital plan informs this government's priorities and will help Yukon businesses prepare for upcoming projects. That's exactly what the five-year capital plan aims to do. As projects get green lit for production, we'll add them to the capital plan.

We will continue to provide Yukoners with information on the government's planned capital investments over the next five years. The capital plan will continue to change as circumstances change over the years. We are updating the plan even now and we'll be tabling a refreshed capital plan in the spring session. I'm sure the members opposite are anxiously awaiting that next five-year capital plan. It's going to be a refinement on the early plan that we introduced just this last spring. We're going to add to it with more detail and put more "flesh on the bone", as the expression goes, and allow Yukoners to have a better look into the future to help them plan, forecast and time procurements and plan for projects coming forward.

I asked the member opposite to please stay tuned. He sounds like he appreciates the five-year capital planning that this relatively new Liberal government has undertaken. I can assure him that it will become much more robust and refined as the years go on.

Mr. Hassard: I'm happy to see that the minister understands the importance of planning, but when a community has a project as large as this, it's important that they have the opportunity to plan too. If the government is not willing to provide an update or give some idea of when this project is going to hit the five-year capital concept — or, in fact, even happen — it's very difficult for the community and the members of that community to plan as well. Again, I will ask: Are there any timelines on when this project may move forward?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister answered the member's question. I can understand why this is of concern to the member opposite. I believe this went forward quite a bit when his government was in power and then was rolled back, so the community has been waiting for a long time — that is true. We are going to make sure that we get this right. We are engaging with the community, and I believe the question from the member opposite has been answered by the minister.

Mr. Hassard: It absolutely has not been answered, but anyway — so the Premier is saying that there has been consultation with the community. I would like to know when the last meeting with the community was regarding this project.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The last time my departmental officials, specifically the crew responsible for bridges, met with the community — I can find out when the last discussions on the Teslin project happened. I'll endeavour to get that information for the member.

I will tell the member opposite that we have had discussions with prominent members of the community on an ongoing basis and we will continue to do so. I know that the bridge contract has been mentioned in passing. We have had conversations on that and we will continue to do so.

There's a lot of work to be done on this file. It's a very large project; it's a very expensive project, as the member opposite well knows. It is an important project to this government and to this territory. That Teslin bridge is another bottleneck. It's a fairly small structure. Improving it and making it better will increase the capacity of the territory and its economy.

We will keep this House updated as to developments on the Teslin bridge as events unfold.

Mr. Hassard: I guess we're not going to get an answer to either of those questions. It is interesting, though, that the minister considers the Nisutlin Bay bridge a bottleneck. In all my years of living in Teslin, with the exception of when there was an accident on the bridge — that's the only time it has ever been a bottleneck. I don't think it has to be a bridge to create a bottleneck.

Since the Minister of Highways and Public Works is here and talking, let's ask a couple of questions about Ross River. Last spring, the Minister of Highways and Public Works stood in this Legislature and told the House that there would be paving taking place on the road between Faro and Ross River. I was up there last week or the week before, and I certainly didn't see any paving taking place; I didn't see any preparation for paving. Maybe we could get an update on where that is.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Since 2004 — let's go back and give a little bit of history, as it's good to provide some context — the Campbell Highway between Watson Lake Airport access at kilometre 10 and the Tuchitua highway maintenance camp at kilometre 114 has been under reconstruction to improve the overall safety of the highway.

Reconstruction this season focused on the stretch of road near Frances River, just south of Simpson Lake. That is from kilometre 73 to 79, and this is the final section of reconstruction from kilometre 10 to 114. Work to the final section should be completed this fall, with some bituminous surface treatment work to take place in 2019 from kilometre 73 to kilometre 78. This project is expected to expand the Yukon's gross domestic product by an estimated \$5.8 million and will potentially provide more than 58 jobs over the course of 2018-19.

Design work has also started for the stretch between Ross River and Faro. Design work has also started for the stretch of highway between kilometre 114 and kilometre 232, the BMC Minerals access road. Upgrades to the highway between Ross River and Faro are scheduled to begin in 2019-20.

Mr. Hassard: Since we are on history lessons, here is a little bit of history: The minister stood in this House this spring and said there would be paving going on this season on the section between Faro and Ross River. That is just a little history lesson for the minister there.

On brush and weed control, I was wondering if we could get a bit of an update on where the budget is with regard to brush and weed control for this year.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Brush and weed control — clover. This year, Mr. Chair, we have successfully tendered eight projects with a total value of \$1.2 million for weed and vegetation control in the territory. Our vegetation control program includes annual brush-clearing, tree removal and vegetation control within highway rights-of-way, as the member opposite well knows. Clearing brush and trees from the right-of-way increases drivers' lines of sight, facilitates safe passing and merging, enhances drivers' ability to see wildlife approaching or crossing highways and makes road signage more visible. I will tell you, after having travelled the highways and byways of the UK, you really come to appreciate all of the visibility and sightlines that we have in the territory through brush control because they certainly don't have much of it there.

Decisions regarding which portions of highways to target within the vegetation control program are made based on proximity to communities, traffic volumes, sight distances, sweet clover density, known wildlife corridors and vegetation conditions.

I will tell the member opposite that some of the vegetation control we have on the side of the highways has been erratic. I have been told that some of the vegetation we have in those corridors is 30 years old. In terms of a methodical approach to actually clearing away some of what are now large, maturing trees, it hasn't happened. I am working with the department to try to find a methodical approach to brush-clearing so that we can actually start talking to communities about when they are going to show up in the system so they can actually start to plan and know when brush-clearing is going to be happening in the territory.

That work is really in its very beginning stages, but it is one of the things I want to take a look at.

We're on roughly 5,000 kilometres worth of road. We have a budget this year that is \$1.2 million. We have a fairly good idea how much it costs to clear a kilometre of road and so I want to start to get more method to the actual clearing of brush in and around Yukon communities.

Mr. Hassard: So the minister said that he has a fairly good idea of how much it costs to do brush and weed control on a kilometre of highway. Can the minister provide us with that number?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Well, Mr. Chair, what I can say to the member opposite — I'm sorry if you misunderstood what

I had to say — is that every year we're going to clear X number of kilometres of highway.

We have a budget of \$1.2 million. The math may get a little bit more wrinkly depending on geographic location, but the fact is that if you divide the number of kilometres we did in a year by a number of millions we spend, we should get a fairly good idea over the course of several years how much it's costing per kilometre on sort of an average basis. Throw in a little bit of contingency for unexpected clover outbreaks and then we should be able to come up with a way to plan out our brush-clearing efforts so that it is a little bit more methodical and planned.

Mr. Hassard: Actually, it depends a lot more on whether they're doing three-metre, five-metre, or full-width mowing — but anyway, let's turn to the Dawson City runway for a minute.

We know that the lowest bid came in at almost \$9.4 million for paving of the runway. Last spring, the minister assured us that it wouldn't be over \$6.5 million, so I'm wondering if this is a case of the government's new way of estimating and budgeting not working or what the government's plan is to move forward on this project.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think just earlier today we were talking about — and even earlier this afternoon in this debate — the strange days we're having with trade in a global context and how that is affecting our projects, so we have to keep all these things in mind when we're tendering and trying to get things done. I know the economy, as the Premier and Finance minister has noted — we have a very low unemployment rate right now. We have a very robust economy and unfortunately in the face of some of that, we put out contracts for tender and we get the bids back and we will have to make a determination about where we go from there.

I will say that to better support Yukoners and to maximize economic development in Yukon, the Dawson City Airport is slated to be paved in 2019. We want to make sure that this airport meets the needs of the Dawson and Klondike community as well as the Yukon and supports regional economic activities. We are working with our stakeholders to schedule the 2019 paving and we will ensure service interruptions are planned well in advance of this important development. The plan is still to go ahead with paving the Dawson City runway and, as the member opposite well knows, we will deal with procurement as it comes along.

Mr. Hassard: When the Premier was in the Third Party, he on more than one occasion mentioned that when a project was overbudget such as this, obviously the minister did not have control of their department.

Does the Premier feel that this is the case in this situation?

Hon. Mr. Silver: No, I do not.

Mr. Hassard: Interesting, Mr. Chair. I guess he had it right when he said that the view is different from over here. He seems to have changed his view on things.

North Canol — we know there were some issues with some bridges in the Ross River area. I'm wondering if we can get an update on what bridges have been upgraded and

repaired and how many more bridges there are that need repairs on the North Canol as well.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can tell the member opposite that in 2018-19, we have allocated approximately \$17 million to bridge repair in the territory. Bridge inspection, rehabilitation, replacement projects and load rating reviews have allowed the North Canol bridge weight restrictions to be revised from five tonnes to 48 tonnes since 2016.

We are working to improve our bridges. We are spending a lot of money on that. There is a lot of work to be done. I did mention earlier that we have 133 bridges in the territory and 254 large structural culvert locations. There are a lot of bridges and they are expensive. Bridgework is always very expensive. A lot of our bridges are old. Many of them were put in 75 years ago. It's like a monoculture; they are all coming due at about the same time. We are going to prioritize and make sure that we get our bridges improved. These weight restrictions on bridges do throttle industry. They throttle the communities that they serve, and so we want to make sure that they are as robust and as useful as possible to the people of the territory and the businesses and resource companies that rely on them.

Mr. Hassard: In that answer, I certainly didn't hear how much money was being spent on bridges on the North Canol and how many bridges still need to be repaired, so maybe we can try that again, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This year, \$17 million on bridges — in 2017, we reviewed nine bridges on various major highways as having insufficient load-capacity ratings relative to current design standards — nine bridges right away, just last year in 2017. The Department of Highways and Public Works prioritized retrofit work on these nine bridges this year at a cost of approximately \$2 million. Some of that work — I can delve into the department with the experts in the department — and find out exactly where some of those bridges were, but some of those were on the North Canol.

Mr. Hassard: We are getting closer to an answer. Some of those nine bridges are on the North Canol. Can the Premier tell us how many more bridges there are on the North Canol that still need to be upgraded?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I can tell the member opposite, Mr. Chair, that we are funding \$1.8 million for the inspection of bridges and other drainage structures across the transportation network. That is throughout the whole territory, including significant upgrades to the bridge and culvert inspection program. I can tell the member opposite that this year we are doing almost \$2 million worth of work inspecting and making sure that we identify the most important bridges to fix, replace, upgrade and maintain.

Mr. Hassard: It is obvious that the minister doesn't know or doesn't have that information.

Would it be possible to get the Premier or the minister to commit to providing the House with a legislative return with that information?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This government strives to be open and transparent to provide information. The member opposite is asking for information on the number of bridges on the

North Canol that still require work. The department is currently doing almost \$2 million worth of work identifying bridges in the territory that will need work. I will go back to the department and see how much of that work has actually happened on the North Canol.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the supplementary budget has way fewer departments than what I had grown accustomed to in the previous government. I had already mentioned to the Premier that I had questions that were in relation to departments that do not have supplementary budgets. I know that for two of mine, the ministers are here, so I have questions for either Yukon Housing Corporation or Education.

I feel that maybe the Minister of Education is not feeling tiptop, so I wonder if the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation would be open to questions today and if the Premier would be interested in us going down that path.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Absolutely — I guess we're having a fundamental difference as to what the supplementary budget is for and what it has been used for in the past and how we can move forward in this legislative session and focus in on future debates as well.

The last thing that we want to do, as a government, is to limit conversation or dialogue.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe that's the Member for Watson Lake who has something to add to this conversation later. We'll let her stand when it's her turn, Mr. Chair.

The concept that I just want to float with the opposition is: If we do spend the general debate on the budgetary items, then we do get a chance to do more legislating. I know that's something the NDP is interested in. So again, we have all these different options to have conversations and questions to the ministers. We have casework, we have Question Period, we have legislative returns — there's access to information, and we're changing that legislation as well. Again, we are happy to maintain a status quo in general debate when it comes to asking questions specifically about their departments, if that's what pleases the opposition.

It is a lost opportunity to spend a lot of time legislating and having discussion about legislation as well, so it's just a balance. It's how we use our time in the Legislative Assembly effectively on both sides. We had criticism from the NDP during private members' day about going on, on some files. I think we have done a good job of curtailing that. You don't see us sitting up here for 20 minutes responding to answers from the members opposite. I would like to get a little bit of a confirmation that, yes, we are doing something differently here.

At the same time, it does take the whole of government and the whole of opposition to decide whether or not we want to use this time for what it's supposed to be for or if we want to continue with what we have traditionally used it for. That's up to all of us. Again, we are here to answer any questions, but I guess we, as a Legislature, will all be judged equally on how we spend our time in legislation and how much time we

spend legislating or using the time in Committee of the Whole to talk about specific debate.

With that being said, we are happy to continue to answer general questions on this supplementary in Committee of the Whole. I will give that opportunity to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Ms. White: I don't know if I would use the term that I appreciate the Premier's "lecture". I'm going to use the word "lecture" because when I write a letter to a minister and it takes six weeks to respond when I'm doing the casework sometimes, this is the only opportunity to ask a direct question. If members opposite would like, I could start asking very direct relevant casework questions during Question Period, but I feel like that might not be the time.

My first question for the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation is: When a request comes from a tenant and we're talking about a tenant with a disability, what disability information does the Yukon Housing Corporation look at before they either approve or deny a request for a repair within a Yukon Housing Corporation unit?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to provide the member opposite with the protocols — the schedule of details with respect to the requests when they come in. At this moment in time, I'm not able to respond to the specific questions around the policy directives within the department, but I would be happy to acquire and share that information.

Ms. White: I guess I take issue with that because that has been in direct communication where I have asked which policy, when we're dealing with disability issues and questions of repair, does Yukon Housing Corporation take. I have the consent form if we need it here now. In particular, I'm talking very specifically about a tenant with an amputation whose flooring was changed and a transition strip was placed in the middle of a floor. Typically when you have transition strips for able-bodied people, it's not an issue because you can feel through your legs. If you have a leg amputation, you can't actually feel the transition strip. When I started writing about this issue about two and a half months ago and I asked about what policies we followed when we were dealing with disability, I didn't get a response.

The reason I'm asking this question is: If we are causing issues or we are exacerbating issues with tenants in Yukon Housing Corporation spaces, I want to know how those decisions are made.

If a tenant has a specific concern around the safety of their unit and they address that concern to the department, what is the policy that the department then takes to either accept and say, yes, we're going to make those changes or they deny it and say it's fine the way it is? I'm asking how those decisions are based. I have, just to be clear, asked that in a letter to the minister. I have done that in e-mail communications so now I'm looking for clarification.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to protocols around a Safe at Home policy, what the department has looked at and will continue to look at are improvements in efficiencies. I would like to thank the member opposite for bringing this forward. The concerns that have been raised have been

brought to the department. We look at efficiencies within the Yukon Housing Corporation around service delivery and home first as a good model where we work in partnership with Health and Social Services. If we have clients within the units that are owned by the government, then we ensure that the supports are there. If the client raises a concern, then certainly we would want to ensure that we provide the best possible care to the individual in question.

I'm not going to stand here and say that everything is addressed, but we do our best. When issues are brought to our attention, we raise it with the department and we ask them to please follow through, recognizing that we have 700 units.

We try to adjust our budgets accordingly and provide supports. In the event that the unit doesn't meet the needs of the client, then certainly adjustments have to be made to provide suitable accommodations. Where flexibility can be had, then that is what we focus on. If there are specific concerns, I would like to commit to the member opposite that we would follow through on that and, again, raise it with the department. If there are specific issues, then I am not prepared to have that discussion here in the Legislative Assembly, but I will talk about efficiencies and policies so that every tenant of Yukon Housing Corporation is in the right home that suits their needs.

Ms. White: I was actually asking about the policy that the Yukon Housing Corporation followed to make decisions as to whether or not repairs were done to a unit when they were requested. I guess I am asking now: If a policy exists, does it address accessibility? Does it address specific needs around those people with disabilities? Does the policy exist and, if it does, can we see a copy of it? If it doesn't exist, then I just need that as an answer.

Hon. Ms. Frost: We are working with the Department of Health and Social Services. With respect to the policy, we have attempted to make adjustments to the policy to ensure that we have a home first model and that a home first model, in conjunction with Yukon Housing Corporation, addresses the needs of the clients who have mobility or other challenges that have come to our attention.

Ms. White: For future reference and for me, can the minister make that policy available please?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I apologize. I didn't hear the last question. Maybe the member opposite can repeat the question and I will respond.

Ms. White: I was just asking for the policy that the minister referenced. Can I get a copy of it please?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to provide the home first initiative project from Health and Social Services for the member opposite.

Ms. White: I was actually asking around the specific policy that would deal with renovations to existing Yukon Housing Corporation units if there was a problem as far as accessibility. If that is to be found in Safe at Home, then I will take that. In my communication with the minister and with the department around this issue, it seems to be something different. I am just looking for clarification on how to go about asking for this information.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Clearly, we have a number of units, and I want to make note that we are looking at modernizing and upgrading some of our affordable housing units. We have been doing that over the course of the last two years. The objective there is to ensure that we provide supports to those tenants who have mobility issues. As soon as it comes to our attention, then we try to address it.

The focus is really to try to put some energy and effort into rural Yukon as well, because we do have a lot of units in rural Yukon that have not had much attention paid to them. Our objective is to modernize and adjust our policies to meet the needs of all of our clients.

Ms. White: In trying to decide priorities for next fiscal year, one of the issues would be around wait-lists. Can I get an update on the number of people on the current wait-list? We can either talk about seniors, we can talk about in Whitehorse, we can talk about communities and we can talk about the whole list. I'm just looking for numbers on the current wait-list for Yukon Housing Corporation.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite. Recognizing that the wait-list for Yukon Housing Corporation far exceeds the stock we have and recognizing also that historically we have the stocks that are aging out of the system, so we haven't accommodated or adjusted our budgets historically to meet the demands, we're trying to put some effort into retrofitting and adjusting our — I guess building standard — the codes. The buildings that existed 30 years ago that are still within our housing stocks don't meet current requirements and codes, so some efforts are put into energy efficiencies, but also really try to focus on working with the housing navigators and assisting those most in need with application processes, but modernizing more our social housing application forms, working with the clients and addressing the demands and putting a little more effort into rural Yukon communities as well. Just this last year, we put an additional \$200,000 for a rent supplement program, helping Yukoners access eligible units.

We will continue to work with the Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services to try to match the needs of all of our clients.

Ms. White: Can I get the numbers of people currently waiting for Yukon Housing Corporation units?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I believe I tabled that previously, but I would be happy to do that again. The following shows a wait-list for housing units in rural Yukon communities. As of August, we had 41 on the wait-list and 248 in Whitehorse. That includes seniors as well, so those who are on the social spectrum and then also the seniors wait-list.

Ms. White: Does the minister have the breakdown of the number of seniors out of the 248 in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that at my fingertips, but I can certainly provide the member opposite the information.

Ms. White: The reason why I'm asking about the specific number of seniors on that wait-list is that, in the same way that I have been working on case work for about two months with the tripping hazard, I have been working with a local senior who has actually been couch surfing for eight

months. He's in his 80s. The reason why I ask this question is because I want to know if there are plans for the Yukon Housing Corporation to develop new units next year.

What I'm looking for is: Is there any intention? I appreciate that we have extended the grant program that allows people to access market rental housing, but what I want to know is: Is there any intention from the Yukon Housing Corporation to build new units in the near future?

Hon. Ms. Frost: In 2018-19, the housing program investment anticipates an increase in new units. We anticipate approximately 353 new units with the support and partnership initiatives and the funding as we budgeted. That includes some seniors units, affordable micro-units using the municipal matching grant. There are a couple of units going into Ross River. There are eight more units in Dawson City. We have a number of units through the municipal partnership arrangement through the housing initiative project. I am really excited about that.

In 2019-20, we'll have an additional \$3.6 million in our budget toward trying to seek further partnerships. As a note, the partnership initiative of \$3.6 million allowed us to work with our partners and bring in \$26 million in partnership initiatives on projects.

We'll continue to work with our partners and look at the housing initiatives fund, looking at the development of new lots as well as some key priorities for this government and some new initiatives in terms of accessibility, as noted, trying to ensure we have sufficient resources in place so that we look at the new construction and accessibility and some of the criteria.

With regard to seniors housing, that's a key priority for the government. Currently, we're in rural Yukon doing our aging-in-place conversations that are happening and engagement sessions. Those will give us some indication and some direction on what rural Yukon elders and seniors would like to see as priorities, and then we need to budget accordingly to ensure we meet the demand where the demand is most.

Ms. White: In the 353 new units the minister mentioned, how many of those are expected to have Yukon Housing Corporation wait-list people move into them? So of the 353, how many do you expect will be accessed by Yukon Housing Corporation clients?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The objective of the funding proposal is really to address those who are particularly hard to house. We want to make sure that we provide affordable housing, so the objective is to provide and eliminate the list that currently exists for Yukon Housing Corporation. Our goal is always to make sure that we provide opportunities for those who are currently challenged to find secure accommodation.

I want to make sure that we don't put up barriers and that we take down the barriers that have been there for years. We also know that we have a growing population and we're having some further pressures in the city that we have not seen historically. We're trying to focus our efforts on working with our partners in rural Yukon communities. I'm happy to say we have another project in Dawson City, working with the

municipality and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation to look at some priorities there.

Of course, we will continue to work in our larger municipal centres, as well as some of the communities.

Ms. White: What I had asked — the minister mentioned 353 new units for the 2018-19 budget year — is: Out of those 353 units, how many would have Yukon Housing clients? Could I just get clarification on that question?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can say to the member opposite that all of the new construction projects that we have — that we are seeking partnerships on — are to give opportunities for Yukon Housing clients, or potential clients, to affordable housing through supports. At this point in time, I don't know what that is, but the objective is to create the opportunity, create the partnerships for low-barrier housing, to provide opportunities for those clients and citizens of Yukon who have a hard time finding accommodation. That is our goal and that is our objective, and we will continue to work with our partners to acknowledge the pressure and acknowledge that we want to take down the barriers and try to provide support. We are working through our housing navigators through the Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services, as well as looking at a lot of the work that was done historically through the Safe at Home plan and the housing action plan and focusing on partnerships as best we can and looking at supplementary supports as we need them.

Ms. White: Out of the 248 people on the Yukon Housing Corporation wait-list for Whitehorse, how many would the minister hazard a guess at are requiring low-barrier housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that answer at my fingertips. I would be happy to follow up. I do have the list and I will work with the departments, as I don't know specifically who are on the list. What we want to do is ensure that every door is the right door, no matter where the barriers are, and that we provide opportunities to the private sector or through our social housing. We have a number of clients who have — providing through private rent supplements and through private arrangements.

We want to explore options with our partners and look at providing assistance to those most vulnerable, ensuring that we work with our clients and work through the housing navigators and their case managers to ensure that their needs are being met.

Ms. White: The reason I ask that is that not everyone on the Yukon Housing Corporation wait-list will be accessing the corporation through a housing navigator. Many people — the low barrier that they're experiencing is that there's just no place to live. It's not that they require additional supports. It's not that they're looking for something like the Housing First model or the transitional units at the Salvation Army. What they are literally looking for is a place to live.

The reason I'm asking is because, when the minister responds and talks about the list of programs and removing barriers and low barriers and housing navigators, although I appreciate all those things, the real issue when it comes down to Yukon Housing Corporation is that there are just not

enough places. There are just not enough units, whether within the corporation or in our 3.4-percent availability in private market rentals. I am going to leave it at that.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. White that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled October 9, 2018:

34-2-72

Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Tenth Report (October 9, 2018) (Adel)

The following legislative return was tabled October 9, 2018:

34-2-148

Response to matter outstanding with Mr. Cathers related to general debate on Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Government of Yukon staff on secondment (Mostyn)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 96

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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Yukon Party

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| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 10, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to welcome to the Assembly today Kelly Milner, as well as Lisa Preto and her daughter Sylvia. They are here for the tribute that will take place in a minute for the unFURled project.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would also ask members to please welcome Laura Eby, who is the manager of operations for the Association of Yukon Communities and Sam Crosby, who is the acting director of the Community Affairs branch.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Fur Real

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Yukon Fur Real and the drivers of the social enterprise initiative: Kelly Milner and Lisa Preto who are with us here today; Misha Donohoe — who is, I think, listening in — and also Kelly Proudfoot. We are here to thank them for their project and all their hard work on this.

For folks who don't know, Kelly Milner is a communications and media consultant and the Yukon Fur Real's project manager and coordinator and former winner of the 2016 People's Choice Award at the Banff Film Festival. Lisa Preto is a trapper, artisan and also a very good musician. Misha Donohoe is a graphic artist and designer. Kelly Proudfoot is a marketing and events specialist.

Yukon Fur Real was born from a conversation between Kelly Milner and friends from Old Crow, like Jason Van Fleet. I also know that Stanley Njootli was a key mentor on this project, and I would see his grandson, Dean Kapuschuk, with him on many occasions talking about this project.

Jason is a passionate local trapper who believes that we can revitalize the Yukon's fur industry by starting right here at home. They discussed the fur industry at length, the experience of selling pelts through big commercial sales in Toronto versus direct-to-market access here at home. They knew that to ensure trapping remains an economically viable

way of life here in the north, something different needed to be done. They also saw a growing demand for locally sourced fur products.

In the spring of this year, the first-ever unFURled event took place at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. That day, Yukon trappers and artisans filled the longhouse, proudly showing their wares. You could walk through that room, run your hands through the silken pelt of a lynx and talk to the person who trapped it about where it came from. It was also an unprecedented platform for trappers and artisans to showcase their products and connect with the public through workshops and demonstrations and at the market. It was a way of honouring Yukon's trapping history and celebrating today's fur industry. With the impressive quality of fur products on display and the high level of interest from the public on that day, it was no wonder that there were more than 1,000 attendees at the event. In one day, approximately \$65,000 in sales occurred. That was money that went directly into the pockets of our local trappers and artisans.

UnFURled was made possible through a partnership with the North Yukon Renewable Resources Council and the Yukon Trappers Association, with extensive support provided by Jason Van Fleet and Brian Melanson and collaborative efforts of many other individuals. This is great news for the industry, and I wish to thank Yukoners for supporting unFURled.

Encouraged by the success of unFURled, Kelly, Lisa and Misha collaborated on a business and marketing strategy, which is known as Yukon Fur Real. Yukon Fur Real is a social enterprise focused on supporting Yukon trappers and fur artisans while creating informed consumers who support a sustainable and ethical Yukon fur industry. It's a buy-local initiative and a brand. Yukon Fur Real purchases furs at a fair price from trappers and puts them in touch with the artisans who can turn the furs into guaranteed Yukon fur products. The marketing and branding of these products is focused within the territory, with sales driven through partnerships and events.

Trappers and artisans are able to realize the true value of fur and fur products through their sale, and customers understand and appreciate the value of wild, sustainably harvested local fur. Yukon is home to some incredibly talented craftspeople, which is evident from the art displays in this very Chamber. Yukon artisans add value to furs by producing a range of products, such as ruffs, scarves, hats, mitts, earmuffs, belts, bracelets, necklaces and more, which often include intricate beadwork.

Something else that many probably don't know is that each Yukon Fur Real product is tagged. These tags provide information such as the artisan's name, the trapping location and supplementary information relating to the final product to create the unique story of the journey from start to finish.

Yukon Fur Real was one of four submissions shortlisted for this year's Yukon Innovation Prize. The theme was social enterprise, which received 29 submissions. A social enterprise is one where entrepreneurs use businesses and commercial strategies to make positive changes to societies.

In June, Yukon Fur Real won the Yukon innovation prize. The prize money has enabled Kelly Milner, Lisa Preto, Misha Donahoe and Kelly Proudfoot to move forward and continue promoting the fur industry. To date, Yukon Fur Real has developed an online directory for trappers and artisans, conducted sewing programs to empower community members in Old Crow, Haines Junction, Whitehorse and Mayo, completed the Yukon fur industry auction plan, which will be presented in the coming weeks, and developed a business plan for an ongoing social enterprise. Yukon Fur Real is creating local employment opportunities and keeping dollars in the Yukon. It supports the creation and commercialization of Yukon products and occupies an important niche in our economy.

I expect Yukon Fur Real will continue to grow as a brand. It continues to gain recognition, and I applaud the great work they are doing.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: It is a pleasure today to rise in this House. Any opportunity to talk about trapping is excellent, I believe.

I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to the trapping industry in the Yukon and also the Yukon Fur Real project.

Over the past five to 10 years, trapping has experienced a renewed interest in the Yukon. The Dawson fur show put on by the Dawson District Renewable Resources Council has gained momentous popularity in recent years. Accompanied by other efforts by the Yukon Trappers Association and the local renewable resources councils, Yukoners are becoming more excited to buy local fur. We have seen an increase in teaching opportunities and initiatives being brought forward by Yukon First Nations and, of course, other organizations. By instilling an appreciation for trapping in our children, we can ensure that future generations continue to maintain the importance of this industry.

In my riding, Mr. Speaker, the Kluane First Nation muskrat camp is one example that has been held annually over a decade to teach participants how to trap, skin and cook muskrat. Another initiative in my riding is the local Rangers patrol — the Haines Junction Rangers — who take the Junior Rangers out on trapping courses.

One I remember vividly from many years ago was when our trapper instructor, Alex Van Bibber, back in the day — we wound up with 24 kids who got their trapper's licence out of that course, and it was incredible.

While other events take place across the territory, I'm especially fond of these initiatives, of course, in my riding, but I would also like to recognize here today the Yukon Fur Real project, which is aimed at developing and supporting the local fur market's next steps. Fur Real buys furs from trappers at a decent rate and has them tanned. Artists pay a deposit on the furs, and they work with and sell their finished product back to Fur Real. The project is then tasked with coming up with market initiatives and events, selling finished products back to

Yukoners. You can see some products in the House today that the minister spoke about earlier.

Fur Real was a recipient of the 2018 Yukon innovation prize, and it was awarded \$60,000 this summer, which will help to continue their work — buying local pelts, supporting our local artists and organizing events. The whole initiative is very exciting and it is a modern spin on traditional trapping and selling, encompassing the entire process from trapping, to the crafts, to retailing.

Congratulations to all involved — we have two in the House here today — for all of the hard work that they put into this Fur Real project, for their hard work and ingenuity, and to all those who continue to support our Yukon trapping industry.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon municipal elections

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Before I start, I just want to comment that I had been hoping to wear my Arctic Winter Games toque today to the Legislature, although my wife has stolen it with its beautiful wolf pom-pom.

Mr. Speaker, today I not only stand to recognize the hard work of our local elected officials, but also to urge all Yukoners to get out and vote on municipal election day next Thursday, October 18. If you can't make it next Thursday, the advance polls open tomorrow in all communities. Please vote.

I rise to pay tribute to local governments and the hard work and dedication of our elected officials. This includes mayors and councils in our eight municipalities, as well as the local advisory councils and our five local advisory areas.

Mr. Speaker, I am a recovering city councillor. I truly believe in the importance of local government. I say recovering, not because it was traumatic — hard, yes, but not traumatic — I say recovering because people get elected to make a difference, to improve our communities, and that desire to make things better — well, it stays with you. Local governments foster critical, informed decision-making in our communities. They are vital to our democratic system. Local governments provide invaluable programs and services to residents.

While I'm at it, Mr. Speaker, let me give a shout-out to the Association of Yukon Communities. I know our Community Affairs branch is working with the association to prepare for their elected officials' orientation workshop following the election next week.

Local governments deal with the issues that are closest to home, like dogs, drinking water, ditches, waste diversion and dumps — sorry, solid-waste facilities. Local governments make sure our towns function properly today and tomorrow. Our councils are made up of people who care, and they truly have the opportunity to make a difference and to shape the future of our communities.

I'm going to acknowledge one of those folks now — Ms. Colleen James, recently acclaimed to the South Klondike Local Advisory Council, or LAC. She has been writing poetry — laments, in fact — about the challenges of local governance.

Recently, I wrote her a response, which I would like to read as part of this tribute:

From Lewes Lake to Crag Lake and down the road to Skagway,
the LAC makes recommendations
that might come true one day.
“What’s going on in Carcross?” you say

The tourists are flocking, the downtown is rocking,
people are rowing, the clear waters are flowing
that south wind, well, it just keeps blowing.

I’m glad the LAC didn’t get tired of yakking
About the infrastructure lacking
Cause now there’s a skateboard park that’s attracting our youth.

The doggie bags are on order.
Hope they don’t get stuck at the border.
So thanks to Colleen, I would like to reward her

With a reply poem of praise
You make a difference with the ways
You chair the South Klondike LACs

I know it can be hard but you have made
A real difference. Our hearts are swayed
Cause you turn laments into lament-ade.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I am happy to also rise today on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party and the Yukon Party to pay tribute to the many Yukon citizens who have put themselves forward as candidates for municipal and local area council elections this month. Much has been said even today about the importance of the role of municipal governments in the daily lives of us all. What is not often acknowledged is how diverse the challenges are, how long the hours are and often how scant is the recognition that goes along with the burden of ensuring that our water is safe, our garbage is picked up, our roads plowed, our streets paved, our neighbourhoods well-designed — among so many other things that we both take for granted and expect our municipal politicians to deal with.

When elected, all council members swear an oath, as the Yukon municipal elections handbook states — and I quote: “The words place a heavy burden on the elected official to accept and discharge, in a conscientious and forthright manner, the duties, obligations and responsibilities of office.” That handbook also points out — as members of this Assembly know and appreciate probably more the longer one serves as an elected representative — that: “If elected, it is important to remember that you requested and received the trust of the electorate.”

The Yukon government officials who put together the municipal elections handbook deserve our thanks. They capture in plain language the array of demands placed on

those who choose to serve their fellow citizens at the municipal or LAC level. The handbook reminds candidates that it will also be their duty as an elected official to act for the whole community, not just the district or the area from which they are elected.

They are also reminded that they have a duty to strive to improve the finances, the health, the security and quality of life in their municipality or local advisory area as a whole, not just for the ones in the direct area that they live in.

As well, councillors and mayors have a personal responsibility to fulfill the obligations of their office with impartiality and integrity. We ask a lot of the people who serve. To do this, councillors and mayors are advised to become informed about the problems that face everybody in their communities. They are advised to make decisions without fear, favour or evasion and always in the best interest of the whole municipality or the local advisory area.

They are further advised to resist the pressures of groups of electors organized for selfish purposes — straight, plain language. That is what local government is about; that’s what governance is about. Municipal councillors and local area councillors also advised in this guidebook to be prepared to accept responsibility for majority decisions of council even though it may mean supporting a decision that you did not vote for. It’s a reminder that serving on a municipal council and local area council is a team sport. There is no partisan nature to that council.

In closing, I would like to quote from a handbook promoted by the Association of Yukon Communities that I thought was kind of fun. It’s called *The Joy of Governing*, and it’s designed to help municipal and local area council members navigate their roles. The authors take kind of a lighthearted — because there are lots of cartoons sprinkled through it — approach, but they end the booklet by saying: “The job is not easy, but that does not mean it has to be still or stale... Bring your energy, your laughter, and a boundless curiosity to the table... It is a long game requiring committed players willing to think critically rather than be critical.” They go on to say: “We commend you for your personal willingness to engage in public service. Take it seriously but hold it lightly.” To that we add a big thank you to all who have agreed to place their names, their reputations, their ideas and their hopes for the future of their communities on the line and on the ballot on October 18.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have for tabling the 2017 annual report for the Yukon Energy Corporation.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling today a response to a question raised by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on October 4.

Mr. Hassard: I have for tabling a legislative return in response to a question asked by the Minister of Education during Question Period on October 9 regarding a tender for school portables.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Adel: I rise to give notice of following motion:

THAT this House supports the Government of Yukon providing rebates from carbon-pricing payments for energy-intensive, trade-exposed industries.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to request that Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner appear before the Legislative Assembly to address the concerns raised by the commissioner regarding Bill No. 24, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, prior to the bill's third reading.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motion?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: School structural safety

Mr. Hassard: As you know, the Liberals left the Ross River School off of their five-year capital concept. We know that the government received an engineering report telling them to relevel the school. The government apparently didn't like that recommendation so they went and got a second opinion. The Liberals can find money to give a pay raise to the Premier, but they can't find money to spend on this school.

To quote the minister from last week — and I quote: "I can assure parents, teachers and staff in that Ross River School facility that it remains safe." Yesterday, a concerned staff member was on the radio saying this — and again, I quote: "I do have concerns. I have concerns for the children that are here. I have concerns for the workers that are here. I have concerns for myself." Why won't the minister take action to address the concerns of employees working at that school?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Really, off the hop, I have to take issue with the assertion of the member opposite. We do take the concerns of our staff and the children in that school extremely seriously. The multidisciplinary team that is presently monitoring the school includes an architect, a structural engineer and a survey team. At times, we have also enlisted a mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer and a

geotechnical engineer with expertise in permafrost. There will be a minimum of two monitoring visits each year. If movements outside of normal parameters are observed, the consultants will provide recommendations on what actions should be taken, and the frequency of site visits will increase if necessary.

The school is safe for occupancy and we are going to make sure we keep a very close eye to ensure the school remains safe for occupancy. It's an issue that both my colleague the Minister of Education and I take very seriously, and we're making sure that building remains safe for the students and staff of the school.

Mr. Hassard: The fact of the matter is that the Liberals tabled a five-year capital concept. According to it, the Liberals have zero plans to fix, renovate or replace the Ross River School. Meanwhile, we have staff from the school with some very serious safety concerns for the children. The Liberals are telling Yukoners they need to tighten their belt and they won't spend money on an important safety issue in one of our schools, yet they wasted money on a new logo and are going to give the Premier a raise, as I mentioned.

Families and staff should feel confident that the school they rely on is safe for all of those using it. I again will quote the staff member who was on the radio, who said, "I have concerns for the children that are here."

Will the minister take action to address these important safety concerns of the people living in the community of Ross River?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Over the last several years, a number of structural repairs and interventions have been made to the school. The members opposite will know this well; they were partially responsible for the half-measures we have inherited. A recent building conditions report was completed by engineers in February of 2018 on the structure and confirms the school remains structurally stable and safe for occupancy. As I said in my earlier statement, it is absolutely critical for this government to make sure that is the case, and we are making sure that is the case. It is safe for occupancy for all staff and students. We are continuing to monitor, as recommended in the report.

The member opposite continually talks about a five-year capital concept, and I wanted to correct the record on that score. A concept is something you sort of think about and maybe will implement in the future, and that may be the thought process of the members opposite, but we actually plan and execute. We promised in our platform a five-year capital plan; we have actually delivered on a five-year capital plan that lays out the spending priorities of this government on a go-forward basis. It was introduced this year for the first time — it's the first time a government has done that. That plan exists; it will exist for the mandate of this government and, hopefully, into the future, because we have heard it's a very useful planning tool for the communities and for contractors and we're happy to have delivered on that promise.

Mr. Hassard: I think it's unfortunate that the minister takes this opportunity to try to spin things and use the blame

game when we're talking about the safety of the citizens of Ross River.

We do know the Liberals have found money to give the Premier a pay raise. We know they have found money to spend over a half-million dollars on a new logo, yet even though they found money for these things, they didn't want to spend money on the Ross River School so they got a second opinion. Now we have a staff member from the school saying — and I will quote them again, because I think this is very important for everyone to hear — “I have concerns for the children that are here.” Also, “I have concerns for the workers that are here.”

Mr. Speaker, that's from someone who works at the school.

Will the minister travel to Ross River to listen to the staff, parents and students about their safety concerns?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I have said in previous answers, the safety of the school inhabitants — teachers and staff — are critical to this government and we are doing everything we can to ensure their safety. The multidisciplinary team report was received in the spring of 2018. That was a report we commissioned to make sure the students and staff were safe in that school. The team is continuing to monitor the building and will complete assessments during the 2018-19 fiscal year at a total cost of \$100,000. This multidisciplinary team that presently monitors the school includes an architect, a structural engineer and a survey team. At times we have also enlisted a mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer and a geotechnical engineer with expertise in permafrost. We will continue to do so as warranted.

As I have said before, the staff and students of that school are critical and we will have to ensure their safety. We will continue to do so.

Question re: Education assistants

Mr. Kent: Regarding educational assistants available to our students, I am wondering whether the Minister of Education can tell us what the estimates for the amount of educational assistants was going to be at the beginning of the school year. Also, is she able to let us know how many educational assistants are currently working in our Yukon schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I believe I am able to do that, if I can find my note. Of course, as the members opposite know, and it is critical for Yukoners to know, the Yukon government provides a range of supports and resources to address the learning needs of all students in our schools across the territory. Educational assistants are one of several resources that schools have to support students. Other supports for schools include counsellors, teachers, learning assistance teachers and school administrators.

The information with respect to educational assistants, of course, changes from the original estimate. I will determine if I have those numbers from the beginning of the year, but I can indicate that the current allocation for educational assistants to schools here in the territory for 2018-19, as of this date — and

the date that I have this information from is actually today — is 244.67 FTEs of educational assistants.

Mr. Kent: If the minister, in a letter or legislative return, or perhaps next time she is on her feet, could just let us know what the estimate was going into the school year versus how many are employed now, that would be great.

Is the Minister of Education able to tell us what the current wait time is for a student who is waiting for an EA from the time they are referred until the time they receive the needed support?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate that this a question that is asked, in my experience, probably every opportunity that the House is sitting and it is an important one.

The Department of Education provides special education programs through Student Support Services for student learning needs. We use a team-based approach for programs and school staff work together with families. The first step for a school-based team is to informally assess the student's learning needs. School staff put recommended strategies and plans in place and they work with Student Support Services through formal and informal assessments to provide services to students.

Because of the nature of that particular process, wait times are on a case-by-case basis. Some schools supports are delivered at the stage where the Student Support Services become involved and others are definitely started much sooner through the school program with the school administrators, teachers and parents cooperating.

Mr. Kent: Just to reiterate, can the minister provide through a legislative return an estimate for the numbers that they anticipated going into the year? Perhaps even just the average wait time would be helpful for us when we're speaking to our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the minister is currently looking for up to \$3.6 million in reductions to the O&M budget at Education. Is the minister able to tell us if the government is looking for any of those reductions in program areas around educational assistants or Student Support Services?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: What I am able to tell you is that we are very keen to make sure that Student Support Services are completing assessments, helping students and families in whatever way they can. Opportunities for us to review the work of Student Support Services and the way in which they deliver those services are critical. I spoke last year about that happening. It in no way involves a reduction in those services. I take issue with the premise of this particular question, which says that the department is being cut by a particular number. That is not what is occurring here. The department is evaluating Student Support Services, and in fact, all services that we provide to students to make sure we are doing it in absolutely the most efficient, most student-centred way.

Question re: Social assistance rates

Ms. White: Last Wednesday, the government rejected motions from both opposition parties to conduct a review of both medical travel and social assistance rates. Instead, the

government said these reviews would be part of an overall Health and Social Services review. That is a big review, considering that Health and Social Services is the largest department with the largest budget. Every single Yukoner will be impacted by any changes made to this department since it provides services from birth to death. Yet my colleague questioned the minister about this review last week and until that point, the public had heard next to nothing about how or when this review would be conducted.

Let's start with the basics: Can the minister tell this House who will be conducting this review?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. As noted last week, the comprehensive review will seek to find ways to contain historical growth in order to provide long-term sustainable health care and social supports within the system that continue to meet the needs of Yukoners.

The review isn't about immediate cost-savings. It's more about program efficiencies. The discussion with respect to medical travel will be considered in the comprehensive review — note that the review will be completed in the fall of 2019.

We are committed to engaging with all Yukon First Nations, public non-government organizations and our staff, and that process is underway.

Ms. White: What I was looking for was the “who”; so it might be the good staff from the Department of Health and Social Services or maybe an Outside consultant might be involved. It might be that we will have an online survey presence where people can fill out questionnaires or answer surveys, but this review needs to be more than an online survey.

The scope of this review and the resulting recommendations will have impacts on people. Maybe they will be good impacts and maybe they will be bad impacts. If this government is going to talk about patient- or client-centred service, then it's critical that the real stakeholders — the social assistance recipient, the parent with an adult child with disabilities, the foster parent, the patient who has hospital experience, the community person who needs to travel into Whitehorse, the caregivers — all have direct input into the review and not just through an online survey.

Mr. Speaker, how is the Minister going to ensure those who are directly affected by the review are driving the process?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, just to correct the record, we are not going to focus just on online surveys. I think we spoke about a very comprehensive review, as noted by the Financial Advisory Panel. A comprehensive review of health was conducted over the course of two different occasions. This specific review will be built on comprehensive input from Yukoners, from our stakeholder partners and from individuals, as noted by the member opposite.

That's a critical component of how we do business. We must consider the input of Yukoners in the services that we provide to Yukoners. It must be comprehensive; it must be efficient; it must be timely and, most definitely, it needs to

consider opportunities and timely services for rural Yukon communities.

I would like to make note that it's not an independent review unto itself. There's some internal work that has to happen with respect to policies and directives within the department so we can look strategically at making some changes now to ensure efficiencies within the services. We are looking at an independent expert panel that will provide some feedback and strategic direction and advice for the department.

Ms. White: So the questions of the “who” and the “how” still stand, so maybe now I'll get to the “what”. Perhaps the most important question to ask about this review that will impact us all has to do with the terms of reference. The terms of reference are critical in that they describe, first and foremost, the purpose of the review. Are we reviewing everything in order to save money? Is it a review to look at a duplication of services or gaps in services, or maybe we're trying to identify needs that are not met by current programs? It's anyone's guess, since the terms of reference haven't been made public.

When government talks about reviews of this scale and mentions the need to look at NGOs, as the minister did last week, citizens and groups start to feel insecure and nervous about their futures. So Mr. Speaker, will the minister share with this Legislature the terms of reference and timelines for this very important review of Health and Social Services?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I think the questions that are being raised right now are exactly the same questions raised last week, and I will continue to reiterate to Yukoners and to the member opposite that the Management Board process previously — let me refer to the 2008 health care review, the 2013 clinical services plan, and now the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's final recommended report, which advised that we must look for efficiencies, and that's exactly what we're doing. We will do that with input from Yukoners. We will do that with a comparative jurisdictional scan analysis of the cost drivers. As we know, we have Pharmacare, we have medical travel, physician billings, national and territorial initiatives that are happening, but we also have an aging population, and clearly we have cost drivers from rural Yukon that we're considering.

I went through the review process and I would be happy to share that again. I can provide that to the member opposite — the review span for specific phases — and we'll see the results in the fall of 2019.

Question re: Community emergency medical services

Ms. McLeod: I have some questions today for the Minister of Community Services about EMS. The Yukon's ability to provide EMS service in most of our communities depends on people who volunteer to serve their communities as members of the Yukon emergency medical services team.

These trained dedicated volunteers deserve our respect and appreciation, and it's important that their needs and their concerns are treated seriously by everyone. My colleague, the

MLA for Lake Laberge, wrote to the minister with concerns and suggestions regarding EMS, and I would like to follow up on a few of these issues with the minister.

There have been problems with rural EMS members not receiving uniforms that fit — in a timely manner — and a desire by some to see more training in communities. Can the minister tell us whether he is planning to take action to address those priorities and, if so, what he intends to do?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will respond in two ways. The first one is — I thank the Member for Lake Laberge for the letter last week. I did sit down with him briefly to review it. We did discuss some of those questions and concerns. I had already shared it with the department and we're working on getting a reply — so trying to respond to you directly.

We always agree that there is tremendous value on the contribution that volunteers make to improve emergency services throughout rural Yukon. That is why, through Yukon Emergency Medical Services, we continue to support community responders by supplying vehicles, medical and safety equipment, uniforms, fleet management services, station maintenance, administrative services, online education and responder training in communities.

If there are really detailed, specific concerns about uniforms, I am so happy to try to deal with those directly. I completely agree with the Member for Watson Lake that we need to support our EMS volunteers.

Ms. McLeod: An issue I have raised with the minister several times about EMS is regarding a regional supervisor position in Watson Lake. I've raised this issue with the minister on several occasions over the past year, including during Question Period in the Spring Sitting when I asked for a commitment that this position be kept in Watson Lake. We have now heard that the regional supervisor position may be relocated to Whitehorse. My understanding is that there has been no consultation with the Town of Watson Lake, the Watson Lake Chamber of Commerce or citizens prior to the posting of this position.

Will the minister please explain the current status of this position? If there is a plan to relocate it to Whitehorse, will he commit to reconsider that decision and keep that EMS position in Watson Lake?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question. I am always a little bit careful when we are talking about one position because those positions are in our communities and everyone understands who they are. I always want to be a little bit careful there, Mr. Speaker.

However, I stood in this Legislature and I made the commitment that, if there were going to be changes, I would ensure that we had a conversation with the community ahead of time, including with the Member for Watson Lake. Late last week I got the letter from the Member for Lake Laberge and I turned it over to the department. I sat down with them earlier this week, and I am hoping to get a response shortly. Please let me take the time to turn to the department to find out the status of those concerns.

I continue to uphold my commitment that, if there are to be changes, we will come and talk to the members of the community.

Question re: Fiscal management

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, when in opposition, the Premier asked the previous government about a project that had gone 10 percent overbudget as an example of project mismanagement by the government of the day. Given the standard that the Premier himself has set, does he believe that the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation is mismanaging the Housing First project as it has come in at 44 percent overbudget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is a great opportunity for our minister to speak about the good programs that are being offered through Yukon Housing Corporation, and it is a good opportunity for me to congratulate the minister and her team for the second year in a row being the chair on a national front when it comes to housing initiatives. If there is anything further from the minister herself, then she can answer that question in the first supplementary.

Mr. Hassard: Apparently the Premier wasn't listening to the question, so we will try another one, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, these are standards that the Premier himself set as Leader of the Third Party, and he seemed to believe that any project that goes over 10 percent overbudget is an example of capital project mismanagement.

The Minister of Community Services is responsible for the construction of the Ross River bridge. That project went 33 percent overbudget. Did the Premier ask his minister why he mismanaged this project?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am happy to talk about the Ross River bridge. I think Ross River was the very first community that the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and I visited. While we were there, we asked them some direct questions and found out that repairing the Ross River bridge was a priority. As we took a look at that project and understood that there were more repairs needed than originally anticipated, then, yes, of course, the scope of the project had to change, and with the changing scope of that project, the cost of the project went higher. We had a conversation with the community again to understand that it remained their priority, and this, I guess, would be a community within the members opposite's riding. We heard from that community, we heard definitively that it was their priority and we went forward with the project. We are very happy. We were there for the opening, and we were excited to see that bridge in the community. It connects both sides of the community, and I know it is important to that community.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Premier criticized Yukon Party ministers for going overbudget by 10 percent and then called them out for capital mismanagement. However, now that he is in government, when his ministers go overbudget on their projects, it appears that all is well. Why the double standard?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would say, first and foremost, that what we are seeing here is a government that actually gives

answers to those questions. I don't recall getting any answers from the member opposite's government when I asked those questions.

I think the major difference here is the difference between oranges and apples. We are experiencing a strong economy right now and there is a very tight labour market. We are also seeing steel prices that have risen over 40 percent in recent months, so we have tariffs that are going back and forth. There are different considerations now than there were in the previous government's administration. I believe the word "recession" was being used at that time.

It's a different situation and a different economy right now. We are trying to support local markets and we are trying to make sure that, when we go from boom to bust, we create programs, services and processes like a five-year capital plan that actually allow industries to flourish and for our economy to be better off than it was in the past.

I'm proud of the work that we are doing, but there is not much you can do when steel prices are rising by over 40 percent. Lumber prices have also been on the rise, with Statistics Canada reporting a 10.7-percent increase nationally in labour as well. These are just a few of the reasons why this is an oranges-to-apples comparison.

Question re: Destruction Bay Marina

Mr. Istchenko: I have raised the issue of the Destruction Bay Marina a number of times in this House. As you know, the government has delayed any work to dredge the marina and make it accessible. The government delays have been, of course, very disappointing for my constituents. When I asked the minister about this in March, he said that he would do more analysis of the lake level this year, but there would be no design or physical work at the marina before the assessment is complete.

Can the minister provide us with an update on the assessment, and has it been completed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works will get up in a second in response to supplementary questions. I just want to begin by saying that we did go to and talk with the community. We sat down, and we actually went to the marina and discussed their concerns. When we talked with our engineers about it, one of the issues for them was to try to make sure, first of all, that the lake levels had stabilized, because we don't want to be going and doing a lot of work and then find out that work is not going to last. This is the issue of climate change and we need to be thinking about the long term, not just the immediate term.

We also needed to consider the approach, winds and dredging. There was a lot of technical work, but what I do want to begin with is to say that we heard the concerns from the community and their desire to see reparations to the marina because it is important to the community. We are engaging on that work and see it as their priority, as they have defined it. We just want to make sure that the investment is going to be one that lasts.

Mr. Istchenko: The issue with the marina falls under the Minister of Highways and Public Works, and it was the Minister of Highways and Public Works, in response to me, who committed that they would go back to the Kluane Lake Athletic Association and provide an update on this assessment before the end of this year.

I will remind the minister that it isn't just a convenience issue; it's a safety issue. I think doing something sooner rather than later is important. I think we actually realize that the lake isn't going to change anymore.

Can the minister provide any sort of timelines at all as to when work will be conducted on the Destruction Bay marina?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I was out at the marina this year as well. I went up the north Alaska Highway and reviewed the situation myself. I am going to rely on the experts to tell me whether or not the lake levels are changing or have stabilized. Once I get that assessment, we will be able to plan and move forward on this file a lot easier.

As I have mentioned in previous responses in this Legislative Assembly, Highways and Public Works has fixed the Sheep Mountain boat launch. That boat launch has seen significant repairs to make sure that it's useful on that lake so that residents can have access. I sympathize with the community and I understand and appreciate the Member for Kluane representing his constituents' concerns. It's important that they have a voice and I am listening.

It's a terrible calamity that our lakes and rivers are changing in this manner and that a community that has relied on and had the access to the river at such a convenient location now doesn't have that access. It's a significant problem for the community. It is a problem, I would argue, that comes about through our changing climate and we have to take action to make sure that we address that concern.

I do sympathize with the community. I have seen it first-hand. I thank the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Istchenko: I have good news for the minister. I'm not sure if the minister is aware of this or not, but there will be a community engagement dinner tomorrow evening at 5:00 p.m. in Burwash to discuss boat launches for Kluane Lake. The Yukon government is going to be there to present updates on this topic. I would assume the minister might have some knowledge of this. He might have something in his briefing binder.

Can the minister tell this House what those updates are? Will he be able to table the documents in the Legislative Assembly that they will present at this meeting?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: My officials will be up there to deliver that news to the community tomorrow. I expect that they will get a very fulsome answer to some of their questions from the competent and well-informed staff of Highways and Public Works. I won't presume to cloud matters. I think they will be giving the answers tomorrow, so Kluane will get their response. Thank you very much to the member opposite for that information.

Speaker: Thank you. The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 91

Clerk: Motion No. 91, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to increase the ceiling for the Yukon small-business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify.

Mr. Adel: Today I rise to speak to Motion No. 91 that reads, as you have just said: That this House urges the Government of Yukon to increase the ceiling for Yukon small-business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify.

When I was on the campaign trail in 2016, I was clear to Yukoners that our Liberal team was committed to diversifying the Yukon's economy, especially to reduce our reliance on global commodity prices. The need to turn the government's focus toward the economy and create conditions for our economy to grow and diversify was clear. I am happy to report to Yukoners that, after less than two years in office, our Liberal government has made great progress in our commitment to improve economic conditions in our territory. We have lowered both the corporate tax rate and the small-business tax rate. These tax reductions support local business and promote increased economic activity in the Yukon — but I can't do much about the lights.

Our Liberal government recognizes the contributions made to the Yukon's economy and we want to see them thrive. Local businesses help to create jobs and circulate wealth and enable families to put food on the table and to pay the bills. They create innovative solutions and work hard every day to provide needed services and products for Yukoners. By creating a competitive tax environment, we can support existing local businesses and also attract new business to the territory. Attracting new business to come to the Yukon and incentivizing entrepreneurs to start up new businesses in the Yukon is an important part of growing and diversifying our economy.

This past summer, our Liberal government was proud to announce an investment and partnership with the Government of Canada and Northwestel to create more reliable Internet for Yukoners, but also the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and northern British Columbia. The northern fibre network line will connect Dawson City to Inuvik, Northwest Territories, helping to close Canada's north fibre loop, which will provide more robust Internet service to northern communities across Canada. This additional fibre connection is a long time coming for our territory and was talked about for many years. Our government is proud to be advancing this project and

delivering on our commitment to Yukoners. Reliable telecommunications are vital to diversifying our economy and will help Yukoners and northern residents participate fully in the digital economy. Stable Internet can also attract and increase investment in the territory, creating jobs and other opportunities.

Another project that we have invested in, in partnership with CanNor, is NorthLight Innovation, the first innovation hub north of 60. Digital connectivity is important, but to allow our economy to truly reach its potential, we need a space where business professionals can connect in person and exchange ideas. The hub has been under construction for the last several months, and the grand opening is scheduled for next week. This is a very exciting project that is creating opportunities, but also revitalizing a long-neglected part of the downtown core. This hub will support the development of innovation and entrepreneurship through physical location, providing business assistance, collaboration, mentorship and networking opportunities. It has brought (co)space and YuKconstruct, Yukon College's Cold Climate Innovation centre and the Yukon Development Corporation together under one roof.

This dynamic space promotes an entrepreneurial culture of innovation and commercialization and will support the development of innovative business in the Yukon and help more products come to market. The mentorship and networking opportunities it provides will encourage the development of new programs that can address other business skills, gaps and needs.

Through this streamlined support, we expect the hub to attract more start-ups and entrepreneurs to help our small businesses grow. Investing in NorthLight Innovation supports our government's vision of an innovative and collaborative knowledge economy. With the exchange of ideas, expertise fosters individual success and a collective strength.

To help us foster a culture of entrepreneurship that will result in incubation, commercialization and the export of Yukon-made innovative products, these are just some of the projects we've been working on. They're exciting initiatives. They demonstrate our government's commitment to diversifying our economy and encouraging economic activity.

We are also encouraged by how the current state of the economy in our territory has helped us to bring a lot of new people to the territory. Last week, the Premier and Finance minister released the interim economic and fiscal outlook, and it's really worth the read.

Our population is growing; it's now over 40,000. Our economy is one of the strongest in the country with projected GDP growth this year at 2.5 percent. We are experiencing record low unemployment rates; tourism numbers continue to grow. The Yukon is in an enviable position in Canada, Mr. Speaker, and we need to seize the opportunity. In particular, we need to look at how we can increase investment in Yukon businesses.

That's why I brought forward this motion today to urge the government to increase the ceiling for a Yukon small-business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million

and to increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify.

The small-business tax credit investment is 20 years old, having been introduced under the New Democratic Party in 1999. The purpose of the tax credit is to stimulate the economy by incentivizing investment in local business and helping them to grow. I think all parties can agree that it has been successful for Yukon companies and investors and helped to diversify the economy.

Yukoners will recognize some of the businesses that have benefitted from this program, including Yukon Brewing and Air North — two of our favourite local companies.

After 20 years, I think it is important to look at how the tax credit works to make sure that it still remains effective in today's economy and our tax regime. We need to modernize this tax credit to make sure that it allows Yukon businesses to capitalize on the increasing economic activity and opportunities in our territory. Increasing the tax credit will help Yukon businesses raise more money and allow more Yukoners to invest in the Yukon and Yukon companies. Increasing the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify will make more Yukon businesses eligible for the program and allow them to take advantage of it for projects that they are working on and to grow their businesses.

The proposed changes to this tax credit will make it work better for Yukon companies and local investors, which will, in turn, stimulate economic growth in our territory while contributing to the diversification of our economy. These are the goals, I believe, that members of this House share, and I hope that this motion will receive the support of the members opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: As I rise here today to speak to Motion No. 91, put forward by the Member for Copperbelt North, I will be really short in my remarks, as it does seem to be kind of a straightforward motion. I know my colleagues have some questions that they would probably like to ask when the Premier is in general debate later this afternoon.

Regarding this motion — as you know, this was a platform commitment of the Liberals. They don't have the greatest record of meeting their platform commitments, so we're happy to see them make an effort on at least this one.

I will, off the top, indicate that we support this in principle, but we do have some questions that I hope the minister or another member of the government will be able to answer when they get up to speak.

Some of the questions are: Are there legislative changes required to make these? If so, when is the government planning on bringing forward those legislative changes? Will the government publicly consult on these legislative changes before bringing them forward?

We know that the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* has some stipulations about tax credits that different jurisdictions have — what those limits are, et cetera. How does making these changes to the Yukon small-business investment tax credit impact the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*? Is this allowable under the agreement?

I have the same question regarding the *Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement* with the European Union and the newly signed agreement with the United States and Mexico. I am hoping that the government, throughout the course of today's debate, can provide us with some answers to those questions.

Finally, I am wondering if the government has done an economic impact analysis of these changes and whether or not they can provide those to the House.

With that, I will close off my remarks and I look forward to hearing from the government on these questions.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I am pleased to rise today to provide general support for the concepts outlined in Motion No. 91, put forward by the Member for Copperbelt North. We are pleased, of course, to see recognition of the value of the small-business investment tax credit, which, as the member correctly identified, was put in place by a New Democratic Party government almost 20 years ago.

Over the course of the past seven or eight years, my colleagues and I in both this current government and the previous Legislature have advocated for the government to do the financial analysis with respect to increasing the threshold for the small-business investment tax credit. We had raised it, and it was also part of our platform, Mr. Speaker, with due deference to my colleague and friend from Kluane. The Yukon NDP had indicated that we think that increasing the small-business investment tax credit does hold great potential for increasing the ability of local businesses — and I put the emphasis on “local businesses” — to both generate additional revenues necessary to grow their businesses without having to seek financing from Outside — more expensive financing from a large financial institution. We saw that when Air North was seeking to have the previous government look at this small-business investment tax credit when they were attempting to — and when they did — purchase additional aircraft as a way of raising funding to make those purchases without having to go Outside for that.

We do question — and it's unclear from the member opposite's opening remarks — exactly what the implications are and the kinds of scale when we talk about the application of this in terms of increasing the asset limit to allow larger companies — there's certainly a difference between larger companies and small businesses in the territory. Most businesses in the Yukon are small businesses, according to Revenue Canada. It's my understanding that if you are 500 or less, you're still going to be qualified as a small business. Then it covers just about everybody, probably including Air North, but if we're talking about larger companies, then we would have real concerns, because why would the Government of Yukon be looking to subsidize Goldcorp, or any of the big mining companies?

The question in my mind is: What is the intent here? How is that going to put increased value — because we are talking about ultimately making an investment here through the

means of denying revenue to the Government of Yukon coffers, through these credits.

So it's foregone revenue, and that has lots of merit and you can make the solid argument, in terms of the return with respect to the multiplier effect, when we start talking about small businesses in the community, but if your asset base is someplace else, we're going to question this really seriously.

To that end, I echo the comments made by the Member for Kluane that we would look to see before government implemented this kind of measure that they have a solid analysis by the Department of Finance tax division that will support both aspects of what's being proposed, so \$1 million 20 years ago — does that equate to \$5 million in the member's mind now? Is that backed up by financial analysis? To put a value to the concept of what a larger company is and where those assets are based — define a larger company in the Yukon that meets that definition, because if you're going to start inviting large companies to the Yukon and saying you're going to take a benefit of us forgiving your taxes, I don't think you are going to find too many Yukoners willing to do that. Sorry. One of the avenues that you have just spent a heck of a lot of money on, all on our behalf, was the Financial Advisory Panel, but one of the key elements, of which this government refuses to acknowledge, is how you generate revenue. It's not just how you cut spending. We need to be really clear that when we're getting ourselves into the areas of providing incentives for investment, they are investments that will benefit Yukon and not necessarily benefit businesses that are based elsewhere.

As I said at the outset, we're comfortable with the concept of the approach that was put in place. The basis is strong — the strong base that was there 20 years ago still holds merit and we see it working, but we're unclear about the additional line that has been added to this motion. I would ask that the member and/or other members of the government explain the expansion that is meant to increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify. How big is "big"? How big is "larger"? That aspect is difficult to — without that kind of substantiating data, it does give me and the New Democratic Party real pause. I'm not saying that it will cause us to vote against this motion, but we do look to the government to elaborate on that, because it is an area that we have seen governments across this country fall prey to and we're a relatively small government. We can't afford to get caught in some of the scams that have occurred across this country, quite frankly. All of us in this Legislative Assembly could probably name a few.

We look forward to the government member or members clarifying the intent of the second part of this motion and, of course, we support in principle the first part. We would look to the analysis in terms of the amount — the threshold — that has been identified here and what the rationale is for \$5 million versus any other number. The concept of increasing the small-business investment tax credit is one that we have supported, campaigned on, discussed and debated in this Legislative Assembly over the last number of years to date. We didn't receive support previously; we are happy to see that

aspect being supported, but we look to see what is intended by the balance of this motion.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt North, for bringing forward this motion for debate.

Certainly, as Yukoners know, one of the major planks of our platform in 2016 was creating good jobs in a sustainable environment. I will endeavour to touch on some of the questions that were put on the table today by the Member for Kluane. I think there are some good questions there and I will do my best to speak to — I will politely say — the concerns and questions that were put on the table from the Leader of the Third Party and just touch a bit on why the idea of looking at a change like this is appropriate at this time.

Our Liberal government is committed to balancing economic diversification and environmental stewardship. We recognize that a thriving and prosperous economy should support major innovators, visionaries, and those capable of expanding Yukon's economic competitiveness and creating good jobs. Ensuring Yukon has a favourable tax regime is one way of providing that support as well as encouraging investment in Yukon businesses so that they can grow and increase efficiencies and capitalize on gaps and opportunities in the local economy.

That is why, early on in this mandate, we reduced the corporate tax rate from 15 to 12 percent and it is also why we reduced the small-business tax rate from three to two percent. We continue to have discussions with our local chambers of commerce and the business industry about further changes and innovative tools to best support Yukon small businesses.

These changes are a demonstration of our work to encourage economic activity in the territory by creating a favourable tax environment for those who do business and create good jobs in the territory. It's a very fluid conversation concerning what's happening right now across the border and how Canadians, whether they be at the regional level or at the national level, are looking to try to ensure that the country or the regions continue to be competitive with some of the broad, sweeping changes that we've seen in other areas in North America.

Another way of encouraging economic activity is to look at how we encourage investment in Yukon businesses. One of our campaign commitments was to increase the ceiling for the Yukon business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify. Of course, that is the subject of the motion this afternoon. I am happy to rise and share my thoughts as the Minister of Economic Development. When I took on that role, the Premier gave me explicit instructions in my mandate letter to encourage economic growth and diversification by aligning program funds and supports to attract new investment to Yukon businesses.

I want to just take a minute and thank the Department of Economic Development and all of the 53 or 54 people who are in that department who have been working extremely hard to take white paper work that has been done over the years —

to take their ideas and put them into reality on a number of innovative ways that the department can tweak and be more efficient. They have been working hard throughout the department. I truly appreciate that work. That's a way that we are going to meet some of the items that were outlined in the mandate letter — when we talk about aligning program funds and ensuring that the department is nimble, yet can support real diversification in our economy.

I believe that increasing the small-business investment tax credit and looking at how to revise the eligibility criteria to allow more Yukon companies to qualify would be an excellent way to follow through on this directive. Of course, we touched on the fact that the small-business investment tax was introduced by the NDP government in 1999, although from some of the comments today from the NDP, I would say that the government in 1999 was a bit more business-friendly. I will do my best to speak to some of the points made by the Leader of the Third Party.

It was good then and I think it's still a good idea now. It's an economic stimulator that is good for Yukon companies and for investors who support local businesses. It has been a successful tool for local companies and investors. Since it was introduced, the tax credit has helped Yukon-based companies raise almost \$10 million in capital. It has helped to grow local businesses and diversify Yukon's economy. Some of Yukon's most iconic and successful homegrown companies that my colleague touched on have benefited from this program, like Air North, Yukon's airline, as well as Yukon Brewing, our first local brewery. Encouraging investment and growing local businesses and diversifying Yukon's economy are the objectives of our government and we strongly support that.

At the same time, we want to ensure that the tax credit is effective when it comes to supporting local businesses and encouraging Yukoners to invest in Yukon corporations. Aside from minor tweaks, the tax credit has not substantially changed since it was introduced almost 20 years ago. Our Liberal government believes that we need to look at changes that will modernize this tax credit to make sure it's working within the context of Yukon's current economy.

We hope that members opposite support the idea of modernizing this tax credit and will be supporting this motion today. A lot has changed in 20 years and we're in a good position, as outlined in the interim economic and fiscal outlook released last week. In 2018, the Yukon is a desirable place to live and work. We are seeing good population growth, almost 2.1 percent. Preliminary numbers have our population cresting over 40,000 people and our economy is one of the strongest in the country. We have to modernize our toolbox when it comes to a limited number of items we have to work with, such as this tax credit.

When we look at the projected GDP this year of 2.5 percent and the out-years at almost over double that, we will continue to have to provide new and innovative ways for local companies to grow.

Even Yukon's average weekly earnings have averaged almost \$1,100 over the past six months, and that's the fourth highest in the country. When you look statistically at the

number of people in our population who are working, it's almost the highest in the country — of people who are available to work. Even today's numbers just out — the magnitude of our building permits, based on last year to this year. We continue to see growth in other sectors. Even mineral exploration estimates from Natural Resources Canada are expected to increase by 4.4 percent.

These are all signs of growing interest in our territory and they represent how exciting things are in the Yukon.

We want to make sure that we capitalize on those opportunities presented by this increased economic activity, including updating our programs and services in order to diversify our economy. Tomorrow night will be a very good example of that. We're going to be in a position where Members of the Legislative Assembly can attend the opening of a 25,000-square foot innovation hub — at least one company, before we have even had the grand opening, has already scaled up and have been invited to one of the most preeminent opportunities to be an accelerator and to have access to more investors, and they're hiring more local people. That was the commitment we made.

You need bold people in the departments, and I commend the people at Economic Development for all the work they have done on this. In many ways, some of those same staff members were also working on dealing with the fibre file, which was a long-standing item in the Yukon. They were carrying both those packs up the hill and have done a phenomenal job in both cases to see those projects — one to a point where it can start to be built and the other one built and filled, and now already doing what it's supposed to do.

I have been approached by Yukon businesses that are interested in accessing the investment tax credit. We have had good discussions. Business costs have increased over the last 20 years, and we want to make sure that we are encouraging investment in local companies rather than inadvertently limiting that. It is clear that the tax credit could be modernized in a number of ways will better support Yukon businesses. Increasing the investment tax credit will allow more Yukoners to invest in local businesses and to help Yukon businesses raise money in light of the increased costs of business today compared to 20 years ago. Increasing the asset limit will allow larger companies to qualify and will allow more Yukon businesses to take advantage of this program. Of course, modernizing this tax credit to make it work better for Yukon companies and local investors will encourage economic growth and contribute to diversifying our economy. The time is right to do that, and I believe all members of the House should support these objectives.

As for some of the questions from the Member for Kluane — I'm sorry if I have missed a couple of them. I think the general discussion was: What is the mechanism that would be used to make this amendment and change? From my due diligence — and we certainly can discuss this — but it looks like potentially a legislative change would be in order to do this work. Of course, with a legislative change comes a series of protocols, and I think that those protocols would help to meet the concerns of the Member for Kluane. That ability, of

course, when you bring legislation to the Legislative Assembly to debate the merits of it, to challenge the data that backs up — in cases — or at least to get a thorough understanding of what the justification is for those legislative amendments — and really an opportunity to debate. I think things like an analysis of the economic opportunity and impact of such a change would be something that we would have an opportunity to speak to.

In certain cases, the question was: Would you talk to the Yukon public on this particular topic? I think that certainly I would sit with the officials and there would be a consultation process that would occur. What I have learned in the Legislative Assembly to date is that, when you are making amendments like we are bringing forward in this Sitting — which have to do with the *Forestry Act* and the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* and are fairly technical in nature, but, at the same time, I believe, don't have a mass impact on all Yukoners, but maybe on sectors — but being respectful that this does give a tax advantage, we would have to take a look at how broad — yet ensuring that we had an efficient and effective conversation with Yukoners. It is not something that I am against, but at the same time I think there is a tremendous amount of work happening in government. The different communications individuals at the Executive Council Office and others have a tremendous amount of work that they are undertaking. I think we would be respectful and we would look to see what the appropriate conversations should be. I'm sure that if we didn't undertake those in a way that didn't suffice, the members opposite would certainly outline that during the debate on the legislation.

I think that the legislative changes and the economic impact — and, of course, with any legislative change that we were going to take forward, there would be a legal analysis. I appreciate the Member for Kluane highlighting the fact that, of course, there would be a cross-reference versus the potential implications to the CFTA and how that played out. That would be something that we would have the Justice department undertake, and they would work with our officials and policy teams to ensure that a tool that was enhanced in this way wouldn't put us offside to other jurisdictions.

Concerning the comments from the Leader of the Third Party, I don't want to be disrespectful, but I did sense there was a conspiracy theory that was put out there about how the big companies are going to come in and we're putting together this tax incentive. That's really what we heard. The member opposite can go back and review the comments in Hansard — that's sort of what I heard.

I think that this jurisdiction is a place where, when we meet with individuals Outside who invest in the Yukon — because there is a tremendous amount of money that comes from banking groups and investors that help us fuel the economy. What I have heard previously is that — whichever government it is — governments in Yukon understand that they need to support local businesses. That's really what it was.

The only reason I bring it up is that, when I look at what's happening with an investment from Goldcorp and how this

summer — seeing how many young Yukoners and generations of Yukoners are currently at work, I was shocked at the comment from the member for the Third Party — if this is about Goldcorp. Of course, we're going to ensure that we keep our regulations and our environment safe, but at the same time, to sort of put the focus on one organization, I think, is a little bit — I don't think that really makes our territory welcoming. As a company, they have done great with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and continue to work with other First Nations in their traditional territories. I will say for the House that this potential amendment is because long-time Yukon businesses have come to us and they want to increase projects that they think are good, projects that maybe the Leader of the Third Party doesn't support, but projects that I think the Official Opposition probably supports and projects that we in government support.

Some local businesses want to ensure they have the ability to grow; they want to continue to invest and they want Yukoners to be part of that success, and that's the great part of this initiative.

Certainly, we can get into the details on assets, and that would be something that would take place when you table legislation and you have that real robust debate on it. Right now, what I am trying to see at this point is where we are at. I think our government is sort of at the door, and people have come to talk to us about it. We have had meetings with businesses. I hear from the Official Opposition that there are some questions concerning legislation. The question is for the Leader of the Third Party that this —

Some Hon. Members: (inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I must have hit a soft spot. I think that this is a great NDP tool. Do you support it or not? Is this a different way of doing things? I will leave it at that. I have certainly listened, and we will see if anybody else would like to speak to this motion.

Mr. Gallina: I wanted to take a moment to reiterate some of the points that the government members have made here today and to address some of the questions raised by members opposite. I won't be very long in my remarks.

I do appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to Motion No. 91, urging the government to increase the ceiling for the Yukon small-business investment credit. As members had mentioned during the 2016 territorial election campaign, Yukoners did identify that they wanted opportunities for businesses to thrive in the territory, and this is one way that we can support that effort.

In listening to Yukoners, this initiative was made a priority and became a platform commitment. We pledged to raise the amount of credits issued under the small-business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million. As other members have mentioned, since its inception in 1999, the small-business investment tax credit has helped Yukon-based companies raise almost \$10 million in capital. The tax credit has helped to grow businesses in the Yukon and to diversify the economy. Local businesses help create jobs, circulating

wealth and enabling Yukoners to put food on the table and pay bills.

I would like to thank the Member for Kluane for his comments on this motion. The points he has raised are valid and through debate today, I believe some of the questions have been answered by the minister responsible. I recognize that there are other questions that will be addressed as the government explores these tax incentive options.

On the matter of Liberal campaign commitments, I would just like to bring to the attention of the Member for Kluane that we do take our platform commitments seriously, and there are a number of commitments that I believe that we have delivered on for Yukoners. The five-year capital plan is an example. That plan helps industry stakeholders plan their business moving forward. It signals certainty so that they are able to establish their business moving forward here in the territory. Reducing the small-business tax rate from three percent to two percent — reducing the small-business tax rate is a commitment that we campaigned on, and we have done that. Reducing the corporate rate from 15 percent to 12 percent is another commitment that we did make in the election, and I am happy to stand here and say that we have done that.

We used our trade agreement exemptions to promote regional economic development and ensure that Yukon businesses have opportunities to bid on 10 \$1-million procurement opportunities. We have worked with industry, First Nations and Yukoners to finalize the Yukon tourism development strategy and guide our investment in the tourism industry.

I recognize that there are still discussions and there is still work being done on that strategy, but I believe that will be completed during this mandate — surveying our visitors to gather data in support of evidence-based decision-making and further investments in Yukon's tourism industry.

I would also like to thank the Member for Whitehorse Centre for her comments. I agree that a thorough analysis should be conducted and will identify some of the questions that she has raised and will allow for evidence-based decision-making as the government moves these tax incentives through this House. I also agree that this tax regime should be benefiting Yukon businesses and not businesses abroad. I think we can all agree on that.

Our economy is one of the strongest in the country, with a projected GDP growth this year of 2.5 percent, as other members have mentioned. We are experiencing record low unemployment rates, tourism continues to grow, mining operations are ever-increasing and emerging industries, such as information technology, are on the rise. The Yukon is in an enviable position in Canada and we need to seize this opportunity.

In particular, we need to look at how we can increase incentives and investment in Yukon businesses. Ensuring that Yukon has a favourable tax regime is one way of providing that support.

In closing, I do believe it is important that we modernize this tax credit to make sure it allows Yukon businesses to

capitalize on the increasing economic activity of opportunities here in the territory. I look forward to support from members on this motion.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am wondering if we could please welcome Mr. Kells Boland, a constituent from beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, into the House today.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to stand today to speak to Motion No. 91. I thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing this motion forward.

As mentioned earlier by my colleague, the MLA for Kluane, this appears to be a straightforward motion. The Member for Kluane did provide some questions that we felt were important to be answered. The Leader of the Third Party has also provided some questions.

Unfortunately, I don't think that the minister — he partially answered those questions, but didn't fully answer those questions. Maybe if he would have had the opportunity to have staff here today, he would have been able to provide us with a bit more comprehensive answers.

I think the important thing out of all of this today was the fact that the Official Opposition, as well as the Third Party, had agreed that the motion in principle was worth supporting and would support; however, I am not going to speak for the Third Party. Maybe they felt those questions were answered. I didn't — but anyway.

Again, I think the Official Opposition is in a position to support this motion in principle, as I said, and I hope that in the future we see this motion move forward as long as it can do so in a legal and fair manner. It is unfortunate that the government wasn't able to answer these questions or didn't have this information before bringing the motion to the floor of the Legislature so that all members and all Yukoners had the opportunity to receive the information before voting. At this point in time, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for Copperbelt North for bringing it forward. I hope to see this motion pass.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard in the debate on Motion No. 91?

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues from across the way for their input today.

I understand that, in modernizing this idea brought forward by the NDP in 1999, it is going to take some time to look at it. A good idea is still a good idea, though I think we need to bring it forward. The multiplier effect of being able to take this from \$1 million to \$5 million has a cumulative effect if it is fully subscribed for \$20 million of fresh investment for Yukoners and Yukon companies. I think that is a positive step

forward for Yukon businesses that are looking to take that next big step forward.

I hope that my colleagues from across the floor, our department here and the minister — what we've done so far in getting this forward — can work together on this when it comes to the floor of the Legislature and answer the questions in a more robust way. I encourage them to move this forward because I believe that this is very important to increase Yukoners' involvement in the business of growing of our own economy.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 91 agreed to

Motion No. 315

Clerk: Motion No. 315, standing in the name of Mr. Hutton.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure Yukon has flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure funds in the best way to meet community and territorial needs.

Mr. Hutton: I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce Motion No. 315.

In the fall of 2017, the Government of Canada announced \$2 billion in funding as part of the low carbon economy fund,

an important part of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. This \$2-billion fund supports projects submitted by provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous governments and organizations, business and both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations.

Other programs, like the federal government's Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, includes up to \$600 million to the Yukon over 10 years to fund green energy, improved water and waste water, community and cultural infrastructure, public transportation and northern community development. The realities of living in the north — whether in an urban centre like Whitehorse or rural communities such as Mayo or Pelly Crossing — are different from down south. I know the value of these facilities and recreational infrastructure in our communities — the Mayo Community Centre, the Link Building in Pelly, the old Carmacks Recreation Centre — social and absolutely critical pieces of infrastructure for our communities.

While infrastructure funding from the federal government is good news, the fact is that, here in the north, we require flexibility to access and implement this money. Currently many of these federal funds do not allow us to spend money on public buildings. Under the *Yukon Recreation Act*, the Yukon government is a primary supporter of recreation facilities in Yukon communities. These are our community halls, our recreation centres and our gymnasiums. These spaces are the heart and soul of our communities, Mr. Speaker. They are where we gather to share news, to celebrate, to stay active and to mourn the passing of other people in our communities — as we have suffered over the past year.

Recreational infrastructure in our communities is incredibly important. These spaces are where communities come together. From community halls to gymnasiums and playing fields, these spaces provide opportunities for Yukoners to lead active, healthy lifestyles, and these spaces contribute to positive well-being and an enhanced quality of life. It's especially important in these days of the fentanyl crisis and the opioid crisis that is going on and cocaine in our communities. Our young people need some healthy alternatives. They need programming in these facilities. They need things to do other than stand on a street corner and wait for a drug dealer to approach them.

These spaces foster personal, social, economic and environmental benefits for Yukoners. Yukoners who live in rural and remote communities deserve the same access to services as those in southern urban centres. We know that infrastructure projects are costly; however, we do have a responsibility to advocate for our rural communities — our rural communities' right to invest in these spaces.

This government is playing catch-up in rural communities, Mr. Speaker. Infrastructure needs in our communities have been addressed very sporadically, if at all, over the past 15 years. We need the flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments and plan for the spending of federal infrastructure dollars in the most efficient

way possible to meet the needs of communities and to meet the needs of the territory.

This spring, our government met with municipalities and First Nations to discuss local priorities for infrastructure investments. The feedback we heard, along with input from our government, has been combined into our government's multi-year plan for the Investing in Canada infrastructure program. With this plan now in place, we're able to move forward with potential projects, ensuring alignment with our long-term plan for infrastructure development.

As part of this government plan, \$34.7 million has been targeted for community, cultural and recreation funding. Another \$270 million has been targeted for rural and northern funding to improve the quality of life for Yukoners residing in rural communities. I'm very pleased to see that such a significant amount of our infrastructure funding is focused on the rural communities. This is really a new thing for us in the rural communities.

I'm also happy to see that municipalities and First Nations are having a greater say in what this funding will be used for. In the past, when communities and municipalities received funding, they didn't have a say in what the funding would be used for or how they could access it. This government has made a commitment to work with municipalities to find community-generated solutions to community problems.

Furthermore, the increased flexibility from the federal government that we have asked for has the potential to bring our communities closer together. First Nation governments and municipalities submitting joint priorities and co-applications for community development projects bring our communities together, and when Yukoners work together, they can tackle any issue.

The cost of aging infrastructure is another issue that all rural Yukoners are all too familiar with. In 2015, under the previous government, the outdoor skating rink in Carmacks closed due to safety concerns. It brought an abrupt end to the skating season for Carmacks residents, and the repair or rebuilding of a rink became a high priority for them. The community of Carmacks considered the ice-skating rink to be more than just a hockey rink. It provided a year-round heated space that doubled as a place to host community events, a place for families to gather for recreational events as well as a place that attracted visitors from other communities. This Liberal government recognized that repairing or rebuilding the Carmacks rink was a priority for the community, and I am proud to say that this government has worked diligently with the community of Carmacks to champion this project and has successfully accessed federal funding to rebuild it. Through this partnership, we were able to help to secure \$16.55 million to see Carmacks' dream of a multi-use, year-round arena come to fruition. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, for the collaboration on this project. The residents of Carmacks are looking forward to having this much-needed community building constructed so they can once again enjoy recreational and social activities in a communal space in their community.

This motion gives flexibility, not only to the Yukon government to work with the federal government to spend federal infrastructure dollars, but to First Nation and municipal governments as well. It will ensure that Yukoners have access to as much federal money to put toward infrastructure funding as possible. It ensures that thousands of unspent dollars are not left on the table rather than in the communities where these dollars are needed.

As a representative for rural Yukon residents, it is very important to me that we work with communities to access these much-needed infrastructure dollars, not only for today but for the communities of tomorrow. I encourage the members opposite to vote in support of Motion No. 315 today.

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise to speak to Motion No. 315 as brought forward by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. The motion reads: "THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure Yukon has flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure funds in the best way to meet community and territorial needs."

I understand the government's desire for flexibility. Under the first Building Canada fund, there was a little more flexibility afforded to the territory in choosing infrastructure projects to be funded under this program. This model was seen as fair, balanced and well-liked by those in the department who were tasked with identifying projects to undertake and to see them through to completion.

Under this model, 75 percent of expenses were funded by the federal government, leaving the territory to fund the remaining 25 percent. With the change in federal government came a new infrastructure funding model. The 2014 New Building Canada fund, or NBCF or BCF2 — all these acronyms — saw changes that required the territory to cede some of the control over project approval back to the federal government.

Municipalities could submit priority infrastructure projects for funding, and the Yukon government would narrow those projects into a list that would have to be then submitted to the federal government to be approved. The process took a lot longer. When this new model was introduced, the number one priority for the Yukon government was fighting for the funding distribution to remain the same.

We wanted to ensure the federal government continued to support the 75/25 funding arrangements. This was the desired model for the territory, and negotiations centered around ensuring this funding model remained. The concerning part of this motion is that there is no mention whatsoever about ensuring the funding model remains to ensure that the federal government continues to fund 75 percent of the infrastructure while the territory covers the remainder.

As there is no mention of this at all, it is troublesome. The idea of flexibility often comes off as a good thing, but in this case, we have no idea about what is meant by the words "for future funding".

This government issued a news release on July 20 of this year. It also addressed the desire of this government for more flexibility from the federal government when it comes to investing in infrastructure.

Again, in principle, this sounds good, but we wonder if the government is off-handing costs to the municipalities. Without knowing all the details, it is hard for us to support this motion. That is like signing an agreement without first reading the fine print. There is no mention of ensuring the Government of Canada pays 75 percent and the Government of Yukon pays 25 percent.

I believe that, in order to support this motion, there should first be an assurance that the important details are not omitted. With this being said, I would like to put forward a friendly amendment to the motion.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Van Bibber: I move:

THAT Motion No. 315 be amended by:

- (1) inserting the word “priorities” after the word “community”; and
- (2) adding the phrase “, through actions including keeping the current cost-sharing balance of 75-percent federal funding and 25-percent funding by the Yukon government” after the word “needs”.

Speaker: If the copies of the proposed amendment could be distributed to all members for their review, I will take an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk.

It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek North:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 315 be amended by:

- (1) inserting the word “priorities” after the word “community”; and
- (2) adding the phrase “, through actions including keeping the current cost-sharing balance of 75-percent federal funding and 25-percent funding by the Yukon government” after the word “needs”.

The proposed motion as amended would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure Yukon has flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure funds in the best way to meet community priorities and territorial needs, through actions including keeping the current cost-sharing balance of 75-percent federal funding and 25-percent funding by the Yukon government.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In speaking to the amendment, I would like to note that priorities and needs are different ideas. Further, the needs of the territory may not necessarily be reflected in the priorities of the community and vice versa. I believe it is important to acknowledge both community priorities and territorial needs in this motion and have thus reflected this in my amendment to the motion.

I would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring that this funding arrangement also remains in effect. In doing so, First Nations and municipalities are assured that they will not be forced to fund an infrastructure project, potentially going into debt or being forced to raise taxes. Further, we wouldn't want a community with less money to be denied funding for an important project because the Government of Yukon won't provide funding.

This current funding model has long ensured that infrastructure projects are successful. The responsibility for ensuring infrastructure is reflective of the needs of the territory and each community within should rest with the territorial government. There should be no financial burden placed on municipalities or First Nations other than to share their priorities with the government.

The lack of details in both the July news release and the original motion are problematic to us. The government would like flexibility, or wiggle room, but will not provide further details on what kind of flexibility it is seeking.

I would like to acknowledge once again that flexibility can be a good thing, but without certain parameters in place that safeguard the financial model of the infrastructure program, flexibility can be detrimental to other levels of government in the Yukon.

I hope that this government will consider my amendment as a friendly addition to what I believe may have been an oversight on their part. I would encourage members to take a close look at the motion as it was originally worded and see that there could be a future problem with the lack of detail as it was submitted.

I look forward to hearing further thoughts from other members on the amendment and what I see as an important addition to this motion.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I have risen in the House before and I will say again that if members wish to introduce amendments, I welcome them. I invite them to come and talk to me ahead of time. I will express a small concern that this will leave us in a position of not being able to support the amendment, despite the good intentions.

The first part of the amendment as proposed is talking about priorities. That's fine. We do talk to all of our communities to identify what their priorities are. We have always worked to respect that local decision-makers have the best knowledge about what local priorities should be, so that's great.

The second part of the amendment says that we would keep the current cost-sharing balance of 75/25. I will deal with the latter half of the amendment where I really run into problems, but the first thing I want to note is that our gas tax fund, which we have with the federal government, is 100-percent federally funded. No, I am not going to go for a 75/25 model there. We will stick with the 100-percent model. I would hazard to state that our communities, our First Nation governments and our municipal governments prefer gas tax funding over all others.

I don't want to confuse things. I am pretty sure that what was referenced here was talking about the infrastructure funds that we have going forward — for example, the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, but even with that one, if we are able as a government to advocate to get a stronger portion, then I think we should try to keep that opportunity open. I do agree that it is good that we have the 75/25 model.

Let me talk about the addition of the words “funding by the Yukon government” in the language of the amendment, which is the one I am most challenged by. The reason is that I have stood in this Legislature and said before that the amount of money that the federal government has offered to this territory and is willing to invest in this territory on a 75/25 split would be too much for us as a government to spend. We have to do one of several things: We have to look for that additional money, we have to leave money on the table or we have to turn to municipal and First Nation governments to see whether they wish to take up that opportunity.

Let me, first of all, give some assurances to the members opposite, because the first thing I believe I heard the member for Porter Creek North say was that we have not provided any assurances that we wouldn't force a community to spend money. Well, let me just say unequivocally here on the floor of the Legislature that we will not force a municipal or First Nation government to spend money on infrastructure.

We certainly will seek to provide them opportunities and they can choose. If they don't wish to spend that money, then that is their discretion, of course. We took the split of the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan funds, which is in total nearly \$600 million, and we stated to our partners in the communities that we, as a government, could provide the 25 percent on two-thirds, or \$400 million of that \$600 million, over 10 years. We assured them that we would continue to work on finding more dollars so that we would be able to continue to be the one that provides the 25-percent portion, but that we would also not seek to leave money on the table. So if that meant we were not able to find those funds, we would provide the opportunity for those other governments, should they wish to take it. There is a deep infrastructure deficit here in the territory. We need to invest.

Let me talk about one of the flexibilities, which I was going to talk about on the main motion, Mr. Speaker, but which I will choose to talk about right now on the amendment — because the Member for Porter Creek North was talking about how she has not heard from us what those notions of flexibility are, so let me list one. When we worked with the federal government and sought flexibility in the original negotiation dialogue with them, we asked for stacking. Stacking, as it turns out, would be a great tool for our communities because of the gas tax fund. If you are able to stack on it, you can leverage those funds and, right away, we would see that those funds could double or triple, because the gas tax fund could be leveraged.

We were able through that negotiation with the federal government to get stacking for our First Nation governments. We were not able to get it for municipalities. However, even last month when I was at the ministers of infrastructure

conference, that was exactly one of the issues I put on the table — noting the issues that are relevant to the North and, in particular, the Yukon, and noting our issues with small communities, which are distant from one another, and that those issues made a case for stacking for our municipal governments. I will continue to work and advocate to see if we can get that flexibility.

So we've put that notion out there. I will list off other ways in which we're seeking flexibility. It's not about wiggle room. I'm standing up; I'm saying very explicitly what that money looks like and what we're trying to achieve with it.

Unfortunately, because I would always like to see us seek an even stronger deal, I wish to thank the federal government for agreeing to the 75/25 split. That isn't everywhere in Canada by any means, but it is across the north. Although I will continue to work stronger, I note that gas tax is 100 percent, and I note that the wording in the latter part of the amendment would try to put the balance of all of the spending back on to the Yukon government, which would send us too far into debt. We don't have those funds as we project forward.

Mr. Cathers: I would like to thank my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, for bringing forward this amendment. It is unfortunate to hear that the government is not going to consider it a friendly amendment. It was intended to reinforce what has been the practice — one might even call it a principle — in terms of federal funding agreements with the Yukon government for infrastructure, whereby, over the last number of years, we have seen a model of 75-percent federal funding and 25-percent Yukon government funding.

I was a little surprised that the minister interpreted the wording moved by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, as being a reference to the gas tax fund. The gas tax fund itself has been a separate agreement that has specific sharing put into place as far as which portion of the gas tax funds go to municipalities as well as to First Nations, with a very small portion retained by the territorial government. We did not feel, and I do not feel, that the wording proposed in the amendment was a reference to the gas tax fund. Perhaps if the minister wished to clarify that, it could be done either through his comments on the record or through making a minor subamendment to this to address any concerns he has, rather than simply voting against it.

I do appreciate the offer extended by the Minister of Community Services for members to share with him planned amendments to government private members' motions; however, I would note that the reverse practice does not typically happen in this Assembly. The government members do not typically share planned amendments to opposition motions when they are planning on bringing forward those amendments. Again, we respond to those amendments to our motions when the government brings them forward and when we are in a different situation — when I was on the government side of the floor — we also considered opposition amendments when we felt that they were constructive. There were numerous times when we either agreed to them or made

an amendment so that we could support the proposed amendment brought forward by another party, so I would just encourage the minister to reconsider the plan to vote against it.

I would note and echo the comments made by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, of the importance of recognizing the limited fiscal capacity and financial capacity of Yukon First Nations and Yukon municipalities.

It is important to maintain that principle for large infrastructure projects, we believe, of the Yukon government and the federal government helping First Nation governments or municipal governments build up their asset base and address the needs of their communities and citizens, while recognizing that, in the majority of cases, those other levels of government do not have the financial capacity to contribute substantially to those projects without potentially going into debt and then placing a burden on future generations of their citizens and future councils, whether at a First Nation level or municipal level.

In speaking in support of the proposed amendment to Motion No. 315, as moved by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, I want to also address another concern that we have received related to the government's plans for infrastructure. To that end, I am pleased to introduce a subamendment to the amendment proposed by my colleague.

Subamendment proposed

Mr. Cathers: I move:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 315 be amended by:

(1) inserting the number “(1)” after the word “including”; and

(2) adding the following words after the phrase “Yukon government”:

“(2) providing for the long-term financial health of the Yukon government by not increasing the territory's debt limit; and

“(3) ensuring that the Yukon government is not required or encouraged to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects.”

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge has copies for distribution? Thank you. If those could be distributed for the review of all members, then I will review the proposed subamendment with Mr. Clerk.

It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 315 be amended by:

(1) inserting the number “(1)” after the word “including”; and

(2) adding the following words after the phrase “Yukon government”:

“(2) providing for the long-term financial health of the Yukon government by not increasing the territory's debt limit; and

“(3) ensuring that the Yukon government is not required or encouraged to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects.”

The motion with the amendment and the subsequently proposed subamendment would read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to ensure Yukon has flexibility to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure funds in the best way to meet community priorities and territorial needs, through actions including:

(1) keeping the current cost-sharing balance of 75-percent federal funding and 25-percent funding by the Yukon government;

(2) providing for the long-term financial health of the Yukon government by not increasing the territory's debt limit; and

(3) ensuring that the Yukon government is not required or encouraged to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects.

Member for Lake Laberge, on the subamendment.

Mr. Cathers: In speaking to the subamendment, I would just note that, in our caucus discussions, we chose to bring forward these two points separately but collaboratively, because we believe they are both very important issues that need to be recognized and considered on their own merits. We're providing an opportunity for the Liberal government to be very clear on where it stands on these matters.

The first important issue in the amendment brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, is, of course, the issue of who is paying the cost under the federal infrastructure agreements. She proposed the 75-percent federal funding, 25-percent Yukon government funding structure — which I support and I am pleased to contribute to by adding the portions that specifically relate to the Yukon's debt limit and encouraging the federal government to not increase that debt limit, as well as ensuring that the Yukon government is not required or encouraged to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects.

We believe these are both important issues. How the government responds to this — whether they choose to support them or vote against them — will be very telling, in my view, about their views on these issues.

I would note that the Premier and his colleagues have given out mixed messages about their plans as they pertain to federal funding agreements, the use of infrastructure dollars and, specifically — and very importantly — whether they are prepared to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects and leave the bill for that to future governments.

We've been clear about our views on that topic — that the Yukon government, in its current financial situation, should not be borrowing money for infrastructure projects or, of course, to pay operational costs, as happened under a previous Liberal government. There was a time, as members will recall, where they were borrowing money short-term simply to meet payroll during a time of financial shortage.

I would note as well that, when I speak specifically to the government not being clear about their views on this topic, the Premier and some of his ministers have given mixed messages on the issue of infrastructure dollars. The Premier has spoken, as have some of his colleagues, about their view that it is important not to leave federal infrastructure money on the table.

We know the Premier, last year in April 2017, told the federal Finance committee that he would be looking for federal help in removing power — that being electrical generation — from being considered under the Yukon's debt limit. Of course, the majority of Yukon's current long-term debt is related to amounts that were borrowed through Yukon Development and Yukon Energy Corporation, and that would substantially increase the ability to borrow money.

Again, our question when we first debated this and which continues to be a question today is: If you have no intention of using that debt room, why are you making it a priority to ask the federal government to change it?

The Premier, since that time when I raised it with him first in the spring of last year, indicated that he didn't plan to do what his comments to the federal Finance committee would lead one to believe the government was planning.

Recently in debate last week, I asked the Premier in general debate specifically about whether the government was planning to borrow money for infrastructure projects. At that time, he was clear that he had no intention of doing that but, later that week, his comments seemed to be contradicted by his own reply to the Leader of the Third Party when, in debate with her, he said that he had raised the concept with Minister Morneau about indexing increases to the government's borrowing limit to increase along with the size of the economy — that being pegging it to the GDP.

So again, there have been mixed messages on this, and we are providing an opportunity for the government to be very clear on these issues and on each point that is laid out here.

I would also have to reference just some comments made in introducing the motion by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, wherein the member indicated that there had not been consultation previously around community priorities under previous governments. I know the member —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Order. The member can stand. You have to be recognized. You may have a wonderful point but I have to recognize you or not.

The Member for Mayo-Tatchun, on a point of order.

Mr. Hutton: I don't believe the member opposite is speaking to the subamendment that he proposed. He is speaking to the original amendment.

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge.

Mr. Cathers: I would remind that I was briefly referencing comments the member made that directly relate to the subamendment and to my comments on the subamendment.

Speaker: How do they directly relate to the subamendment and your comments on the subamendment?

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, if I am provided the opportunity to resume, I will directly close the loop on this and connect the dots.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I will provide you with some limited opportunity to connect the loop.

Mr. Cathers: I would note that the subamendment I brought forward is related to the long-term financial health of the Yukon government as well as borrowing money for infrastructure projects. As it relates to those infrastructure projects, I think it's important to briefly correct the record and note that, in fact, past governments have done consultation with municipalities and First Nations on their priorities.

In the amendment brought forward by my colleague to which I'm bringing forward a subamendment, there is a reason why the member specifically inserted the word "priorities" after the word "community", because the intention of her amendment was to ensure that community priorities were considered and not just the needs that might be determined by the Yukon government or federal government. It was directly referencing and reinforcing that those projects should reflect community priorities.

I am pleased to support her amendment and strengthen it with a subamendment that we decided to bring forward, which speaks specifically to the financial health of the Yukon government. Again, as members will note in front of them, the motion, if the amendment that I proposed were accepted, would add the addition of urging the Government of Canada to provide for the long-term financial health of the Yukon government by not increasing the territory's debt limit, and (3) ensuring that the Yukon government is not required or encouraged to borrow money to finance infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up my comments, but note that we will be taking note, as will Yukoners, of where the Yukon Liberal government stands on the two specific issues as asked by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, as to where they stand on the issue of who pays the bill for community infrastructure projects and also the issue of whether the government supports our request to not change the territory's debt limit. Perhaps the musings that the Premier has made to the federal finance committee and in debate with the Leader of the Third Party are more reflective of the government's plans, and perhaps the government secretly intends to look at borrowing money and plunging the territory further into debt.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to be brief. First of all, what I want to say is that whenever an amendment is proposed in this Legislature, I think all of us here consider it. I don't think that it is appropriate to suggest that we don't consider it — anyone here. Second of all, the Member for Lake Laberge suggested that the reverse practice doesn't

happen about amendments, but I know that, maybe it does not happen all the time, but it certainly does happen — I myself have done it. I think it is a way that improves this Legislature if we can find a way to dialogue ahead of motions coming here. I don't think it will always happen, but I do think I have made an effort on that front and I have seen my colleagues do the same.

The member opposite talked about the gas tax fund — how it doesn't apply — but it does, in my mind. It is an infrastructure fund; it is a federal infrastructure fund; it's a 100-percent federal infrastructure fund and I'm very glad it is there. I was hoping, as he stood to make a subamendment, he would address that issue, but he didn't.

So the subamendment keeps in place the issues that I've already stated. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when I stood to talk to the first amendment, I talked about debt and I expressed concern around debt. Then the subamendment came up from the members opposite — and it is new for me to see a party propose an amendment and then subamendment on itself, after having dialogued. So they chose to do it in this manner — okay — I'm still trying to sort through why, but that's fine. I don't need to understand motives, I just need to understand whether the wording is something that we can support or not.

Debt is important. All governments need to be concerned about debt. I am glad that we will not ever force a municipal or a First Nation government to take on debt. I think we too need to be concerned about debt — that was exactly the point I made. Here the subamendment is talking about trying to make sure we don't have debt, and I'm amazed because the debt that we do have today is debt that was incurred under the members opposite when they were in government. Okay, it's curiouser and curiouser, Mr. Speaker.

The challenge that I have in continuing — and in dialogue with my colleagues, quickly, about the subamendment is that it is still formed on the notion that we would restrict the federal government funding to 75/25, where the 25 would be Yukon government — we have never said that. We said that it would be 25 percent in the Yukon and that we would, as much as possible, fund that 25 percent up until the point where we couldn't sustain it from a debt perspective. I hope that is as clear a message as possible. The member opposite suggested that he would attribute motives to not supporting this subamendment, but I stand up and I state clearly that our motives are not about the debt limit here. Our motives are around increasing the flexibility to support our communities. That is what we are trying to do.

By the way, I will also say, from a side conversation, that the Member for Mayo-Tatchun was very supportive of the word "priorities" in there and agreed with that portion of the amendment that came across.

Mr. Speaker, sorry — we are not supportive of the amendment. We are supportive of being conscientious around debt, and we are supportive of maximum flexibility for our communities in investing in infrastructure that is needed here in the territory.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the subamendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, I need to confer with you.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are six yea, 12 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the subamendment negated.

Subamendment to Motion No. 315 negated

Speaker: Is there further debate on the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are six yea, 12 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment negated.

Amendment to Motion No. 315 negated

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion, Motion No. 315?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin by thanking the members opposite for their proposed amendments. I understand their interest and concerns, and while we were not able to support the amendments, there were aspects within that I think are worth acknowledging — for example, the priorities.

When I heard the Member for Mayo-Tatchun make his remarks that the previous government didn't consult or engage with communities — I myself was a member of a municipal government at that time, and I know that they did come around and have those conversations. The concern that we have is that we want to ensure that there is transparency. I think that there were some concerns about the transparency at the time.

I also would just like to say that, with respect to those priorities, we have been doing a lot of work in talking with our communities so it is very important. I'm going to take this moment just to highlight other flexibility avenues that we are exploring — based on the concerns raised by the Member for Porter Creek North — that I can give some assurances. I hope that, when we use words here, they are treated as a commitment.

Let me just say that the Infrastructure Development branch is a great group of folks. They provide services in infrastructure development, flood, erosion and drainage control, dealing with disaster mitigation. They administer the federal infrastructure funds, including the design and construction of infrastructure projects in Yukon, and it usually involves working with local governments, both municipalities and First Nations.

Let me also acknowledge that under the — I might get it wrong because I'm not sure if it's the old Building Canada fund or the old New Building Canada fund, but it was under the previous government that the 75/25 percentage split — 75-percent federal dollars and 25-percent territorial dollars — was negotiated, and that was a great deal. We have gone forward and negotiated it again under the small communities fund, and we have also negotiated it under the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. We continue to seek it out.

The small communities fund will provide approximately \$342 million to support Yukon infrastructure over the next six

years. That is a 75-percent-Canada and 25-percent-Yukon split. The clean water and waste-water fund agreement provides \$68.5 million for water and waste-water projects. That is nearly completed. It will be completed in 2020. The Investing in Canada infrastructure plan will provide almost \$600 million in new infrastructure funding over the next 10 years. These are significant investments and they have been needed.

We have signed a bilateral agreement with Canada, and again that is on a 75/25 arrangement. We are taking steps to ensure that planning is aligned with municipal priorities, First Nation priorities and our community priorities.

The ongoing partnership with Canada, municipalities, First Nations and unincorporated Yukon are helping to build a more sustainable future while we address core infrastructure priorities for roads, clean drinking water, green energy, solid waste, waste-water management, disaster management — both at the territorial and local levels. Solid waste management and green infrastructure, including water and waste water, highways, bridges and local roads will continue to be invested in under the small communities fund.

Projects will continue to be subject to the Canada/Yukon approvals processes. I noted, for example, that the Member for Porter Creek North commented on those processes and that there are some challenges with those processes. We work with our federal partners at all times to try to streamline those processes, not only for us but for all of the territory.

As I have noted, we have signed a bilateral agreement with Canada for the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan that will provide nearly \$600 million in new infrastructure over the next 10 years. The categories for this plan include: public transit, green infrastructure, social and cultural infrastructure, and rural and northern communities.

Let me just provide a little more detail on those. First of all, there is \$34.7 million for community culture and recreation infrastructure and \$269 million for rural and northern communities. We get a much larger share of this than other provinces do because we are in the north. This also happens to include \$50 million for the Arctic energy fund. There is \$276 million for green infrastructure, including climate change mitigation and resilience, greenhouse gas reduction and environmental quality. There is over \$13 million for the Whitehorse transit network.

In the spring of this year, we met with First Nations and municipalities to discuss how these and other infrastructure funds will be allocated and to address local infrastructure priorities. That was the point. Through these meetings, we have developed a long list of priorities from our partners. What we will be doing next is building the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, taking those priorities as identified by our communities and building it into our five-year capital plan.

In the last week of the month of September, I attended meetings in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with all the ministers of infrastructure from across the country. I'm sorry — all of the ministers were invited. Not every one of them was there, but we certainly had a great turnout.

I will tell you that the key issue that we discussed was flexibility. I will comment on some of the things that I put forward to talk about — our need for flexibility here. First and foremost, let me talk about stacking. I mentioned it already, but we continue to seek the ability for our municipalities to stack. Secondly, there is a caveat in the terms of agreement that talks about administration buildings. We discussed that, here in the north, our administration buildings are often our community centres; they are often gathering places; they are often our sports facilities. We talked about how they work in different ways, especially in our rural and remote communities. In fact, earlier in September, we had the Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Communities visit the Yukon. We toured with her and visited some of our communities to point out this issue with our infrastructure, and we made some ground there.

We also talked about needing flexibility around diesel dependency for our communities. We actually have negotiated that into our agreement, and we went over that with our federal partners and we made sure that it was still solid.

We gave examples of northern circumstances. One of the issues that I talked about was the Ross River School. I talked about how that school was built in 2000, how permafrost degradation and thawing have led to that building having challenges, and how we will continue to focus on ensuring that our students and staff are safe. For the long term, the life of that building is never going to extend to the life that it was originally designed for. That was a crystal-clear example for all of the folks at the table — just to talk about the issues of climate change and how we are up against them when it comes to our infrastructure.

We talked about the importance of working together with other jurisdictions, about how access to some infrastructure funds might work best if we bundle up some of our projects and seat them as larger, overall projects. We talked about making sure that we could deliver on the outcomes that the federal government was trying to achieve but providing us with the flexibility to support our communities across the territory. We agreed that we would make flexibility the number one priority working forward with this table — and we gave that agenda to the minister and he agreed to work on it — while still seeking to get moving so that we don't miss the coming construction season. The federal minister — Minister Champagne — is new to the file, but he is very energetic and enthusiastic. He seems dedicated to it, and he agreed to visit the Yukon in short order. I don't have a date yet, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to note that it is important to bring our federal partners here so that they can see what is happening on the ground.

We definitely will continue to negotiate and advocate for flexibility with our communities. We know that their priorities often change over time and are fluid. While we do build in a five-year capital plan, we recognize that the out-years should have that flexibility to accommodate things that arise or change over time.

We also want to acknowledge that there are elections from time to time — both here, territorially, but also

municipally. We gave a tribute today that next week, we will have municipal elections across the territory, and that may result in new priorities being set. We will be revisiting that with our municipal partners and First Nation partners as issues arise.

I think it is very important that we build all of this into our five-year capital plan so that we can help our business community to see the directions that we are heading in — the private sector — so that they can ramp up and prepare and can take advantage of those opportunities here in the territory so that we can help to build the capacity of the territory itself.

I will acknowledge that we have the 75/25 agreement with the federal government on the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, but that will never prevent me from trying to continue to advocate on behalf of our communities to get the best deal that we possibly can for them.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm again that, however we work toward investing in our communities, we will never force a municipal or First Nation government to invest in something that they don't wish to invest in. We respect that order of government as a representative government that has the authority to treat their funds as they wish. We won't be meddling with that, but we will continue to provide opportunities for them, especially if they are able to leverage their own investments to get more in infrastructure out of them.

Finally, I just want to say that one of the lenses that we continue to need to put on this is to look at how — not just the investment in the capital, because we can see, for example, that there was a period of time many years ago when we invested in several pools across the territory. That was a great investment, but now those pools are all coming up. What we need to make sure of is that, for every capital investment that we make, there is asset management in place, and we always need to analyze the operation and maintenance budgets that are associated with those facilities.

I landed with a waste-water treatment facility in the community of Dawson, which has an outrageous O&M budget each year. What we need to do as we invest around the territory in infrastructure is look for those opportunities where it will actually bring down O&M costs. That is more sustainable. Again, that will be done in partnership with our municipalities and our First Nations.

Ms. Hanson: I just rise to speak to Motion No. 315 from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

I had it at the top of my page when this discussion started so long ago: “Who could disagree?” That was the question that I had posed to myself in putting my notes together for responding to this motion, and I still hold that.

I would put out just a couple of comments with respect to this motion and to the debate that has subsequently ensued.

I think that, as much as — and I respect and I hear the minister opposite talking about the importance of maintaining flexibility and respecting the priorities — the “community priorities” were the words that were used — that there may be times when the fundamental relationship between the

Government of Yukon and the municipality, and the Government of Yukon and a First Nation government, means that the Government of Yukon has to step aside.

In fact, that funding relationship is directly with the Government of Canada. I use that in the context of when there are programs that are made available, if not for the Government of Yukon stepping in, the majority of the funds would be available to First Nation governments.

We have seen in the past — and I have experienced in the past — where that has been problematic for the federal government to try to finesse that. I put that out there that there are times when the relationship is very different. Municipalities are a creature of the Yukon; First Nation governments are not — the relationship is fundamentally different.

I know and I believe that the government does respect that, but I think it is something that — because history has a sad way of sometimes repeating itself — unless we remind ourselves, we get ourselves caught in that.

I would also seek an undertaking from the ministers opposite that — as they give effect to this motion and to the notion that the Minister of Community Services put forward on respecting community priorities — it would be very interesting to see, as a result of the work done this year with both First Nation governments and municipal governments, a matrix of the community priorities — as of today and then over the next three to four years — of what has been delivered on those priorities, so that when we reflect back four years from now, we can actually see whether or not we achieved it mutually. My observation, Mr. Speaker, is that one of the frustrations that many communities face is yes, it sounded good when we got together at the AYC, or yes, it sounded good when we met one-on-one with the minister and they agreed that was a priority, and then we don't see it when it comes up for the spring budget.

So we would really encourage that kind of discipline that says to citizens, says to this Legislative Assembly and says to First Nation governments and municipal and local area councils that, not only are we talking about it, but we can actually demonstrate that we've delivered — that the government can demonstrate that.

As I said earlier at the outset, what's to disagree with? Yes, it would have been nice to see the word "priorities", but it is not in there so that's a minor quibble.

Mr. Cathers: In answer to the Leader of the Third Party's question of who could disagree, what I want to note is what my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, touched on in her remarks earlier in speaking both to the motion and her amendment, which was defeated: the fact that the lack of clarity in this motion causes us to question what the fine print is beneath the high-level statement.

In many ways, there is an element of the statement that is a platitude, but there is not clarity in what the definition of "flexibility" is. The fine print on whether the Yukon government is planning to borrow money or require First Nations and municipalities to reach deeper into their limited

resources and potentially even borrow money themselves to finance infrastructure projects are two of the major concerns that we're left with in the original motion brought forward by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, because we simply don't know what the fine print says.

The government also chose to reject two constructive amendments, the first brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, and the second brought forward by me in my capacity as Finance critic for the Official Opposition. I would note that one of the reasons we continue to go after the government's mixed messages and statements that seem contradictory is that the Premier and his ministerial colleagues — his Cabinet — indicate sometimes when questioned not to worry — that they have no plans to go into debt — but then a day or two down the road, we hear them hinting that they might.

Why talk to federal Minister Bill Morneau about indexing increases in the debt limit to gross domestic product if you don't have an interest in doing that? Why talk to the federal Finance committee about removing debts that relate to power from being under our debt cap if you don't have an interest in seeing that happen? The net outcome of such an action, I would note, would be to substantially increase the government's ability to borrow money.

Our problem with the motion as worded is that the fine print is really not clear about what flexibility means and whether the fine print in the definition of flexibility includes borrowing money and placing that burden either on municipalities, First Nations or the Yukon taxpayers through the territorial government borrowing more money. We decided to propose solutions to address the lack of clarity. The government rejected those solutions.

The first, of course, was speaking to our view that the principle that operated over a number of years was that for large infrastructure primarily, the Government of Canada paid 75 percent and the territorial government paid 25 percent. The gas tax funding to which the Minister of Community Services referred is, of course, and has been, an entirely different cost-sharing agreement and is legislated in a different manner.

We were puzzled by the notion that wording proposed by my colleague would refer to gas tax, which it certainly was not intended to. If the government had felt that it did, they could have brought forward a constructive subamendment, but their actions speak louder than their words. Again, we hear mixed messages when the Premier and ministers indicate the government doesn't plan to go into debt or borrow money for infrastructure projects, then hint that they might.

I would pose a question: If you don't want to more than double the Yukon's current long-term debt — the current borrowings — why oppose an amendment saying the territory's debt limit should not be increased?

I would point out that it would only be if the territorial government chose to borrow more than double what is currently owed in terms of long-term debt that they'd need to even contemplate an increase to the federal borrowing limit.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that, in making my closing remarks on this, I'm clarifying the fact that we don't have a problem

with the principle of ensuring there's flexibility in a federal funding agreement that allows the Yukon government to work with First Nation and municipal governments to spend federal infrastructure funds. What our concern is with is what government exactly means when they speak of flexibility and they're asking us to sign a blank cheque in voting for that.

Again, we provided two specific, constructive suggestions of how to address our specific concerns and protect the interest of Yukoners and future generations of Yukoners, but the government's actions on this in voting against both of those constructive amendments speak much louder than their words. Also, in voting against the first amendment, they've chosen to not recognize the need to have infrastructure funding reflect community priorities but simply their needs as assessed by someone.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we will be voting, not against the principle of the motion, but against the lack of clarity provided by government and their lack of willingness to work with the Official Opposition and accept the constructive, specific amendments we have brought forward.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to speak about some of the important work we are doing to improve this government's financial position and ensure our communities and all levels of government thrive and their residents prosper. Now, I've been listening to the debate this afternoon, listening to the Member for Lake Laberge — a purveyor of speculative fiction. He talks about debt when my colleague, the Member for beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, has done everything in his power to allay any fears about debt. He has talked about preventing debt. I've heard the purveyor of speculative fiction on the benches opposite talk about cuts. We're working hard to find efficiencies to prevent and curb the trajectory of rampant spending we saw under previous governments. We saw spending of \$1.50 for every dollar we collected. I'm not going to dwell on those points, but I want to set the record straight.

I also heard the Leader of the Third Party talk about the different relationships that the First Nations in this territory have with Ottawa. I know that my colleague on the seat next to me has always said that if First Nations wish to have or do have a direct agreement with the federal government we would be respectful and supportive of that. Just to be clear on that, my colleague certainly is supportive of that and we'll respect and try to work out our relationships with First Nations.

The territory's financial position has come into clearer focus over the last two years through the diligence of the Financial Advisory Panel and the good work of the Finance department, in partnership with other government departments.

While this government works to achieve fiscal sustainability, Yukon must also continue to invest in its infrastructure. We must do this strategically. As we navigate the financial pressures facing us, we have to invest in a way that benefits the territory, municipalities and First Nation governments. To return to a path of fiscal sustainability and

surplus by 2020-21, this government is looking further than the next budget cycle. Aging infrastructure presents a very real financial and safety risk to the Yukon. If ignored too long, the degradation of our pipes, treatment plants, bridges, buildings, roads and runways will compromise our ability to serve Yukoners. Here in the north, our infrastructure risks are especially pronounced, as we are close to ground zero when it comes to climate change. We have roads rising, buildings sinking and crumbling as permafrost thaws. Anyone who has driven the Klondike Highway or the Alaska Highway will confirm this, including, I would reckon, all the MLAs in this House.

We have many structures throughout the Yukon that are now sinking into the ground. Dawson City and Ross River come to mind. My colleague opposite and just to the right of me has talked about the Ross River School. He has also talked about some of the other things that we're doing, such as: multipurpose buildings; stacking the funding; diesel dependency and the work we're doing with the First Nation there and our northern circumstances and how that's really affecting us in grave ways. We're seeking flexibility. In doing so, we are supporting our communities through strategic investments and partnerships. We are ensuring our communities are sustainable. This government is taking action, even as our net financial assets are being depleted.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of not taking action and allowing Yukon communities to fall into disrepair simply passes the maintenance burden on to future Yukoners and governments. Our plan reduces the infrastructure deficit we inherited. We are moving toward long-term fiscal sustainability. We are forming agreements and building relationships to maximize the value of every dollar spent in the territory.

This government will continue to invest in roads, bridges, hospitals, schools and all the other infrastructure Yukoners depend on. We will use our five-year capital plan as well as federal funding whenever available to maximize the Yukon's spending over the long term.

I will now take a moment to talk about this government's commitment to long-term planning and the benefits this is bringing to Yukon. I am pleased our government delivered on our promise to provide Yukoners with extensive information on the government's capital plan over the next five years. This is an example of our commitment to be open and transparent with the citizens we serve. The five-year capital plan outlines this government's infrastructure priorities and helps Yukon businesses prepare for upcoming projects. It was developed with the best information available as to what capital projects are needed, but it is also responsive to needs as they arise over time. The capital plan allows us to time procurement for development and maintenance contracts, providing certainty for vendors.

We will put tenders out at the right time, not just in time, so vendors have a better opportunity to prepare and plan seasonal projects. Industry has told us this transparent approach to capital planning is vital for Yukon businesses to plan for the future. The capital plan signals the Yukon government's intentions to Yukoners, the private sector,

municipalities and First Nation governments. Outlining these capital expenditures earlier helps all levels of government to work together to achieve maximum benefit from our precious capital spends for Yukoners in all communities. It also forewarns private industry, allowing it to be prepared for government projects.

The capital plan launched this year will be evaluated and refined over the coming years, so it continues to improve and to become more useful with each iteration. Capital projects will evolve as community needs arise. My colleague from Mount Lorne has noted the coming elections and how that might change priorities, so we have to be flexible in our spending and make sure we develop relationships and work with our community partners so that we actually tackle the projects that they deem necessary for their communities.

Some of the things we will do, for example, is spread bridge projects out over several years, rather than tender them all together. That allows for local development and expertise to be built in a gradual, methodical manner. The five-year capital plan will become more specific, permitting more comprehensive tendering forecasts for the time of year that provides the greatest benefit for all. As the model matures, so can the capital planning horizon and, so far, I am pleased to say the capital plans are on track for 2018-19.

The second piece in ensuring Yukon infrastructure remains robust is strategic investment in infrastructure projects where the territory will see favourable matching funds from the federal government. Last year, Yukon negotiated an agreement whereby the territory will receive a huge boost to infrastructure funding. The territorial-federal agreement secured \$600 million in new funding, specifically directed to infrastructure projects. The agreement specifies eligible projects will be cost shared on a 75/25-percent split for infrastructure projects over 10 years, starting in 2018-19. I know this was a concern for the members opposite and I am sure they will be reassured that we have actually got that split for projects on a go-forward basis.

Given northern fund fiscal constraints, the Government of Canada support is integral to funding quality infrastructure in Yukon. It allows us to make strategic decisions and effectively meet the needs of Yukoners in all communities. My colleague, the Minister of Community Services, said at the time that this agreement was announced that he was looking forward to working together with communities and First Nation governments to put these dollars to work in Yukon. This agreement is essential to support community infrastructure development, improve the health and well-being of Yukon citizens, make communities more vibrant and sustainable and is a significant contributor to our economy. These green infrastructure investments will encourage inclusiveness through access to community cultural and recreational spaces. They will boost the quality of life through rural and northern communities through infrastructure improvement and they will improve sustainability through public transit.

Specifically the funds will include — and I think we heard these numbers earlier — \$276 million for green infrastructure, \$269 million for rural and northern

communities, \$34 million for community culture and recreation infrastructure and \$13 million for public transit. This federal money is the first step in flowing funding to other levels of government. By working in partnership with our First Nation and municipal government partners, we can make the most of this generous federal infrastructure investment.

From the outset, this government has worked hard to ensure we have the flexibility to put these infrastructure dollars to work, alongside First Nation and municipal governments. The territories face different challenges from provinces and our unique situation calls for creative solutions.

When I speak of flexibility, I point to current federal funding agreements for certain projects which prevent the reallocation of project funds within an existing program budget. This restriction can make it difficult for the Yukon government to manage program budgets. It often removes our ability to manage the cost and saving variations common to infrastructure projects.

Greater autonomy to reallocate funds within existing program budgets would allow the Yukon government to enhance project management without increasing overall federal funding costs. This will also allow us to partner with other levels of government more efficiently. Additionally, it is no secret to anyone that a remote and relatively small economy can make it challenging for First Nation and municipal governments to meet the funding thresholds even at 25 cents on the dollar; \$2 million or \$3 million may not break the bank for larger jurisdictions, but for municipal and First Nation governments that have limited tax bases and smaller annual budgets, infrastructure projects can be a challenge. Flexible funding guidelines promote strategic partnerships that help to meet the needs of Yukon's various municipalities and First Nation governments.

Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that our economy can manage infrastructure funds appropriately. In the past, we have announced ambitious capital plans only to fall woefully short of the mark. This government has taken a clear and deliberate step to table a stable capital budget that is realistic and achievable. As noted, previous governments have had an inflated capital estimate in the spring followed by a radically smaller actual capital spend in the supplementary budget. Tidal budgeting, Mr. Speaker, has to end. Spending sweeps in and sweeps out. We wanted to deliver a consistent, achievable capital budget. While heaping an additional \$100 million in capital spending each year to deliver the biggest budget ever may seem appealing, Yukon must work with First Nation and municipal governments to establish annual and long-term priorities that can be realistically achieved by the construction sector.

During past economic booms, many millions of dollars that could have stayed in the territory flowed south because the local contracting community was already at capacity, or contractors would see a project announced only to have it not go ahead in a timely manner. We are once again in a boom, but instead of just putting all of our tenders out in a short time frame, we will be pacing ourselves and putting more thought into it.

That said, despite our best intentions, federal rules constrain how and when we put out major tenders. The Government of Canada has some rigid criteria and timelines that we must adhere to, which is why I fully support this motion to allow for more flexibility in the way that federal funds flow. All levels of government will be better able to prioritize and pace our strategic infrastructure investments and avoid overheating our economy. We have to balance the ambitions for the future with realistic visions of what is possible today.

This government is committed to having these conversations with all levels of government and at ongoing Yukon Forum meetings, federal-provincial-territorial meetings as well as AYC meetings. Working together, we will achieve an environment where priorities are established early and with input from all levels of government. There is no single solution to avoid future infrastructure deficits; however, the generous program implemented by the current federal government is, without a doubt, the biggest inoculation this territory has ever received against further degradation of our infrastructure. As part of our duty to get the best deal possible for the people of the Yukon, we will lobby the federal government to make this great program even better by allowing us to be more flexible with the dollars that we are given. To benefit all Yukoners, we need creative solutions and strong partnerships. I could not be more supportive of the federal government's incredible infrastructure program. It has built, and continues to build, healthy, happy communities throughout the Yukon. I look forward to hearing from other members on this motion.

Mr. Gallina: I wasn't going to speak to this motion originally, but I did want to say that, today — I think it's important to note for Yukoners — the Member for Lake Laberge and the Official Opposition Finance critic has reiterated the importance of government debt and how it's important that debt be managed and seriously considered.

The Member for Lake Laberge is critical of this government often when we talk about debt, and we are speaking about the motion today on government infrastructure and priorities for investments. To help Yukoners understand, Yukon government debt in corporations as per the Public Accounts on April 1, 2011 was at \$55 million — compared to Yukon government debt in corporations as stated in Public Accounts on April 1, 2016, which was at \$189 million under the watch of the now Finance critic. I wanted to reiterate to Yukoners that this government takes managing the public's finances seriously as stated here in debate today.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 315?

If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard on debate of the main motion?

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, I will keep my remarks very brief at this point. I would like to thank the Member for Porter

Creek North for the friendly amendment, the Member for Lake Laberge for the perhaps not quite as friendly subamendment and the rest of the colleagues who spoke in the House this afternoon. I would simply urge everyone to support this motion because it's extremely important to all rural communities out there. I don't think that, in the two years that I have been here, I have seen a motion that speaks more strongly to support for the rural communities. As a rural representative with five rural communities in my riding, it's extremely important that our government get the flexibility from the Government of Canada to be able to do a better job of spending this money in our communities.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yea, 6 nay.

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

Motion No. 315 agreed to

Motion No. 319

Clerk: Motion No. 319, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land to allow for the private development of residential building lots.

Mr. Gallina: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to Motion No. 319. I believe it is important for the Government of Yukon to

investigate the option of selling land to allow for the private development of residential building lots.

I support this motion as a signal of the direction in which this government could head and to define opportunities the government could explore. In our platform, we committed to working with communities to create available developed land banks to keep lot prices affordable.

One way we can support this goal is to investigate and learn more about how we can introduce private land development for residential lots in the territory. Our government is the primary land developer for the territory. As we look for government efficiencies, we are also looking for ways to get out of the business of doing business. In July, this government transferred the rural Land Development unit from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to the Department of Community Services.

In the past few years, the Land Development unit for Whitehorse was under Community Services and the rural Land Development unit was under the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Merging these two offices is a great example of the many ways this government is looking for and finding government efficiencies. Now, government professionals working on rural and urban land development have shared resources and shared capacity. As we look at housing across the territory, we are fortunate to have a thriving, strong economy. We have the country's lowest unemployment rate. People are coming to Yukon because they are learning what we already know: Yukon is a territory of opportunities for families, for businesses and for individuals. However, new Yukoners put new pressures on our housing supply. The teamwork of this government shows that as we work together to grow the economy, increase territorial revenues and address existing housing concerns, we can manage growth.

As we look at options for private land development for residential lots, it needs to be a collaborative process in partnership with First Nations, municipal governments, the private sector and area residents. Our municipal governments are the local planners in housing and we have land development agreements in place. Affordable and accessible housing is a long-standing issue in this territory and a holistic approach to this issue from all levels of government and stakeholder groups is needed. We are doing this work to prioritize federal funding toward the creation of more affordable housing units in our territory.

Last year, this government released a housing action plan that was facilitated by the Yukon Housing Corporation and supported by the departments of Health and Social Services, Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources. This plan was extremely collaborative in development and it creates a strong foundation of priorities to address housing pressures collectively throughout the territory.

One of the plan's stated objectives is to increase the availability and diversity of land for residential development. The private development of residential lots could be a strong complement to work already being done by this government to develop housing lots in the territory. Housing is a

continuum on all levels and all levels of housing rely upon one another. Availability of lots is a major influencer of this continuum. One way we are reducing this pressure is through the number of lots available to Yukoners in my riding of Porter Creek Centre, which includes Whistle Bend. Over the next year, we expect to release 132 single-family lots, 54 duplex and townhouse lots, 19 multi-family and 35 commercial lots. This lot release plan continues into 2020 when we hope to release 100 single-family, 64 townhouse and two multi-family lots. We are really proud of the collaborative work with the City of Whitehorse on the expansion of this community.

This year, the City of Whitehorse will complete the final planning process for all future development areas surrounding Whistle Bend.

Once complete, the neighbourhood will have transit service, a town square, retail shops and many kilometres of paved and unpaved trails. By making more land available, we are supporting our commitment to enhancing affordability, quality and accessibility of housing for the well-being of Yukoners. Investigating options to sell land for the private development of lots only furthers and broadens this commitment.

Ms. White: It is an unexpected surprise that I should be up at this point. I'm going to thank the Member for Porter Creek Centre for bringing this motion forward. We do think that there is a lot to be said right now when we talk about the development of residential building lots. We have had concerns prior — and that's the fact that the Yukon government sells them for market rates, so to buy a lot in the City of Whitehorse or to buy a lot in the territory is actually quite expensive because it's what the going rate of land is.

We don't know what the answer is to fix that. What this motion is doing is asking for the ability to investigate. It's almost exactly a year to the day. A year ago tomorrow, I brought forward a motion talking about developing a home warranty. It was amended, actually, by the Minister of Community Services, and so the motion, as it was amended read: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explore an effective warranty program for new home construction and home renovations." So it's important to know the wording that was changed. I had "develop and implement" and it got changed to "explore". The definition of "explore" is "to enquire into or discuss". In this motion, we have the wording of "investigate". So the definition of "investigate" is "to carry out research or study into" — and it's interesting that both of those words are synonyms of each other. They also have "consider", "probe", "review", "dissect", "scan", "study" — so those all mean the same thing.

The concern that I have, if we talk about investigating this, is that it doesn't direct the "who" or the "how" or the "where" or the "why" or any of that. The reason why I bring this forward is that I feel like, if we are going to change this on that kind of level, then it should be a decision that's made by all Members of the Legislative Assembly or at least be representative of the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Actually, I'll move the amendment and then I'll talk about that and we'll just get on with it.

Amendment proposed

Ms. White: I move:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by removing the words “urges the Government of Yukon” and replacing them with “establish a select committee”.

Speaker: I have had an opportunity to confer with Mr. Clerk with respect to the proposed amendment and can advise that the amendment is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by removing the words “urges the Government of Yukon” and replacing them with “establish a select committee”.

The proposed amended motion would read as follows:

THAT this House establish a select committee to investigate the option of selling land to allow for the private development of residential building lots.

Ms. White: I will start off by apologizing — I heard the Minister of Community Services saying, “Please bring forward your amendments prior to...” I took that to heart. As soon as he said it, Mr. Speaker, I left the Assembly. I got the amendment and I had a conversation with the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

What I am actually looking for is the most collaborative way for us, as an Assembly as or elected people, to actually kind of dive deep into this. We have had some really fantastic things happen in the Legislative Assembly through select committees.

We saw the creation of the *Smoke-Free Places Act*, and that was through the recommendations of a select committee. We saw recommendations about off-road vehicle use in the territory, including mandatory helmet use for people under 16. That is something that has been adopted. In the 33rd Legislative Assembly, it was the Yukon NDP that encouraged the government to create the Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing — not trying to limit it but opening it up and asking that all members have that ability.

I think it is important to talk about the purpose of committees. They allow for detailed examination of complex matters. Mr. Speaker, I have said before that I am an expert at baking, but I am not an expert in land development, trucking or hauling, putting in sewer pipes, electrical hookups or anything like that. If we talk about land development, it is a complex issue. I would love to learn from the experts in the field what they could see as the benefits or pitfalls of moving toward this direction. Committees offer an opportunity to hear from experts and then have those presentations recorded so that, in the future, any Yukoners who have concerns with a decision made by the government of the day could go back and read through the presentations made by people who came in front of the select committee. The reason why it is

important is that, if we talk about evidence-based decision-making, being able to have that evidence and have it public and accessible means that when the decision is made one way or the other, while there may be challenges, there will be the ability to go back and say, “Well, these are the reasons we made these choices.”

I also think it is important to know that committees provide the means for members to probe into details or policies — or possible policies — and programs. It helps the members develop an expertise. The reason I say this, Mr. Speaker, is that if this is the route that we choose to go down, it would be really fantastic if every member in the Legislative Assembly understood the “why”, the “how” and the reasons for it.

Again, the cautionary tale is that, a year ago tomorrow, the Minister for Community Services amended my motion to put the word “explore” in. “Explore” is a synonym of the word “investigate”, which is what this motion talks about — investigating. I don’t disagree. We want to carry out research and study the issue, but I think the best way to do that would be through a select committee — the ability to call witnesses, to have representation from all parties and to be able to make that decision together. Although I swear I didn’t not do this sooner, this is really in the effort of collaboration.

Part of it is that I want the education as well. I don’t want to have to go on the EngageYukon website or the yukon.ca website trying to learn what was brought forward and why decisions were made that way. I want to be a part of the process whether I am on the committee or not on the committee. The ability to read that information — I can say that during the risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing hearings, I sat for two days in the Chamber and listened to presentations. I am not saying that it would have to go quite as deep as that one did, but the ability to listen to presentations, whether you are on the committee or not, is important and that those presentations are recorded.

Mr. Speaker, this was my hope — collaboration and actually inviting all parties to participate in this decision because I think it has a lot of merit. I actually think that it is something that we should look into. I don’t want to dictate the outcome, but I really do believe that if we had a select committee, then the select committee writes a report and that report gets tabled.

Then government can go to a decision from there, but it’s the ability of all parties to participate in what would be a big change in government.

With that, I look forward to other people’s thoughts. Know that this is coming from the best place. This is looking from collaboration 100 percent and it’s just the cautionary tale that last year — a year ago tomorrow — a motion was changed to say “explore”. At this point in time, I’m not sure if we’ve done our exploration. I don’t want to investigate for the long term. I would like to know that we can create a select committee and that we could have some changes. With that I look forward to some discussion.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing the amendment forward as well as for tabling a number of good points. I believe, at this juncture, I don't think we will be supporting a motion to look at a select committee, but I think, with respect to — I owe the member opposite reasons why, so here we go.

First of all, I think that when we look at select committees — and I think there was a very good series of examples put on the table concerning the previous select committees and the good work that came out of those select committees. The one common theme that I saw throughout that work on select committees was the Assembly coming together to discuss and debate complex issues so decisions could potentially be made on policy that would be new to the territory. It would be the first time the *Smoke-Free Places Act* would come into play. It would be the decision on if there should be fracking or not fracking. It would be a decision on what would happen with ORVs.

The use of private land to be developed in the Yukon, although we're looking at something unique in the sense of government letting, is something that has happened here for decades. There is land currently being developed in the riding of Porter Creek North where there is substantial density, which is much needed and is being developed at this particular time by a private developer in conjunction with the City of Whitehorse. Neighbourhoods like Pineridge, I believe, were developed by a private developer, where there was land that was brought into place. The amenities that were needed were put in place — i.e. roads and others — and then the lots were sold. There was actually a member of this Legislative Assembly that, at one particular time, did a land development in Porter Creek North, where the individual acquired and put the groundworks into place. There is a bit of a history on it.

I say this with all sincerity to the member opposite, because the member opposite is a fantastic champion in this Legislative Assembly when it comes to housing and when it comes to housing need and for a continuum of housing. I know that I and the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation — although we have spirited debates on land and housing — truly appreciate the passion that the member brings forward when it comes to this particular topic.

With the spirit of collaboration, although it may not seem so, what I will offer is this: I do believe that we need to move on this type of protocol when it comes to land development sooner than later.

I do believe that, at this time, striking a select committee to discuss whether or not we need more land developed in the Yukon — I know I am missing some words in the sense that, yes, I do know it is a difference for the Yukon government to have a tract of land put out to a private developer, but I do think we all understand — with the vacancy rates that we see in place right now — that this is something that we truly should be investigating, but not only investigating. What does an investigation look like? Does that look like we should be out to an expression of interest? Should we be out to some sort of an RFP? I'm not sure which system the government would use, but I think that it is something that we would leave to the

government officials to investigate which system would be the best way.

I think that — at least when I speak with my colleagues and we start to look at an option like this when it comes to private land — there are a number of things we take into consideration. We take into consideration the current land continuum that we have; we take into consideration the lots, community services, the city, Energy, Mines and Resources, all working on lots, rural residential, residential, commercial and then in our communities as well — but also continue to have conversations with First Nations.

We're at a point right now where, again, Kwanlin Dün is first out of the gates with an opportunity to put leases in place. They are sort of really moving in a very calculated process on that. We've had meetings at Kwanlin Dün with our lands people and our community services, the Premier, a number of ministers, directly with their chief and council and their lands department to discuss opportunities that they may have, whether it be commercial or residential. We want to ensure that we are supporting that.

I also believe that, under our commitment to get out of the business of doing business, we do believe there is an opportunity for the private sector. We have spoken to contractors. We have spoken to companies that move dirt. We have spoken to surveyors. We have spoken to tradespeople. Something we're hearing from the business community is that they feel we're at a level of maturity.

This isn't something that's unique or would be unique. Every other jurisdiction in the country, for the most part, has situations where government will let land in cases and the private sector can come in and look to do that. There are many items that we will have to take into consideration as a government and our departments absolutely would — whether it is pricing and what the process is to make sure it's accountable and transparent. Those are things that our government officials do at all times. I think our government officials can do that without going through a select committee conversation.

I know that, during my time with the City of Whitehorse, this was something that I felt that we should look at. At that particular time, the feeling was that the cash flow that was required to be put in place to execute these styles of projects may not exist. That certainly was not the case. I think it was a lack of understanding, maybe, at that time from our officials. We started to look at giving more opportunities for the private sector, and now we have the private sector, in some cases, knocking at our door. I think if the opportunity was put out there, there would be other individuals and companies that exist in the Yukon that would probably collaborate together.

This is really just about seeing Yukon companies taking on some of this responsibility and making sure that we continue as a government. I will leave this to my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, to continue to work with the city but also to try to build capacity in a calculated way.

I think the Member for Takhini-Kopper King makes a very good point. How do we gather data? I think one of the best ways for us to gather data is to look at smaller-type

projects, number one, to see if there is interest, to do an analysis of how that works to ensure that the parameters or the terms of reference as we roll out these projects — but I think we should be in a situation where these are projects that we need sooner rather than later. This is work, whether it is over the winter or this spring or next fall. These are things that I think we really should be moving in. It's really about supporting our private sector, supporting our tradespeople and supporting the companies.

The difference is that, at this particular time, we have technical people who are hired by the Yukon government who do a great job. They're inside our departments, whether it is Community Services or Energy, Mines and Resources. Those individuals lay out a plan and then the private sector, whether it is any one of our great companies, execute the work. In turn, the Yukon government essentially takes care of the financial responsibility and risk as we roll it out. All we're looking to say is: Is there an opportunity for the private sector to take a tract of land and to actually do that work without having the oversight of government? I think it's something that we should consider. I think a select committee would make the process a bit more cumbersome.

I think there are other items that absolutely should go to select committee, but I think this particular item is something that — if the concern of the member opposite is, as was stated four or three times in the opening, in her words, that were tabled here concerning the amendment, which was really about us making sure that a word doesn't get changed, with a fear that something would happen. With that in mind, I think we should look to see if we can make sure that this is a process that gets undertaken sooner than later, and we respect the member opposite's concern to expedite, but do it in a calculated way. I don't want to put words in the member's mouth, but to say that if the concern is about the speed and pace of getting this underway, that's the same concern I have with looking at a select committee.

With that, I hope we can get support. By voting this down, it's not about not having collaboration within the Assembly; it's about respecting the fact that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King does a phenomenal job of walking in here every single day that we're here and making sure that her constituents and Yukoners understand the need for housing. The minister and I respect that and hear her, and that's the reason why I believe that looking at the private sector, investigating that now and moving in an expedient way is the right thing to do.

With that, I'll finish my words and hope we can get on with the support of Motion No. 319.

Speaker: Is there further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you prepared for the question on the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are eight yea, 10 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment negated.

Amendment to Motion No. 319 negated

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will try to be brief. I first want to acknowledge that the branch that deals with rural land development has moved to the Department of Community Services. I think it is important that this has happened. What we are trying to do is to consolidate that work. A couple of years ago, there was an attempt to see whether the City of Whitehorse wanted to take over land development, and that caused a bit of movement within the Yukon government — that maybe the election, and certainly the economy doing well, put pressure on land development. When we think about the housing issue and the continuum that we need to focus on, one end of that continuum is lot development. It is an important issue, and I thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for her interest and for talking about it as a big change.

The situation that we find ourselves in is that we, as the land developer — it is not normal for governments, and so, of course, we want to look at whether we can move to a model where we are not the land developer, but we don't want to do that in a sweeping change. What we want to do is keep going with the system that we have, because we need to ensure that there is a continuous supply of lots. We saw that when there was a hesitation, it put pressure on the system.

This investigation is about working with the private sector to do a trial with this system and see how it goes, while at the same time maintaining the full efforts that we have been working on all along to try to ensure that we get a strong supply of lots within the marketplace.

I also wanted to say that at all times, we must respect that there are municipalities involved and that they are the planners of the community. So even if we were to develop a select committee, we always must keep a notion that they are the people who will make the decisions about how the communities should develop through official community plans, through zoning, et cetera. I think of them as the people who are setting the direction and, in this case, we are the group that is carrying out the development.

Another thing that is worth noting is that 95 percent or so of the budgets that go into land development are going into the private sector right now. It's not that they're not involved — they certainly are — but can they be the people who are doing the full lot development, dealing with issues like risk and land sales, et cetera? Well, if we're going to do it and explore it then the way we need to do that is in a way that is not going to threaten the need for lots right now.

That's why I think that, rather than using a select committee, effectively, we use a way to pilot it. I'm happy to keep engagement going with the members in the Legislature.

I appreciate the question about wanting to learn at all times — I take that as a strong thing.

What the member opposite asked for, when I went out on a break, was to try to discuss what are the aspects that we envision around this. I will list off five here and build on some of the comments that came from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The first one is to make sure that whatever the system is, as we do this exploration, we keep going with the existing system. We need to maintain a dedicated program for developing and delivering a range of lot types, for example, in Whistle Bend, but also in smaller developments in all of our Yukon communities — Whitehorse and the rural communities.

Secondly, we want to expand opportunities for the private sector that are interested in the land development process. We would like to support capacity development for the private sector. We want to seek developer and stakeholder feedback, fine tune future offerings and build on public feedback to assess the benefits to the public. We want to continue to explore our options and work with First Nations to advance land development opportunities for and with them.

We also must at all times make sure that we are keeping municipalities in that role of doing the planning. I want to acknowledge that — I think it was in 2016 — the *Land Titles Act* was amended and that has made for some strong changes. Those improvements, especially in support of First Nation long-term leases, are good improvements. They are a good thing for land development.

Fourth, we want to take an integrated approach to land development, recognizing that the availability of properly zoned and developed lots are critical to meeting housing, business and industry demands within our economy.

Fifth, we would like to develop new tools and guidelines to improve efficiencies and streamline the early stages of land development and infrastructure development processes. That is whether the work is done by the Yukon government, by the

private sector or by First Nation development. All of them are important.

Let me also acknowledge and thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for her reminder about our motion here in this Legislature about the home warranty program. I haven't forgotten. I will turn back to the department to see how that is progressing.

The Member for Porter Creek Centre asked me about timelines. I said that we want to have a conversation internally but that, from the department's perspective, we think that we can start down this path this fall. We see it as an ongoing process. The exploration is: Let's introduce more private sector opportunities by speaking with municipalities and making sure that they are on board, by getting the private sector involved with a chunk of land that would allow them to do their work — and then let's come back and test again. Let's see how that works.

Let's see how that complements or otherwise allows us to continue with producing a two-year lot supply at all times for our communities. If we need to adjust something in the two-year lot supply, it might be because the growth is increasing and we need to ensure we have more lots.

That's what we've been doing since I arrived here — ramping up lot development. We would also like to add to it — not replace it, but add to it — an investigation of private development to see whether we can transition across to allow the private sector to have a growing role in lot development. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down and see whether we are able to get to a vote.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciated hearing the debate on this earlier today, and I appreciate the suggestion brought forward by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I do think there's room for collaboration in the area of land availability and would note, as well — just as a reminder to the Member for Porter Creek Centre, who was, earlier in this House, talking about a housing action plan — I think he missed the fact that he was referring to a housing action plan that was developed under the Yukon Party and, at best, had a new sticker put on it by the Liberal government upon taking office. I would really like to acknowledge as well that, as shifts of government go underway, the work that's done by officials across departments does continue.

There have been some changes that the Liberal government has made in terms of the responsibilities for land development.

One thing is that the Minister of Community Services — or it may have been the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — was indirectly making reference to a protocol with the City of Whitehorse and the previous expectation that Whitehorse would take on more responsibility for land development work inside the municipality. I had previously, during the first week in this Assembly, noted that we would appreciate some clarity on whether that protocol is currently in effect and, if not, whether the protocol is being either renegotiated or revised. Also, we have heard, but not directly from the lips of either of the ministers responsible, that

government, at this point in time, has again gone back to the old structure of Community Services Land Development taking the responsibility for managing the projects. We would appreciate some more clarity on just exactly who is doing what.

I note in saying this that I'm not trying to be critical. We're not trying to be critical of the relationship in that area between the City of Whitehorse and the Yukon government. I appreciate that the area of land development and how it relates to community planning has a lot of pieces to it. I appreciate the work that is done by staff, both within the Yukon government and staff at the City of Whitehorse, and understand the challenges that they face in moving forward those projects.

In fact, it was not until I became Minister of Community Services and saw some of the many complicated details of the work that was done by the staff of Land Development that I felt I had a complete understanding of just the complexity of a project like Whistle Bend, and I do appreciate the work that they did during our time in office as well as continuing under the current government.

We would appreciate some more clarity from the government on just exactly what is currently happening in terms of Whitehorse land development. We are supportive of the concept of the Yukon government creating more options for private sector developers to move forward with land development and perhaps begin to replace the Yukon government purse for developing land options for Yukon citizens. That is something that, if memory serves, was identified in the land availability and housing action plan work that we had done during our time in office. It remains an area where there is opportunity, and we would appreciate hearing from government what steps they are planning on taking in those areas.

As well, because of the connection to land planning outside of municipalities, we would be interested in hearing more from the government about what their vision is as far as it pertains to working with Yukon communities in developing land in towns such as Watson Lake as well as in the Whitehorse periphery. How does government plan to work with communities and respect the interest of citizens, including those who are concerned about the protection of greenspace and the spread of too many people into their areas? It is a challenging balance at times, but we are looking to hear more from the government on what their vision is for balancing those competing priorities of Yukoners for greenspace as well as the availability of agricultural areas and residential areas that meet the needs of Yukon citizens.

Speaker: Order, please.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 319 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled October 10, 2018:

34-2-73

Yukon Energy Annual Report 2017 (Pillai)

The following legislative return was tabled October 10, 2018:

34-2-149

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: wildlife management — harvest data (Frost)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 97

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 11, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 11, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to see Team Yukon here from the 55+ Games. There are a lot of folks, so I will apologize right up front if I miss someone: Glen Doumont, who is the executive director of the ElderActive Recreation Association; Rudy Couture; Alex Jegier; Tom Parlee, who is the president of the ElderActive Recreation Association — and who, by the way, won a gold, silver and bronze in discus, shot-put and long jump; we have Brenda Dion, who was our flag bearer; Jenny Trapnell; Donna Letang; Carol Cunningham; Monica Kulych; Loretta and Ben Warnsby; Ranjit Sarin; David and Mary Robertson; Gary and Linda Hewitt; Roger Hanberg; Lorne Whittaker; Carole Theriault; Ev Paschnyk; Don White; Barb Phillips; Bonnie Barber; Sue Meikle; Mike and Gail Craigen; Michel Gelinis; and Hank and Rose Leenders.

Can we welcome them for all of that hard work please?

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I ask my colleagues to help welcome to the House today Geneviève Doyle, who is with the Yukon Girls Rock Camp committee and a member of Something Shows collective. With her is Emily Farrell, a former producer of the Yukon Girls Rock Camp show in Dawson City and a volunteer here in Whitehorse this year.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to welcome my beautiful daughter Alice and my husband Roger Hanberg to the Assembly today. Of course, there are also some great friends from Dawson City, Chuck and Bonnie Barber. Welcome.

Applause

Ms. White: I am going to ask my colleagues to join me today for the first time in seven years in welcoming my father, Don White, because he hates to be the centre of attention. One thing I would like to highlight is that we were told seven years ago on the floor of this Assembly by the then-Commissioner that it wasn't just us who bore the responsibility; it was our families. My dad, Don, has been steadfast, which is really fantastic. Thanks for being here, Dad.

Applause

Ms. White: I have one other because I didn't want to put them together. In the gallery, we also have Taryn Turner. Taryn is incredible. She taught me things that I didn't even know I needed to know about feminism and our place in the world. Taryn, thank you for being here. It's lovely to see you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of International Day of the Girl Child and Yukon Girls Rock Camp

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal caucus on the United Nations International Day of the Girl Child, October 11, to pay tribute to Yukon Girls Rock Camp. I was hoping that all these folks would join up with the Yukon Girls Rock Camp, but they are busy doing other things. We are proud to recognize this day as celebrating the creative spirit and achievements of Yukon girls, and the advancements that they have made towards gender equality in the territory.

This year, I want to highlight a wonderful program that is supporting and empowering Yukon youth through music — the Yukon Girls Rock Camp. Yukon Girls Rock Camp aims to empower the voices of youth for healing, growth and change through music. They offer a week-long summer camp for girls and for gender non-conforming youth, ages eight to 18. This program began in Dawson City in 2015, culminating with a performance on the Dawson City Music Festival main stage. I assume that was nerve-wracking.

A consistent lack of female representation across genres of music has been acknowledged by the industry. The Dawson City Music Festival wanted to see more women on stage, and they decided to do something about it. Lineups have featured more female performers and Yukon Girls Rock Camp offers an opportunity for the next generation.

Dawson City Music Festival offers Yukon Girls Rock Camp to encourage more young girls and gender non-conforming youth to be loud and confident and to see themselves in more typically male-dominated spaces. They also have the goal of eventually seeing more northern youth in Canada's music scene, something I think we can all get behind.

Yukon Girls Rock Camp has now expanded and a camp was held in Whitehorse this summer. The response was enthusiastic and I know that the experience will have a lasting impact on all those involved — the campers, counsellors, organizers and audience alike.

I had the honour, with some of my colleagues, of attending the first ever camp showcase held at Epic Pizza in Riverdale at the end of the week-long camp. The room was full of energy and excitement. The performances were remarkable and it was inspiring to see these youth — many of whom had never picked up an instrument before the camp — making noise and confidently taking up space together.

Congratulations again to all of the campers, both in Dawson and Whitehorse, on your hard work leading up to the showcase. Your performances were a highlight of our summer. Yukon Girls Rock Camp demonstrates to our whole community that girls rock at whatever they put their minds to. Thank you to the Dawson City Music Festival and Something Shows for leading the change that you want to see when it comes to diversity on stage. Encouraging these youths to see themselves in the spotlight and share their voices and talent is a true success.

This camp and its organizers share the important distinction of being part of a small but mighty group that works specifically with and for young women and gender non-conforming youth. When we encourage our youth to reach their full potential and think outside the confines of gender stereotypes we benefit from a diversity of viewpoints, experiences and contributions that will strengthen and improve our whole society. We must support Yukon girls in reaching their highest aspirations.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus and the Yukon Party to mark today as the International Day of the Girl Child. It is easy to get bogged down in the realities that women — especially young women — around the globe face challenges, hardships and risks that their male counterparts do not. You will not need to look far to see images and information to feel overwhelmed. Today, we are going to take a deep breath and switch our focus.

Today, I am going to focus on the good — or, in this case, the awesome — that is the Yukon Girls Rock Camp. This camp is run by the Dawson City Music Festival for girls and gender non-conforming youth between the ages of eight and 18. I had the pleasure to speak with Lana Welshman, the founder of this initiative, and I wish you could have heard her radiate pride over the phone. She explained that there is a misconception that Girls Rock Camp is just a music camp. She assured me that it is so much more than just teaching music; it's telling and showing campers that they are valued and helping them navigate relationships — sometimes difficult relationships — in a healthy fashion.

Girls Rock Camp is more than just feel-good girl power, it is grounding campers and giving them the tools to deal with the realities of the world that they live in. It is about planting the seeds about who these young people will become, and that is an incredible gift to share. Four years and five camps in, it is now understood that although the leaders of these camps won't see what they have been able to do right now in the present, in 10 years' time these young people will have the skills and confidence to be who they are, and like Lana said, "That's pretty special."

Thank you to all of the role models who lead by example and build up the young women around them — our future only gets brighter.

Applause

In recognition of Canada 55+ Games Team Yukon

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am excited to rise today to pay tribute to Team Yukon of the Canada 55+ Games and the ElderActive Recreation Association. ElderActive supports active living and wellness in body, mind and spirit for Yukoners who are north of 60 — or even like me, north of 55.

Their support for active adults in the 55+ Games has been unwavering. Five years ago, they had 350 members in ElderActive and, over the past five years, they doubled their membership and are now 750 members strong and growing. Not only does ElderActive administer Team Yukon for the games, but they also offer opportunities for active living year-round, including seniors' days at the Canada Games Centre and so much more.

Tomorrow, they are hosting a full day of events. All 55+ folks are welcome to join them for their semi-annual general meeting starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Elks Lodge.

I would like to thank the ElderActive Recreation Association for all you do — sport for life. This past August, ElderActive sent Team Yukon to the Canada 55+ Games in beautiful St. John, New Brunswick. From curling to cycling, badminton to bocce, scrabble to swimming and from tennis to track, we had a lot of Yukoners competing in a lot of events. We had 159 athletes on our team, including the Member for Copperbelt North. Team Yukon wore striking red and black jerseys.

People would come up to us and ask if there was anyone left in the Yukon. To put this in context, the Yukon fielding 159 athletes would be like Ontario bringing 64,000 athletes, which they didn't. Even though there might have been bigger teams than ours, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon cheering was the mightiest.

I want to congratulate all of the members of Team Yukon. It takes a lot of effort to prepare and compete at the national level. Team Yukon's dedication paid off. This year, the team came away with 83 and a half medals. I see some of those medals in our gallery today.

I spoke with Gary Hewitt, our half-medal earner. Every year, he has played doubles darts with a fellow athlete from Ontario, I think, and they split the medal count. It's part of the colourful charm of the games, which fuses competition with well-being, friendship and exchange. The Yukon shone on the podium and off, Mr. Speaker. Yukon's own Betty Hebert was recognized as the oldest athlete at the games. She sparkled. She turned 93 the week after the games.

Yukoners twinkled on the dance floor, both at the sock hop and at the kitchen party. Yukoners were radiant when they led a standing ovation for our New Brunswick hosts at the gala.

In short, I know we are so proud of Team Yukon for their spirit and enthusiasm — "Ah, ha, ha, ha, stayin' alive, stayin' alive".

The 55+ Games were inspirational for everyone, and I know Team Yukon is looking forward to 2020 in Kamloops, BC.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the 2018 Canada 55+ Games and all the Yukon athletes. Each year, Yukoners who are 55 years old and older join together to participate in these annual games held in various regions across Canada. This past August, 159 Yukon athletes descended upon Saint John, New Brunswick and, after four days of competition, returned home with a record number of medals, 83.5 medals — 24 gold, 28 silver and 31.5 bronze medals. It's nothing to sneeze at. Well done to all who gave their very best.

I am going to repeat the story. I ask: How can one win half a medal? Well, definitely in the spirit of Canada and the spirit of the games, our Yukoner Gary Hewitt teamed up with a fellow from Ontario to take third in the men's double event in darts. Now we know how to achieve a half-medal count.

Track and field events, bocce, shuffleboard and Scrabble are some of the many games that Yukoners excelled at during their time there.

Some might know that I like to play the odd game of Scrabble and I send out big congratulations to all the Scrabble players who are top of their game. I like the fact that they add these brain games and make the senior games truly inclusive, as many cannot run and jump — like me — but still have so much to offer. The average age of our participants was 68 years; 11 were over the age of 80 and the eldest was 93. Our own Betty Hebert, a cribbage player, was recognized at the opening ceremony as the eldest female entrant.

By visiting new areas of Canada and meeting others while having a blast, these Yukoners become our ambassadors for all of us in the territory. They not only show the face of our energetic young elders and seniors but remind others that Yukon is a force to be reckoned with at any of these events. The sock hop and the Maritime kitchen party, and so much more, kept everyone engaged and laughing.

Whitehorse did bid for the next games. However, as we had hosted in 2004 and the Province of BC has never hosted, they will be held in Kamloops, BC in 2020. Now the fundraising starts all over again, trying to ensure that each participant has the opportunity to play without a lot of financial burden, and, of course, all the training will start.

The Yukon's red and black uniforms were eye-catching, and so everywhere, along with the Yukon hand flags, we had a great presence.

Thank you to everyone who assisted in the organizing, the fundraising and the logistics and to the chefs de mission and, of course, all of the athletes who have done us proud. Well done — and all the best in the 2020 Kamloops games.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to celebrate Team Yukon 2018. As the third speaker, it shouldn't be hard to figure out which Team Yukon I'm referring to. We're lucky to have so many of them today with us in the gallery.

As we have heard, this year's Canada 55+ Games took place in sunny, agreeable Saint John, New Brunswick. My

numbers are a bit different, but I will say I have an inside scoop here with mission staff. All together, there were 159 Yukoners from five communities who got on planes to fly across the country to compete. There were 134 athletes and — way to go, ladies — there were 80 women and 54 men. There were 22 cheerleaders, because no sporting event is worth anything without a cheering squad, and last, but certainly not least, three mission staff — those hearty souls who organized, herded and made sure Team Yukon was present and accounted for at every competition.

The average age was a youthful 68, with eight participants over the age of 80. I would be remiss if I also didn't mention Ms. Betty Hebert, who deserves special recognition and who got it there at the games, as the most mature participant of the all the athletes at this year's games at the tender age of 92 or maybe 93.

This year, as has been said, there was a record haul of medals, with 24 gold, 28 silver and 31.5 bronze medals. As we heard, we can thank Gary Hewitt for that bronze half-medal. It's going to go down in history as the greatest medal in the world.

I consider myself to be a super fan of the Canada 55+ Games, with many friends participating, a mother on the mission staff and a father who both coached and competed in athletics, so a big congratulations to Team Yukon 2018 and we can't wait to see what you do in Kamloops in 2020.

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the Yukon Development Corporation 2017 annual report.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling today two responses to questions raised by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on October 9.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the renewal of the federal-territorial health investment fund, which will see an investment of \$25.6 million over four years to support innovation in Yukon's health care system.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to strengthen the independence of the Yukon Human Rights

Commission by making it an office of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: School capacity

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, overcrowding in our schools has become a major issue in the last couple of years. With the population projected to grow even further, this problem will only get worse. Unfortunately, it has become clear that the Minister of Education has no plan to deal with this. When we asked about this last week, the minister spoke about buying portables and said — and I quote: “Nobody is needing them this minute — there’s no kids in hallways, there’s no issues with that...”

It turns out that the minister was wrong about no one needing them. We have now heard several stories of parents who are having to home-school their children because there isn’t enough room in the schools. Will the minister now tell us what her plan is to deal with overcrowding in the schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Once again, the Leader of the Official Opposition is bringing forward information that I have not been apprised of. If he is aware of families who need assistance, we are certainly encouraging him and them to come forward to the department. We have been working very closely with families in various school districts across the territory to deal with their concerns or issues and to have children placed in schools, hopefully at their first priority and their first choice. We have made a number of adjustments in different schools across the territory to deal with the enrollment pressures that we probably all saw coming.

Again, as I said last week, this is not necessarily a terrible problem to have. We have a booming economy. We have a growing population and, of course, that puts pressure on our quite outdated infrastructure with respect to schools. With the exception of F.H. Collins, there have been no new schools — and, of course, that was a replacement school — built in over 20 years. We are working closely with our partners to make sure that these issues are being addressed going forward.

Mr. Hassard: It is certainly not a good problem to have if you are one of the parents or the students who are in this situation.

We have seen that the Liberals have found money to give the Premier a raise. They find money to spend over half a million dollars on a new logo. Now they are looking for cuts at the Department of Education of up to \$3.6 million and have no plan to address the growing issue of overcrowding in our schools.

The minister said last week that they didn’t need to do something urgently because — and I quote: “... there are no kids in the hallways...” Well, it turns out that the reason there are no kids in the hallways is because they are either wait-listed or being home-schooled. The minister’s lack of planning and leadership is only making this situation worse.

What will the minister do this school year to deal with overcrowding in our schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Government of Yukon, as the opposition is well aware — but it is very important to remind Yukoners — has a long-term capital plan with respect to Education. There is a five-year capital plan for projects generally with respect to the government, and we are working on what we hope to be a 10-year capital plan for Education.

I certainly take issue with the fact that either I or my department, which is working very, very hard on this particular issue, is doing nothing in response to this issue of enrollment growth and school growth here in the territory.

I’ll repeat — if a particular family has an issue and they have contacted the department, we have been working with individual families to resolve their concerns and their issues all through the summer, and we will continue to do so as they arise. If there are families that I am certainly unaware of at this time who have chosen home-schooling because of an issue with respect to a school, then we would be very keen to speak with them and see if we can help to resolve issues for them.

Our plan includes schools that we need to build, that we need to replace or that we need to maintain and modernize. Also, with the proper planning — this includes a functional plan or business case — we are making decisions going forward to address the enrollment issues.

Mr. Hassard: The Liberals are sending the wrong message by giving the Premier a raise at a time when they’re telling Yukoners that they need to find cuts in the Department of Education.

The Minister spoke about the five-year capital concept. We know that the minister has put Holy Family in this capital concept, yet so far, she’s been unable to give us any details as to what work will actually be done at Holy Family. We’ve asked if it is painting, renovations or a new school. We don’t know, and it seems that the Minister doesn’t know either. This is an important issue, Mr. Speaker, so can the minister tell us today how many students are currently on a wait-list to get into a school in the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As I’ve said, this is a situation that is well known to the Department of Education, I would expect is well known to the former Minister of Education and certainly is well known to me since I have been given the privilege of this job. The opportunities afforded to Yukoners and new Yukon individuals moving to our territory are great. We have issues with respect to enrollment in schools because our schools, despite the situation we’ve been in the past number of years, are filling up and individual families are working with the department.

We have situations with respect to catchment areas, of course, and it is something that the department is attempting to address with much seriousness. We have many families that have more than one home, so children are attached to more than one catchment area. If there are situations like that, we want to work with the family to make sure that’s the case; however, catchment areas with respect to schools are not the

only issue. Clearly, our growing population and increase in enrollment in all of our schools has become an issue.

The former governments had not built a school in more than 20 years and we're going to attempt to change that by having a 10-year capital plan going forward.

Question re: School capacity

Ms. Van Bibber: Earlier this week, the Minister of Education told this House that there were no local manufacturers of portables. I think the local manufacturers were surprised to learn that. Yesterday, several documents were tabled in this House listing local manufacturers of portables. These documents were found on the Government of Yukon's own website after one minute of searching, so this information was very public and very accessible. It is odd that the minister would suggest there were no local manufacturers for portables.

Can the minister tell us why she developed a plan to shop for portables in western Canada instead of shopping locally, given that there are local manufacturers here in the territory?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question and the opportunity to clarify that what I intended to say — if I didn't say it word for word last week — was, in fact, that the tender that was put out in April 2018 for portables was not responded to by anyone, not a local contractor and not a contractor in western Canada. No one replied to that tender.

There is clearly a process for procurement. It doesn't involve me as the minister shopping for anything, quite frankly. It involves us having a public process where we seek individuals who might want to supply the object — in this case, portables for schools — that we were seeking.

I also indicated in the question last week that we sought other options by looking to other departments and other government-issue buildings that might be able to be used as a portable or retrofitted as a portable. That was not appropriate in the circumstances. As a result, we are still seeking to purchase portables, hopefully locally. That would be amazing, but it has not happened to date.

Ms. Van Bibber: I will remind the minister that she told the House there were no local manufacturers of portables. She went on to plead for information about any local manufacturers. After only one minute of searching on the government's website, we did find that information. We were left wondering how much attention the minister was paying to this file. Given that overcrowding at our schools is becoming a major issue, it is unfortunate that she finds that she's not on top of this.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there were no bids on the tender earlier this year to build portables. We have heard a number of different reasons from local contractors as to why this was the case.

We asked this question earlier this week, but the minister was unable to answer: Has the minister since asked for analysis on why no bids were received?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will answer the question on behalf of Yukoners because they deserve an answer, despite the personal insults, which I find to be disturbing.

Nonetheless, the situation involves an analysis of where we can get the proper buildings for schools going forward, a focus on our 10-year capital plan so that we can determine the best decisions that can be made on behalf of Yukoners for the purpose of addressing the high enrollment, primarily in our elementary schools here in the territory. As a result, yes, an analysis is being done about that, and quite frankly, many alternatives are being looked at. Creativity is being used. An opportunity has presented itself and we need to address it. As such, we need to make sure that we are taking good ideas from all places.

None of the local contractors who have been mentioned here today have contacted my department — the Department of Education — or me. I would be very happy to speak to them if the member opposite would provide me with a list of those individuals.

Ms. Van Bibber: Can the minister tell us how many portables the government will build or purchase this coming year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: No, I am not able to answer that question because a tender went out and there were no responders. Information will come forward with respect to how we should address this problem, whether it is an additional tender — we are working with our partners at Highways and Public Works to determine how we might manage to get the buildings that we need, and that work is ongoing.

Question re: Home-warranty programs

Ms. White: A year ago today, this House adopted my motion to protect homeowners through a warranty program for new construction and renovations. The government did water down the motion by amending it to say — and I quote: "... explore an effective warranty program for new home construction and home renovations." Buying a home is often the single-most important purchase in a person's life, and over the years many Yukoners have paid a high price for shoddy construction. It is a full year after the government committed to explore this issue. Can the minister tell Yukoners what specific steps have been taken as part of this exploration?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Last night, after the Legislature finished and we had this conversation, I spoke with the deputy minister and asked him to provide me a more detailed update on the plan. He assured me that it is part of the work plan for this year, and I will be happy to get back to the member opposite with specific details. Let me take the opportunity to state to this House that we are committed to programs that ensure that homes are properly and safely constructed. We recognize the significant investment that Yukoners have made in their homes and we will explore ideas that will give homebuyers more peace of mind and assurance about the quality of their new home or renovation.

In the Yukon, we do not have a mandatory new home-warranty program; however, a robust building inspection process exists for new buildings and renovations. I am happy to talk more in supplementary questions.

Ms. White: I look forward to those specifics. From Whistle Bend to downtown to many Yukon communities, there is a rush to build housing. With this rush comes concerns about shoddy work and the consequences that has on homeowners. Contractors and builders are also affected by this. A few bad apples give the industry a bad name, and that is why contractor associations across the country have welcomed homeowner protection. A year ago, the minister committed to exploring this issue. Can he tell Yukoners if his government will bring in a home-warranty program during its mandate? I am just looking for a yes or a no.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I wish I could always accommodate the members opposite with what they want to hear; however, I am doing my best to respond to the question as it is presented. The answer, I think, depends on how we do with this exploration. If the exploration yields results that are positive and we are able to move on them, then I think we take the next step. The first step is to carry out the exploration of a home-warranty program.

I am happy to say that it is still part of the scope of work for this year for the department, and I got assurances last night that the work is planned for this year.

We always encourage prospective homebuyers to work with their contractor or home builder to ensure that a warranty is in place prior to purchase, and we have a great department of building safety inspections, and they do great work to try to ensure that our homes are safe for everybody, whether by the owner at that time or whether they are sold later.

We are aware that other jurisdictions have attempted to address this subject and will continue to explore this issue by reviewing their initiatives and resulting outcomes, and we will also consider how consumer protection could be best achieved in the Yukon without adding more cost and regulation to home construction.

Ms. White: My questions are not a criticism of any government department or the building industry — what this is about is protection for homebuyers.

My colleague asked about protecting homeowners in May 2017, a year and a half ago. Six months later, we had an entire debate about this, and the government committed to explore the possibility of bringing in a homeowner protection act, but a year later it looks like little has been done and the minister can't give us a straight answer. I would understand — when he sticks to his talking points — if we hadn't just brought this up yesterday.

This is an issue that should have been on the minister's radar at least since yesterday, and I think he owes Yukoners an answer. Does his government support a homeowner warranty program?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I never thought that the member opposite was criticizing, and I do hope I give straight answers every time. My straight answer is that we support exploring a home warranty program. That's what we agreed to do. I checked last night with the deputy minister after I was done meetings — around 8:00 p.m. or something like that. I gave him a call. We had a conversation. He assured me that it is underway. He agreed to get back with details. I am not sure

that I can get it any faster for the member opposite. I apologize that I don't have it here, but I know that the department is working hard to get answers for the members of the Legislature.

Question re: Solid-waste management

Ms. White: Here is an opportunity to explore waste management.

Last week, we heard from an operator of a regional transfer station. Concerns were raised about the amount of material being brought to the transfer station from City of Whitehorse residents. Some residents are looking for ways to recycle still-functional furniture with no free store open in Whitehorse, and others are looking for ways to avoid paying the tipping fees charged at the Whitehorse landfill.

Our regional transfer stations are just that — transfer stations. This means an increase in the amount of materials being brought to the transfer station, which in turn needs to be sorted, loaded and brought to the Whitehorse landfill. This increases regional transfer stations being forced to divert valuable time, resources and money away from other important tasks.

Mr. Speaker, what is this minister doing to address the concerns raised by the transfer station contractor, including establishing tipping fees for transfer stations?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks very much again for the question.

Earlier this year, I volunteered at that solid-waste transfer station. I had spoken with the staff there. I've been trying to get to each one of the ones near Whitehorse to experience first-hand the concerns that they have. I spoke with the person whom the member opposite is referring to. We had a good conversation about this issue.

We recognize that we need to make our system more sustainable, and the great thing is that we have a Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Last year, they developed an action plan. That action plan has been supported by us as a government.

There are several steps under the solid waste action plan that deal with the regional pressures that exist. One of those was designated material regulations which, I was very excited to see, came forward on October 1. We're working on the next step on designated material regulations; part of that plan is to look at a fee system for all landfill stations across the territory to make it fair for all Yukoners and to make sure that we deal with pricing pollution up front and recover those costs to make sure that we have a sustainable system.

Ms. White: This summer, we also heard the Johnson's Crossing transfer station did not have adequate bins to meet the volume of garbage being dropped off. This unstaffed transfer station, which covers a large region, regularly had overflowing bins and garbage strewn about, as well as appliances, furniture and propane bottles being dumped there. This is an unstaffed transfer station that depends on someone in Whitehorse making the call on when the bins should be picked up and brought to Whitehorse. The concern for residents in the area is that the overflowing bins and garbage

have become attractants for bears — something no one wants to see.

Can the minister give us assurances that unstaffed transfer stations will be emptied on a more regular basis to minimize the risk of bear attractants and hazardous waste being left at the site?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can let the member opposite know is that we are well aware of those concerns at the smaller transfer stations and, in fact, part of the recommendations that came from the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and the plan of action is to consolidate those smaller waste-transfer stations and to regionalize.

The issue is that the resources it takes to deal with those small transfer stations far outweigh their value, and it's better for us to consolidate. I know they are working on that plan. For example, I know the Community Operations branch is in conversation across the territory with municipalities about how that can and would work. I don't have an update today on how those conversations are going but, again, I'm happy to go back and check in with the department to see how that work is progressing.

What I will say is that we want to make sure that solid waste across the territory is sustainable over time and that we move more to a territory-wide robust system rather than a piecemeal system.

Ms. White: Transfer stations across Yukon are experiencing difficulties in managing what's coming into their stations. Many of these problems are the result of having tipping fees in Whitehorse but having none in transfer stations less than an hour away. This could be solved with a comprehensive plan that harmonizes the City of Whitehorse's waste management plans with those of the Yukon government.

In fact, municipalities, through the Association of Yukon Communities, asked for just that when they passed a resolution calling on this government to develop a comprehensive waste management plan. The lack of a comprehensive waste management plan has contributed to the increased traffic to peripheral dumps around Whitehorse and the corresponding squeeze on the staff time and facility resources.

Mr. Speaker, what progress has been made to ensure a comprehensive plan is in place that will alleviate the unsustainable and unnecessary pressure on Yukon's regional transfer stations?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The progress is what I have already been describing. We already have the plan. That's the plan I have been referring to in my last two responses. It is in place. That's great. It was developed in direct consultation with an advisory group that was made up of municipalities, the Department of Environment, the Department of Community Services' Community Operations branch. It was done to make this robust, sustainable, territory-wide plan.

The great news is that some of the steps that we started are already starting to make a difference. I was just at the Tagish solid-waste facility this past weekend, and I had been there two weekends before, volunteering for the day. I had

spent a day moving electronics and e-waste to get it under cover because it was overflowing, and it was all gone already. That's due to the designated material regulations, which we just brought in. That's terrific.

I saw a big backhoe picking up all the metal and putting it into a compactor, and that metal pile is nearly gone. There are things that are happening. I'm happy to see it. There are more pressures. It's great that we have a solid waste action plan for the whole of the territory.

Question re: Francophone high school

Mr. Hassard: Earlier this week, we asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works about the restricted list he added on September 27 for companies bidding on the francophone high school. The following quote from the minister was about this restricted list: "That was a commitment that I made to the industry at the very outset of this contract."

Can the minister tell us exactly when this commitment was made to industry, and did he let KZA know in the spring that they wouldn't be eligible to participate?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about procurement again and to talk about how we're procuring goods and services in the territory, trying to right the procurement processes and make sure they are fairer, more transparent and work better for our contracting community.

The member opposite has referenced a few times our five-year capital plan, and I appreciate the attention he is bringing to the plan that we have in place. As well, we have all sorts of other things we are doing — the 10 \$1-million exceptions — the first jurisdiction in the country to have those in place and to be using those. We are using them again this year. I am very happy to be doing that. We are actually using them on this very procurement.

We are doing an awful lot to right procurement, and there is a reason why we are doing that. That is because, when we came into office, there was a procurement improvement plan that had come about because it was being done poorly. We recognize that and so we're taking steps to improve it. One of the things we are doing is making sure it is fair for all contractors. One of the policies is that, if you design the school and if you are involved in the very front end of a design/build, you don't get a chance to build it later. That is an established rule in procurement and so we're following that rule.

Mr. Hassard: If the minister made this commitment to industry, in his own words — and I quote: "... very outset of this contract" — then why was the restricted list of bidders not included in the original tender and was only issued 43 days later?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This government has taken action on all 11 Procurement Advisory Panel recommendations to improve procurement. We now have standard clauses in our value-driven procurements that give points for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge.

Since June 1, 2017, we have tendered 157 value-driven procurements with these mandatory clauses. We are investing

in ongoing skill development, with more than 100 employees enrolled in a professional procurement certification program, and we have partnered with the Organizational Development branch to create a procurement training framework to ensure procurement is conducted by staff with appropriate expertise. Part of this developing of expertise means we follow the rules. That is what we are doing.

In terms of the addendums that the member is speaking about, those addendums come about — I am not involved in this procurement process at all. The department handles addendums. If they get questions that require clarification, they put the addendums out. I presume that is what has happened in this case.

Question re: Education assistants

Mr. Kent: Yesterday, we asked the Minister of Education about support staff in our schools, particularly education assistants or EAs. A number of parents reached out to us about this issue after we asked those particular questions. The minister told us that, as of yesterday, there were approximately 245 FTEs working in the schools as support staff, which, of course, includes the EAs.

Can she tell us today if this is an increase or a decrease over last year and how many schools have seen changes to their EA complements over last year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: At the end of August 2018, we had 239.8 FTEs for education assistants, and I think the number that I referred to yesterday was that, as of October 1, 2018, we have 244.67 FTEs.

Mr. Kent: Yesterday, we highlighted that, at the same time the Liberals are giving the Premier a raise, they have asked the Department of Education to find up to \$3.6 million in cuts. When we asked the minister if these cuts would be found in the program areas of educational assistants or Student Support Services unit, she wasn't clear and spoke of efficiencies or potential cuts.

Can the minister assure this House today that there will be no cuts or reductions to the budgets for EAs or Student Support Services?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I believe what I said in response to this question, which I think was just yesterday, was that departments have been asked to find efficiencies — to tell us where they can spend money better and more appropriately — without cutting programs. They are the experts in their departments. They will make those recommendations to us and we will consider those going forward in next year's budgeting process.

Mr. Kent: Based on figures that the minister gave us in her first response, it looks as though the number of EA FTEs has gone up by about five since the beginning of the school year.

Based on applications still outstanding from schools for additional support, can the minister tell us how many additional EAs are anticipated to be added in the current school year? What is the budget allocation for those EAs?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The member opposite is correct. The budget has increased with respect to that, but as he also

well knows, the allocation of EAs in schools across the territory is an ongoing assessment. We might have new students; we might have students who present with different issues or need services of different kinds and that can change throughout the year.

We have not had any supplementary budget brought forward to this House for the Department of Education at this time. Those issues are being managed within by, may I say, an excellent staff who are turning their minds very closely to the details of the Education budget. As a result, I cannot give an answer as to what the anticipated issues will be going forward, because they change as the needs of students change and that is what we focus on.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 24: Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 24, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Mostyn.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I move that Bill No. 24, entitled *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 24, entitled *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce Bill No. 24, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, for the Legislature's consideration.

This bill will replace the Yukon's existing *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* with modernized legislation regulating the protection of personal information held by public bodies and the public's access to information held by public bodies.

Twenty-six years ago, Mr. Speaker, when the act was first proclaimed, the world was a far different place. I was younger — an ink-stained wretch banging out words on a green iMac in a tiny crowded room. Often I was covering this Legislature. Most communications in those days were done over the telephone or face to face and snail mail set the pace of correspondence. Forms were filled out by hand, in triplicate, and filed in paper record systems that required archivist expertise to manage and retrieve information. You wouldn't have believed the morgue at the *Yukon News* — it was a nightmare.

We got news of new music from *Rolling Stone* or *SPIN*. We obtained up-to-date facts about the world economy from an almanac that was published once a year. We got our movie reviews the same way; we could pull the information out of the latest edition of *The Globe and Mail*, which, if it made the

plane, arrived the day after it was published down south — got it down at the bookstore on Main Street.

At this time, the Internet was just emerging. E-mail was a new technology used sporadically and the development of electronic databases for information management was just emerging. Google wasn't founded yet — not until 1998. Facebook wasn't created until 2004. Big data and its promises were the realm of archivists, scientists and dreamers.

Skipping ahead another decade or so, the increase in our use of computers and mobile technology has led to a cultural shift in how we interact with the information world.

When we want information we can find it at our fingertips, on our smartphones, tablets or laptops, in our homes, our cars and our public spaces, through speakers that we just spread around the house. Society as a whole has come to expect almost instant and certainly regular access to online services, which increases our awareness about how essential information is — particularly our personal information.

We only need to look at news any day to see this cultural shift. Access to information and protection of privacy issues are ever-more prominent in today's world. Look at the example of Cambridge Analytica and Facebook data leaks. The public continues to be very concerned about their information, along with the ability of government and business to collect it and secure it. The shifts in political realities can impact the security of information depending on where it is stored. The monetization of information as an asset to business and the public demand for government transparency and accountability depends on access to information.

One thing is certain, as the world changes in ways no one fully imagined in 1995 when I was a young man, bringing in stronger access and privacy legislation is vital to maintaining our democratic ideals. As the former editor of the *Yukon News*, I fully understand the frustration media and members of the public have had with our outdated existing legislation. I believe government information should be available to its citizens. I also believe our citizens' personal information should be properly safeguarded, but as a territorial government minister, I do not believe it is appropriate to strong-arm municipal and First Nation governments into adopting this legislation.

We live in a democratic society. It is strengthened by information; however, the decision about whether or not to adopt this legislation needs to come from municipal governments and their leaders. That's how democracy works. I don't believe in imposing this legislation on the publicly elected governments of this territory.

I do want to provide the option for them to opt in to our legislation because I believe in it. As I have stated, I also believe in a citizen's right to know and right to have their personal information protected. Those ideals are built into this legislation. We are committed to being accountable to the public in providing better services to Yukoners while protecting rights to privacy. This bill delivers on these commitments and is firmly founded on the core principles of protection of privacy, transparency and accountability.

The purpose of this proposed legislation is threefold: to ensure that the personal information about individuals held by public bodies is well protected; to enhance services to Yukoners while protecting their right to privacy; and to be more transparent and accountable to the public. A good portion of this bill focuses on protecting personal information that is held by public bodies. It sets out rules for when and how public bodies can collect personal information, what they can use this information for once it has been collected and in what circumstances that information can be shared with another public body or the general public. It requires that all public bodies maintain adequate security for the personal information held.

This part of the bill also gives individuals the right to ask for corrections to personal information held by a public body. The proposed legislation further protects Yukoners' personal information and builds a culture of privacy.

For example, one significant change is the requirement for ministerial bodies, where a minister is the head of a public body, to incorporate privacy-by-design principles before implementing new programs or services, including the implementation of new systems or implementing changes to existing programs, services or systems if the change impacts the collection, use or disclosure of personal information. In this way, privacy, data protection and compliance are built into programs from the start as a good governance practice. Including privacy-by-design principles will always be accomplished with a privacy impact assessment. Privacy impact assessments have been in use in the Government of Yukon for some time, and they will now be legally required. While all jurisdictions in Canada use privacy impact assessments to some degree, the majority of jurisdictions provide for the use of privacy impact assessments in government policy or directives. However, in some jurisdictions, the requirement for this type of assessment is set out in legislation, which is the direction we are taking with this bill.

To help fulfill the duty and responsibility of protecting personal information held by a public body, the bill establishes key roles for a privacy officer and an access and privacy officer. A privacy officer will be appointed by the head of each public body, that is to say, each department. This privacy officer will be the point of contact for employees of a public body to address issues related to compliance with the privacy provisions in the proposed legislation. The privacy officer will investigate privacy breaches reported by government employees and assess an unauthorized collection or over-collection of personal information reported by government employees. The access and privacy officer may, if they consider it necessary, conduct inspections of a public body or program or activity of a public body to ensure compliance with the act.

Another significant change is providing the Information and Privacy Commissioner with the ability to conduct compliance audits in specific privacy matters. For example, if a recommendation from the Information and Privacy Commissioner is accepted by the head of a public body, the

commissioner may choose to audit the public body to ensure that the recommendation was implemented and/or implemented properly.

Finally, the new privacy part of the bill will allow government and partner agencies to collaboratively share personal information to better serve children, youth, adults and families. This integrated approach is commonly known as “integrated services”. An integrated service refers to a program designed to benefit an individual, which is delivered by one or more government institutions and may include other parties, such as First Nations, municipalities and non-profit agencies. For example, a multi-agency team could be created consisting of various senior decision-makers from the Department of Education, Justice, Health and Social Services, the fire department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to mobilize resources to address individuals or families with acutely elevated levels of risk of probable harm occurring to them or to their community. The current act does not allow for this type of approach, even though it has been shown to improve outcomes in other jurisdictions. Generally, other jurisdictions are authorized to create this type of service via an information agreement, but we are proposing a higher threshold test by requiring such services to be created via regulations. We are also proposing an additional safeguard measure. A privacy impact assessment will be required and given to the commissioner before creating such a service.

The bill also contains rules around access to information. It provides the public with a process to obtain access to most records in the possession or control of public bodies. This right of access is so important for maintaining an open and accountable government. When the public can see how government is functioning and how they are doing their work, they are better able to participate in government and to hold government institutions to account. In the bill, public bodies are required to routinely publish certain types of information — for example, final reports, evaluation or audit reports, data sets, policy manuals, frequent requests for access to information, et cetera.

Privacy impact assessment summaries will also be available to the public to inform them that government has properly considered the privacy rights of citizens in new programs, et cetera.

Routine proactive disclosure means that the government will be opening its doors without anyone having to knock on them. Proactive publication details will be determined in regulation.

Yukoners’ feedback from the recent engagement survey will be used to help us craft the regulations. We are also proposing a public interest override. The public interest override recognizes that, even when information fits into a category that should not ordinarily be disclosed, there may be an overriding public interest in disclosing it to an applicant or to the public at large. In this respect, the public interest test is a kind of lens that public officials must look through when they are exercising discretion as to the disclosure.

The bill provides a couple of ways for a public interest override to be activated: a general public override, where the

head of a public body must not deny an applicant access to information if it is determined that the public interest outweighs the public interest in withholding the information from disclosure; and empowering the secretary of the Executive Council to grant an applicant access to any information held by a public body, despite the nature of the information or record, if they are satisfied that the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the reason for not providing access. This includes information contained in a Cabinet record.

This will provide government with the flexibility to fully disclose information if it is in the best interest of the public. Cabinet records will be available after 10 years rather than the 15 years that it currently stands at. This is the earliest in the country.

We are also repealing some of the changes made to the ATIPP act in 2012. That year, briefing book information was no longer accessible via an access-to-information request. Yukon was the only jurisdiction in Canada to remove briefing books from the right of access.

We are now proposing to re-establish the right to request access to information contained in records prepared by a public body for the purpose of briefing the Premier in relation to the formation of a new government, briefing a minister in relation to their assumption of responsibilities for a department or corporation and briefing a minister in relation to a Sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

We are also repealing the exception to access to information revealing the consultations or deliberations involving officers who are employees of a public body because it is overly broad and included deliberations among employees of a public body. Repealing these amendments will strengthen the principle that government information is managed for public purposes and the public has a right to that information.

Another policy shift to highlight is that the bill establishes an exception to an access request when a public body has — and I quote: “... accepted information in confidence from the third party” or from another government. With regard to third party, the current act states that a public body must refuse to disclose information that would be harmful to third party business interests. It applies a three-part test — the information supplied implicitly, or explicitly, in confidence, and will it harm business interests.

Proposed change — the exception related to business information will now be applied to business information that is accepted in confidence. Regulations will identify how this type of information must be provided for a public body to apply the accepted-in-confidence exception. The goal of this change is to provide the needed certainty to third parties, other governments and public bodies as to what information can be accessed through an access request and what information is not able to be released.

The harm test — disclosure harmful to third party business interests will still be applied but only to information that is not — and I quote: “... accepted in confidence...” to ensure information that may harm a business is still protected.

I want to stress that the public interest override applies to this type of information and gives the government discretion to disclose this information.

Throughout the development of the bill, consultations with a range of stakeholders have taken place. We spoke with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Yukon government staff, the media and the public. I can say that we listened. The bill integrates what we heard from Yukoners, stakeholders — including the Commissioner — and Yukon government departments.

I especially want to extend a thank you to the Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner for a fulsome review of the draft legislation and a constructive criticism that helped to make the bill stronger and better. I had the opportunity to meet her in her office a few weeks ago — I was the first minister to do so — and we had a really great talk, and some of that conversation actually made it into this bill. The amendments were made while it was in draft form.

The key issues raised are addressed here. The bill increases ways to ensure compliance across government and enhances customer service by making more information available to the public.

As the digital world continues to grow, it is our responsibility to ensure that our legislation is flexible to meet our changing needs. For example, currently a person needs to provide their personal information, such as name, address, e-mail address and/or phone number separately to access government programs or services. Right now, you could have your name in Environment, Health and Social Services, and Highways and Public Works. When you move, you have to go to each of those agencies individually and update it; you don't know what information each agency has. That's unwieldy. It doesn't work. It doesn't work for the public and it doesn't work for government. We want to clear that up.

Proposed new legislation supports a government framework for an individual to update their personal information online or to access government services online at the individual's request.

Moreover, through regulation, one or more public bodies or partner agencies could combine personal information contained in one data set with personal information in another data set for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected. Allowing for government to make evidence-based policy decisions also benefits the public interest — for example, injuries reported at our medical centres combined with types of road accidents will inform whether any targeted public safety campaigns should be made to improve road safety.

We believe that this bill builds on the core principles of the existing act and replaces its outdated elements with modern and flexible ones designed to better achieve the objectives of public body accountability and transparency.

Before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my colleagues on this side of the House — specifically the Minister of Justice, who was just a wealth of knowledge in preparing this bill with her experience in her private life. I don't think this bill would be half the bill it is without her

involvement. Even though I'm giving the speech this afternoon, she has been integral and a huge part of this bill and I want to thank her, as well as kudos to — I would like to call out the Information and Privacy Commissioner for her input on this thing and the media and all the people who made this bill so flexible and modern.

I want to thank you for your time today, Mr. Speaker, for your consideration and review of this important legislation, and I look forward to hearing the remarks of the members of this House and any comments they may have.

Mr. Kent: I'm pleased to speak on behalf of the Official Opposition to Bill No. 24 at second reading here today, which is the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. I wanted to start out by thanking all of the officials in Highways and Public Works who have been working on this for a number of years since the review was initially launched, and a special shout-out to a recently retired ADM, Mr. Kevin Macdonald, who was instrumental in initiating this during my time as minister. I appreciate the work that officials have continued with the change of government a couple of years ago.

I'm going to start off by saying that we in the Official Opposition will be supporting this bill during second reading today with the assumption that the concerns of the Information and Privacy Commissioner — or IPC — will be reviewed in full by the government and addressed during Committee of the Whole. I'll note the motion brought forward by the Third Party yesterday, asking if the Information and Privacy Commissioner would be able to appear here during Committee of the Whole as a witness to speak to those concerns and have members ask questions. We are supportive of that motion that the Third Party gave notice of yesterday and we're hoping the government will also take them up on that offer and ask the IPC to appear here before Committee of the Whole.

I'm going to highlight today some of those concerns that the Information and Privacy Commissioner registered. I want to get them on the record and trust that the government will take the matters under advisement and will work on amendments to the bill as presented.

There are a number of positive changes contained within the bill, such as increased transparency by public bodies in the way that specific records and information will be made public. Additionally, public bodies must have privacy management programs and they must submit privacy impact assessments to the IPC for integrated services, data linking and when establishing an identity service.

Breaches of privacy must be reported to individuals and to the IPC, and the powers of the IPC will be expanded. This will give the office the power to initiate complaints and conduct privacy compliance audits.

These are all good changes and, as mentioned by the Privacy Commissioner, have her full support. We are looking for some clarifications on a number of changes made to this act and we look forward to going into more detail in Committee regarding the questions that we have.

We are also hoping to have addressed the initial concerns brought to the government's attention by the IPC, and they are as follows: first, the onus is placed on complainants to go to court if a public body rejects a recommendation made by the IPC. Complainants should not be required to initiate action in court or foot the bill against a public body. Second, the legislation does not include the information security obligations of public bodies. Adequate security requirements should be embedded within the legislation and not tacked into the regulations. Third, the legislation introduces the use of protocols to exercise authority. The IPC is concerned that this places too much power in one person's hands, which may in turn negatively impact citizens' rights.

Another issue is that offence provisions included in the bill may not be strong enough to encourage compliance. Fines are too low and will not serve the deterrence function. The IPC further notes that this may in fact be balanced out by the addition of a term of imprisonment if one is found guilty.

Another one of the issues raised by the IPC is that there is no offence for failure to notify individuals about a breach of their personal information when there is a significant risk of harm due to that breach. An offence should be included to remedy this oversight.

Finally, another concern that we wanted to highlight that the IPC brought forward is that the power of public bodies to collect, use and disclose is too high and should be limited. The IPC references private information that may be available by means of social media and that public bodies may in fact use and disclose.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we will be supporting this bill at second reading today. I look forward to speaking to specific concerns that we may have, as well as those disclosed by the IPC during Committee of the Whole debate. I trust that the government has taken the time to analyze the concerns brought forward by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as they are extremely important to Yukoners and will ultimately lead to a stronger piece of legislation for Yukoners. Of course, we want to make sure that there is willingness by the government to either bring forward amendments during Committee of the Whole or perhaps take the bill that is on the Order Paper out and amend it — potentially even bring it back in the spring, if necessary, if those amendments can't be accomplished during the current Sitting.

Again, we thank the minister, with special thanks to the officials and to the IPC for her work and her involvement. We look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole on this bill at a future date.

Ms. Hanson: I am happy to rise to speak to Second Reading of Bill No. 24, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The member opposite made reference to the fact that access to information and the right to information is an issue that has long been of importance to him.

I can tell you from the point of view of a Member of the Legislative Assembly, this is not the first time that either I or

my colleague have been involved in the debate of ATIPPA. In the 33rd Legislature in 2012, we were faced with a very long and protracted discussion — if you could call it that — on the then-amendments that were made in the 33rd Legislature to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* — amendments that, in fact, made access to information in the Yukon more difficult and, as a result, government less open and less accountable.

It was commented at many venues that it took this territory backward in terms of access to information when it was compared to other provinces and territories. We were very hopeful when the Member for Copperbelt South referenced the soft launch — as it was called then — of the review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* when the Information and Privacy Commissioner in December of 2015 gave all members of that Legislative Assembly — and subsequently, this Legislative Assembly — a very detailed analysis and recommendations with respect to proposed amendments to the legislation that were required — again, as embedded in the legislation, the five-year review — the five-year review that hadn't occurred and has now finally happened.

When we are talking about access to information, let's be clear that the fundamental principle should not be on limiting access or even the concept of access; it is the right to information — it is the fundamental right to information. It is from that basis that we understand — and that is the lens that has been applied to the legislation and to the recommendations made to the government by the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We are pleased to see that this government has brought forth an act that goes a long way to recognizing the needs of people of the territory to have access to information and to ensure, not just by words but by actual legislation, that Yukoners will now have assurances in legislation around the protection of private information.

Once again, the minister opposite made reference to the good work of the Minister of Justice — the good work that the Minister of Justice did during her tenure as the Information and Privacy Commissioner. There must be a sense of Yogi Berra here — it's déjà vu all over again — because the Information and Privacy Commissioner has complimented the government on the extensive amount of consultation and then has said — and I think as the member on this side from the Official Opposition has pointed out, she has not just identified and acknowledged very publicly the extensive consultation, she has also acknowledged that to this side here when we reached out when the legislation was introduced to say: "Have you been consulted? Because we have seen instances where those individuals who should have been consulted were not consulted."

We were very happy to hear that, but I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was concerned, and our party was concerned, when we saw the release of October 9 from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, because when the Information and Privacy Commissioner acknowledges — and I'm quoting — she says: "My office was consulted extensively throughout the process of drafting the bill..." and

she acknowledges the positive changes made. She also went on to say — and I quote again: “I do have deep concerns about some aspects of the draft bill.”

Mr. Speaker, we believe that it's time to not go halfway again on access or right to information in this territory. This government campaigned and say almost every single day how they go on evidence-based and best practices. Here we have the opportunity to ensure — ensure — that we are, in fact, as legislators in this Assembly, passing the best *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* that is possible in Canada. Why settle for less?

That's the reason why we felt it is so imperative that, after all the extensive consultation and if there are only a limited number — an enumerated number of concerns — raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, then I think that we owe it to that office of the Legislative Assembly who will be charged with the responsibility for ensuring that this legislation is effectively implemented. We owe it to that office to have a hearing that allows for the expression and a discussion of why certain courses of action were chosen not to be followed when the recommendations were made.

What was the overriding concern by the government with respect to the notions that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has identified when she identified the improvements that she believes still need to be made to this bill? I think every member of this Legislative Assembly, before we vote on this bill, needs to hear from the IPC — the Information and Privacy Commissioner — why she is concerned about the provisions that are left in the bill as it is now that make it up to the complainant to go to court if a public body rejects a recommendation made by the IPC. She not only pointed out that her recommendation was to establish an alternate level of adjudication with an order-making power, she also said that there was an alternative here. The IPC recommended that the Yukon look at adopting the solution used in Newfoundland and Labrador under their act, which requires the public body to go to court to refuse a recommendation. Neither of those recommendations was accepted.

The Legislative Assembly, before we vote on this, needs to understand what the reasoning was behind that and needs to allow the Information and Privacy Commissioner to have that discussion with us so that we understand the implications and not end up with yet another flawed bill. We need to understand why the government did not address the concerns that she had with respect to — and we raised this during the briefing ourselves — the notion that the information security obligations of public bodies are not contained in the legislation but are being left to regulations. There is a concern, as the IPC identified, that regulations can be easily changed. As we have seen with legislation, it's not so easily changed. If we're really serious about the security obligations of public bodies, I think we need that conversation, and I would like to have the IPC explain, based her vast experience and experience across this country, why that approach is preferable to what has been chosen by this government. An

open and transparent government is willing to have that conversation.

Why did the government choose to use protocols to exercise authority, as the IPC pointed out, placing too much power in one person's hands? The IPC — and I was really interested in this one because the concerns that she raises are with respect to the offence provisions not being strong enough to encourage compliance. We just had introduced into the Legislative Assembly legislation with respect to lobbying. When I look at the penalty provisions in the lobbying legislation, we're talking about a first offence fine of not more than \$25,000 and a second or subsequent offence fine of not more than \$100,000.

That's lobbying — that's a legitimate activity. So if somebody is not following the rules on that — but if you're dealing with somebody's privacy, you're dealing with violations of some of the most fundamental rights in terms of an individual. We're saying that the penalty is up to \$5,000. I would like to know how the government believes, contrary to what the IPC says, that this is an adequate deterrence factor. I would like to have that conversation. I would like to have that conversation led by the IPC so that we can understand what other jurisdictions are doing and why the Information and Privacy Commissioner made the statement that this could mean that the offenses in Bill No. 24 may not serve a deterrence function. She did offer and suggest that you might balance that out. We would like to hear why the government chose not to balance it out in terms of the approach taken by the government.

The IPC expressed real concerns about the lack of an offence for the failure to notify affected individuals about the breach of privacy. We see that. We know how pervasive that is and the IPC identified that in her notes to the press release on October 9. She talks about this in her note, and it's a concern that we're seeing increasingly through the dissemination of information about us all everywhere, and people's concerns need to be taken seriously. The legislative tools that we have are one aspect of how we deal with this. The Information and Privacy Commissioner is saying that she doesn't believe that this legislation goes far enough. I believe that, as legislators, we need to hear that and we need to see whether or not there are ways that we could collectively address the concerns that she has identified.

As she says, the pervasiveness of privacy breaches and the ease with which large amounts of personal information can be breached — she says that this is the reason why most modern privacy laws include privacy breach notification provisions, with failure to notify being an offence. She talks about HIPMA, our *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*, as a good example.

I don't understand why we would have failed to do that with this legislation. She offered a remedy. I would like to know why and have that conversation in this Legislative Assembly with the IPC about why the government chose to ignore the proposed remedy that was to include an offence when required notification doesn't occur of a breach of privacy.

There are a number of areas where the Information and Privacy Commissioner has raised significant concerns. I want to take real issue though with the way the minister chose to describe or typify the comments made with respect to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's comments and the concerns she raised with respect to the fact that Bill No. 24 does not apply to municipalities.

The language used was that we're not going to be strong-arming First Nation governments and municipalities. I don't think anybody was suggesting strong-arming. I would suggest that, as I said yesterday in this very Legislative Assembly when we were talking about another matter, there's a very different relationship that the Yukon government — maybe the minister doesn't quite get this yet, but he has a very different legislative, legal and constitutional relationship between his government and First Nation governments and municipal governments.

In fact, he does have it within his legislative purview — this government does — to make legislation that pertains to and affects municipal governments. Not so with First Nations. If there was an intention of this government to suggest that it was an intention that ATIPP or territorial access to information legislation should apply to First Nation governments, then they would be triggering a whole other aspect of the self-government agreement, and so the terms of consultation and the definition of consultation would be very different from what has been followed by this government with respect to the act to amend this legislation.

I think, again, the minister's comments reinforce the absolute imperative to have the Information and Privacy Commissioner appear before this Legislative Assembly. Her comments, Mr. Speaker — and I'm going to read them into the record, because they counter what the minister said. She was not talking about strong-arming.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in August, I attended a session the IPC held for members of the access to information community — I don't know what else to call it — throughout the Government of Yukon. The Hospital Corporation was there, and Department of Justice officials were there, with the keynote speaker being Toby Mendel from the Centre for Law and Democracy. The whole focus of that conversation was on the right to information.

The Association of Yukon Communities was at that meeting, as were representatives of a number of municipal governments. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at some point during that conversation, there were a number of reservations or questions raised about the application of this legislation to municipal governments. Through the reasoned conversation that occurred during that meeting, I will tell you that I believe that people came away thinking and understanding how important it is for that level of government that is the most directly affected and affects every citizen — how important it is for access to information and privacy legislation to also apply to them.

The IPC said in the notes she prepared to attach to her press release that the draft legislation provides the option to include Yukon municipalities. In the view of the IPC,

municipalities should be subject to this legislation as soon as it goes into effect, given that they are, in essence, public bodies. Citizens should have the same ability to access information held by municipalities as they do with other public bodies. In addition, municipalities hold a significant amount of personal information that should be subject to the same level of protection as other public bodies.

Citizens should be able to exercise their privacy rights in respect to personal information collected, used and disclosed by municipalities. Not having municipalities subject to the legislation is a gap that significantly affects the access and privacy rights of Yukoners and others.

I do believe that it is imperative that we have that open conversation in this Legislative Assembly and that we all, as legislators, can then make an informed discussion as to whether this is the best piece of legislation that we could possibly provide to Yukon citizens at this time.

Mr. Adel: I rise today in the House to speak to the second reading of Bill No. 24, the proposed implementation of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

We are dealing with the public's right to know, the right of Yukon residents to access the information their government is generating on their behalf and the right of Yukon residents to learn details about what is going on in their government. We are also dealing with the protection of citizens' personal information and addressing ways of doing this in more effective ways within the digital era we find ourselves — all of which is vital to good governance and to the freedoms that go with it.

The McGill University School of Continuing Studies for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has defined the "right to know". At its core is freedom — freedom of expression and the right to information. A free and robust media is also important in the exchange of information. All of the above freedoms are enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, as well as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.

Access to information legislation enables both the public and parliamentarians like us to ask informed questions of one another.

As we move forward with this legislation, which aligns with our mandate of open and transparent governance, we are working to create a more responsive and adaptable Legislature for all Yukon residents. A critical obstacle to our accountability is the inability to obtain information, a barrier that can easily develop between a government and its citizens. Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz has noted that barriers to information allow officials to pursue policies that are more in their interests than in the interests of their citizens.

Bill No. 24 aims to modernize the flow of access to information in a digital age. This bill replaces the act that came into force in 1995. Back then, when I was looking for my kids, I would call out the back door. Now I have to text or Snapchat them to see if they are anywhere in the house because supper is ready. It is a different era.

Information now flows through conduits inconceivable back then — Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter and many other apps and programs. For even some of the people like ourselves who are a little older, we are even getting into some of those, as I can see members across the aisle are looking at some of their stuff now.

In concert with the provisions of information, we need to reflect on how we collect information and keep it safe and secure, how our security is managed around the expectations of political and public entities, how the flow of information can enhance business opportunities and how to manage and address public demand for government accountability and transparency.

Bill No. 24 provides framework for policies and regulations that will encompass the new digital information reality we currently live in. This bill will also repeal some of the changes made to the ATIPP act by the previous Yukon Party government, which used the guillotine clause to pass amendments to the act on the final day of the legislative Sitting in 2012. One specific example is access to briefing notes. Prior to this government undertaking a complete ATIPP review, an extensive public consultation and the development of the proposed amendments before us today, the Yukon was the only jurisdiction in Canada to restrict access to briefing notes under the ATIPP act — for example, requests for the briefing of the Premier on the formation of a new government; briefing a minister on the assumption of the responsibilities of the department, or a corporation or their sitting in the Legislative Assembly; the deliberations or consultations of the officers or employees of a public body; or how information in confidence is treated from a third party or another government. Unfortunately, these kinds of restrictions were common practice and certainly were an impediment to the flow of information.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to support this centrepiece of our commitment to open and transparent government, which repeals some of the restrictions put into place by our friends across the aisle. This bill will also make provisions for a privacy officer in each public body that oversees and investigates privacy breaches. It allows for assessments of the unauthorized collection of information, as well as conducting of inspections of public bodies to ensure compliance. This bill will provide the Information and Privacy Commissioner the opportunity to conduct compliance audits. This new bill will allow the government and partner agencies to collaboratively share personal information within the framework of this bill, allowing Yukoners to develop a personal account with the government to access multiple platforms and services. The bill also addresses the safeguarding of personal information through the application of a privacy impact assessment which, in simple terms, means that allowing personal data to be used by the new platform or service will not mean that the information will be at risk for public disclosure. The proposed amendments to access of information gives the public a process to obtain greater access to most records held or controlled by public bodies.

Circling back, Mr. Speaker, to where I started, an informed public can hold their government to account for their decisions and, moving forward, all of the decisions that they make. Public bodies will be required to routinely publish certain types of information. There is also a provision, through the power of the secretary of the Executive Council, to grant an applicant access to information held by a public body, provided that the disclosure is in the best interest of the public, such as determined by the secretary.

This will allow flexibility in the application of the bill. The discussion about how our personal and corporation information will be kept and used in the future may seem daunting; however, by building a flexible framework around the collection and distribution of information, we are making the endeavour much more manageable. With the best intentions, we are providing the public with the information that they require to question and to hold government accountable.

We are also allowing for an exciting step forward into the integrated government services while still protecting the privacy and integrity of the information that is collected. A more equal and balanced ATIPP act will allow for more transparency and accountability. As Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously quoted: “A little sunlight is the best disinfectant.”

In closing, I would like to thank my colleagues and the Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Department of Justice, along with all other officials who worked diligently to get this legislation brought forward to the floor of the House, and also to take into account the good intentions and suggestions from my colleagues across the floor.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: By hard work and good fortune and with the much-appreciated confidence of the people of Riverdale South, I find myself in an enviable position of standing here today to speak to Bill No. 24, the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, after having made many of these recommendations myself to improve the Yukon’s access and privacy law during my term as the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner from 2007 to 2012. It is truly my honour to serve the people of the Yukon in that role — it was my honour to do that — and an honour to serve them now in a different capacity and as a member of this Legislature.

My unusual path has afforded me a unique opportunity to work with my colleagues as one government on the policy work and the decisions that have brought this Bill No. 24 to the floor of the House. This is an opportunity that I truly appreciate and I am thankful for.

The world of information management and the protection of personal privacy is changing rapidly — not quite daily, but almost. An increasingly more sophisticated public have great expectations of their ability to access information in the hands of public bodies and to have their personal information properly collected, used, disclosed and protected. Despite our seemingly insatiable appetite for sharing personal details of our lives on social media in its various forms, Yukoners

expect public bodies to protect their personal information that is collected, used and disclosed by those public bodies. In addition, Yukoners expect their interactions with governments, which make up most of the public bodies as defined by this legislation, to be convenient, expedient and secure.

The prohibition on public bodies sharing information between public bodies, except in certain circumstances, is not well understood. The Yukon public understandably query: If I move or change my address and I give that information to the Department of Motor Vehicles, why do I have to contact every other government department that I deal with? Why can't they talk to each other? It is a good question. It is something going forward that will be changed, and the new legislation will enable enhanced services to Yukoners in future while protecting their privacy as a priority. It's key that we understand and that the public understand at this point that this new legislation will enable that in the future, but it does not take that leap just quite yet.

We have heard from the Minister of Highways and Public Works the details of this legislation and from others, so I will not necessarily repeat those elements here. I will take this opportunity to emphasize the significant improvements that bring this legislation into the 21st century of access and privacy law.

Mr. Speaker, government departments and organizations will be required to consider and incorporate privacy-by-design principles into all new programs and services. This is a significant improvement in the adoption of best practices in privacy and data collection and compliance, in that they will be built into the new government programs and services. The last 26 years have proven that trying to build such elements into already existing programs and services is a difficult task and Yukoners' privacy could be the casualty.

There is a requirement in this new legislation for privacy impact assessments, something that information and privacy commissioners across Canada have been championing for many, many years. Privacy impact assessments will be required by public bodies when they are determining how to structure a new program or develop a new service. These are different from privacy-by-design principles in that the privacy impact assessments are, in fact, an evaluation that will be provided so that the parties have to determine exactly what the impacts on an individual's privacy are when they are building a program or a service.

Another important change is the compliance audits that will be permitted to be done by the Information and Privacy Commissioner. This gives our current Information and Privacy Commissioner and future ones the opportunity to determine compliance audits for a variety of things from public bodies and will be an extremely valuable improvement.

One of the changes in this piece of legislation that I find near and dear to my heart is the integrated services concept, primarily for the protection of children's rights. Public bodies will be able to share information that they might not otherwise be able to share among them for the purposes of protecting

children's rights, particularly in situations where a child's health and welfare might be at risk.

This is based on some children-first legislation that exists in Alberta. The purposes of integrating it into this piece of legislation is that a message be sent to public bodies and to the Yukon public that children's rights and the health and welfare of a child are paramount.

This piece of legislation also contains a requirement for a proactive disclosure of government information. One piece of advice that in my former role I often gave requestors when I spent time at the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office was to simply say: Ask the department for the information you want. It was advice that I gave on a regular basis. Sometimes it even worked.

It could be considered naïve, but there is nothing in the current ATIPP act that requires departments to proactively disclose information, although there are provisions that require them to consider what they could be disclosing. I certainly think the intention was there in the original piece of legislation — that departments or public bodies be required to proactively disclose things — but that's not the way it has turned out.

I'm very pleased to see this improvement in this legislation in that public bodies will be required to consider and required to proactively disclose information. The Yukon public has a right to information held by government, whether it be a report on some issue or other, or whether it be some of their own personal information. The consideration here and direction in this legislation is that proactive disclosure is an important piece of access to information for Yukoners.

In this legislation, there is also a public interest override. That is something that has been asked for in this jurisdiction for a long time. It certainly exists in other pieces of legislation across the country. It permits the disclosure of information in the public interest — if there were such a reason to do so — that would otherwise not be permitted to be disclosed under the act. That will be a considerable change for the better — again, modernizing our ATIPP legislation.

You have heard from the Member for Copperbelt North some of the details with respect to Cabinet records. Mr. Speaker, in 2012, amendments were made to the ATIPP act here in the Yukon where the Yukon Party excluded access to government briefing books as a result of those changes in 2012. This act will reverse that decision and have us join the ranks of all other Canadian provinces and territories to provide access to government briefing books — a critical change for the better.

There have been a number of comments made today by the opposition and by the Third Party. I don't intend to address those, but we will have an opportunity in Committee of the Whole to speak about them in much more detail.

I will comment on one, because it was shared by a number of individuals today. I don't have the section in front of me, but with respect to the concept of not permitting the Information and Privacy Commissioner to be a party in a court action, my only comment — and I certainly will have more comments, if I can, during Committee of the Whole and I

know the Minister of Highways and Public Works will — is that this situation is extremely rare. In the five years before I was the Information and Privacy Commissioner and in the five years during the time I was — so in that 10-year period — I am only aware of one occasion when the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendations were not accepted by the public body. I think it's a rare situation.

I understand, through comments from the current Information and Privacy Commissioner, that there may have been more than one occasion, but I will be keen to have further discussion with respect to that. The issue is not simply that it's not a situation that's very common — that doesn't mean we don't provide for those situations — but, in a small jurisdiction like ours, it also is a complicated situation, should the Information and Privacy Commissioner be a party to a court action where she is defending or seeking implementation in order to implement her own recommendation on behalf of another individual. I know that the conflict-of-interest question was something that the department took very, very seriously.

Yukoners deserve access to information, and I am very pleased to see that the other parties — particularly the Yukon Party — will now support this bill at second reading for greater access to information and protection of privacy. Of course, the act does those two things.

It is my experience that the approach under the former piece of legislation, sometimes by government, was that the default position was to not disclose anything unless you absolutely had to, based on the law, and what we know is that the current ATIPP act is somewhat confusing on those points and certainly not as clear as we want it to be.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you and to this House that the default position must be to disclose the information unless there is a reason not to. Those are two different equations, and two completely different answers come as a result of those questions.

I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to work with my colleagues on this legislation. I know that the staff at the Department of Highways and Public Works — who are, if they weren't before, eminent experts on access and privacy law here in Canada — have done great service to the people of the Yukon and great service to this Legislature in their work on this document going forward. I also know that the legislative drafters who have worked on this project have gone above and beyond with the work coming forward.

I am very pleased to have had the opportunity today to speak to this at second reading. I look forward to the debate going forward, and I very much look forward to a modernized access to information and protection of privacy act.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just speak briefly here at second reading.

First of all, I would just like to thank all members of this Legislature for their support. I think it is important that we improve access to information while protecting privacy. I've heard the minister and the Leader of the Third Party talk about how information is the right of our citizens and that

government-held information generally should be available, except where it impinges on privacy — and, in certain cases, to allow for that privacy.

The piece that I want to speak about is around the question of municipalities. First of all, I think we agree — and, in my conversations with municipalities and the Association of Yukon Communities, we all recognize that our municipalities collect and store a great deal of personal information — and protecting the privacy of that personal information is a necessary thing.

The question that seems to be posed is whether or not we, as a government, should require that municipalities use these rules or methods for protecting privacy. It's not a question about whether they should protect privacy — they should — but it's about how they should do it.

First of all, I was very interested to hear the Leader of the Third Party talk about a meeting that happened in August, and I will try to do some follow-up. I had a quick conversation with her outside of this Legislature just to get some details. If the Association of Yukon Communities and the municipalities have changed their perspective, I would be interested to hear that.

What I do want to share with everyone here is that the Association of Yukon Communities did write to me, as the minister. In that, they state — and I quote: "Therefore, AYC requests that the legislation is very clear about what constitutes a public body, and the municipalities themselves could opt in, but not be regulated to opt in."

From my conversations with the association, what they did not want is what the Information and Privacy Commissioner has said should happen, which is for those municipalities to be required to be public bodies. What it comes down to, I think, is that no one disagrees that our municipalities need to protect citizens' information and the information that they have, and that privacy is maintained. Everyone agrees with that. We have written the act in such a way to enable municipalities to use the act and to take advantage of the systems that have been developed, and they can even tailor it so that they come in on the access side or the privacy side or both. We're working with them to support them.

The issue that I want to talk about — the Leader of the Third Party over the last couple of days has mentioned how municipalities are created through legislation that we have here, and so sometimes they are referred to as "creatures" of the territory. I don't like to think of them that way. In fact, just recently, I signed a memorandum of understanding with the Association of Yukon Communities — a three-year memorandum of understanding when we were there celebrating or thanking all those people who had been in office for the past three years.

I'll quote from that memorandum of understanding now, Mr. Speaker: "In the spirit of fairness, openness and good faith, any proposed significant change in legislation, regulations, standards, policies or programs will be preceded by appropriate consultation among the affected parties."

Recently, we've seen a new government in Canada, upon taking office, choose to impose its will on municipalities without allowing for there to be dialogue or even an engagement with the citizens that were affected. That example was the Government of Ontario in how it decided to approach upcoming elections with the City of Toronto.

Within that, the Government of Ontario, in an early court judgment, was found that they were breaking the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Then the Ontario government chose to use the notwithstanding clause. That approach, where a government just imposes — in that case, not a provincial government, but a territorial government — if we were to impose and say, “Here is what you will do” — it is not an approach that I think we want to take. I think the approach that we want to take is to say to municipalities that we respect that you are an elected body and that you, like us, are there to represent your citizens and have an obligation to deliver many services and to ensure that the privacy rights are upheld; we respect that you are an order of government that has that responsibility and that you will carry it out; we will support you in a respectful fashion and work with you to achieve it and not force you to do it in a particular way that we are deeming.

What we have tried to say to municipalities is that — and we have had the conversation with them where we recognize, collectively, that there are rights to be upheld and we want to be supportive of them to achieve that.

Speaker: Is there any further debate with respect to Bill No. 24?

If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the comments from the members of this House on this piece of legislation. I will follow up on a few points made this afternoon. I agree with the Leader of the Third Party, who is a passionate advocate of access to information and the protection of personal information. We on this side of the House want the same thing. Citizens have a right to information — information generated by their government. It is important to our democracy and on this we agree. Citizens need to have their personal information protected and on this, again, we agree.

Municipalities should adopt these measures — and again, Mr. Speaker, we agree. Where we differ is about how. The Leader of the Third Party and the Information and Privacy Commissioner want to automatically include municipalities under this legislation. Or course we could do that, but we chose not to. As my colleague, the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, has noted, we were asked not to. Municipalities are led by elected representatives. They are answerable to their citizens, and I hope those elected representatives see the importance of access to information and protection of privacy legislation. I hope they embrace it like I do. We have drafted this bill to allow municipalities to opt into the legislation — to be covered by it. We are willing to bring them in if they ask, and I think they should. I think it

is important that all governments do their best to provide information to their citizens and to protect the personal information to their citizens that they hold and that they're responsible for. I think we need rules around that. I think the rules need to be better drafted. I think that, with our legislation, the bill that we are presenting this afternoon, we have done that. I believe that municipalities will see the value in that. I think they will start to opt in, but I will leave that for their decision-makers and their leaders to make that decision.

This legislation we have tabled this afternoon offers better protection of personal information, proactive disclosure of information, better control over personal information, more control over your own personal information, better collaboration among government agencies, faster disclosure of Cabinet records, a public interest override and access to briefing books.

The opposition has, in the course of our discussion this afternoon, raised other issues around this legislation, and I look forward to answering their questions in Committee of the Whole.

Again, I want to thank the very skilled legislative drafters who worked magic on this piece of legislation, on this bill. They are eminently skilled and informed and I really value their counsel.

I also want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Justice, for her insights into this bill. The information she provided was, as always, incisive and practical. The Information and Privacy Commissioner gave very thoughtful considerations and a lot of her time. I appreciate that. The media participated, as did many citizens who contributed to this piece of legislation.

At its heart, this is what it's all about: informed participation in our government. I thank everyone for their thoughts this afternoon. Let's get on with the rest of the afternoon. Thanks very much.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 22: Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First, I would like to welcome the officials to the Assembly this afternoon. With me is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Manon Moreau, and also Sheri Hogeboom, who is here with us as a drafter from the Department of Justice. I appreciate all the work that they had done on this very important work as we try to fix something that has come to our attention here in the Assembly and in the government.

I request that Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, be now considered by the Committee of the Whole. The amendments focus on resolving the technical issues. We recently discovered in the two acts, in resolving these issues, will strengthen and clarify the acts and will help us better protect our land and forest resources.

As a summary, these amendments will ensure that: all regulations under the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* carry a maximum penalty of \$5,000; the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* contains the ability for a court to issue remediation orders to a person found guilty of damaging natural resources due to an offence; the English and French versions of section 21(j) of the *Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act* are aligned; and the definitions of “forest resource harvesting” and “timber harvesting” in the *Forest Resources Act* include cutting or removal of forest resources or timber or both.

I thank the members of the Legislative Assembly for the discussion in the second reading last week as well as raising industry concerns related to the *Forest Resources Act*. Broader changes to the *Forest Resources Act* are outside the scope of these technical amendments, but I have taken note of them for the review of the *Forest Resources Act*.

The issues raised by the Member for Lake Laberge have also been brought to me and to the attention of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources by the Yukon Wood Products Association and will be addressed during the *Forest Resources Act* review. We will have a great opportunity for them to speak to a number of issues. At this time, we are just discussing the scope of the *Forest Resources Act* review with our First Nation partners. We hope to be up for full public and stakeholder engagement on the *Forest Resources Act* early in the new year.

Industry, renewable resources councils and other stakeholders will, of course, play an important role in this review. It is mandated through that piece of legislation that it is time for us to go back and have a discussion with stakeholders and take a look at potential amendments and improvements. These technical amendments today are very targeted, as we have discussed.

I thank the members of the Legislative Assembly for their support of the principles of these technical amendments, and I look forward to more in-depth discussion and debate in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Cathers: I thank the minister for his introductory remarks as well as officials for their work on this legislation and for appearing here this afternoon. I would like to start by thanking the minister for his commitment to review the *Forest Resources Act* to address the concerns we identified, and he noted that these are directly from the Yukon Wood Products Association. That is something that my colleague, the Member for Kluane, has been advocating on behalf of his many constituents who are affected by this. I made the request as well of the minister, and I do thank him for agreeing to do just that.

We do understand the targeted nature of these amendments to correct a problem. Since the minister has committed to a review of the *Forest Resources Act*, that addresses our only concern that we had with this legislation.

I have no further questions about this or comments at this point. We will be supporting this legislation in Committee of the Whole and at third reading.

Ms. White: I would like to thank the minister and, of course, the officials and the razor-sharp, lightning speed with

which they responded to the issue as it was identified in front of the courts. I am just relieved to know that the problem that we ran into recently won't ever happen again. For that, I am deeply grateful because, until that loophole was caught or identified the way it was, it turns out that we were really vulnerable and we didn't even realize it. I am just grateful to have this here. It is written in the plainest language possible, which I appreciate, and I have very few questions. I just look forward to being more in tune. I believe my colleague from Lake Laberge will lead and I will follow when he is finished.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 22?

Ms. White: I guess I won't be following today. I just wanted to give the minister the opportunity to talk about this on the record so that it is more easily understood. We could address it line by line, but I think there is the ability now.

In section 5, under 27(1), it talks about how the maximum fine will not exceed \$5,000. If we can just talk about, to start, why that number was selected, then I will ask the next questions.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is a second part of this that I think is quite important.

Within the act, as it is stated now, to be consistent with the maximum fee schedule associated with the act, we used the amount of \$5,000. That is essentially the reason — that it is the most we could charge as a fine or a fee.

Over and above that, of course, we now know that we have the ability in this act, and with the amendments, to seek the cost of reclamation. Certainly, what we are seeing on the MacGregor case right now is that we are somewhere between \$250,000 and \$300,000. If we had these tools in place at this particular time, we would have the ability to seek those costs. I think that it has some real strength now, within this legislation. That is the reason behind the maximum — without getting into a full-scale change of the current structure of fees and penalties that are in the act as stated.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. It was a nice continuation into the next questions.

It is not so much a question. I just wanted to give the minister the opportunity to talk about the importance of the reclamation order or the reimbursement to the cost of government. Even if we tie it into the recent court case, or he can just make up a situation — if we could just talk about that. Those are all the questions that I had. I want that to be really clear because this is really powerful. I think this is the first time that we have seen legislation go quite this far in saying that, if you go against the law, there will be ramifications. I think this is really powerful, and I would like the minister to have an opportunity to talk about that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to touch on a little bit of explanation on the remediation order that we are speaking about and the importance of that — the remediation order could also levy significant costs to an individual company, which we have just touched on. The remediation is quite broad in scope and can require the individual or company to post a bond, or report, publish or pay for costs incurred by the government. The amendments will also allow government to

request a variation to the remediation order if it is found to be lacking. I think that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is right. We need the right tools in place.

This one case — I appreciate the comments concerning the work of the departments of Justice and Energy, Mines and Resources with help from multiple branches within Energy, Mines and Resources. We were all caught off guard. I think probably the Official Opposition who did some work on ensuring that this legislation came in, and ourselves, and you watching this and always being a proponent of ensuring we have the right tools to deal with different forms of industry — I think this was something that needed to be done.

I do really appreciate the speed, as well, with which the department moved and the policy that was put into place. This one event affects so many things. We're in a position where there's a lot of activity in that particular area — there's a lot of activity between Carmacks and Dawson City at this particular time, in taking into consideration the Pelly area. When something like this happens, it really adds a tone to the conversations about everything that's happening in an area. When you're in a position where you don't have the ability to be in a situation where you're addressing something that was done — and it shouldn't have been done — then you're in a difficult situation. You want to make sure that your government partners know that you can address these things.

I also have to say that I think that, in that particular case, individuals involved probably would have thought twice about this situation, because of what's played out. Probably we rethought what had happened, but I leave that to the legal system. I think everybody has walked away from that. At least some individuals that have been involved I know spoke with the affected First Nations and tried to right-side things. I think everybody has learned from it and I do appreciate our ability to move forward with a legislative change that gives us the ability to follow up on stuff like that. So thank you for your question.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 22?

Mr. Kent: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses of Bill No. 22 read and agreed to

Chair: Mr. Kent has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 5 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Pillai that the Chair report Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*. Is there any further general debate?

Ms. White: Just before we start today's proceedings, I would like to take the opportunity to apologize to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation for a statement I made on Tuesday when I indicated that I had sent a letter to the minister and was awaiting an answer regarding a tripping hazard within a Yukon Housing Corporation unit. I found the original document on my desk and it had not been sent, so I apologize for any confusion that this may have caused. I just wanted to make sure I started with that today because it's important to apologize for mistakes. I made a mistake and I apologize.

At this point, I am going to turn it over.

Mr. Kent: I have a number of questions for the Premier, or perhaps the appropriate minister, related to my critic roles and critic roles of departments that won't be called for debate once we clear general debate. Those are Energy, Mines and Resources — the mining, oil and gas, and energy side — and the Department of Education. I have a few other general questions that perhaps the Premier or some of his colleagues may be able to answer. Highways and Public Works is one that comes to mind.

Where I am going to start with the Premier is in the document that was presented — the fiscal and economic update, October 2018. I have a few questions about this. The first one is with respect to the consumer price inflation. Page 7 of that document notes here that it has ticked up with energy prices. I'm just going to quickly read this part of it into the record. It says: "Consumer prices in Whitehorse increased by 2.4% in the first seven months of 2018. Year-to-date inflation

was slightly higher than the overall Canadian inflation rate of 2.3% and the Budget forecast of 2.0%."

It goes on to say: "Higher fuel prices so far in 2018 have been reflected in the growth of major components of the Whitehorse consumer price index (CPI). Notable gains in transportation ... and shelter ... are in large part the result of strong year-to-date gains in the prices of gasoline..." It indicates that gasoline increased by 9.4 percent and that fuel oil and other fuels went up by 22.6 percent in the first number of months of 2018.

Going forward, the current outlook is for inflation of 2.6 percent in 2018 with CPI growth remaining fairly consistent over the next four years, averaging 2.1 percent. My question for the Premier is: Has the carbon tax been factored into those inflationary numbers in this outlook, especially given the fact that the gains referenced here are largely to do with gasoline, fuel oil and other fuels, which will have upward pressure when the carbon tax comes in, in the new year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: To answer the member opposite's question, the answer is yes. All forecasts are based on the knowledge that we have at the time of forecasting.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Premier for that response.

I have a couple more questions with respect to the fiscal and economic update that are related to my critic role of Energy, Mines and Resources, but perhaps the Premier or the minister has a response.

This is again on page 7: "Interest in Yukon's mineral potential remains strong. The latest estimates from Natural Resources Canada's (NRCAN) Survey of Mineral Exploration, Deposit Appraisal and Mine Complex Development Expenditures indicate that exploration spending in 2018 is expected to increase 4.4% to \$172.3 million. This spending represents 7.7% of total spending in Canada, behind only Quebec, Ontario and B.C." This is obviously great news for us here in the territory.

My question comes from this last sentence in that paragraph: "It is expected that when revisions for 2018 are released that estimates for Yukon will be revised upward."

Does the Premier, or perhaps the minister, have any idea at this point when those revisions will be released and estimates for the amount will be revised upward, or has that changed since this document was authored? I note that there have been softening markets. I have heard — and perhaps the minister or Premier can confirm — that some of the projects that were slated to go ahead perhaps got cut short or didn't proceed. I am just looking for confirmation that they are still expecting that \$172.3 million to be larger when all the dust settles, and if they have any idea of how much that will be.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am happy to speak to numbers concerning the exploration activity that we are seeing. I think we can endeavour to get the exact dates. Some of the exploration projects that are currently underway — as we speak to the exploration numbers specifically. We are in a position, like years past, where there is an extended season of spending. We are still seeing some activity in certain projects to date, which would help with the total revision of numbers for this particular year. I do agree that, as the member

opposite has stated, there is concern with the markets over the last couple of days, but I think overall we are in a situation where we will probably see it being much more difficult in the country as a whole to access capital for exploration projects.

Of course, this is just from discussions with the sector and with local companies or companies that are doing work here in the Yukon, that it is a much tougher slog to access capital and bring it in for the early exploration projects. I think the other thing is that we are in a unique period within our capital markets. A lot of money has gone into different lines of business. I had an opportunity to speak with one individual — and the member opposite has probably worked with this individual in the past — who deals with a gold royalty regime.

I will just quote the number from that conversation, but this is somebody who does understand the markets and has strong relationships across the Canadian markets, where almost \$40 billion of capital has gone into cannabis-related companies. That is a tremendous amount of capital that has moved away from the mining sector and the junior mining sector.

When you look at the comparison between the Australian market and the TSX, we are also now seeing for the first time the Australian market outcompeting the Canadian market when it comes to activity on the mining side. Will we see a correction on where capital goes? Probably over the short run, we are going to see how certain companies meet the demand that they have and how they fulfill their relationships with Canadian governments to supply cannabis, what the performance of those companies will look like and if people feel that it is safe to park capital there. At the same time, what I get from subject matter experts is that things have definitely changed in the market and we are probably in a situation where, over the short run, we are not going to see the access.

It will be important to make sure that we are as competitive of a jurisdiction as possible, that we continue to ensure that the jurisdiction has the stability that is needed and also that we are trying to continuously look to improve our regime when it comes to ensuring that we take the environment into consideration, such as the work we did earlier today — at the same time, making sure that we can reduce some of the cumbersomeness.

I will leave it at that. Maybe the Premier has something to add.

Hon. Mr. Silver: For the member opposite's question on updates, there have been no updates since the publication of the interim fiscal review. There is another survey that can be informative for these figures, and it is called *Private and Public Investment in Canada, Intentions* and it was released by Statistics Canada in February. Updates usually come up after the end of the calendar year, but I would say that we would be looking at March for a revision, if that is what the member opposite is looking for.

Mr. Kent: Normally at the annual Geoscience Forum, Yukon Geological Survey has an overview of the year in exploration. Are we expecting — I am going to back away from that question because it is speculative at this point. We will wait to see what happens at Geoscience and get a sense if

indeed these estimates for Yukon will be revised upward. Hopefully, as we move into the new year, we will get a better idea of what next year's exploration expenditures are looking like.

Moving to page eight of the *Interim Fiscal and Economic Update*, at the top it talks about mineral production and states that: "Yukon's mineral production currently includes output from Capstone Mining Corp's Minto mine and placer gold operators."

It goes on to say that, "Beyond 2018, even with an expectation that Minto will cease production in mid-2021..." — it goes on and talks about Eagle Gold and Coffee mines and other projects.

Given the unfortunate announcement today about Capstone going into care and maintenance today, will the Premier and his officials be able to give us a revised — again, recognizing that this is news for all of us. I should also state that there is obviously a human element to this, so for those 200 employees and contractors who are affected, we certainly wish them all the best in finding alternate employment as soon as possible, especially as we move into the winter.

Getting back to my question: Will the Premier commit to tabling revised production numbers at some point, either prior to the end of this Sitting or in the Spring Sitting so we have a better idea of what the estimates are for mineral production in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the member opposite knows, we just heard that the Capstone Mining company announced that they were suspending operations and placing the Minto mine in temporary care and maintenance. I definitely concur with the member opposite that it's too bad for the approximately 200 workers right now — and a core team of employees who will be maintaining on the site. Yes, almost 200 jobs will be lost — hopefully temporarily. We will see what happens as far as moving forward with that particular project.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Chair. I was up in your riding just a couple of weeks ago, and I was visiting with the Victoria Gold crew that is set to get production going, hopefully in less than a year now. It was interesting at that time that there were lots of conversations with the CAO and the management team there about how members of the placer industry are working for Victoria Gold and that there are not enough unemployed people around right now to fit all of the different jobs that are happening. Hopefully some of those 200 can find their way to the beautiful town of Mayo and enjoy some economic opportunities with Victoria Gold.

The closure, though, will result in a downward revision of the outlook for our real GDP growth for 2018. That downward trajectory will be about 0.8 percentage points. Nonetheless, the economy does remain strong with the low unemployment that I mentioned, rising earnings, as well as a robust population growth. Although the mining production has declined this year, mining exploration activity has been strong, as the minister had mentioned, which does bode well for the future. We have seen in previous years where no production happened, it was the exploration industries that really kept the mining industry afloat. A lot of times those are

the local companies like Talus Exploration Ltd., GroundTruth Exploration or Kluane Drilling. There are lots of people who are working in exploration.

The proponent had a press release and noted that the agreement to sell Minto to Pembridge Resources had been terminated by both parties and were citing Pembridge's inability to raise financing for the transaction due to unfavourable equity market conditions currently.

Capstone will continue to explore options — which is the good news — including some further discussions with Pembridge and also other interested parties.

The estimated cost to place the mine in care and maintenance is about \$5 million American in each of the 2018 and 2019 years, with ongoing costs expected to be under \$4 million US dollars annually after that for environmental compliance and other activities. The impact of the closure to Minto Mine will be taken into account when Finance completes its next economic forecast.

I think that does answer the member opposite's questions.

A little bit more background, though — preliminary revised estimates accounting for the closure of Minto did indicate, like I said, the weaker, near-term real GDP growth, with 2018 revised down from 2.5 percent to 1.7 percent. The reason why I'm mentioning these numbers is it does go to show how important the mining industry is to Yukon. When we talk about own-source revenue and we talk about having jobs for Yukoners, one mining project — 200 jobs — is such a big — either a boon or on the opposite side to our GDP.

Basically we're hoping that the proponent can strike a deal with Pembridge or some other financiers, but as far as our forecasting, a new forecast will be released with the budget.

Mr. Kent: Thank you, and I thank the Premier for that.

Of course, those 200 direct jobs, there are also a number of indirect jobs that may either disappear or the hours will be affected for those employees. We're all excited about Eagle Gold getting up and running and doing their first pour next year, and then, of course, Coffee Gold and Kudz Ze Kayah hopefully hot on their heels, as far as getting into production.

One point of clarification from the Premier — I think he mentioned the costs of the care and maintenance at \$5 million US, I think, for the next two years and then \$4 million per year going forward — just for Yukoners who are listening and to get it on the record, will those dollars come out of the security for the project or are they — since it is in care and maintenance, which hopefully is a temporary closure — does the company pay for those directly until they make a decision to permanently close the mine or find a new buyer?

Hon. Mr. Silver: No. For clarity's sake, again, it would be \$5 million for care and maintenance each year of 2018 and 2019, with ongoing costs expected to be under \$4 million annually after that for environmental compliance and other activities. This money is not coming from security; this is money that the company itself will be paying.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that clarification.

I am just going to move on to some questions that I have from the opposition briefing that we had on October 1. I thank the Energy, Mines and Resources deputy minister and his

senior officials for providing that briefing to me and the Leader of the Third Party. We asked some of these questions in the briefing but I wanted to get them on record here.

When it comes to oil and gas mineral resources, there are a number of changes in Assessment and Abandoned Mines — or they are reflecting revised work plans, which, of course, have been approved by Canada: Mount Nansen looks like an additional almost \$2.4 million; United Keno Hill Mines, \$100,000; Clinton Creek, \$341,000; and Ketz, \$621,000. Of course, these dollars are 100-percent recoverable from Canada.

Could the minister or Premier provide us with some details of the revised work plans? It could be at a higher level — or if we could get some sort of letter or legislative return just outlining what those revisions are.

We know that Mount Nansen is looking at a different model. I believe they have awarded to a contractor — Canada has awarded to a contractor. It would just be great to get a few more details of what those revised work plans look like and if there are any new dates associated with them as far as remediation activity on those sites.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will do a two-headed monster here. I will start with some general numbers and then the minister will get his tentacles into some more details.

When it comes to oil and gas and mineral resources — Assessment and Abandoned Mines — these are the following changes that are required to reflect the revised work plan that was approved by Canada: as mentioned, Mount Nansen is at just under \$2.4 million or, to be specific, \$2,396,000; United Keno Hill Mines at \$100,000; Clinton Creek at \$341,000; and Ketz at \$621,000. All of these amounts — it's worth recording for Hansard as well — are 100-percent recoverable from Canada. This is from operation and maintenance details from Energy, Mines and Resources, so all of that will total up to \$3,456,000. There was also a reduction of \$1,890,000 for Assessment and Abandoned Mines. That is a reduction that reflects the revised independent assessor work plan for Ketz, a type 2 funding agreement with Canada, which is the transfer of Faro governance to Canada, which is 100-percent recoverable from Canada to the tune of \$17,815,000.

Then we have Oil and Gas Resources, well abandonment funds deferred to the 2019-20 budget year. The project was not completed due to delays in the procurement process and weather conditions. Mineral Resources, Wolverine mine construction, commission and operation of a water treatment plant at the mine site — again, 100-percent recoverable from a third party — that's a reduction of the budget item from \$1,400,000.

Sorry, I'm confusing two numbers — the Oil and Gas Resources, abandonment of wells was the reduction of \$1.4 million; the Mineral Resources, Wolverine mine construction is an increase of \$6,550,000; and the last line item for the calculation is Strategic Alliance, additional funding for the first national Gateway project — so we have an additional \$575,000.

All of that, with the lion's share being the type 2 funding agreement with Canada — being the lion's share of a

reduction of a budgetary item — comes in at a total of minus \$10,522,000, for a total net decrease in operation and maintenance, Energy, Mines and Resources, of \$9,956,000.

If the minister has anything else to add or anything specific, if it's okay with the opposition, we'll allow him that opportunity.

Mr. Kent: Again, noted in this budget and the Premier just repeated it — I think he said it — that for type 2 funding agreements with Canada for the transfer of Faro care and maintenance and implementation of urgent works to Canada, there's the reduction of \$17,815,000. I'm curious if there were discussions about transferring all of the type 2 sites back to Canada instead of just Faro. Perhaps the Premier or the minister can let us know, or let Yukoners know, if they entertained any of those thoughts or if those discussions took place or if it was just specific to the transfer of Faro.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There were no discussions that took place concerning transfer of any other type 2 work. The strategy was to ensure that our team can focus on those reclamation projects and, at the same time, provide the regulatory responsibility over the Faro site. At this point, with the magnitude of the Faro site and with Ross River in place and Selkirk First Nation having a greater opportunity to take part in some of the larger procurement, this was inevitably providing impact to our economy here through joint venture or through subcontract.

Mr. Kent: I know the Premier responded to this when he was answering a question from the Leader of the Third Party, but it was a question that I had raised about the FTEs associated with Assessment and Abandoned Mines — the Yukon side of things. This is obviously very unscientific, but I went on the website and it shows there are 12 individuals working for Assessment and Abandoned Mines. If the Premier — and again, I understand if he doesn't have this information with him today — could tell me: Is that equivalent to 12 FTEs working in Assessment and Abandoned Mines? If he does have that note from when he was talking to the Leader of the NDP about the number of FTEs associated with Faro versus the number of FTEs associated with the other type 2 sites, I would appreciate that information. Again, if he doesn't have it here with him today, we can follow up at a later date.

Hon. Mr. Silver: There was the question — not only in the Legislative Assembly from the Leader of the Third Party, but also, I believe, at the briefing — about the status of the FTEs within that transfer. Under the draft transition agreement, Canada has agreed to fund up to four of those full-time equivalent positions and the related infrastructure requirements to support Yukon's ongoing role in that project until a water licence is issued for the remediation project.

Continued funding will be subject to review and approval of the parties and linked to the revised Faro governance model under the review with Canada. In addition to the four full-time project staff, Canada also agreed to provide funding for up to four full-time equivalent positions for a period of two years to allow Yukon to redeploy existing project staff within the Yukon government, at their sole discretion. The redeployed project staff are currently working for Assessment and

Abandoned Mines on type 2 sites. Canada has also agreed to allow Yukon government to redeploy up to four existing project staff to fill the vacancies in the type 2 unit, subject to the approval of an annual detailed work plan.

This is a good briefing of the 12 positions in total and their responsibilities.

Mr. Kent: I apologize to the Premier if he answered this question, but I have just one more question for clarification. Are all of the FTEs in Assessment and Abandoned Mines — and, I guess, the budget of Assessment and Abandoned Mines, including the human resources — is that all 100-percent recoverable from Canada, or is there a Yukon component to funding that?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The said positions that the Premier had touched upon are all funded 100 percent by Canada.

Mr. Kent: Is that the entire complement of the staff at Assessment and Abandoned Mines or just the ones that the Premier talked about? I will review the Blues to take a look at exactly what the Premier mentioned, but does that cover all of the staff there?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am just speaking to the positions today that we are speaking of concerning the Faro project — the 12 positions — and all, of course, in a different continuum — the four that we talked about here in the Assembly that get revised based on work plans — very similar to the structure that was in place for most of these with Canada — and, of course, the four full-time project staff and the others.

I can come back at another time and have a discussion — in the springtime — concerning, not so much the supplementary budget, but the overall budget and what percentage of the total staff, as we go into the next year, is supported through third-party agreements versus our normal O&M budget.

Mr. Kent: Actually, that is what I was just going to mention — that I will follow up with the minister in the spring when he has officials present and we are debating the Energy, Mines and Resources department in the mains.

I have some Wolverine mine questions as well. The Premier mentioned that there is \$6.55 million in this supplementary budget for a water treatment plant at the mine site — 100-percent recoverable from the security.

At the briefing, we asked about the status of the Wolverine mine and we were informed by officials that, under the quartz mining licence, it's in temporary closure but the water licence has the project in full closure. We've heard — and officials indicated — that there is some commercial interest — the opportunity for some people who are looking at buying that particular property from the current owners.

I am just wondering if the Premier or the minister can shed a little light on this temporary closure under the quartz licence and full closure under the water licence, and what that would mean for any proponent to get the mine back into production. Would they have to start right back at the beginning and go through YESAA to get the water licence, or is there some other way for them to come out of full closure and go into commercial operation based on the previous water licence?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it would best, with this particular question, to have an opportunity to meet with the officials at Energy, Mines and Resources and the officials at the Executive Council Office through major projects, because I think there have been ongoing discussions with a new party. As of today, it looks like there's a new owner who wants to restart and open the mine. There was a negotiation that was ongoing for the last number of weeks. That has now subsided with that particular group. We did support the process.

I want to commend the officials at Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as at Major Projects Yukon, in Environment and Executive Council Office. I apologize if I have missed any others, but there has been a really phenomenal approach to this where there has been a team that has been brought together to ensure that we do the right thing when it comes to the health and welfare of Yukoners, that we look after the site in the most appropriate way and also make sure that, if there is, as we see — of course, we have soft copper prices right now, and then we have had zinc soften, but at the same time, there has been renewed interest on the outlook for both. With that in mind, we want to make sure that we have the proper processes in place.

As the member opposite would be aware, there would be quite an extensive process that would happen with the Water Board to ensure that the current licence — now, there may be other tools that could be used. That is really for the Water Board to speak to versus the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I know that, as early as this morning, there were discussions that were taking place with the new ownership group that is taking on some of the responsibilities.

Our team at Energy, Mines and Resources will ensure that we are sitting with the group in Major Projects Yukon, that we take a look at what is happening when it comes to commissioning of the infrastructure that we feel we need to put into place. Are we going to go down the process of tendering? Are we going to work with them? It is all so new, but certainly our biggest responsibility is to ensure that the site is looked after. Secondary to that is to see if there is an economic opportunity for the Yukon and, of course, all the while having discussions with the affected Kaska nations on this particular project. I would be comfortable during Question Period to speak to this as we move forward and as we have new information from the new ownership group.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for that. I had heard that there were new owners in place. I just wasn't sure if it was public information yet, so I appreciate that he has confirmed that it is public. Hopefully the new owners will be able to move through this licensing issue that they are facing right now, get the mine back into production and get the security back into place. It is my understanding that the \$6.5 million is coming from the security and officials told us there was about \$5 million left in security.

Another quick question on the Wolverine mine would be: Does the Premier or the minister know when we would expect a tender to go out for the construction and operation of a water treatment plant at the mine site? Has it been awarded in a different way? Is it an urgent works or will it be going through

the normal tendering process for this \$6.5-million-plus expenditure?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I want to clarify that, after work is completed, approximately \$4.1 million in security would be remaining. I believe the member opposite quoted \$5 million, but it is \$4.1 million. Also, urgent works is underway to treat water from the underground mine and to discharge it into the Go Creek — if there is any other information from the minister, then if he could avail himself at this time.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to clarify, there is some work on-site that has taken place. The previous owner also undertook a bit of due diligence on potential systems that could be looked at, but at this point, there has been no procurement of infrastructure. The department continues to prepare a process that is appropriate and accountable, looking to see under the very specifics of the technical nature of this type of work what local companies or local partnerships can help us to get this work taken care of.

Mr. Kent: Under the strategic alliances and the carry-forward of funds for the First Nation — the briefing note we got from officials said "First Nation gateway project", but I'm assuming that is the gateway resource roads project. Am I correct in assuming that? Maybe I will just sit down and get clarification; otherwise I'm thinking about something entirely different.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm assuming that he's talking about the briefing on the Energy, Mines and Resources. It does say that gateway discussions with First Nations on the gateway project agreement are ongoing. That would mean the gateway project, the federally matched funding for the 75/25 split money for the gateway project. I do believe so.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Premier for that clarification and also for clarifying the amount left for the Wolverine mine. Officials had told us \$5 million, but I thank him for letting us know that it is now \$4.1 million left in the security.

On the project agreements and the negotiation with First Nations, are there any updates that the minister or the Premier can provide us on progress on that? I think it was a little over a year ago now that the Prime Minister was here to announce the Canadian portion of the funding for this project, so I'm just curious about if there are any updates that the minister or the Premier has for Yukoners and particularly those Yukon contractors and First Nations who are looking forward to building these roads — and, of course, the companies along the roads that will benefit once they are constructed.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just for a bit of background, the Yukon Resource Gateway Project that the member opposite is speaking to will provide a bypass at Carmacks and approximately 650 kilometres of needed upgrades to the existing road infrastructure in Dawson. It and the Nahanni Range are two areas of high mineral potential and active mining.

At this particular time the department continues to have good discussion. There has been agreement on the relationship with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and on the bypass. That will now move to the environmental assessment process.

There are talks continuing over this week, as well as into the next number of weeks, to conclude agreements with both the Liard First Nation and also a more complex conversation, but with First Nations, concerning the Coffee Gold infrastructure.

The department continues to work diligently. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources takes on the responsibility of the negotiation and consultation with the nations, and then the responsibility will move over to the Department of Highways and Public Works, which will then take us through the technical processes where both departments will feed into the assessment process and then look to move to construction in the spring of next year.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just for clarity's sake as far as the split, I was incorrect in saying 75/25. The proposed value is going to be \$468 million, including \$248 million from the federal government, \$112 million from Yukon government and then \$108 million from industry.

Right now, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has identified over a half-million dollars in funding for engagement with the affected First Nations and to negotiate those project agreements, and we are currently developing those agreements.

When required, of course, the components of the Yukon Resource Gateway project will be subject to the Yukon assessment process and, at that time, would be an opportunity for the public to have input on it as well.

Mr. Kent: If the Premier can let us know: Are they going to wait until the First Nation agreements are in place before proceeding to YESAA? Is that the sequence of events with this? Because I think the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources mentioned that they are hoping to start construction in the next construction season, 2019. The sequence is: First Nation agreements, then any particular YESAB assessments that need to be done and then construction. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, the department is looking to conclude and then to make sure that we're preparing documents. We're going to make sure that, as we go through the order of events, we are taking into consideration next year's building season and also making sure that there could be portions of the project that are moving quicker than others, depending on where we are in discussions and how much of the preparation work is done in each particular area.

Of course, when it comes to certain areas in Dawson where there are existing roadways — or there are existing roadways in south Yukon and in southeast Yukon where there are upgrades — or where you're looking at discussion that has been going on and concluded now with more of a planning phase in Carmacks. You are in different areas — ahead in some processes versus others. In each particular area, yes, we would be making sure we concluded those conversations with each First Nation before we move toward going through assessment at this particular time.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for that response. I am just going to have one follow-up question on that and then I will ask a couple of questions about another topic. If the minister can provide us with a time horizon for the entire

project — obviously we don't want to see everything tendered in one year. We want to make sure there are opportunities for local contractors, but if they had some sort of an idea on how long it will take to complete the gateway project once all the necessary agreements and approvals are in place — what they are thinking for a construction schedule.

I have a few questions about the ATAC road and the Stewart watershed sub-regional plan that the minister announced in the spring.

I will just get these on the record quickly. I am just wondering — and I didn't see any public announcements or news releases about this — about the committee, if it has been established, the makeup and the structure of that committee, if the committee has terms of reference and when any public engagement could be scheduled. Obviously the minister and the First Nation set proposed dates of March 2020, I believe, to have the sub-regional land use plan done, as well as a road management plan, I believe. I don't have a copy of the news release here with me. I'm just looking for some details on what is going on there, as well as what the budget is for this committee to conduct their work.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will just actually get the member opposite — it was a two-part question with different themes. I'll get the first question and then we can go to ATAC.

Mr. Kent: The first question dealt with the gateway project. I am just looking for some sort of an idea on what the time horizon is or the schedule for construction. I know it's early days with that, but once the agreements are in place and the environmental assessments are done, what are you looking at as far as timing to get those dollars spent and over what type of time horizon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that this is a submission and I believe the member opposite should know, probably from previous experience, a bit of the scope of the work and how it is connected. I think that our government is committed to following through on the terms of reference on the contribution agreement and continuing to do the work in the time frame that has been identified at this particular time. We are looking at a situation where part of that plan, of course — we will continue to look at and make sure that we are always taking into consideration what is best for Yukoners, Yukon companies and value.

We'll stay the course, unless there's a decision based on a swing in commodity prices or a project to pivot, and ensure that we're continuing to support Yukon and Yukon companies.

As for ATAC, I'll touch a bit on ATAC just to respect the question. I believe that part of the role here is we have a supplementary budget and we are not really — I don't believe — I know there are a number of line items here that have had changes and, because Energy, Mines and Resources will not be coming forward because there's no request for new monies, we are going a little bit outside of the parameters in the sense that there wasn't any change, or ATAC, listed in our Energy, Mines and Resources budget.

The Yukon government and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun were both decision bodies for the ATAC road, and

there was significant concern raised by NND about the access to the region and this project proceeding in the absence of a regional land use plan.

While we work at completing the Peel watershed land use planning process, restarting the Dawson land use planning commission and work with First Nations on how to improve the planning process, the Yukon government and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun agreed to a new approach to plan the Beaver River portion of the Stewart River watershed and to work with ATAC Resources to develop a road access management plan.

The ATAC road agreement between the Yukon government and the First Nation of Na Cho Nyäk Dun outlines how our two governments will work collaboratively to complete the local land use plan and work with ATAC Resources to develop a road access management plan.

Yukon government also works with the First Nations and communities in other planning exercises outside of chapter 11, including local area planning and zoning regulations. Of course, the Government of Yukon is committed to advancing reconciliation with First Nations and bringing sustainable development and tangible benefits to Yukon communities.

The planning committee started meeting in the summer of 2018 and will endeavour to submit the local land use plan to the First Nation and governments for March 31, 2020, which was what we identified as a timeline. The local land use plan and the road access management plan must be completed before the construction of the road is authorized.

Mr. Kent: I will have some further questions, I guess, during Question Period about that specific project and what the budget is and the committee makeup and when all that stuff was determined, who is on the committee, those types of things — terms of reference.

Under the Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications side of things within this supplementary budget, a couple of line items — there are four different line items, I think, so I wanted to touch on a few of them. The first was an agreement with Canada for solar, biomass and energy planning for First Nation projects — \$371,000. The second one was an agreement with Natural Resources Canada to support First Nation biomass-related projects — \$245,000. I'm hoping that the Premier or perhaps the minister can give us a sense of where those biomass-related projects are that the First Nations are contemplating and if the government is considering any biomass projects that are brought forward by a non-First Nation proponent at this time — if either the Premier or minister could let us know that as well, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: So concerning the Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications budget changes — the overall in the operation and maintenance estimate for the Energy, Corporate Policy and Communications division has increased by \$466,000. It's up seven percent from the original \$6.5 million.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs is contributing \$371,000 for the Yukon government to work directly with seven Yukon First Nations on various research projects or assessments and feasibility studies related to implementing community

biomass systems. The Yukon government has reached an agreement with Natural Resources Canada to support biomass in First Nation energy audit work with \$245,000. The Yukon government plans to add biomass heating systems to three community schools. New boiler systems are being installed to be used as backup systems once the biomass heating systems are in place.

About \$800,000 will flow through the residential and commercial energy incentive programs. The former provides incentive for energy efficiency improvements to existing residences and for the construction of new super-insulated homes. The commercial energy incentive is for energy efficiency retrofits and lighting system upgrades for multi-family dwellings and commercial buildings.

As for biomass specific to that, we do have one interested party in Watson Lake that we have continued to have discussions with. Part of the challenge is making sure that there is enough critical mass within the business model. There have been requests to add, not just what was contemplated before for government buildings, but to have a bigger scale in place so that there would be more — the critical mass of opportunity there would provide a more feasible project and would, I think, reduce the overall risk as well with the capital investment.

We continue to work with different nations. There is a real interest by my colleagues and me when it comes to biomass — whether it is the Minister of Community Services or the Minister of Highways and Public Works — the three of us, with the lead of Community Services and my colleague, Mr. Streicker — bringing together the three of us to look at the full cycle of how we can take biomass into consideration. Whether we are working with First Nation governments, development corporations or the private sector in the Yukon — right now, in the Kluane riding, we have significant players with a tremendous amount of experience and projects that we have supported through Energy, Mines and Resources as well as Economic Development, such as our greenhouse project, through which now we have food growing here in the Yukon throughout the winter. It is a great project. We can maybe speak to that later in the session and highlight it, but we are seeing the chips coming from Kluane now versus Alberta.

We are committed to working with the private sector on these projects. There is different technology as well that we are taking into consideration. Some of the technology that is being used in the Teslin project — which the Teslin government and their technicians feel comfortable with, right from the electrical infrastructure that is required through to the actual biomass systems. At the same time, we are supporting looking at new technology, such as some of the Finnish technology that was first contemplated. When we came into government, it was contemplated to be dispatched here in Whitehorse and we are trying to make sure that we have the best possible place for that. It is the Volter technology.

We are looking to many Yukoners. Both of my colleagues and I attended the Yukon Wood Products Association AGM. We had a great conversation with their leadership and the Minister of Community Services and the

Minister of Highways and Public Works. We discussed where the opportunities are and how we can work with the different stakeholders represented within that board. We are looking to continue to have those discussions. We did hear earlier, when we started to look at some of the amendments in legislation — the Member for Lake Laberge touched on the fact that there were some concerns. We spoke to the fact that there is a review happening, and we looked to kick that off to review the legislation that surrounds forestry, so we will have another opportunity to hear from Yukoners and try to understand where the opportunities are and how we can best help them. Certainly we think biomass is key.

There are a number of other items in here, and I want to ensure that I thank Energy, Mines and Resources and the Energy branch. There are other assessments that have been done — whether it is Haines Junction or other communities that are going in, doing energy assessments and ensuring that the right technical expertise is put in place so that, at the grassroots level, we can see many of these renewable energy sources being taken into consideration and put into place. We are, of course, open to the private sector. We are trying to ensure that we get out of the business of doing business.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Premier for answering the questions with respect to Energy, Mines and Resources in the supplementary budget.

I am going to move into a few questions that I have with respect to Education. Of course, Education has a zero line item here with respect to the supplementary budget, but I still have some questions with money that was committed in the mains. We are hoping that it is still going forward and we will get a sense from the minister or the Premier with respect to those dollars, as well as some policy discussions in Education.

I know I talked about this in the spring, but it was right on the heels of the transfer of the Native Language Centre from Yukon government to the Council of Yukon First Nations. I think that it was so close to the tabling of the budget that I don't believe the money, as it was reported, had been transferred out of the Department of Education. Perhaps we could get a sense from the Premier or the minister — has the contribution agreement been negotiated? Is there a term that they can give us? Is there any initial indication of what the work plan would be for the Council of Yukon First Nations' new role in running the Yukon Native Language Centre? Have there been any mandate changes that the minister would like to highlight for us?

Finally, with that — I talked about it and I want to obviously be careful about personnel issues, but the minister indicated when, I think, the announcement was made that those employees not continuing on with the Yukon Native Language Centre — there would be positions found for them within government or particularly in Education? I am just looking for an overall update on the transfer of the Yukon Native Language Centre and how that has rolled out, and if those personnel have been assigned to new roles within Yukon government — those who aren't with the Yukon Native Language Centre anymore.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As the member opposite knows, the Yukon Native Language Centre provides key services and training in certifying new language teachers preserving and documenting Yukon First Nation languages and developing curriculum and other learning resources.

Currently, the Yukon Native Language Centre is developing a work plan to be approved for funding by Education. This will include the provision of training for aboriginal language teachers and trainees. That work is still continuing. As more communities — for example, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and others — begin to develop their own adult language training programs, we are discussing the role of the Yukon Native Language Centre, the existing school-based resources and funding, and the ways that we can collaborate to provide aboriginal language instruction to as many students as possible. Aboriginal indigenous languages are a priority for this government in Education.

They are priority for — the United Nations Year of Indigenous Languages will be 2019. I can tell you that it is a priority for ministers of education across this country and has been slated as a priority for the ministers of education going forward.

With respect to some of the finances, CYFN will continue to receive \$450,000 annually from the Department of Education to support the operations of the Yukon Native Language Centre, including First Nation language teacher and trainee programs, and to develop the curriculum and resource materials and the language proficiency development.

As of June 2018, there were 41.10 FTE deployed Aboriginal language teachers and trainees in the territory, but it continues to be an area that requires attention and requires new language learners all the time in order for languages to be preserved and to grow.

Included in that number are 6.3 staff positions at the Yukon Native Language Centre. Discussions are currently underway to determine a new funding agreement that will include the funding previously allocated for the salaries of the 6.3 FTEs to CYFN. CYFN has submitted a proposal for the Yukon Native Language Centre that will allow them to staff the centre as part of their requirements.

I'm looking quickly for the information regarding the staff who were previously employed at the language centre on behalf of the Yukon government. It is my recollection that there were six people, but I stand corrected on this.

I shouldn't be guessing, but my recollection is that there were six people and that they have all received employment elsewhere, with the exception possibly of one person who I think may have retired. This is information that I can provide to you, of course, in an aggregate form in a legislative return if that's something that is of interest to the member.

Certainly, the most updated information that I recall from conversations about this particular topic was that all the individuals had been dealt with and worked closely with and had found employment in places that were suitable to them.

Mr. Kent: Again, this is one of those particular issues that we can revisit in the spring when the minister has officials

here to support her. Hopefully by that time the work plan has been approved and an agreement will have been negotiated so we can get a better sense.

I just have one quick question. She may have answered this. For this year, as the new work plan is being developed, is the Yukon Native Language Centre, under CYFN's leadership, operating under the existing work plan that was in place as we devise a new one? That would be great if the minister could clarify that for me.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: That is my understanding, but I know that there is extensive work happening so that the priorities of the Council of Yukon First Nations and the individual First Nations that work with them can be folded into or considered within the new work plan.

Clearly one of the reasons this decision was made was that the Council of Yukon First Nations had some priorities and a direction that they wanted the Yukon Native Language Centre to go in, and that was not the way it had been operating. Of course, we want — all Yukoners want — it to be the most effective operation possible.

It's my understanding that they are currently operating under the same work plan because there hasn't been a new one, but I hesitate because I think there's obviously staffing changes and some things like that. It may be that the development of the new work plan will resolve all of those issues.

Mr. Kent: I'm going to turn my attention to some safety issues that have been identified for us from some of the school communities that we work with or parents that are involved in those schools. The first one is with respect to the PA system at Elijah Smith Elementary School. I understand that it has been down for some time. Of course, functioning PA systems are extremely important for schools. I think the interim measure that's in place — again, this was explained to me by one of the individuals in the school community, so if it's not the case, I would certainly welcome the minister to correct this on the record — but in case of a school-wide emergency, teachers or admin staff are dispatched to go down the halls and knock on each door to alert each classroom. Then if there's an emergency in an individual classroom, the teachers in those classrooms have walkie-talkies, I think, so that they're able to communicate with the office. In one particular incident, I understand, the teacher couldn't find the walkie-talkie, and it was fairly serious.

I will give the Minister of Highways and Public Works an opportunity to give us a sense of when this particular PA system is scheduled to be fixed. Is there something in the current mains or is it work that will be addressed in a future supplementary or, perhaps, in this supplementary with existing dollars being reallocated? It is the PA system at Elijah Smith and whether or not there are other schools that perhaps we don't know about or haven't heard about that are in a similar situation and don't have a functioning PA system — I think it has been identified to us, and me in particular, as a health and safety issue for those schools.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is not something that I have up-to-date information about. I appreciate the question. Of

course, PA systems in all buildings — but certainly in schools — are a critical part of the safety plan, as well as all functioning infrastructure. I have not had this issue brought to my attention, either from someone at the school or through the department, so I am puzzled a bit that it is of serious concern. I am looking to my colleague, but certainly it is something that we will pay attention to. I am not sure that I have the recollection that it was an issue for — when you say “for some time”, I am recalling that maybe it was an issue during the election, and it certainly was my understanding that it had been addressed. I appreciate you bringing it to our attention, and I will look into it immediately.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate the minister taking a look into that. If there is also the opportunity for her to determine whether there is work scheduled for some of the other schools with respect to their PA systems — the other school that was brought to my attention — and I'm not going to take a shot at the new name, but the school formerly known as the Teslin school that my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin, who is an alumni of that elementary school, mentioned to me that they have never had a PA system there. This isn't something that needs to be fixed or addressed; it sounds like they need one installed. When I was Minister of Education, I didn't know that they didn't have a PA system there, so I can certainly appreciate that perhaps the current minister wouldn't know that either.

If there is an opportunity for her just to look into that for us and again look into all the schools because, as I mentioned, one particular incident was relayed to me, something that happened at Elijah Smith that I certainly wouldn't want to mention on the floor of the House, but I would talk to her privately, perhaps at House leaders on Monday or something, about that issue that is quite concerning — a safety issue at Elijah Smith.

There are a number of questions that I still have with respect to Education. I wanted to get into some of the seismic and geotechnical reports for various schools, especially those ones that were identified in the 2013 schools seismic report and the subsequent school seismic mitigation program.

I have some questions as well for the minister about Advanced Education and if there is a new structure within that branch at the department.

I wanted to ask a little bit about Public Schools and the curriculum rollout — obviously a chance outside of Question Period to follow up on the portables issue and the wait-list issue, particularly at the Golden Horn school which, as members know, serves my riding, as well as students and families in the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes' riding.

I was hopefully looking to talk about the Yukon university and get an update on that, as well as any cost pressures that the government might be seeing in this budget or in future budgets with respect to transitioning Yukon College into a university.

We will have to save those questions and probably a couple of others for another day.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Kent that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 22, entitled *Act to Amend the Forest Resources Act and the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2018)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled October 11, 2018:

34-2-74

Yukon Development Corporation 2017 Report (Pillai)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 11, 2018:

34-2-150

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate of Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Yukon Housing Corporation wait-lists for seniors and tenants with disabilities (Frost)

34-2-151

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate of Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Yukon Housing Corporation addressing requests from tenants with disabilities (Frost)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 98

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, October 15, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 15, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I ask my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly to help me welcome some individuals who are here today for our tribute concerning the Startup Canada regional award winners. If you could help me, I will go through our list and then we can give a hand to Luke Legault, who is here from The Wandering Bison. He also has one of his key employees here, his new sous-chef, Teresa Kozakewich. Jason Rayner, a key individual in the Department of Economic Development, is here as well and he is also an award winner this year. Tara Larkin as well as Sofia Fortin and baby Mira are here as well. I will touch on some of their great work. Jim Coates and Astrid Grawehr are also here with us today. Tammy Beese, who is the owner of *What's Up Yukon* and an award winner, is also supported here today by the editor of *What's Up Yukon*, Danny Macdonald. Please help me in welcoming them here today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm wondering if we could recognize some other guests who are here for Waste Reduction Week: Leslie Leong, a local artist; Ean McDonald from Computers for Schools Yukon; and Ben Teertstra; Forest Pearson, a colleague from Morrison Hershfield; Ira Webb, program coordinator for Zero Waste Yukon; and Lea Pigage, a Zero Hero from Urban Caribou Bed and Breakfast.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Startup Canada regional award winners and Small Business Week

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal caucus to pay tribute to the Yukon winners of the Startup Canada regional awards. Startup Canada represents more than 200,000 entrepreneurs and innovators and speaks for a greater community of approximately 2.3 million. These awards recognize the innovation and contributions of entrepreneurs from across the country.

Each year, hundreds of entrepreneurs are nominated across the nation. Startup Canada has chapters in 50 communities, with YuKconstruct operating Startup

Whitehorse. This organization promotes and celebrates Canadian entrepreneurs and supports them to start and even scale up their businesses.

In May of this year, the Startup Canada regional awards for the north recognized entrepreneurs, innovators and community builders from Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut for their achievements and contributions. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the following Yukon recipients of this year's Startup Canada regional awards for the north.

First, Bob Baxter, president of Yukon Brewing Company, for the entrepreneur of the year award. Yukon Brewing continues to receive tremendous community support for their inspired releases of beer, whisky and gin.

Luke Legault, who is with us today, is the founder of The Wandering Bison — he's a constituent of mine as well — for the entrepreneur's choice award. The Wandering Bison is a delicious addition, of course, to Yukon's catering industry. I think probably all of us here have had an opportunity to see the amazing work that they do.

Jason Rayner, who is with us, is a senior business development advisor with the Government of Yukon, received the entrepreneur promotion award. He has been key on all of our projects in this sector.

Selene Vakharia, Tara Larkin, who is with us, and Sofia Fortin are co-owners of SMRT Women and received the entrepreneur support award. SMRT Women holds regular workshops and inspiring speaking events. I think they've done a fantastic job of drawing women mentors together — and very successful entrepreneurs — to continue to build great businesses here in the Yukon.

Jim Coates, who is with us today and is president of Kryotek Arctic Innovation, and Astrid Grawehr, partner and director of operations, received the innovation award. Kryotek Arctic Innovation's lightweight drill technologies used for mineral exploration and its geophysical imaging technology are used across the Arctic to identify permafrost hazards.

Also, Tammy Beese, owner of *What's Up Yukon* magazine, for the Woman Entrepreneur Award. *What's Up Yukon* is, of course, a weekly community-focused publication.

These awards demonstrate that we are rich in talented, driven individuals, and I want to congratulate and thank all of you for your entrepreneurial efforts and benefits to Yukoners across the territory.

Yukon entrepreneurs innovate our local community and provide local opportunity for local solutions. They are leaders and risk-takers who enrich our territory and help diversify our territory. I was so pleased to attend and speak at the YuKconstruct opening for NorthLight Innovation last week, just in time for Small Business Week, which started yesterday. NorthLight Innovation is a facility that supports innovation and entrepreneurship. It is already a hub of activity and will help grow our knowledge economy. The facility has the power to build our communities, grow the Yukon economy and act as an incubator for next year's Startup Canada winners.

In light of the fact that it is Small Business Week, I would like to mention Luann Baker-Johnson, owner of Lumel Studios, a great local entrepreneur, who recently was

nominated in the micro-business category for the 2018 RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards.. The winners will be announced on November 21 in Toronto. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Luann all the best, and if I could just get a hand from my colleagues for all of these amazing entrepreneurs.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 14-20 as Small Business Week in Canada.

Each year, it is an honour to take a moment to recognize all those who took a step or maybe a huge leap to turn an idea into reality as they launched their businesses. The minister spoke of some of them in the House here today and it is great to see them here.

This Saturday, October 20, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is inviting political and community leaders to show our support for independent business and owners across Canada by participating in Small Business Saturday. We are to visit a local business and take a photo to post on social media, so I will be sure to take part and visit local businesses. It will be a little tough to get everyone in my riding and in my community, Mr. Speaker, but I encourage others to do the same.

Startup Canada celebrates individuals and groups across the country that are working to advance entrepreneurship in Canada. Guidelines around nominations include those who increase awareness of the importance of strengthening Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystem and culture and incentivize efforts and elevate the ambitions of the Canadian entrepreneur community.

In May of this year, Startup Canada held its north region awards ceremony in Whitehorse, which saw six Yukon individuals or organizations take home awards. I would like to offer my congratulations to all those who were honoured in each category.

Take this week to get out into your communities and visit some small businesses and buy local. We are fortunate to have so many small businesses that continue to thrive, with dedicated owners, staff and customers.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to highlight the local businesses in my riding of Kluane. It is local businesses that are key to the success of our especially small rural communities. They provide jobs for our youth. They donate to the local organizations and provide modern amenities for locals and tourists that we are so accustomed to today. Whether they are putting hard-earned dollars back into upgrading their businesses or diversifying to help meet the needs of their customers, this is what sustains our communities.

When most of us go home at the end of the day after a day of work, it's the local businesses that are still open and provide needed services, helping the travelling public get to where they want to go or helping a local with much-needed supplies. From the Yukon Party, a big heartfelt thank you to all the small businesses across the Yukon and, on a more

personal note, I would like to thank those across my riding of Kluane.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to celebrate the well-deserved recognition of northern Canada's community builders, entrepreneurs and innovators through this year's Startup Canada Awards.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I attended a gathering at the Whitehorse Trolley Roundhouse where Startup Canada leaders outlined their vision for this national yet regional network. At that time, I think there were a lot of tentative folks sort of wondering what this was all about and how it might actually work in Yukon. Victoria Lennox, the co-founder of Startup Canada, explained it as a network backed by an impressive array of corporate sponsors — large and small — that work to promote, inspire, education, connect and give voice to entrepreneurs across Canada.

At that early event here in Whitehorse, Startup Canada saw an opportunity to build on the work being done by YuKconstruct and (co)space to support entrepreneurs to take those first steps toward operation and — importantly in the north — to scale their business operations. Then when we fast forward to May 2018, it is clear that Yukon entrepreneurs, both brand new and established, got the Startup Canada message.

As we heard today, Yukon swept six of the eight northern regional awards in May. I was especially happy to see smart women recognized. There are so many women in the North creating amazing businesses and all have an admirable drive to make it happen and to support one another.

As Selene Vakharia, who, along with Sofia Fortin and Tara Larkin, who won the entrepreneurs support award category, put it, "It has been incredible since the beginning to see and be part of the energy these women bring to our events, programs and the whole community and to see collaborations and friendships being created and to realize that we are a part of making it happen."

As the winner of the entrepreneur's choice award, Luke Legault, founder of The Wandering Bison, said: "It's pretty amazing that, for doing something that I love, I've not only been able to make a career out of it, but that I can make so many different people happy. Then to be recognized on such an impressive stage is a new feeling altogether." He said, "I still feel I'm not doing anything all that special, but it's cool that there are other people out there who give me such incredible praise and accolades."

That, Mr. Speaker, is typical northern modesty.

The other 2018 entrepreneur award winners we've heard about today — Jim Coates, Jason Rayner, Tammy Beese and Bob Baxter — are all very much deserving of our accolades too.

Mr. Speaker, Startup Canada is designed to inspire the next generation of game changers, the disrupters and innovative leaders. These Yukon entrepreneurs have demonstrated that taking risks, disrupting industries and

supporting one another are pathways to a successful future for all Yukoners, and we thank them for it.

Applause

In recognition of Waste Reduction Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm rising today to talk about reduction — waste reduction, Mr. Speaker — as it is Waste Reduction Week.

Solid waste is front of mind for many Yukoners, where our lives are so closely intertwined with the environment. I would be surprised if there is even one person in this territory who doesn't value the Yukon for its natural beauty and its vast landscapes.

We all have a stake in this territory so it is important that we take it upon ourselves to reduce waste and keep our environment clean. Although the Yukon is vast, we need to remember that we don't have unlimited space for waste. Managing solid waste is part of the job of government and it is also our responsibility as Yukoners.

Waste Reduction Week is all about celebrating our achievements and encouraging new innovative ideas and solutions. Today, I want to pay tribute to Zero Waste Yukon and in particular, the Zero Heroes.

Zero Waste was created to increase awareness and action in our communities around consumption and disposal of resources. Zero Heroes are local folks, businesses and organizations who make smarter purchases, find clever ways to reuse and creatively recycle everything possible.

MLA Kate White is a Zero Hero. I remember the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King taking part with several Whitehorse city councillors in wearing Waste On Your Waist program for a week in 2014, early on in the Zero Waste Yukon launch.

I would like to give a shout-out to entrepreneurs like Leslie Leong, who recycles items like computer parts to make jewellery and is one of the founders of the Reuse Fair. If you get a chance, please check it out, Mr. Speaker. I hope all Yukoners check it out. It's an amazing show.

I would like to congratulate organizations like the St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction, Yukon College, BYTE Yukon, Computers for Schools Yukon and the Mile 9 Dump in Mount Lorne that helped to divert all manner of waste. I want to give a special shout-out to Mike Bailie, who is a true Zero Hero here in the Yukon.

Particularly important today, as it's Small Business Week, I would like to congratulate businesses who are making a difference: Lumel Studios, who we heard about earlier; Riverside Grocery, who lets you take in your own cup for malts; Northwestel; Changing Gear; Westmark Hotel; and Lea Pigage of Urban Caribou, who has done a great job working to reduce her small business use of single-use plastics.

Thank you to all these Zero Heroes and to everyone in the Yukon who is doing their bit. Less is more.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus and the Yukon Party to talk trash about trash or, in today's case, the reduction of said trash.

Waste Reduction Week isn't new. It has been toyed with since the mid-1980s. I can also say with certainty that society's obsession with stuff also isn't new. What is newer is our acknowledgement that there is a problem and in willingness to try to change that. This year, each day of Waste Reduction Week has a theme and that theme ties directly to us moving toward a circular economy. To understand a circular economy, first we have to understand where we are now, which is in a linear economy. The easiest way to think of a linear economy is: take, make and dispose. An example I can use is the dreaded coffee pod. In a circular economy, manufacturers design products that allow for the long life, optimal reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling of products and materials. You can think of this as the three Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle.

You might ask yourself how this is different from recycling. Rather than having a recycling solution after a product is designed and brought to market, like the coffee pod, recovery and material reuse is part of the design and manufacturing process of the product from the very beginning.

As a relatively new concept in Canada, the theme days will provide an opportunity to educate what is meant by the circular economy, as each theme had its own story to tell. Today, it's the introduction; Tuesday is all about textiles; Wednesday, it's celebrating champions and innovators; Thursday, it's about plastics; Friday, it's about food waste; Saturday is swap, share and repair; and the final day on Sunday is all about e-waste.

In celebration of Waste Reduction Week, Zero Waste Yukon is building a campaign to end the use of single-use items in the territory. This includes things such as single-use bags, take-out containers and disposable cups. Zero Waste Yukon will have a free showing of the documentary *Bag It* at the Beringia Centre on Wednesday, October 17 at 7:00 p.m.

Bea Johnson, author of *Zero Waste Home*, will be speaking Sunday, October 21 a midi et demi en français and 5:00 p.m. in English at the MacBride Museum.

I also want to make sure that we have a special thank you to Raven Recycling and executive director Joy Snyder for the work that they continue to do in promoting Zero Waste Yukon. Thank you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling a legislative return responding to questions about value-driven procurement from the Leader of the Official Opposition during Committee of the Whole general debate on October 9, 2018.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the continued development of legislation, policies and practices to ensure the Yukon government meets rules and social standards for LGBTQ2S+ non-discrimination.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education, in partnership with all appropriate stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive review of school busing in the Yukon, including but not limited to:

- (1) bus capacity and assigned seating;
- (2) whether seatbelts should be mandatory;
- (3) registration process;
- (4) behavioural and disciplinary policies;
- (5) emergency procedures; and
- (6) service areas and standards.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Cannabis regulation in Yukon

Ms. McLeod: Cannabis will be officially legalized this Wednesday. We have heard from several Yukon employers who have not yet heard from the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, Occupational Health and Safety or Employment Standards with any details on this change. Employers are wondering what their responsibilities and liabilities are with respect to impairment from marijuana in the workplace.

What is the government doing to help and support employers?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: With respect to Employment Standards, I will happily go and get information for the member opposite. What I want to note is that with the legalization of cannabis, we don't anticipate an increase in the usage of cannabis. It has been used — medical cannabis is legal now and there are already programs in place for our workplaces generally. I will happily go back and get information from Employment Standards to see what outreach has been done around this with employers.

Ms. McLeod: The government requires employers to have stringent safety policies and manuals and these policies and manuals are audited based on Occupational Health and Safety regulations. These policies include no-drug and alcohol policies, but we have heard questions from employers who are

wondering what help the government will provide in determining impairment with regard to legal cannabis.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As I stated in my first response, I don't anticipate a change in the programs that are already in place. I will confirm what programs are in place and bring it back for the member opposite. Like any employer, we have a responsibility to ensure that our workplaces are safe environments for both our employees and our clients. This means that our employees must be fit for duty at work and not under the influence of a recreational drug that may compromise workplace safety. To ensure that employees understand their responsibility to be fit for duty, we have developed a substance use and impairment policy that applies to all staff.

Again, I will happily go out and get a briefing for the member opposite.

Ms. McLeod: If an employee has a serious accident and Occupational Health and Safety goes to the workplace to investigate, how will they determine whether the serious accident happened as a result of cannabis impairment?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to Yukoners about their concerns regarding the legalization of cannabis. The Government of Yukon has been working extremely hard and is ready for the legalization of cannabis.

The regulations that have been passed and are going forward provide for the sale, possession, personal cultivation and consumption of cannabis under the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*, and they have been developed and are waiting for October 17, when the federal *Cannabis Act* will proceed. Our approach to legalization of cannabis, Mr. Speaker, is focused on displacing illegal activity and protecting public health, harm reduction and preventing negative impacts on youth. More than four out of five Yukoners support these priorities that we've seen over the past work being done on this file.

Our cannabis legislation reflects intensive engagement with Yukoners, First Nations, municipalities and stakeholders. We are ready for tomorrow.

As my colleague has noted, the possession and use of cannabis is currently illegal; it always has been. We don't anticipate the effect on the workplace to change. As we move forward, we expect that Yukoners will support these priorities as they have to date.

Question re: Cannabis regulation in Yukon

Mr. Cathers: There is only one approved roadside saliva test to detect marijuana impairment in Canada at the moment. Yukon government has indicated that it intends on using these devices. The problem is that, according to news reports by CTV, the device's operating temperature ranges from four degrees Celsius to 40 degree Celsius. The average daily temperature in Whitehorse in the winter, of course, is well below that — with the average temperature in January being around minus 15 degrees Celsius. This, needless to say, is well outside the device's accurate operating temperature range.

What is the government's plan to ensure accurate, consistent and reliable roadside testing for cannabis impairment?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Of course, with this being a new file, it's great to be able to work with the RCMP and also the federal government when it comes to new roadside sobriety tests. As you do know, Mr. Speaker, a lot of times when individuals are being detained, a lot of the tests happen inside of the RCMP detachments as long as the RCMP officers can detect whether or not somebody is not sober while driving.

I had a great conversation with the American ambassador to Canada about other initiatives that are going on through Washington State University about different types of tests. As this is a new legalization of cannabis nationwide; there will be some stumbling blocks. I am confident that the RCMP has field sobriety tests and will be able to use the current national standard testing in good climate temperatures but will also be able to use them back at the detention offices if need be.

Mr. Cathers: Of course, our concern with this is that, as the Premier talks about moving toward this, there is the concern that some people may be detained needlessly and some others who are impaired may be missed by testing. The CTV report noted that the issues of the approved roadside testing — they also quoted a criminal lawyer with expertise in this field who highlighted concerns with the RCMP using these devices. They pointed to an academic study of the device that looked at its effectiveness on 300 drivers. Through the course of the study, it found that the device generated 14.5 percent false positives. Also quoting from CTV, it noted that 13.5 percent of drivers showed false negatives, meaning the THC in their system was not detected by the oral screen.

Again, a question for the government is: What are they going to do to ensure that Yukon's RCMP have all the tools and resources they need to enforce the new cannabis laws effectively and ensure that our roads are safe?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the questions. We are all concerned about public safety, but I think it's important to remind Yukoners that it is already an offence — it is currently an offence — to drive while drug-impaired and while impaired by alcohol. As a result, the RCMP here in the territory and across this country have been enforcing those laws all along. While the legalization of cannabis may affect that somewhat — in that new products are being developed for the detection and testing of cannabis impairment — they are not the only process by which the RCMP — and the only tool by which the RCMP — have to effectively charge and ultimately prosecute drug-impaired driving.

We are working very closely with the federal government and with the RCMP to determine the evidence going forward with respect to how these devices will work. As the Premier has said, we expect to have the full support of both the RCMP and the federal government going forward as these devices are developed for use here in the territory.

Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, the problem is that there have been issues around inaccuracy with the tests by these devices. I think the minister would agree with me that

cannabis use can only be expected to increase once it's legalized.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction said that Canada would require 2,000 drug recognition experts, or DREs, to help enforce cannabis legalization when it comes to driving. Those officers are specialized officers able to test drivers once they have been stopped for a drug-impaired driving offence. According to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, it is far off its target of having 2,000 DREs by the time of enforcement; in fact, there are only 825 certified officers as of July. Some provinces have been working closely with the RCMP to increase the number of drug recognition experts in their jurisdiction.

Can the minister tell us how many drug recognition experts are currently in the Yukon as part of the RCMP's force, and how many additional officers — if any — the government plans on training over the next number of months and over the next five years?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Just to be clear — and I want, of course, Yukoners who have questions about this new state of affairs going forward — and I'm sorry; I spoke earlier about it being tomorrow. Of course, it's Wednesday, October 17 — not tomorrow. I was a day ahead of myself. Yukoners who are concerned about that should know, of course, that the government doesn't train RCMP officers. Just to be clear: That's not our responsibility.

However, we are working closely with the RCMP to make sure that they have the supports necessary for the drug recognition officers to be trained here in the territory. I do not have a number as to how many they are, but I know that they are working on that and that it is their responsibility.

I also want to note that the legalization of cannabis going forward will grow the technology industry with respect to the use of this particular substance. There will be, and there have been, developments in business, technology and enforcement for individuals who continue to break the law when the legalization of cannabis is, in fact, completed. We will learn a lot. We certainly don't have all the answers. We are ready for the legalization of cannabis here in the territory and we will continue to learn as we go forward with respect to all of the issues brought up today.

Question re: Electoral reform

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, electoral reform is an important issue to many Yukoners. After two years of inaction on this matter, the government finally got the ball rolling a couple of weeks ago by doing what they do best: Releasing a milquetoast online survey. The government survey tiptoes around a slew of issues but, believe it or not, in the 20 questions that make up this survey, there is not a single question asking Yukoners if they want to do away with our antiquated first-past-the-post system.

The Premier says he's committed to working with other parties to appoint a commission on electoral reform. He also said that this survey is meant to inform the commission. If that is the case, does the Premier not think it would be useful for the as-yet-to-be-appointed commission on electoral reform to

know whether or not Yukoners want to change Yukon's electoral system?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Out of that, I got two questions: (1) whether or not we're going to be engaging with the opposition; and (2) how important this is, to really poll Yukoners to see how important electoral reform is to them. That is exactly what we're doing. We're going to do both of those things.

The first step is to get out there and the survey — which I encourage everybody to get online and to participate in — breaks down this concept into three broad topics, and we made it broad on purpose. I explained that to both opposition leaders when I talked to them about electoral reform, that we're going to have three different methodologies to look at inside the survey. We're going to use the numbers from that survey to see how engaged Yukoners are on each one of those individual areas, and I will come back to both leaders of the two opposition parties about that, as I stated when I talked to them, and we will have a conversation about the next steps for the committee's work.

Ms. Hanson: We will come back to that latter point in a moment, but I want to ask the Premier another question, because another key issue, when it comes to electoral reform, is political fundraising. Yukon is the Wild West of political fundraising. There are no limits on corporate, union, or Outside donations.

Unsurprisingly, this topic is carefully avoided throughout the survey. It is only mentioned in passing once, along with examples that have nothing to do with fundraising. The vague questions in this survey are unlikely to yield very clear results.

If the survey had asked Yukoners whether they think it's appropriate for the Premier to host a cash-for-access fundraiser in a private suite with corporate executives, they probably would have received a much clearer answer. So why does this government survey on electoral reform largely avoid the issue of political fundraising?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The Leader of the Third Party goes to Edmonton for her corporate suites, I go to Vancouver and the Yukon Party goes on a yacht, so we are all doing fundraising, that's for sure. The electoral reform is extremely important to our government and we want to strengthen the fairness, we want to strengthen the integrity and the accessibility of our democracy and that's what we're going to. The first step is through this survey.

The electoral reform is about the system that we use to turn our votes into seats in the Legislative Assembly, but it is also about a way that Yukoners' voices are being heard and the rules that political parties follow — and that's exactly when we talk about fundraising as well. We're surely not skirting the issue of fundraising in the Yukon. I agree with the member opposite; we need to take a look at how we raise money and make some changes therein. We're definitely not skirting it; it is mentioned in the survey, as the member opposite pointed out.

This is why we are starting by asking Yukoners about what areas of electoral systems are most important for us to focus on based upon Yukoners responses to that survey.

Surely the members opposite would agree that listening to Yukoners about their perspectives on electoral reform is an extremely important part of this process.

The commission will work on the priorities that are determined by Yukoners and will decide what further public engagement may need to be conducted before reporting to the government, but before that, it is really important to this government that we get out there and find out how important this topic is and which parts of this topic are important to Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, the Premier can't be surprised that we, along with many other Yukoners, are skeptical about this government's intentions when it comes to electoral reform. A full year into the mandate, after a year of radio silence on electoral reform, this government was forced into adopting an NDP motion to appoint a non-partisan commission to study the issue and then was back to radio silence for almost another year until the survey was released earlier this month — this survey, which is so general and so vague. Two years into this government's mandate, the commission has yet to be appointed and the Premier's promise to collaborate with opposition parties has so far consisted of 24 hours' notice that the survey was going to be released. That doesn't sound like it's much of a priority.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister — the Premier — actually get to work on this important issue and appoint that commission?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I hate to pop the balloon from the NDP. We weren't forced into this conversation from any motion from the NDP. This is something that we committed to in the electoral process and we will continue on that electoral process. Now what we were considering on this side of the Legislative Assembly is there are two other jurisdictions that are in the process right now of considering electoral reform. Would we go out before they figured out their answers or do we think that Yukoners think that this is a part that should be added into that process — gathering information and best practices from other jurisdictions — but again, most importantly, it is what Yukoners think, and we hope that we are going to get that response from the work of the survey and then forming the commission.

Now, I will again sit down with the Yukon Party and with the NDP and have another conversation after we get the results of the survey, like I said to them already. I'm seeing some press releases from the Yukon Party that somehow forgot that I met with the Leader of the Official Opposition on this topic. We spoke together about this. There will be a commission. Are we going to involve the members of the opposition in the creation of that commission? Absolutely — in fact, I've already had those conversations and we'll continue to engage with the members opposite.

Question re: Opioid crisis

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, we have not heard this government talk about Yukon's opioid crisis in this Assembly since January 2018. At that time we were told of eight opioid-related deaths, with the caveat that, due to toxicology delays

of up to six months, there could be more. It's now October — 10 months since that number was confirmed.

When we look at the statistics and information available on the Health Canada website, data for Yukon is of concern. Our death rate is the second highest in the country. Eight opioid deaths — likely more — is too many.

There is an opioid crisis across Canada and, Mr. Speaker, there is an opioid crisis in Yukon, but we aren't talking about it.

Can the minister share with this House the up-to-date number of opioid-related deaths in Yukon and what actions this government is taking to address the issue?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question.

Certainly there is a crisis, and it is known that we are the third jurisdiction in the country with respect to opioid overdoses, so it's certainly a key priority for this government. We are working with the medical professionals to address the crisis that we are experiencing. We are working with our colleagues across the country and I am working here in the Legislative Assembly with my colleagues as well — and the Minister of Education — to deal with education in the education system. We are working with our partners to address the concerns that are brought to our attention. We are working with our partners in ensuring that we have the necessary naloxone kits out there. We are working with all of our partners but certainly addressing the crisis.

We see that there are numbers that — I can't really say specifically how many we have had since that is a number that is generated through the Coroner's Service office and through the medical professions. It is not for me, at this time, to make note of that. I do want to say that we are taking this very seriously.

Ms. White: It is important to say that people have died since January of this year. They continue to die. We have all heard stories of recent deaths in our communities that are being associated with drug overdoses. We hear people say: "Not my drugs, not my dealer," referring to the misplaced confidence that their drugs are safe because somehow they trust their dealer. Even the government's own public information sheets talk about fentanyl on the streets and drug users, seeming to suggest it is just "those people" who should worry and not the occasional recreational drug user who might be using at a party who is at risk. Opiate overdoses and deaths in Yukon continue at an alarming rate.

What is this government doing to ensure all drug users are aware of the risks, and what public education about fentanyl is being shared in Yukon schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is an extremely serious community issue. We are well aware that the health and safety of our students in our schools is a priority but also our students in the community. I take the point from the member opposite that we are not talking necessarily about drug users. The information that I have is a rather unique situation, in which I am both Minister of Education and Minister of Justice, and that is exactly where those two worlds collide.

The Government of Yukon is working with students and staff and their families to educate them about the dangers of illicit drugs like fentanyl — and dangers of all drugs, in my view, Mr. Speaker. We are not talking anymore about what you are deciding to take; we have to get the message out to young people and to everyone in the territory that drug use of almost any kind can be dangerous — more dangerous than ever before — because of the use of fentanyl and the consideration of fentanyl being included in these kinds of things.

We do have opportunities for individuals to have their drugs tested without any questions. I will leave that to a later question. But this is, by far, the most pressing issue, in my view, with respect to getting education into schools.

Ms. White: I caution us when we just say "fentanyl" because fentanyl is just a component that is added to every chemical drug out there right now.

Blood Ties Four Directions is providing free drug testing to any member of the community. Individuals can have their drugs checked for fentanyl and Blood Ties urges anyone — even occasional users — to consider using the drug-checking program to check that their drugs haven't been contaminated with fentanyl.

In 2017, the department hired a part-time opioid overdose prevention coordinator as well as an opioid surveillance officer to collect detailed opioid-related information in the territory. Can the minister inform the House of what these two positions have accomplished, whether or not they are still in place and what the strategy is to address this growing and ever-growing concern?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To the point that was made with respect to drug-testing programming — we have partnerships, certainly, with Blood Ties Four Directions and we are looking at other partners as well to ensure that drugs are tested to ensure that they are not contaminated. So we are, since 2018, early on — this crisis rose for us in 2016 and we have seen the rate increase, of course, from the second highest to now the third highest. So our government is working to address the current crisis.

Since then, we have acted swiftly. We have adapted the information that we're receiving. We're working with our partners. We're working with the chief medical officer of health. My department has supported an establishment of four opioid working groups focusing on harm reduction, public awareness, surveillance and health and social system reform. The action plan that we have been working on with our partners is now actively being implemented.

Following the first incident, we have now released over 1,200 naloxone kits. We have worked with our partners, as noted, to look at identifying a prevention coordinator overseeing the ongoing distribution, inventory data and training. We're working with Blood Ties Four Directions and other stakeholders in our community.

Question re: Cannabis regulation in Yukon

Ms. McLeod: As we are only two days away from the legalization of marijuana, I'm wondering if the minister could

tell us what workplace rules and procedures have been put into place to ensure that Government of Yukon employees operating heavy machinery are not doing so under the influence of cannabis. If there's a question about whether or not someone is impaired, what are the government's plans to verify?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think I already said that the rules that we have in place and the policies and procedures are there already. They're not new. Medical cannabis has been legalized for some time and we have known, of course, about the illegal use of recreational cannabis. It is commonplace and well known. So we have been developing procedures and policies.

Like any employer, we have a responsibility to ensure that our workplaces are safe environments for both our employees and our clients. This means that our employees must be fit for duty at work and not under the influence of a recreational drug that may compromise workplace safety. To ensure employees understand their responsibility to be fit for duty, we have developed a substance use and impairment policy that applies to all staff. I will ask the department to please get me that policy and I will table it here in the Legislative Assembly for the members opposite.

Ms. McLeod: Is the minister able to tell us whether or not Government of Yukon employees will have to submit to tests if they are suspected of being under the influence of cannabis?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I just said and what I will say again is that I am very happy to provide the substance use and impairment policy and table it here. I will try to get it for tomorrow and have it for the member opposite so that question can be answered.

We're not inventing cannabis, we're regulating it.

Ms. McLeod: Has the Government of Yukon provided any training or information to employees regarding their obligations once new legislation becomes legalized?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The answer is yes, in the sense that, for example, we have done training with our corporation staff. We have developed training requirements and regulations for all staff who will be working around cannabis, whether in the warehouse or in sales. On the other hand, I think we haven't introduced new training around substance use that I am aware of.

I will take a look, but my understanding, as I have said now three times in this question and previously today, is that we already have a substance use and impairment policy that applies to all staff, and I will happily table it here in the Legislature.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Peter Julian, Member of Parliament and also a member of the finance committee, who is here today in

Whitehorse to hold hearings. Welcome, Mr. Julian — no stranger to Yukon.

Applause

Speaker: Any further introduction of visitors at this time?

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 21: *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 21, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Dendys.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I move that Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that Bill No. 21, *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Speaker, this government is pleased to bring forward this legislation. It continues our work in making our laws non-discriminatory and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirited and more Yukoners. The acronym commonly used is LGBTQ2S+. I'm pleased to see this item proceeding because it marks a significant milestone in our work to make Yukon fair and equal for everyone.

On this occasion, I'm speaking on behalf of myself and my colleague, the Minister of Justice. In my mandate letter from our Premier in January 2017, I was directed to work with the Minister of Justice and other colleagues to conduct a review of legislation, policies and practices to ensure the Yukon government meets the rules and social standards for LGBTQ2S+ non-discrimination.

As a government, one of our priorities is to work on creating a diverse and fair society. The bill we are considering is designed to do just that. As legislators, you know that changing all of our legislation to make it non-discriminatory for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners is not something that can happen overnight. It takes time for our legal and policy staff to study the present state of the law. It takes time, and a lot of it, to catalogue our legislation that discriminates against this community.

This bill is a step in the right direction to ensure the Government of Yukon meets its constitutional obligations with respect to equal treatment of both married and common-law same-sex partners.

We are essentially cleaning up our legislation, modernizing it to speak inclusively of our LGBTQ2S+ community. While this work is being done, we will also engage with interested Yukoners and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community through a safe and inclusive public

engagement process, based on an extensive pre-engagement which occurred over the summer.

We are committed to ensuring that their views are heard and considered in this process. As I have mentioned, the legislation that needs to be changed cannot be changed in bulk. It is a step-by-step process and it will take some time. After our initial engagement with the LGBTQ2S+ community and conducting research, we believe we have chosen the best course of action, which is to amend the legislation that has the most impact on the community first.

Last year, we started in earnest the process of making our legislation more inclusive for all genders and sexual orientations. We tabled the new *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act*. That act introduced amendments to both the *Vital Statistics Act* and the *Human Rights Act*. The amendments to the *Vital Statistics Act* allowed for the introduction of a gender-neutral marker on a birth certificate. This is appropriate for people who are intersex or who identify as non-binary gender. The amendments to the *Human Rights Act* make it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of gender identity or gender expression.

In March 2018, we tabled the *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act*. The act promotes more cultural, regional and gender diversity on four key Yukon boards and committees. These committees deal with childcare, violence prevention, social assistance and provision of care. The act also amended the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act* to add sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression to prohibited grounds of discrimination.

The scope of the bill that we put forward today is fairly narrow. It will remove binary language — language that tends to discriminate against LGBTQS+ community members — for example, the words “his”, “her”, “husband”, “wife”, “widow” or “widower”. Those terms are now replaced with language that includes all genders and sexual orientations — for example, “spouse” or “surviving spouse”. This change will appear in 10 existing acts and six regulations.

We are also repealing the *Married Women’s Property Act*. The *Married Women’s Property Act* is a relic of a bygone era — a time when legislation was needed to clearly abolish antiquated common-law rules. An example of this is the doctrine of marital unity, whereby a husband and wife were considered one person under the law. Back in the 1950s, there was a need for the *Married Women’s Property Act*. The *Married Women’s Property Act* abolished old common-law rules that limited the agency of women. Prior to the act, when married, a woman lost her ability to independently hold and dispose of property, enter into a contract by herself, sue or be sued or act as a litigation guardian. Prior to 1955 in Yukon, only a single woman — then called a “fem sole” — could do all of those things. However, over time, the doctrine of marital unity has been challenged by progressive changes in the common law and society. More recently, sections 15 and 28 of our *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* assert the rights of women.

We could retain the act and amend the most redundant and discriminatory provisions, but we have decided to repeal

the act altogether and make the necessary adjustments to the *Judicature Act*. This will ensure that old common-law rules are still abolished and that the arguments on their basis will not have merit. Indeed, Canadians and commonwealth courts have stated that it is better to just change the laws in the legislatures rather than in the courts.

This is what we are doing today. We are making it very clear that this law is no longer a useful contribution to our statutes. Besides its view of women, the Yukon *Married Women’s Property Act* uses deeply entrenched heteronormative and gender-binary language that has no place in our modern society. Married women’s property acts have been repealed or rendered totally ineffective in most Canadian jurisdictions. It is time we catch up.

I also want to briefly touch on one more way that we are working to modernize our legislation and make it more inclusive of our LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. For the last couple of years, we have worked to engage the LGBTQ2S+ community in a process of changing our legislation. As legislators, we know that this process can take time. As I have said, we do not, and we cannot, enact and repeal in bulk. In consultation with the LGBTQ2S+ community, our policy and legal staff members are creating a step-by-step course of action that includes both a legislative review and policy and program review.

Having said that, we did not consult with the LGBTQ2S+ community on this specific legislation change — those contained in Bill No. 21. This is because adjusting references to married and common-law partners in Yukon legislation to speak more inclusively of all sexual orientations and genders is a constitutional obligation and therefore not up for debate in a public consultation process. These changes ensure equal treatment of same-sex and common-law partners. We are modernizing legislation and bringing it into line with most other Canadian jurisdictions.

In 2004, the *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon* case was a legal action taken by a Yukon same-sex couple to affirm their right to marry. The Supreme Court of Yukon gave the couple the right to receive a legal Yukon marriage. The court also ruled that the old common-law definition of marriage — the union of one man and one woman — violated the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

That ruling introduced a new common-law definition of marriage in Yukon: the voluntary union for life of two persons to the exclusion of all others. With the changes to the acts and the regulations that we proposed, we are adhering to the new state of the common law. We are removing outdated terms like “wife” and substituting words like “spouse”. We are repealing the *Married Women’s Property Act* because it also reflects the old state of the common law. Today’s common law repeatedly stated that women have the same rights and freedoms as men, no matter their marital status.

It is important to note that the *Married Women’s Property Act* was originally created to advance the legal rights of women and now it is outdated. The consequential amendments to the *Judicature Act* make it clear that the concept of the unity of legal personality continues to be

abolished. This concept is the archaic concept that a husband and wife are one person under the law. That act is also amended to affirm that, no matter what their gender identity or expression is, a married person is separate and distinct from their spouse. In effect, every married person has the power to make their own decisions, just as if they were unmarried. This amendment reflects how the law should be in 2018.

We will continue to consult the LGBTQ2S+ community in creating an action plan for next steps and changing legislation and government policies, programs and services. With all of these initiatives, we are making steady headway in our goal to make sure Yukon meets the rules and social standards for LGBTQ2S+ non-discrimination. We will remain unwavering as we continue this work so that all Yukoners feel safe, are treated fairly and enjoy equal opportunities.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it is not just the LGBTQ2S+ community that benefits from these changes. All citizens benefit from an inclusive and equal society.

Mr. Cathers: I thank the minister for her introductory remarks on Bill No. 21, *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*.

I would also like to thank the officials from the Women's Directorate and the Department of Justice who provided a briefing on this legislation. The one question I would ask the minister to answer in her closing remarks is — the officials gave us a handout that said — and I quote: “No engagement was required because the amendments reflect changes in common law.”

I would just ask the minister to confirm that this is her understanding of the reason why no public consultation was done and the current state of law.

Just to reiterate, our question was about the lack of public consultation. Could the minister confirm that her understanding is that none was required because the amendments reflect changes in common law as reflected in court decisions?

Ms. White: I want to thank the minister and ministers who were involved in making these changes.

I practically skipped out of the briefing room when we were doing this because the one really important thing to talk about is that we've just made people in the territory “people”. We were removing gendered language. When I highlighted the concerns I had of the legislation, it was through a very — I'm not a legislative expert so I was doing Google word searches in the documents and I identified ones where I could find really clear gendered language.

The reason why this is such a big deal — and it is — is that it's about joining the times but making sure that we're following the rights of people. All people are under the human rights legislation, so it's about making sure that people are covered under the legislation that we have here. There was a really entertaining moment that I'll share with everyone else who wasn't there for the briefing, but the drafter from the Department of Justice pointed out that they took a long and hard look at the *Land Titles Act, 2015*, because I had

highlighted that the word “husband” was used. They had studied the act and they had looked into it, and the word “husband” that was used is actually meant to be “husbandry”, which is about the cultivation or the raising of animals, in which case, I have no problem with that definition of the word “husband”.

These changes are a celebration for me. This is us moving toward what all legislation in Canada should be like. I have no critiques or criticism. I am super excited that it happened this quickly, because we had this conversation recently about the changes that need to be demanded and these are them here.

I am so pleased that people in our community will be viewed as the people that they are, no matter how they identify, and for that I am grateful. I thank the government for bringing these changes forward because it's been a long time that some of our community members have been left out, so this is important. I look forward to having the conversation in the Committee of the Whole and maybe making fun of myself a little bit about my custom Google word searches in documents, but I am so happy that people who had the skills were able to identify even more acts that I had and make sure that they're being changed.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to comments and then, of course, Committee of the Whole at some point.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: At risk of repeating a few things that my colleague has already said, I too will take the opportunity to speak briefly on this matter today, because it is an exciting step forward for the Yukon — one that is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, you have already heard from the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate about the general background and emphasis on the requirements set out here in this bill, but I would like to just take a couple of minutes to expand a bit on the legal issues that it deals with, partly because, like many of you here, I've watched this happen over many years — the last 15 for sure — and well beyond that with respect to the *Married Women's Property Act*.

It is an exciting day and I think we should take the opportunity to speak about that and celebrate, with respect to the modernization that is in this bill.

In his January 2017 mandate letters to us, the Premier charged the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and I, and other colleagues to conduct a review of legislation policies and practices to ensure the Yukon government meets the rules and social standards for the LGBTQ discrimination — and that was a quote, sorry. I will be happy to help with that after this particular presentation.

What we propose today is to amend nine acts for sexist, heteronormative and non-binary language and to repeal one — and you have heard about that.

The one act that we seek to repeal is in itself an antique, as the minister has mentioned, of bygone days — the *Married Women's Property Act*. Most antiques I favour but not this one. In its original form, it restated the old common law that when a woman married, her legal identity was subsumed into that of her husband's. I think it's a very important point to

make because there are, thank God, many generations behind us who don't have any concept of that understanding. I'm pleased that this is the case. I think that it's important to remind us all that it was, in fact, a regular practice for hundreds and hundreds of years. Her legal identity was subsumed into that of her husband's. A married woman could not own or dispose of property independently, she couldn't enter into a contract, she couldn't sue or be sued and she couldn't act as a guardian. Only single women could do all those things. The logic of that escapes me.

Once a woman was married, she legally became part of her husband. Both persons were united to be one person in the eyes of the law. The legal doctrine was known as unity of personality. Over the years, evolution in the common law and in society has eroded it, again, thank goodness, and this doctrine, still a Yukon statute although it has no effect any longer, remains on our statute books. As this House will hear and as Yukoners will hear me say in a bit, I don't favour laws that don't have any power or authority. I think we should — I don't favour statute books that aren't helpful and useful to the Yukon public.

Today, I'm pleased to confirm that a woman, married or not, is, of course, her full legal person and that's the reference made by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Unfortunately, through the years, the *Married Women's Property Act* hasn't even been amended to reflect the changes in societal attitudes. More recently, sections 15 and 28 of our *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is entrenched in our Constitution, asserts and legally protects women's rights. Although the Charter does not apply to private law — legal actions between parties — Canadian and Commonwealth courts have traditionally been uncomfortable defending laws that express an outmoded view of a woman as a person and their own legal entities. Courts have also stated repeatedly that they prefer that changes in law result from legislation rather than their rulings and that's been mentioned by the minister — again, a very important tenet and worth repeating.

Mr. Speaker, that's what we're doing here today — removing this outdated and irrelevant law from our Yukon legislation. Most Canadian jurisdictions have repealed or rendered ineffectual their version of our *Married Women's Property Act*, so it is well past time that we followed their lead. As if we haven't stated enough reasons, that particular act uses non-binary and sexist language that has no place in our modern society.

Repealing statutes that discriminate against women is one thing and it is really quite simple; however, creating a society that is more open to gender diversity is quite another. A step toward that occurred in Canada when we legalized same-sex marriage. A pivotal Yukon case from 14 years ago was part of a movement that created that great progression in this country. In 2004, the Yukon Supreme Court tried a case known as *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon*.

Let me just take a second to refresh your memory. In 2004 the *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon* case was won in a series of Canadian legal actions taken by a same-sex couple to assert

their right to marry. At issue was the application form that was used to apply for a licence of marriage here in the territory. At the time, the registrar of Vital Statistics stated to the applicants — and I quote: "The common law definition of marriage in Yukon remains the union of one man and one woman. As a result, until such time as the federal Parliament enacts legislation to allow same sex marriage, or the common law definition of marriage is changed in the Yukon, we are of the view that Yukon Vital Statistics is unable to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples."

Right there, at that exact moment in time, there was an opportunity for the Yukon government to make a change. They did not. So off to court they went.

Of course, the Supreme Court of the Yukon gave two male plaintiffs the right to receive a marriage licence and have a marriage ceremony registered under Yukon law. If I remember correctly, it happened within days. The court ruled that the common-law definition of marriage was invalid because it violated section 15(1) equality rights and, as such, could not be justified under section 1 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

On the day the ruling came out, the court created a new common-law definition of marriage in the Yukon — and I quote: "... the voluntary union for life of two persons to the exclusion of all others..."

The court also indicated that the Attorney General of Canada, who had participated in the trial, was so fundamentally inconsistent with the approach that it took in the other provinces with similar actions, that it awarded solicitor-client costs to the plaintiffs to be paid by Canada, in addition to the Yukon being ordered to pay solicitor-client costs for their refusal to grant the licence — the ability of the court to indicate, not only its decision, but the fact that the action was so fundamentally problematic that costs would be awarded to the plaintiffs.

This last fact is what should give any government pause, because not only does ignoring the equality of Canadians come at great personal cost to some of our citizens, it also comes at a cost when the government tries to deny those equality rights and that cost, of course, is borne by the taxpayer of this great territory and other provinces and territories across this country. As one of the plaintiffs correctly stated, the *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon* case was — and I quote: "... the nail in the coffin on the issue..." of same-sex marriage."

Later in 2004, four other provinces reformulated the opposite-sex, common-law definition of marriage and issued orders authorizing same-sex marriage in their respective jurisdictions. Soon every province and territory, including the Yukon, affirmed it. In 2005, it became federal law.

As we move toward a more inclusive and gender-diverse society, there's another practical point worth considering. If we continue to deny any of our citizens any rights enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, we are leaving ourselves vulnerable to expensive litigation and test cases. It's easy, Mr. Speaker, to do the right thing.

One other interesting point now is that allowing same-sex marriage brings with it an obligation for us to alter our bureaucratic process to adapt to the new state of the law. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the necessary changes were not made to Yukon government forms, including the certificate of marriage, which was clearly required by the *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon* case for more than 12 years. It took the Yukon government that long to change the certificate of marriage form after the case.

Our government was elected in late 2016 — again, the case was in 2004 — and, as we have stated in our Platform and in our mandate as ministers, we are committed to equality for our LGBTQ2S+ community. That is why our Minister of Health and Social Services, responsible for the Vital Statistics branch, made it a priority to change the form that was the instrument of rejection in the *Dunbar & Edge v. Yukon* case.

Today's marriage certificate has no reference to "husband" and "wife". It uses no gender terms to refer to either spouse. At this point, we must stop and thank and recognize the Minister of Health and Social Services for making that vital revision to the marriage certificate. This is something that, Mr. Speaker, was required by a change in the law as a result of the common law in that case in 2004 — but it was never done. It was a small change and very easy to do, and it is of utmost importance for two reasons: first, the Yukon government forms did not accurately reflect the law; and, second, for the purpose of including those people who must fill in applications who do not see themselves identified within a government form because the language is too narrow.

One thing that we have to remember is that changes in law, including the ones we propose today, do not exist in isolation. They bring with them necessary revisions to government processes, like revising the marriage certificate, as I've noted. The minister has already stated that we must change the way we provide services to all of our Yukon citizens.

In the almost two years since we took office, we have made tremendous progress in making our laws more inclusive of all genders. The changes we propose today are the latest step towards making our laws inclusive and relevant to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. We intend to continue this process — carefully, methodically and purposefully.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: Before we continue debate on Bill No. 21 on second reading, I would like to introduce Jessica Lott Thompson, the executive director of the Yukon Human Rights Commission, who is in the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: My name is John Streicker. I go by the pronouns "he" and "him".

I wanted to say that I am proud to stand in support of Bill No. 21, *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*. I wish to be an ally. I support and stand up for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual,

queer/questioning, two-spirit, plus — or LGBTQ2S+ — people.

I note that I come from a place of privilege, Mr. Speaker. For many years, the legislation that governs this country has not been representative of the complete Canadian landscape. Moving toward a representative and inclusive body of legislation is important and significant. A necessary shift in the way our society approaches inclusiveness is to ensure that our laws reflect the rights of all peoples. This is long overdue, but I also want to acknowledge that we have a long way to go to change the culture of discrimination that exists here in Canada, here in the world and here in the Yukon.

As a government, I would like to acknowledge the support that I have heard in the Legislature today. We as a government are committed to passing changes as we have already done to the *Vital Statistics Act*, the *Human Rights Act*, the Yukon *Public Service Labour Relations Act* and now more.

I am also quite excited that, with this piece of legislation, we see the first repeal of a significant piece of legislation, the *Married Women's Property Act*. I think that's worth noting. I also believe that, if my memory is correct, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has pointed out in a previous Sitting that this is an act that should be repealed.

Many of us know people who have been marginalized for a range of reasons. Understanding that people are people, no matter what their sexual or gender orientation is, is important. We know under our human rights, we should not discriminate based on this.

I have seen a real renaissance here in the territory. It has been really exciting to see, for example, our pride parade. It is not about one group; it is about being more inclusive. It's my sense that, when we embrace diversity, we strengthen all of us.

It's the differences that are so important that make up our character. It's important that, as we work to get along with one another, we act with respect.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a workshop called "Bridging Gender Divides". I heard first-hand from people who have been somewhere on the gender spectrum that isn't binary. I heard first-hand about the struggles that they have had within our society to be loved, respected, appreciated — I would just like to say that I feel this is an important piece of legislation and I'm very happy that we, as a territory, are moving forward.

Speaker: Is there further debate on Bill No. 21?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard at this time?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have listened carefully and with an open heart and with interest, of course, to the remarks from my colleagues in the House this afternoon, and I thank them very much for their thoughtful contributions to this discussion of this bill.

At its heart, we are talking about the future we want to create in this beautiful northern territory. Our government has

a vision for supporting healthy, vibrant communities. It is one of our key priorities.

For me, the importance of our debate in the Legislature is how we can transform this vision into meaningful change and that all Yukoners feel included and respected.

This bill makes sure that we are meeting our constitutional obligations and modernizing our legislation in support of greater inclusion and equality of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, and I'll just answer the question that was posed by the Member for Lake Laberge. He asked specifically — and I did say this in my opening comments so maybe didn't hear them. I did say that we did not specifically consult on this bill, and the reason for that is that the changes proposed in Bill No. 21 are a legal and constitutional obligation.

I think that the Minister of Justice clearly went through the length of time that has gone by during which these changes have not been made in our laws, and they are long overdue. I'll get into a little bit more around that as I go through my closing comments.

These changes certainly ensure the treatment of same-sex and common-law partners. The move was to modernize legislation and bring it into line with other Canadian jurisdictions. A debate in the public would not have changed the result of what we're doing here today. That being said, we are having a debate in the House and we all represent the public, and so I'm looking forward to Committee of the Whole and having further debate with all Members of the Legislative Assembly on this bill.

Many of us here today, if not all of us, know people who identify as LGBTQ2S+. They are our friends, they are our family members, and they are our neighbours and our colleagues. We know that these members of our community deserve the same equality, rights and considerations that others enjoy.

That is why we brought forward this legislation. The question of whether we should support equality of all genders and sexual orientations belongs to another time. We know that this is the right thing to do but, more importantly, this is something we want to do.

Yukon was indeed among the few jurisdictions to initially legalize same-sex marriage, as the Minister for Justice went through carefully, and update the common-law definition of marriage as "the voluntary union for life of two persons to the exclusion of all others".

Building upon amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* of 1992 and the *Marriage Act* of 2014, this bill helps to, at the same time, address where our language fell short for our constitutional obligations. The amendments to these nine acts affirm the importance of equality and inclusion of LGBTQ2S+ married and common-law spouses by making important shifts in language.

Indeed, replacing gender-binary and heteronormative references to married and common-law partners with terms inclusive of all genders and same-sex couples ensures that our enactments are not discriminatory to LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. This supports greater societal equality and, by extension, positive social outcomes and community well-being. The

repeal of the *Married Women's Property Act*, alongside the necessary changes to the *Judicature Act*, underscores our commitment to reflect progress in society and the courts.

I know that many of us here in the Legislature, as we've heard today, join many women across the territory in pride as we repeal an act with such outdated language. I think it's very fitting that we're doing this and that it is happening during Women's History Month. It truly is a historic moment and time that we're experiencing here in our Legislative Assembly.

While there was a time when the *Married Women's Property Act* was required, it is clearly unnecessary with the progress of women's rights, which are human rights, throughout this country. I want to express my appreciation for the meaningful engagement and debate in this House. I look forward to more, as I have already stated. We are part of changing the way our laws and our society conceptualize gender and sexual orientation in a very substantive way. We are learning more about how the language in our laws can intentionally and unintentionally discriminate against people of all genders and sexual orientations. I'm proud that we are committed to modernizing our legislation to ensure that our territory, our Yukon, is welcoming, open and inclusive of diversity within our communities.

I continue to learn so much from members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and the tireless advocacy work that takes place both here and across the country. This bill is but one contribution to a much broader, multi-faceted approach to creating a more inclusive Yukon. Modernizing legislation is only one component of our efforts. We also know that our LGBTQ2S+ friends, family members, neighbours and colleagues will provide the guidance we need to prioritize further changes to government legislation, services and programs.

That is why we are taking the time to design a very safe and inclusive public engagement on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. We've concluded the pre-engagement phase. Our community partners have provided their input on how best to engage the LGBTQ2S+ organizations, individuals, families and allies to provide input on their needs and priorities.

The input from the pre-engagements, our ongoing interdepartmental collaboration and the expertise from a company called Qmunity will make sure the LGBTQ2S+ voices are heard and understood so we can effectively respond to their priority needs.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members for their thoughts and their contributions on how to make our laws more inclusive and equitable for all Yukoners. So let's continue to move forward together.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 21 agreed to

Speaker: Are there any further government bills?

Bill No. 26: Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018 — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 26, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that the *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 26, entitled *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As the Minister of Justice, I have been mandated by the Premier to ensure that our laws meet acceptable standards for fairness, equality and respect for the rule of law. It is important that we work on an ongoing basis to ensure Yukon's legislation is valid, error-free and consistent.

As such, I have tasked the Department of Justice with identifying and bringing forward technical amendment bills like this that fix specific issues in legislation that may not otherwise be addressed until a more substantive review of each individual piece of legislation might occur.

As we know, we have heard in this House quite recently that there are some of those reviews that just don't come forward, for whatever reason. Dealing with technical amendments is that much more important. Sometimes these bills are larger, as we saw last spring, and other times we see, as in this case, that they are quite brief. This one is quite brief; however, it is still important that we continue to work on making these types of changes.

This bill proposes to amend two pieces of legislation. Bill No. 26, *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, proposes an amendment to the *Human Rights Act* that will help to facilitate the smooth operation of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of

Adjudicators. This amendment will allow a member whose term is set to expire, if they are in the middle of a hearing of a matter, to continue to remain a member of that panel of adjudicators until a final decision has been delivered so as not to interrupt that process. This amendment will ensure procedural fairness for those individuals who have hearings underway by reducing the need to have the entire matter reheard by a new panel. More importantly, perhaps, it will provide flexibility that is needed in the scheduling of hearings. This type of provision also exists in other provincial and territorial human rights legislation.

Bill No. 26, *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*, will also make an amendment to the *Territorial Court Act*. This amendment will repeal section 11(5) of the act. This provision deals with the retirement age of judges who were appointed to the bench prior to coming into force the act. This provision is no longer needed, as all of our current territorial court judges were appointed after the act came into force.

This also provides clarity in the legislation, as there could be a perceived conflict between sections 11(5) and another section in the act. The repeal of section 11(5) will remove the potential of that conflict.

Cleaning up and repealing unneeded provisions in legislation is an important part of keeping legislation up to date and relevant. The *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018* is an important bill that helps ensure Yukon's legislation is as fair, error-free and clear as possible.

Some might question the necessity for making what could be considered minor or inconsequential amendments. I am pleased to bring these amendments here because Yukoners deserve up-to-date, clear and concise legislation. When we have the opportunity to amend legislation for the improvement of our laws, we should do so.

I look forward to the support of all members of this House on this bill.

Mr. Cathers: There is really not much to this legislation. It does make a very minor change for which we understand the rationale. The text is less than a page in length. We do not have any concerns with this legislation, so we will be supporting its passage.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the Minister of Justice for her comments and explanation with respect to the *Technical Amendments Act (No. 2), 2018*.

In addition to indicating that the NDP, of course, will support these technical amendments, I express some curiosity as to how technical amendments to current legislation are prioritized. It's clearly not alphabetical, because surely there's more legislation between H, *Human Rights Act*, and T, *Territorial Court Act*, that is requiring review and amendment. So I would be interested if the minister could clarify that. Again, just as a point of interest, we're making an amendment to section 22 of the *Human Rights Act* to basically ensure that good practice is followed with respect to not interrupting the train of thought during adjudication. I would ask the minister if she could clarify with respect to the *Human Rights Act*,

which establishes the Human Rights Commission — and we've got in the act that the commission is responsible or reports to the Legislative Assembly, but is it by regulation or by convention that it actually is subject to the Department of Justice as opposed to what the act says? I think section 16 speaks to the Human Rights Commission reporting to the Legislative Assembly and for budgetary purposes through the Speaker. So I'm not sure how that would be clarified, because it doesn't look like it needs a technical amendment and it sounds like it needs a confirmation of how the act is being carried out in conformance with what the act actually says.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, we're happy to support the legislation.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on second reading of Bill No. 26?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate.
Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the members opposite. I will just take a brief moment to try to address the two comments by the Leader of the Third Party. No, they are not alphabetical. They come to the attention of the legislative drafters in the department and ultimately come to my attention when there are changes that are pressing — if I can say it that way — and are potentially going to cause a problem.

We did have the issue with the Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators arise in the last eight months or so — probably in the spring of 2018, if I remember correctly. We did have brought to our attention the potential conflict between the *Territorial Court Act*, section 11(5) and another piece of legislation that dealt with retirement age for judges. So for clarity's sake, both of those matters have been brought forward. With respect to that, those are, in my view and the view of those who give me great advice, technical amendments, so that's why they are here.

The question that the member has asked about the convention or the structure of the Human Rights Commission is one that I would like to discuss further, but it is a matter of policy and practice as opposed to a technical amendment. Certainly, in the event that the process is changed in future, it would be an act to amend the *Human Rights Act* more specifically than a technical one. In the event that it requires those kinds of amendments — I can't answer that on the floor today.

I have read an opinion about the structure of the *Human Rights Act* but I don't recall, and should not recall, for this Legislative Assembly today the specific details of that because it has been some time, and my memory should not be trusted in that circumstance.

The last thing that I would like to say, hoping that I have addressed those two issues for the member opposite, is to thank the Department of Justice professionals and all those who work on these types of bills coming forward. They work with our legislation every day and bring forward the solutions that we need to have modern and relevant laws. We truly

appreciate their extensive work on behalf of Yukoners, and I appreciate the support of the members of this House for this bill.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 26 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20: Societies Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to just begin by welcoming back to the Legislature two colleagues — the first is Bhreagh Dabbs from the Legislative Counsel office and second is Louise Michaud, who I think is on her first day as assistant deputy minister of Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs. It is always nice as well to have Sephora back in the Legislature.

We have had second reading debate on the *Societies Act*. I know that colleagues generally were supportive of the act but that there may be some specific questions. I'm happy to have that debate here today. I will just sit down and look forward to questions from members opposite.

Ms. Van Bibber: I too would like to welcome and thank the department officials for coming — with a guide dog as well. It is also fun to see — I'm not sure what the dog's name is, but it's fun to see her in the House.

As we had spoken about the *Societies Act* last week and we had a good briefing by the department, I understand that there was approximately 90 participants in the reviews leading up to the rewriting of the act — 55 at open-house events, seven through teleconferences and 30 written submissions. This was the sum of the public input on potential improvements. Thanks to all of those who gave their time to participate and give some feedback.

Can the minister give us a feel for the top two or three main concerns that registered societies had with the current legislation?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I did have the opportunity to attend one of those public sessions. Also just a reminder that, when there was a request here in the Legislature that we extend the date of the engagement, I think we extended it another month. I thank members here for that suggestion.

Based on my own observations and talking with my colleagues, I think that the three things that we heard most — and I don't want to give them in an order, because I don't want to give it in a sense of precedence, but they were all important issues that we heard.

Number one was that there was a desire to handle backlogs that were dealing with changes to amendments to constitution and bylaws and basically to try to reduce the red tape so that our societies could register more readily.

Along with that, there was the notion that not all societies were the same thing, that there needed to be some flexibility to allow for the differences across a range of societies and that the societies wanted to be able to tailor their bylaws to suit.

Finally, it was just that the act itself wasn't always clear. There wasn't always information about what would happen around a range of issues, around things like dissolution. There was a request from societies that we just provide more information about societies and about how the act would govern them.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that response.

To modernize and update the act with plain language is always good. Although it has expanded to multiple more pages, we do hope that things are going to be clearer and easier to follow. We too agree with cutting red tape.

Societies or groups file their bylaws without perusal by the registrar as has happened before. Who carries the liability if the bylaws are not up to code and are not what the group needs to fulfill their goals?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks to the Member for Porter Creek North for the question — it is a good question.

Let me just start talking about the plain language of the act. We actually gave direction to make it in plain language. I know that they worked to not write it with a lot of cross references. There are whole sections — for example, a member society — that probably don't pertain to many of our existing societies. Even though it is long, there are whole sections that people don't really have to concern themselves with. I think that the act is intended to assist our societies so that they can read directly by using the table of contents to find the right place and find the information generally that they need.

With respect to the overall responsibility, it is the directors of the society who have the overall responsibility for the society and for ensuring that it is operating in compliance with the act and all acts. If there was a bylaw, for example, that was not in compliance — let's say that it contravened our *Human Rights Act* — then it would be the society that has the obligation to correct that act and, in fact, within the *Societies Act* bill that is before us — the draft — section 12(4), I believe, says — and I quote: "Subject to subsection (5), if a provision of the bylaws is inconsistent with this Act, the regulations or any other enactment of Yukon or Canada, the provision has no effect." What it is saying is that if you made a bylaw and it is suggesting that you do something that would contravene — say, the *Human Rights Act* — then that bylaw is not in effect. It might be sitting there on the books, but it is not correct.

We can talk about how that is tested and I can also talk about how that is amended, but just specifically to start off with, it is the responsibility of the directors.

Ms. Van Bibber: In general debate the other day, we spoke of single-interest groups — such as hate groups — forming a society and operating within their own parameters. We were assured that other laws or other departments could take over and they could not function and they would not be granted legal status to operate within the territory, but if the registrar is no longer looking over those bylaws, what assurance does the general public have that self-interest groups do not flourish under this particular new act?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. I'll answer this in a couple of different ways. The bill does not directly prevent hate groups from incorporating into societies. It's also possible, of course, that there's a group out there that has intentions to act in a way that contradicts our *Human Rights Act* and they might incorporate as a society, but it might not even show it in the nature — they don't broadcast in their

constitution or in their bylaws; you might not know it, even. I just want to say, to begin with, that the registrar will, of course, look at the constitution and will, of course, look at the bylaws; however, it's not their job to be scrutinizing those and to be approving them.

I will just say again, that all societies, including member-funded societies, may only be created for lawful purposes, if under the new act — and depending on the specific circumstances — the registrar — if they see something that they feel is contradictory to other acts, they can refuse to file incorporation documents so they don't even begin. If they see something they have a concern with, they have the authority to require the society to correct that situation before they move forward. Maybe it's something inadvertent or — I want to say — doesn't on the face value appear to be nefarious — in which case, the registrar can seek to have it amend those documents so that they are appropriate.

It will be as it's encountered. The thing that I want to say, though, is that, beyond the *Societies Act*, we have human rights legislation, we have the *Criminal Code* and there are many remedies that can be found in those legislations that will apply. The more appropriate place to deal with issues of societies that are propagating hate, which is contradictory to our human rights legislation is under that legislation, not under the *Societies Act*.

No matter what safeguards we put in place, it is still going to be possible that societies can register and form and we will be none the wiser, based on the content of their constitution and bylaws.

Ms. Van Bibber: This is sort of a take on the same question. With duties of the registrar scaled back so that the onus does fall back on the directors of a society — and you just said that they can look at the file documents to ensure their compliance and correctness. So the oversight then does go back to the registrar to ensure — am I not understanding this?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I want to say that the word is not "ensure". It is not the responsibility of the registrar to ensure. There is an opportunity for the registrar — if they identify concerns — to act on them, but it is not their responsibility to ensure. It is the society's responsibility to ensure that it is compliant with the laws — for example, human rights legislation and the *Criminal Code*. That would be where the responsibility lies.

I will just take this back a step. I hear that this could be a concern. I think it is a concern today in the existing legislation. As I say, there are groups that form and become a society and we are none the wiser at times.

What we heard as well from societies was that they were concerned that we were impeding their ability to perform well because, under the current act, we're reviewing all amendments to bylaws and it is taking time.

I think that, as a mature territory, we can understand that, for 99 percent of societies, they have the ability to do that. Of the remaining percentage — and I'm just speaking metaphorically, Mr. Chair, because I don't have an exact number. In a small number of cases, it will be a mistake.

There will be some small misstep. We will work with those societies to help correct that.

In an even smaller number of cases, it will be where there is a group that is organizing in a way that we would consider unlawful, and we have tools to try to address that. We'll try to catch that here, as we can, but it is not the responsibility of the registrar to ensure — it is the responsibility of the directors to ensure that their society is compliant with all of our laws.

Ms. Van Bibber: If a parent company of a society is outside the territory and there is just an arm of that society registered in Yukon, who is responsible for the bylaws? Is it the parent company in their jurisdiction, or would it be the Yukon local office and our Yukon jurisdiction?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: If I could just ask for a bit of a clarification from the member opposite — was she referring to an extra-territorial society or a corporation?

I just want to be clear, because if it's a business I'm going to give a different answer than if it's a society.

Ms. Van Bibber: I think it would be extra-territorial — that a society registered, say, in BC but also has an arm of the society here in Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to make sure I am navigating things correctly here. If it is a society that exists across Canada and they are opening a branch within the Yukon, then they will be registered here, but the regulations of that society will move under the *Business Corporations Act*. They will be governed by their bylaws from their home jurisdiction, wherever that may be.

Ms. Van Bibber: Societies are held to a high standard — and so they should be, because they have to do annual reporting on finances and any changes that happen within their group. The clarification in the new act is supposed to be simpler, and so we ask the minister if he does feel that the new act will be simpler for filing documents for every society category.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I do think that overall we have been working to reduce red tape for societies and that we have been working to provide clarity. Those have been two of the overriding goals, as I think I said in my first response for the member opposite. A society still has to do annual financial statements to give to its members at its annual general meeting, and those statements have to be available to their members and to the public, should they request them.

The real place where we're going to get to the advantage — and it's not so much to do with this act as it is to do with processes within the department — is that we have been developing a Yukon corporate online registry.

Our goal is to make the registry a digital registry that will then provide more ready access to information, and I hope for the ability some day for societies just to upload their documents and to make it quite simple. We are not there yet. I know the department has been working hard on this and I know that they have more work planned each year to move this ahead. I think we started with businesses — the business registry. I think that societies are in the queue and we will be working toward it. I think that will be a great savings for all of our societies.

Ms. Van Bibber: As reporting and financials are complicated and at times costly, it was hoped during the consultations that this act would alleviate some of these issues around finances and auditing.

Will there be financial assistance available for non-profit organizations that do need help in handling financial audits?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This act was 30 years old. We knew it needed updating. We were hearing from societies that they had concerns. We wanted to modernize it. We had a good look at legislation across the country. We found some good examples to work from. All of those things were there. It's great to update.

It wasn't intended, for example, to provide more financial resources or more funding for our societies, whether that is for doing their books or anything, for that matter. Those are very different policy questions. This was about governance and how the societies work.

The question about funding is a different question altogether. We do, of course, support our societies in many ways and we try to provide them support. We would end up in a conversation with almost every department if we were talking about societies that are supported.

I don't want to be mean-spirited in any way, Mr. Chair. I think societies provide a whole lot back for this territory. We are the richer for it by far.

When it comes to the question about whether a society is required to do an audit or a review and whether they can use an accountant or a bookkeeper and all those sorts of questions, they will be dealt with in the regulation section which is to come. They are not yet developed. They should be developed over the next year or so. We certainly have taken a lot of feedback from societies about their interests and what they think are appropriate thresholds. The balance always is to try to make sure that we are setting those levels so that societies can be accountable and transparent and not moving too far down a path where they entertain too much risk, while at the same time not be burdened with the additional accounting. That is still to come. I will see if there are follow-up questions and whether I have answered it directly for the member opposite.

Ms. Van Bibber: Yes, I think going into the regulations — I'm sure it will be there.

The *Societies Act* is saying that it is dropping from five to three directors to begin a society and only one has to be a Yukon resident. Then, once they are formed, they can apply for public grants and program dollars, like all societies.

Has the minister been assured that financial fraud will not happen by lessening the number of directors and/or the number of Yukon residents?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to be careful again with language. The current act requires that there be five incorporators — not directors. The new proposed act would require three incorporators. Once a society is incorporated, it can drop down to the number of directors it wishes.

What we heard from societies and in the feedback we received was that one of the challenges is, especially in our smaller communities, that we are drawing on the same people

time and time again to form a society to handle recreation or to handle environmental issues or to handle health issues. There are many, many societies that focus on health. There is such a range of things and our communities want to be really engaged, and it is challenging to maintain a quorum. What we did was we looked across Canada for what the trend was for the incorporation of societies. What we found was that there are many that have gone to three and there are some that have gone to one. The trend has been to drop the number and then using the directors and the financial records to be the accountability side of this.

I want to be careful; I don't believe that any law can guarantee that there won't be fraud that occurs. What the laws need to do is spell out how we will address fraud and how we will provide best practices to prevent, as much as possible, the occurrence of fraud. But I can't stand here and make a guarantee, Mr. Chair.

What I can tell you is that, under the new act, we've spelled out the obligations of the directors to show them where their responsibility lies, pass across to them that sense of responsibility and detail it. I think that's where this act moves toward best practices. The issue of the number of directors was really a result of listening to our societies and explaining that there were times when they felt that they just needed a smaller number for a quorum and to understand the pressures of everyone's contributions to their communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: Just now the minister spoke about forming societies and lessening the number of incorporators. Is there better public education on why a group should form a society or should they be forming clubs or another entity? Is it always necessary to have a society and the need to incorporate and register? Perhaps there's a different way of doing business in our small communities. Does the minister have any ideas on that?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin by correcting something when I rose the last time. A drafter reminded me that under the new draft act, once a society incorporates, it must maintain those three directors — it can't drop below — whereas in the previous act, after incorporation, things could change. Actually, the current act doesn't speak to a minimum number of directors. What you could have currently is that you could incorporate and then drop down and we would have fewer than three. It's actually the other way around. This is ensuring that we will have a minimum of three.

It's a great question that the member opposite has asked — like, why? Why form a society? Generally speaking, many people congregate to do good things. They might go to do volunteer work or they might form a club. Not every group that congregates forms a society. Typically — I'm going to give you our best sense here — but I think that people's motivations are not always easy to articulate or identify. One of the reasons that you do it is that if you form a society, you can get a bank account. If you're trying to take in money from your members or through fundraising and you want to pool it and you want to keep it for the purpose of that society, rather than sitting with John, Bhreagh or Louise, you would instead

put the money in a bank account which is dedicated to that society and goes past the terms of those folks who are involved. As new people become directors over time through AGMs, the society continues to perpetuate.

Another reason is that when you form a legal entity like a society, then liability belongs to that society and you can get insurance like directors' and officers' insurance, which then limits the liability that goes out. As long as they are working appropriately and in good faith under the rules that are laid out, there is a limitation to liability that is out there.

I think those are sometimes the two reasons. I think both of them have to do with risk and money. As societies or as groups congregate to deal with things — as it becomes a little bit more complicated around risks and money — then I think that's when we see societies forming.

Mr. Chair, I don't think that with the formation of this act that we will see — I'm not anticipating that, as a result of clarifying the rules and reducing the red tape and increasing flexibility, we will necessarily see more societies, except for maybe those member societies like book clubs, but they are a very different group underneath the act and it's there just really to allow groups like that to be able to form bank accounts. They will not be eligible for funding from the government.

Ms. Van Bibber: No, that was more of a personal interest question as opposed to thinking there was going to be a rise in societies lining up to form groups.

As we know, in the rural communities many people use territorial agents to buy their fishing licences, business licences and drivers' licences. Will those small societies in communities be able to file through their local agents? Is there an appetite for that to be put in the regulations?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That is a great suggestion. My basic answer is that we haven't explored it and I don't think it is going to be the way we go because we are hoping that by 2019 — somewhere in there — we start to get the online side of this stuff. I think that is our focus right now, rather than territorial agents or the territorial reps.

I am going to hold that suggestion because, honestly, we haven't explored it and if, for some reason, we hit some sort of hiccup around the online stuff and if those things were to be delayed, I would be perfectly willing — I just don't want to generate another system. I totally want to support our rural societies — I am all over that — but if what we do is create another system and then switch it out the next day, I am not sure that is helpful to anyone. If we are able to proceed as our original plan has us right now, then I think that is probably what we are going to stick with.

Ms. Van Bibber: I know there have been rumblings on duplicate organizations and maybe too many societies doing similar or the same work. These rumblings state that maybe we should be encouraging them to join forces and collaborate more. Should the government cap the number of organizations if there is a society that is meeting a certain need in a small, rural community or in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The wonders of texts, Mr. Chair. I just got a message in to us that, while you can't register

through the territorial agents, the territorial agents will act like a mail service for our rural folks. If they wish to drop stuff off, I am being told that they can drop it off and that will then get to us.

A cap — no, I don't think so. What I do think is important is that we help similar organizations and similar societies to know about each other and to understand what is going on. That is a great thing that will happen out of a registry that is more accessible. I do think it is important that we try to work with our societies to remove overlap or gain strength from working together, but I don't think that we should force societies to do that. I think it is encourage, yes; force, no. I am not using "force" in a pejorative sense — I don't mean that — so "require" is a better term, I think. In other words, I think that we want to allow societies to form as they wish to form and we wish to be enabling for them. The work about whether there are two societies that are doing virtually the same thing, I think that is more the job of our departments.

For example, if there were groups that were dealing with sports in one community and another group formed that was dealing with recreation in that same community, I might, as the minister — or one of our folks in the department, I hope, would let them know that there was another group right here and they may want to talk to them rather than form a group.

I don't think it would be the role of the registrar nor would it be under the purview of this act.

Ms. Van Bibber: When the input was being brought forward through those initial groups that I mentioned at the start — and the rural communities were encouraged to phone in with their comments and a few did. I do know that being on a teleconference sometimes is not the best way to gain input.

I wonder if the minister will visit the communities when they are starting to get input for the regulations and encourage more rural communities to take part during this next year?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There were some conference calls that were set up to allow people to join in from other communities and listen in, but I also know that the team doing the engagement did — and was letting everyone know that they did one-on-ones with societies. If there was a society in another community and they weren't able to make it to a meeting, my understanding is that there were instances of one-on-one calls, which is different from listening in to a conference-type thing where it's hard to get your voice heard. I appreciate that.

I do think that we will look for ways to engage all communities around the next phase and also the education phase of introducing the new act — so in developing the regulations and in how the act is rolled out to all of our societies and ways in which we can support them.

I can make the offer to do that work as I go around to communities, because I do try to visit all communities. While I will make the offer out there, I don't think it's likely to be me who is doing stuff. I think that we want to make sure that we're hearing from our societies and connecting with them. All I have said to the department is: Let's find out who is

interested and let's make sure we're finding a good way to connect with them.

I don't think that's likely to result in an all-stops tour. What I think it's more likely to result in is: there's a society here that really wants to talk to us; we have another two that are also there; the next time we're up in that community, we'll make sure to connect with them and get their input — something like that — or we have one society here, let's just call them up on the phone, have a good conversation with them and then check in with them about whether that is sufficient or not. I think it's going to be flexible. That's how I picture it.

Ms. Van Bibber: I thank the minister for his responses today and, again, thank you to the staff for being here to assist.

Ms. White: Of course, I echo the welcome to our officials in the House today.

I just have a variety of questions — kind of all over the place — and I'm sad to say that I worked my way through every word until page 66 and skimmed the rest, so I am working through it.

I have the definition of “director”, as stated in this document. It says: “‘director’, in relation to a society, means an individual who has been designated, elected or appointed, in accordance with this Act, as a director of the society, regardless of the title by which the individual is called...” For Hansard, that is on page 14.

If the minister could tell me what a director is — is that someone who is on the board of directors in a not-for-profit or a society? If he can, in more plain language, explain to me what a director is?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is that, Mr. Chair — it's the board of directors. It is those folks who are responsible for and in charge of the society.

Often from the board of directors you will see the appointments of an executive — so someone on the board of directors will be the president, et cetera — but the directors are that group.

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

The reason why I asked about the definition of a director is that there is a section — section 47, oddly enough, on page 47 — that talks about the qualifications of directors. It says: “47(1) The following persons are not qualified to be a director of a society: (a) a person who is under the age of majority; (b) a person who is not an individual; (c) a person for whom a guardian has been appointed under the *Adult Protection and Decision Making Act*...”

The reason why I highlight this is that if we go over to the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*, in the guiding principles, in point two, it says: “This Act is to be administered and interpreted in accordance with the following principles (a) all adults are entitled to live in the manner they wish and to accept or refuse support, assistance, or protection as long as they do not harm others and they are capable of making decisions about those matters; (b) adults are entitled to be informed about and, to the best of their ability, participate in, the management of their affairs;...”

The reason why I'm highlighting this act and the qualifications of directors is that the Yukon Association for Community Living and People First Society of Yukon have people with intellectual disabilities as their board. So on the board of the Yukon Association of Community Living, there is a person with an intellectual disability who may fall underneath the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*.

People First of Canada — I mean, this is an organization that is a national voice for people who have been labelled with an intellectual disability. They're about rights — human rights, citizenship rights, accommodation rights and language rights. People First Society of Yukon is a member-controlled organization. That means that, in order to be a member, you need to be representative of People First, which is a person with an intellectual disability. They do advocacy on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities.

We have the qualification of directors, both 47(1)(c), which talks about a person for whom a guardian has been appointed — and I'll highlight that “guardian” actually is not in the definitions of that act. I didn't read all 49 pages, but I was looking for the definition of “guardian” to see what that would mean. Then, under 47(1)(d), under “Qualifications of directors” it says: “... a person who has been found to be mentally incompetent or incapable of managing their affairs by a court elsewhere than in Yukon...”

I would just like some clarification on those points. Is a person with an intellectual disability who does have — according to the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act* — may have supported a decision-maker in their life under the supported decision-making agreement — are those folks able to be directors on boards?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That was an incredibly thorough question, thank you. I'll respond a few ways here. I think we will have to also go back and check the other act and try to make sure that all our i's are dotted and t's are crossed. Generally someone who has an intellectual disability is not yet found — they have an intellectual disability; that's all I'll say. That doesn't make them eligible or ineligible.

If, on the other hand, there has been application to a court and the court finds that they are incapable of managing some or all of their affairs and has a guardian appointed, then that is a time when we don't want that person — much in the same way that we don't want a minor — to be held liable for a society.

So advisors — terrific. We might have, for example, a society that really represents youth interests — Bringing Youth Towards Equality — I think we could all name off a number of groups. The Association for Community Living is a great example as well, as the member opposite has noted. The point here is that we definitely want the ability for people for whom a guardian has been appointed and who has an intellectual disability, if they want to be advising — terrific — but not carrying the responsibility and liability of a society.

I will also note from conversations with my colleagues that this is consistent with other acts that we have — for example, the *Business Corporations Act* — and other

jurisdictions across Canada. I don't know if it's universal, but this is generally the case.

If I haven't been able to follow it up completely here and satisfy the member opposite, then I will ask that we take some time to look back at the other act and make sure that everything is lining up, but that's the basic reason.

Ms. White: As I am not a lawyer, I would totally appreciate that. The reason why I highlight this as a concern is that both People First and the Yukon Association for Community Living are all about empowering people with intellectual disabilities. That's full inclusion, including on boards.

I guess the next question would be: Were either of those groups contacted about this definition in 47 and how that might affect them?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: All nearly 800 societies were contacted, so everyone was contacted and everybody was invited and welcomed to be a part. I'm trying to remember in my own memory whether the then-executive director — I'm just trying to recall whether I saw her there or not. I completely believe in the notion of empowerment and having people as part of boards. What I don't want to see happen, and what this act is trying to say we should not do, is also end up having them take liability and responsibility, if they are someone who has been found by the courts to not be capable of managing some or all of their affairs. That's what I want to say.

It's not about not including them. It's about not burdening them. That's why I think the act is trying to protect them. I hope it's not being paternalistic. This notion that a society would appreciate being advised or even inspired by people with intellectual disabilities is a great thing and I hope we're not taking away from it here through this act.

Ms. White: Did the Yukon Human Rights Commission submit any kind of information about this clause and the definition of "director" and their qualifications?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I'm going to apologize to the member opposite. I was just gathering a little bit of information and I have completely missed the question. I'm going to give a small response back just to start and get some more clarity on her previous question. I will ask her if she could just indulge me and repeat her question.

Under the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*, part 3, called "Court-Appointed Guardians", is where we'll find the discussion around guardians. I am still happy to ask the officials to follow up and provide a more fulsome response. I would ask if she could just repeat that last question for me.

Ms. White: I will get back to that question, but I'm going to follow up with this first.

I guess the question is: For a person on a board, is there a difference between having — under section 3, which I am just trying to pull up right now — a court-appointed guardian and then having an assisted decision-maker? Is that two different classifications? I'm literally asking for clarification because I am reading as quickly as I can right now and I do not have the background for this.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I am assured by my colleagues that it is different.

Let me just also say here that if there are clarifications required that go beyond this Committee of the Whole today, we are happy to try to follow up just to provide that information. We will get what we can here. We will follow up with what we don't have as we are able.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that because I am also trying to follow documents online right now without the support of two specifically trained people.

The reason why I am asking about the definition of "director" and things is that it's not just about empowerment but about inclusion, so People First Society of Yukon is really about the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. I will take the minister at that and hope that we can reach out and make sure that it will not exclude the folks from People First.

One of the other questions that I had was: Did the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators or the Yukon Human Rights Commission submit any kind of information or feedback about the ability to include people with intellectual disabilities?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry; I am unable to answer that question at this point. We can check back through the records. I know the night that I attended the public meeting, I didn't identify anyone that I knew from the Yukon Human Rights Commission there. That's not to say — they could have done it in so many different ways because we had a lot of ways to get engagement.

I have received letters over my years — now we're using the plural — in this role. I know I have received letters from the Yukon Human Rights Commission, but at this point, I just can't place whether it was about the *Societies Act* or not. We could take the time to try to check on that.

Ms. White: This is not a case of "gotcha" here. It's literally a question about human rights and looking at the human rights of people and all citizens. It was just as to whether or not they had a chance to put information in.

Section 64, Directors' liability for wages, it states in 64(1) that — and I quote: "The liability of a director for debts payable to an employee of the society for services performed for the society in Yukon is to be determined under the *Employment Standards Act*." I am just curious as to how this would work.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The way it was explained to me — I hope I get this right. I will just confirm if I do not. This is not a change in the law as it exists now. Normally, directors are not liable for the society; however, when it comes to employment standards, the *Employment Standards Act* says that, yes they are. That will be the case here, so when it comes to paying their employees and ensuring that they are paid, the directors are responsible to ensure that this is happening.

I will say one other thing just to try to be clear. I used the word "empowerment" earlier. I'm happy to use the word "inclusion" too. I don't want to make it an either/or, I want to make it an "and". I want there to be inclusion and empowerment and again, I just want to be careful. The act is

seeking to be careful that those people who are minors or who are not capable are not burdened with those responsibilities.

Chair: Would members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. White: Another question I have is about section 43. It's under part 5, Management, and it is on page 45. Number 43 says: "A society must have at least three directors and at least one of the directors is to be ordinarily resident in Yukon."

I just wanted to know how one out of three, how that number was come up with and why it wasn't two out of three and why it's only one out of three.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The notion is — first of all, when we looked across other jurisdictions, many of them didn't have a requirement for having someone resident in their province or territory. In our discussion, as we deliberated on it, what we thought was it's important to have a connection to the territory somewhere. We didn't feel that having two made the connection that much stronger than one; it was just that, from our perspective, there needed to be a person, a Yukoner, who would have their name on that board of directors. I don't have any other deep explanation. If you have one, then it brings it under the Supreme Court jurisdiction for the service of papers. There is a rationale to have that one. That connection means something physically. Two doesn't change it per se.

I will also say while I'm up here that we had some more discussion — my colleagues from the Legislative Counsel office and from the department and I were speaking to just confer a little bit more around the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act* and we may have a little bit more explanation. I will just check with the member opposite whether she would like that further explanation.

Ms. White: Absolutely — if we can get clarification about the director.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We were looking through the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act* trying to get some more clarification around the notion of guardianship. There are earlier sections that discuss other individuals.

Sections 4 and 14 talk about supported decision-making agreements and representative agreements and, deeper down in those sections where they talk about them, they say that it is not about guardianship very specifically and that guardianship is only if the court deems it so.

It has to be a decision of the court. In other words, unless the court has said that a person is required to have a guardian,

they then can be able to be a director on a society regardless of any intellectual disability.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that clarification. That makes the concerns I had — that just puts everything at ease, so thank you for that and thank you to the officials who were wizzarding their way through all that information in those very short 15 minutes to try to get the answer for that.

The next question I have is about quorum. It talks about quorum on page 75 — section 87(1) speaks to three voting members unless otherwise stated. My question is: Does this mean that three voting members could be a quorum unless it's otherwise stated in the constitution or the bylaws?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just in general response, Mr. Chair, the question as it was posed is correct, but I want to differentiate between members and directors. You could have instances where you have less than three members. If it's less than three, then it is the total of the membership — so two or one. I think I may be missing something so I'll check with my colleagues. I'm sorry to the member opposite for jumping around. Also, we got a note back through the engagement. We did hear from the Human Rights Commission. I'm still working to track down what that response was and what was in it. I want to say that, as part of the engagement, we did hear from them.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the minister for that. Just as he was saying that, I did pull up the survey and it did say that one of the groups that had responded was that one, but I did not see it when I was asking the question. So I do appreciate that.

One of the questions I also have is — we talked a bit about it with the officials — about the regulations and about the timing and how long it would be for those regulations to be written and for the act to come into force. Can the minister talk a bit about that please?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The way that we have worked it is that the bill, if it receives assent in the Legislature, will not come into force until the new regulations are drafted. The consultation process has been sketched out, but it is not fully formed. In earlier responses to the Member for Porter Creek North, I said that we would happily be flexible with those societies, if they wanted us to talk with them.

I just want to say that we are committed to a meaningful engagement with those groups that have concerns or interests. The notional timeline we are working on is a year. We also recognize that there is a lot of pressure on our Legislative Counsel office. They are doing a lot of work so if we can all thank them — all of us as Yukoners.

I don't want to give a sense, Mr. Chair — if the feedback we get requires us to take a little longer, then we take a little longer. It really depends on the process. A year-ish is how we are sort of thinking about it.

Ms. White: Just in regard to regulations — section 12 is Bylaws and it is on page 22, but my question is on page 23 — 12(2)(c)(ii) that says: "... whether proxy voting is permitted..." One of the reasons I always ask about proxy voting — and it's the same reason I asked about it during the condominium consultation — is that I have seen the worst-

case scenario ever play out with proxy voting, so is government considering putting a limit to the number of proxies that one person can use to vote?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The first thing I would like to note is that proxies, as they exist for societies and corporations, have had a very different history than proxies for elected governments.

That doesn't mean that the risks don't exist — they do — but, of course, any democratic system has its strengths and weaknesses, or a system for voting has its strengths and weaknesses. What we have envisioned here is that the society itself can dictate. You might have a situation where the society is made up of people who are often in the field and they want to see business continue and can't make it there, so they adopt what is an appropriate system for them for proxy voting. We will provide boiler-plate examples of what that can look like, of course, but it will be up to the society to decide.

It's entirely possible — and I think it would be quite reasonable to anticipate — that many societies will choose a one-to-one proxy vote system, but there may be others that choose otherwise for their own rationale and will opt to do that through their own bylaws and through an appropriate process to adopt those bylaws.

I think that's where we have to turn back — is not to assume there will be a problem. This act is not assuming there will be a problem and, again, it's empowering the society to decide how the system will be employed for them.

Ms. White: I have just one last question about the qualifications of directors in section 47. Just to clear up any misunderstanding I might have, can anyone serve as a director in a society unless, for example, they have a court-appointed guardian?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, with respect to the notion of a guardian and guardianship, that is correct, but there are other persons who are not qualified: a person who is under the age of majority; a person who has been found mentally incompetent outside of the Yukon, like through some other jurisdiction and in the same way that “guardian” applies under our act but externally; if they're bankrupt, et cetera. Clause 47 lists a range of requirements, one of which is that it is not someone who has a guardian appointed under the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*.

If the member opposite's question was referring just to that notion of a guardian, it is only under part 3 of that act.

Chair: Is there further general debate on Bill No. 20?

Seeing none, we will proceed with clause-by-clause reading of the bill.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

On Clause 5

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To begin, I want to say that this is a significant act, and I know it is long and I apologize for all of us that it is long, but it is an important act for Yukoners.

Talking about how funds can be distributed — this provision sets out how societies can distribute or dispose of property owned by the society. In no case can societies transfer property to members unless the member pays full retail price to the society for that property.

The notion here is that we don't create societies where the government, or some other donors, fund them and they turn around and distribute that property back out. It is to try to make sure that those public funds stay attached to the society and that it's not some way to move things around.

Clause 5 agreed to

On Clause 6

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is where we discuss that issue of liability. I just want to confirm for everyone — because we had some questions on it today — that a member is not liable for any action taken by the society just because they are a member. If the member, on the other hand, has accepted property from the society in contravention of clause 5, which we've just cleared, then they are liable for value of the property that they received. It is just this notion that members are not liable.

Clause 6 agreed to

On Clause 7

Clause 7 agreed to

On Clause 8

Clause 8 agreed to

On Clause 9

Ms. White: I'm just going to stand up and take some time right now. We're breezing through the clauses, and I'm just going to give the minister a second to try to help him out for a second because I can also help then when we go through it — because, otherwise, I'm ready to clear all the way through. Right now, there are very few questions on my side.

Maybe I'll just ask for a quick breakdown of what clause 9 means and we'll just try to slow it down a little bit.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Clause 9 is really a restatement of a common-law principle, and it's really to protect third parties. If there is a society that is guaranteed an obligation up from that society or a person claiming through a society such as a liquidator, they can't assert that a claim against a society is invalid because the society's paperwork is not order. It's just making sure that there is no “get out of jail free” clause.

There are places where I am hoping we can have a little bit of conversation just coming up. I thought we should talk about the notion of the constitution and bylaws and how they are going to be changed going forward — so this would be starting on clause 17 — and then getting down into a discussion about the records.

Clause 9 agreed to

On Clause 10

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 10 through 16 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 10 through 16 of Bill No. 20 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 10 through 16 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

Clause 10 agreed to

On Clause 11

Clause 11 agreed to

On Clause 12

Clause 12 agreed to

On Clause 13

Clause 13 agreed to

On Clause 14

Clause 14 agreed to

On Clause 15

Clause 15 agreed to

On Clause 16

Clause 16 agreed to

On Clause 17

Hon. Mr. Streicker: In talking about the constitution and the bylaws, one of the differences that are going to come into effect now is that the constitution is meant to be a very simple document, a very straightforward thing, which basically discusses the name of the society and the purpose of the society, and it effectively gives the definition. It no longer will hold a long discussion about all of how a society works. That will move into bylaws.

What we plan to do is to prepare sets of draft bylaws so that those societies — as we transition into the new act — will be supported in being provided sets of bylaws that we think are fairly common and consistent across all.

There is still the provision to deal with the amendments as they come, but this is the place where we really move from it being Corporate Affairs, which is responsible for what is in those bylaws, to where we are giving that role to societies themselves to take care of. That is the reason for this difference in the act and I just wanted to clarify it.

Clause 17 agreed to

On Clause 18

Clause 18 agreed to

On Clause 19

Clause 19 agreed to

On Clause 20

Clause 20 agreed to

On Clause 21

Clause 21 agreed to

On Clause 22

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am going to talk generally about records here, and then I will pop up again when we talk about clause 27, which is how members get access to information within the records.

The registry is going to require that directors and officers disclose when they have a conflict of interest, for example, regarding a matter being considered by the society. It speaks to the records that the registrar must furnish and what is not required to be furnished.

When we have been in discussion within the department, we have talked about whether the registry will have the ability to — one second, Mr. Chair.

The records that the society has to keep and which are their responsibility don't necessarily have to be part of the registry itself but still may be of use to the public. We're talking now about how we can allow the registry to provide that centralized information exchange service without being the body that is responsible for those records. That's the general point here. The society will have the authority of those records — or the responsibility for those records — but we're in discussion about how we can help to make those available, should the society wish, so that there is more transparency for the public.

Clause 22 agreed to

On Clause 23

Clause 23 agreed to

On Clause 24

Clause 24 agreed to

On Clause 25

Clause 25 agreed to

On Clause 26

Clause 26 agreed to

On Clause 27

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, this is a slight difference, and the notion of membership is one of those ones where, even as we discussed the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, this is one of those things where the members are an important piece of information for a member of a society. You have to be able to allow members to access the register of members but it isn't put out there publicly.

There is a way for members to access that information and there is a process where that will be provided. There are also clauses in here setting out that when the member accesses that information — it's not going to be, for example, to sell it to a third party and create lists out there where it's going to be shared. It's one of the balancing pieces that we have to ensure that the information is available to members so that they are aware, without risking overuse and overexposure of those lists.

Clause 27 agreed to

On Clause 28

Clause 28 agreed to

On Clause 29

Clause 29 agreed to

On Clause 30

Clause 30 agreed to

On Clause 31

Clause 31 agreed to

On Clause 32

Clause 32 agreed to

On Clause 33

Clause 33 agreed to

On Clause 34

Clause 34 agreed to

On Clause 35

Clause 35 agreed to

On Clause 36

Clause 36 agreed to

On Clause 37

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is where we start to talk about those financial records and statements. They are an essential part of any society today and will be tomorrow. They are an essential piece of accountability, along with the names of the directors and the purpose of the society.

As it currently exists, you always need the financial statements available at the AGMs. Something that also is here is that, supposing that a society comes in partway through a year and incorporates, the act ensures that it will always capture all of the financials, so the first time will be for that partial year.

That information has to be accessible. I will get up again on clause 38, but this is the portion where we begin to talk about financial statements.

Clause 37 agreed to

On Clause 38

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Can you just give me one second please?

In the current act, there is a regulation that requires that, if there was remuneration paid to a director, that would be disclosed within the financial statement.

At this point, we have taken the decision to move this under the legislation rather than the regulations. We feel that it is essential. There is the opportunity here to have regulations regarding information disclosed about monies paid to employees, especially if it goes over a certain amount of remuneration. We are contemplating that there should be regulations so that this is about ensuring that members of societies will be able to discern how the money is being spent, especially to those in decision-making roles.

That's the purpose here and it is a change from the existing act.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 38?

Clause 38 agreed to

On Clause 39

Clause 39 agreed to

On Clause 40

Clause 40 agreed to

On Clause 41

Clause 41 agreed to

On Clause 42

Clause 42 agreed to

On Clause 43

Ms. White: I asked about this in the general debate on this — but could the minister elaborate on how one director was chosen?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When we did the cross-jurisdictional scan, we saw some jurisdictions — I'm sorry, I don't have the number off the top of my head — that did not

require any residency at all. We felt that there was a good purpose for having residency — a connection with the territory, if you will — and it made a difference in terms of serving papers that would apply. We believe that we needed to have that connection with the territory through someone who is physically a resident here. Once we made that argument and there was a sense that this was the right thing to do, we then went with what the minimum number would be to ensure that this happens. That's how it ended up with one.

It's balancing, I guess, the flexibility of societies to deal with the realities that they are facing while, at the same time, having accountability back to Yukoners.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 43?

Clause 43 agreed to

On Clause 44

Hon. Mr. Streicker: One of the things that this clause is talking about is, while there is the possibility that — and there are times in small jurisdictions this tends to be the case, where sometimes you can have directors who are receiving some remuneration. This clause would say you can't have it where the majority of directors are having remuneration because, if you have that situation, there would then be the risk of conflict. The majority of them are receiving some compensation, some payment of some sort, yet there is also the ability to vote in decisions. It's to make sure there is both transparency and accountability. That's why this clause is here.

Clause 44 agreed to

On Clause 45

Clause 45 agreed to

On Clause 46

Ms. White: This is just directly in relation to the next clause, clause 47.

It talks about how a person must not be a director of a society if the person is not qualified under either section 47 or the bylaws of the director — so if the minister can just elaborate on that please.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I had been intending to rise on clause 48. If I can beg the indulgence of the Chair — if I just talk about both of them together. The notion is that, if there are bylaws that the society chooses — for example, maybe the society is the Marsh Lake Community Society and maybe the society feels that directors need to be resident within the community, they could set out a bylaw that says that their directors have to be "resident within" or something like that notion. It is an enabling piece that says that there could be other restrictions to the directors, as that society deems.

However, I just wish to reiterate that, whatever they choose, they can't say something that would be discriminatory or go against our human rights legislation. If that bylaw is going to be there — or I think the way we talked about it earlier was that the bylaw would have no force if it were contradictory to, for example, other pieces of legislation. That is why in clause 47 we have subclause 2, unless the bylaws provide otherwise, which is discussed under clause 48.

Clause 46 agreed to

On Clause 47

Ms. White: I just would like the minister's assurance that people with intellectual disabilities can still serve on boards such as the Yukon Association for Community Living and People First Society of Yukon.

Then if he can tell me what the definition of 1(b) means: "a person who is not an individual".

Hon. Mr. Streicker: A "person who is not an individual" just refers to a corporation. You can't have a corporation that is a director. It just means a natural person. I'm not sure what the common parlance is — but a person.

I will state for the record that any person who is not eligible under this is able to be an advisor to a board — or there are positions that can be created that still take input and provide a meaningful role for individuals if they happen to be excluded because of the rules that exist here.

I would need to, of course, ask someone to look at the Association for Community Living to even know who those specific individuals are. What I will say is that if those individuals who — and I have sat through a couple of their AGMs and I recognize that they have learning disabilities. That doesn't exclude them.

The only thing that would exclude them is if the court had found that they required a guardian — so again, if a court had specifically found them to be incapable of managing some or all of their affairs as described under the *Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act*. Simply having a learning disability is not such an exclusion.

Clause 47 agreed to

On Clause 48

Clause 48 agreed to

On Clause 49

Clause 49 agreed to

On Clause 50

Clause 50 agreed to

On Clause 51

Clause 51 agreed to

On Clause 52

Clause 52 agreed to

On Clause 53

Clause 53 agreed to

On Clause 54

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This section is talking about if we do get vacancies, as we often do in our societies, even though this bill is suggesting that the act sets a minimum number of directors at three, there still will be times when they have to fill a vacancy. These are the rules around which you would go about it to ensure that you don't keep those vacancies — that you work to fill them — and how to work with respect to a quorum if you have had a failure to elect.

This is one of the places where we've had trip-ups in the past, and it's resulted in there being disputes and disagreements about whether or not something was done in an appropriate manner that would be fairly constituted. It's caused a lot of challenges to our societies. This is the place where we get very specific. Again, the notion is that this will assist our societies when they're in this situation so that the clarity will ensure everybody is on the same page.

Clause 54 agreed to

On Clause 55

Clause 55 agreed to

On Clause 56

Clause 56 agreed to

On Clause 57

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, this is putting into the act the common-law fiduciary responsibilities of directors. They have a responsibility to the society to which they are acting in the role of director. The purpose here is to make sure that we're specifying those roles so that, if someone is acting outside of them, someone can hold them to account. It's really about trying to create accountability for directors. We have seen instances — not just in the Yukon, Mr. Chair, but in many places — where we end up with directors that are acting outside of the scope of the society.

This is providing the information about how they need to be responsible for the society.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate all of the debate that we have had here today. Looking at the time, Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress on Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Streicker that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 15, 2018:

34-2-152

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Bill. No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — value-driven procurement cost analysis (Mostyn)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 99

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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Yukon Party

| | | | |
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| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

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New Democratic Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 16, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gallina: We have some special guests in the gallery today as we raise awareness for Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. We have a grade 6 class from Holy Family, and I will introduce the students in a moment. We have representatives from the Whitehorse Food Bank and parents and other volunteers whom I would like to make note of this afternoon.

From Holy Family, the grade 6 students with us today are Gage Albertini, Sylvana Allain, Damon and Maddison Andrews, Elsa Gleason, Maria Hernandez, Teja LaLonde, Savvas Lantzou, Britney Lajeau, Demis Matteaux-Sotil, Seth Ninehearns, Geanna Austre, Cal Sacramento, Konrad Simpson and Rayland Stenberg. Parents who have joined us today are Tammy Ninehearns, Aurora Baccudo, Stephanie Robertson, Astra Albertini, and Susan Simpson, a parent of Konrad.

From the Whitehorse Food Bank, we have board members Mike Thomas, Debbie Gohl, Tina Woodland, Krista Prochazka, Helen Slama, Jeremy Norton, Laura and Mae Cabott, and we have the executive director, Tristan Newsome. We also have food bank volunteer extraordinaire Myke McPhee. Brenda Dion, who is retired as a health promotion coordinator and is a Whistle Bend resident, has joined us today. There were a number of other Health Promotion unit employees who wanted to be here but were not able to attend today.

Welcome to the gallery. It's very nice to see you.

Applause

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to join me in welcoming representatives here for the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and Voices Influencing Change — always nice to see faces in the gallery. We have Executive Director of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Kristina Craig and one of the co-chairs, Mr. Bill Thomas, and for Voices Influencing Change, Ulrike Wohlfarth-Levins, Jason Charlie, Maureen Johnstone and Kerry Nolan. For those who can't be here, we know that they're supporting us. I would like everybody to welcome them in the gallery.

Applause

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, joining us once again is a constituent of mine, Kim Beacon and her friend, a former constituent of mine, May Blysak.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, may I also ask the Assembly to help welcome two of my constituents who are here today: Connie Gleason, who is here with her daughter on her school trip, as well as Mike Thomas. Please help me in welcoming them to the gallery today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would just like the House to take a second to welcome Ted Hupe. He is a constituent of mine and a principal at the school and I would like the House to recognize him this afternoon. Please welcome him to the House.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Whitehorse Food Bank

Mr. Gallina: On behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, I am pleased to rise in this House today to pay tribute to the Whitehorse Food Bank and the many volunteers and supporters who take the time to care for fellow citizens as we here in this Assembly raise awareness of Poverty and Homeless Action Week.

During the introduction of visitors, I recognized a number of people here in the gallery today, including those from the Whitehorse Food Bank, along with students from the Holy Family School and those who give unselfishly to serve the needs of others. The students were invited here today because they, along with many classrooms across Whitehorse, recently participated in a successful Whitehorse Food Bank food drive.

These grade 6 students at Holy Family School walked around to hundreds of homes throughout the riding of Porter Creek Centre distributing bags to households, which were later picked up by volunteers and students from the school community and delivered directly to the food bank. In total, approximately 3,500 bags of food were donated through this initiative. I'm paying tribute to these students today because it is important to recognize these individuals. These children are our future leaders, and with this service they are taking positive steps to create a healthy and vibrant community filled with love and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, food donations to the Whitehorse Food Bank help 1,300 people every month. Between 50 and 80 regular volunteers collectively donate 500 hours of labour every month. Over time, the food bank program has expanded to provide more fresh produce and meat and they recently began distributing wild game to families in need, which is a special source of nourishment for many.

The Whitehorse Food Bank food drive benefits greatly from the support of schools, students and volunteers who

distribute and collect bags of non-perishable food for donation to the food bank.

Mr. Speaker, this tribute also recognizes the good work from many students for their participation in the yearly From the Ground Up fundraiser that also just wrapped up. From the Ground Up is a healthy choice fundraiser where students from Yukon schools and daycares sell boxes of Yukon grown vegetables. Those who purchase them have the option of buying boxes for direct donation to the Whitehorse Food Bank to give directly to a family in need or enjoy themselves. Each box contains 20 pounds of potatoes, carrots, beets and one cabbage, along with a book of recipes to prepare and enjoy this fresh Yukon produce. Schools and daycares receive 40 percent of the profits for every box of vegetables sold and the other 60 percent goes to local famers.

This initiative began in 2012 with two schools participating, and in only six years, the number of schools involved has risen to 2

1. To date over 375,000 pounds of local veggies have been sold and almost 50,000 pounds have been donated — that's over \$450,000 that the kids have been able to keep for their use in school programs and projects.

Trying out new recipes and enjoying new taste experiments encourages healthy eating, which is one of the goals of this fundraiser. It is such a benefit that this program can be sourced by 100-percent Yukon grown produce. We know the demand for locally sourced produce is on the rise.

In closing, please join me in applauding the visitors in the gallery here today — the students, the dedicated teachers, the Whitehorse Food Bank executive director, board members and volunteers who make the food bank a welcoming place.

I'm proud to stand with these individuals who are giving their time, their attention and themselves for the benefit of those in need. Thank you.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the Whitehorse Food Bank during Poverty and Homeless Action Week as they've completed their annual fall food drive in partnership with volunteers from local schools and individuals from across the community. The food bank has been busy filling their shelves with donated goods.

Demands on the food bank continue to rise. A report released in 2017 noted that food bank usage had increased by 44 percent over the five years covered previously. That's a heavy increase over that time period.

I would like to recognize that there are a large number of private businesses and organizations that contribute to fundraising and donate to the food bank as well as many individuals who volunteer their time. The organization makes a contribution to the fight against hunger in the community and it could not be done without the help of the volunteers and donations.

I would also like to particularly recognize another special fundraising initiative in our community that provides families with nutritious, locally grown vegetables, raises money for

local schools and daycares and provides community members with the opportunity to purchase fresh vegetables that originate from the local farms. From the Ground Up began six years ago in 2012 with just two local schools selling vegetables. Since that time, it has expanded to 17 schools and eight daycares, all of which keep 40 percent of the profits from the box sales.

I would like to thank the Yukon Grain Farm here in the Lake Laberge Whitehorse area and Vogt Enterprises in Dawson City which both provide a large amount of cabbages, carrots, beets, potatoes and produce to be enjoyed by families and individuals across the Yukon.

As I close, I would like to thank the Whitehorse Food Bank and its volunteers, as well as all of the organizers and farmers in From the Ground Up and the volunteers who contribute to the success of each.

I would like to close by particularly recognizing the significant contributions of produce that Yukon Grain Farm, owned by Steve and Bonnie MacKenzie-Grieve, has made over the period of the operations of the From the Ground Up program. They have been very generous with their donations as well to this program.

Thank you to everyone and keep up the good work.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to recognize the important role that food banks and the people behind them play here in Yukon, in Whitehorse and in the communities of Dawson City and Watson Lake.

When we talk about food banks, I think it is important to recognize the harsh reality that, in a rich society like Yukon, there is a need to assist people with the very basics of life — with food — and the fact that, in the absence of serious, coordinated government policies to alleviate poverty, we have so many generous people willing to volunteer both time and money to make sure that there is at least a bare minimum of food available to members of our communities.

In Whitehorse, we are talking about 1,300 people a month — a third of whom are children or youth. Think about that. Think about the fact that since the Whitehorse Food Bank opened in 2009, 7,300 different people — almost 24 percent of Whitehorse's population — have accessed the three-day supply of food and basic necessities provided by the food bank.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it has become almost a cliché that, when food banks were established in the 1980s in response to a serious recession and inadequate social assistance and EI rates of the day, food banks were to be a temporary solution to a temporary problem. They have instead become a normal feature of our social landscape. Governments of all stripes at all levels have talked around and about the need to seriously tackle the root causes of poverty and income inequity in this country. While they talk, their inaction puts more pressure on the generosity of spirit and the action of ordinary citizens to try to alleviate some of the worst aspects of poverty through our food banks.

Governments have been happy to applaud the good work of the many volunteers and hard-working staff of our food banks because they shelter us from the harsh reality that governments have failed to address poverty. To be clear, I am not blaming food banks for the government's lack of coordinated and effective response. The staff and volunteers are caring and dedicated, and they work hard to reduce the indignities of charity for those who receive it. Mr. Speaker, if you have ever been on the receiving end, you know what I'm talking about.

Food banks do allow some people to experience less hunger; however, as Elaine Power, a researcher on food security and poverty and a long-time volunteer with food banks, said in a recent article — and I quote: “Food banks also let governments off the hook from their obligation to ensure income security for all Canadians... Giving food to those who are hungry is a simple response that everyone supports. Tackling poverty means wrestling with diverse ideas about causes and solutions.”

As we celebrate the many Yukoners who have so generously supported our food banks, we, as legislators, are charged with tackling the political conversation to collectively find ways to eliminate the need for food banks in our time.

Applause

In recognition of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

Mr. Adel: Today I rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition on the occasion of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is a volunteer organization that works to promote and improve the well-being of Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, before I talk about this organization and the good work that it does, I would like to say that one of the challenges about poverty in Canada is that there is no official definition of poverty or consistent indicators of poverty; therefore, it is difficult to capture the full picture when it comes to poverty because of the diversity of experiences for people living in poverty. When we estimate that one in seven Canadians — 4.8 million people — currently live in conditions of poverty, it means 4.8 million experiences. It means that these individuals struggle to meet their most basic needs every day and have to make challenging decisions — for example, should they pay the electric bill or buy nutritious food or buy a transit pass? These are things that we take for granted.

Poverty is, at its core, a violation of the most fundamental human rights and the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition has been voicing this violation for Yukoners living in poverty for the past 12 years. They are working with Yukon communities to facilitate the elimination of poverty in Yukon through awareness, advocacy and action.

One of the most impressive strengths of the coalition is that they have formed positive relationships that allow them to pull a large number of organizations, businesses, governments and volunteers together to work toward the same goal. The coalition has more than 400 members, including individuals,

politicians, non-governmental agencies, business people, representatives from the faith community and people with lived experience.

The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition is the true example of the Yukon way of doing things — coming up with solutions. When they saw a need, they initiated the downtown garden, the Whitehorse Food Bank and the Mental Health Association of Yukon, just to name a few. We are a small jurisdiction and poverty affects each of us in some way and this is why we all need to be part of the solution.

This week, one of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's key programs that will be in the forefront is the Voices Influencing Change program that gives participants who want to seek change in their community the skills needed to share with others and to advocate based on their own personal experiences.

I would like to invite all Yukoners to take some action during the Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, October 15 to 19. The theme this year is: “Lived experience — what's your story?” Events this year are listed in the *Yukon News* and *What's Up Yukon*. They include a sock drive, a bake sale, the “Chew on This!” campaign, a CBC book panel on CBC *Airplay* and many more. To get the full calendar, visit the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition website.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff and the volunteers at the coalition for their dedication to eliminating poverty in Yukon through awareness, advocacy and action.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. This is a homegrown event taking place each October since 2005. The intent of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week is to raise awareness and encourage Yukoners to take action to end poverty and homelessness in the territory.

This week is aligned very conveniently to include two important global dates: World Food Day on October 16 and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17.

World Food Day has been recognized since 1981 to increase awareness of world hunger and poverty and encourages discussion on these issues on a global scale.

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty has been observed since 1992. The theme for this year is: “Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity.”

I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition for the work that they do this week and indeed, every week of the year. The coalition goes above and beyond to provide outreach and education to the community through a variety of initiatives and related organizations, such as Sally & Sisters, Food Network Yukon and Whitehorse Connects. I would like to acknowledge the many non-profit organizations and individuals behind them who work

continuously to address poverty and homelessness in our territory.

The work done by an incredible network of people is immense and continues to make small and large differences in the lives of all of our community members.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the hard work done by the folks of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and acknowledge Poverty and Homelessness Action Week.

A story of lived experience is a powerful tool. It is the evolution of one's life, and when that story is shared, it can influence change. That's exactly what the Voices Influencing Change program aims to do. The program supports people who have experienced poverty or homelessness to advocate for themselves and for others by sharing their own experiences.

The initial storytelling leadership and advocacy pilot project ran last year for four weeks, with participants meeting twice a week. This year, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition recognized the need for people with lived experience to help implement Safe at Home, so the program was tweaked and offered again. This time, the program was even more intense. It was longer, meeting twice a week for six weeks. There is an interview process for applicants, opening and closing interviews and ongoing hard work in a safe, judgment-free space.

Learning these skills isn't an easy process. It's unpacking what has been experienced, learning how to protect oneself when sharing those stories and learning how to share it with others. It can be emotional, it can be exhausting and full of triggers.

Mr. Speaker, the four graduates — including Ulrike Wohlfarth-Levins and Jason Charlie who are in the gallery with us today — deserve our congratulations on the completion of the program. They deserve our thanks as they use their new skills to help the community better understand the issues of poverty, addiction and homelessness.

This year, with the support of those at the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, it was the program graduates who have selected the theme: "Lived Experience: What's YOUR Story?" and planned and are executing this week's activities, from tea at YAPC, where those with lived experience shared their stories with would-be counsellors and mayoral candidates, to a sock drive, bake sale, book panel reviews and more.

Kerry Nolan, one of the co-facilitators who works alongside Maureen Johnstone, had this to say: "I believe that everyone has a story and a voice to tell that story. As a community, it's our responsibility to listen without assumptions or judgment, as these stories will help make change within ourselves, our loved ones and our community as a whole."

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. It's important that we listen to the stories being told around us and the stories shared with us. It's important that we listen to them as politicians, as

neighbours, as friends and, most importantly, as humans, because the stories shared with us become part of our understanding and, Mr. Speaker, that understanding can influence change.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Pursuant to section 7.7 of the *Historic Resources Act*, I have for tabling the Yukon Heritage Resources Board Annual Report for 2017-18.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Pursuant to section 9 of the *Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Plan Act*, I have for tabling the financial accounting report for the Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Plan for the fiscal year 2017-18.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today I have for tabling the *Canadian Substance Use Cost and Harms 2018* report and a one-page infographic produced by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling the Government of Yukon substance use and impairment policy.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling public awareness material on fentanyl.

Mr. Cathers: I have for tabling a written question to the Premier.

Speaker: It's a busy day for the pages. They're doing a great job.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with municipalities, First Nation governments, local advisory councils, businesses, non-governmental organizations and consumers to explore options to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to give notice to the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to follow the example set by the federal government in Bill C-83 by eliminating solitary confinement at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to take action regarding the outstanding request by parents for school bus service in Grizzly Valley subdivision by:

(1) reviewing the information contained in the October 2, 2018, legislative return from the Minister of Community Services, which states: “The Grizzly Valley Subdivision was a project developed by the Land Development Branch of Community Services. The roads meet the necessary Transport Association of Canada geometric design guideline requirements for safe access to the subdivision for school buses, emergency response vehicles and other users”; and

(2) providing school bus service to families in Grizzly Valley subdivision without further delay.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cannabis legalization

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The legalization of cannabis tomorrow, October 17, represents a significant shift, not only in our legal framework but in the societal norms of our country. Tomorrow, the Yukon will be responsible for how cannabis is distributed and sold within the territory.

In 2016, Canadian Health minister, Jane Philpott, stated: “We will introduce legislation in spring 2017 that ensures we keep marijuana out of the hands of children and profits out of the hands of criminals.” Her statements set the guiding principles in developing legislation and regulations for federal cannabis, and those same principles have guided the development of our legislation — to protect public health and safety, to discourage young persons from accessing cannabis and to displace illicit activity.

A little under 70 percent of Canadians have said they are in favour of legalization. Here in the Yukon, that number is a little over 80 percent. Yukoners support legalization.

In April 2017, Canada introduced the *Cannabis Act* to legalize, strictly regulate and restrict access to cannabis. At the same time, it was announced that new offences would be added to the *Criminal Code* to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to those driving under the influence of cannabis and other drugs. The federal government gave the provinces and territories the ability to set rules around how cannabis can be sold, where stores may be located and how stores must be operated. Provinces and territories were also given the flexibility to set added restrictions, including lowering possession limits, increasing the minimum age, restricting where cannabis may be used in public and setting added requirements on personal cultivation.

Understanding the federal government would legalize cannabis in 2018, we set to work creating a new legal framework in order to be ready here in the Yukon for the sale and distribution of this product. The Yukon government undertook three phases of engagement to support the

development of our *Cannabis Act*. Those engagement activities with municipalities, First Nations and the public included a public survey, community meetings, engagement about a proposed framework for cannabis legislation and, finally, the circulation of a legislative summary document with the summary of draft cannabis legislation.

Our new legislation received assent this spring and provided the legal framework for the distribution, retail consumption, possession and personal cultivation of cannabis in Yukon.

Yukon undertook the development of regulations in support of our *Cannabis Act* in three phases: first, regulations required before legalization; next, regulations required upon legalization; and finally, currently, regulations for licensing and private sale. The information we gathered from our engagement effort for the development of the act informed and continues to inform the development of cannabis regulations.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation is striving to provide a high-quality experience to customers while at the same time being socially responsible. Our emphasis will be on responsible sales and distribution.

I want to encourage Yukoners who currently use marijuana to use our new services, either by visiting our retail store or visiting our e-commerce site. Yukoners who choose to purchase cannabis through our newly established legal avenues will have access to a product that is safe and a product that is sold at the lowest possible price. Adults 19 years or older will also have the option to grow their own cannabis — up to four plants per household.

One day, we will have local retailers and producers who will need to find a way to support their success in the same way that we have policies and practices that support local breweries and distillers.

Tomorrow, we are taking a step into a new era, a new time and a place for the territory in the country — a time when government members of the public and private industry work together to provide safe and legal access to a product while simultaneously displacing an illicit trade.

Mr. Cathers: As Official Opposition critic for Justice, I am pleased to respond to this ministerial statement.

The Liberal government has chosen to grow government through a new government-run cannabis corporation and retail store. This unfortunate choice is going to cost taxpayers more than \$3 million that did not need to be spent in this area. At a time when the government is going into deficit and telling departments, including Health and Social Services and Education, that they need to look for cuts of up to two percent, growing government to sell cannabis is the wrong approach.

As we have consistently said, the Official Opposition believes that government should leave retail and distribution of cannabis to the private sector, just like is being done in the Province of Saskatchewan. We believe that the private sector can do this cheaper, with no impact on the taxpayers and do it just as safely, if properly regulated. Pharmacies are privately run across the country and operate and dispense controlled

substances and drugs in a safe manner. To be clear, we are not suggesting a pharmacy retail model, but there are Yukon small businesses that are ready to enter the retail market, once given a chance to do so, and we believe they are capable of selling it just as safely as government.

Operation of pharmacies across the country has proven the private sector can manage, order, distribute and sell drugs and other controlled substances in a legal manner, just as safely as the private sector, if properly regulated.

If the Premier and his colleagues had wanted to not grow government and stay out of the business of doing business, they had a clear option. We also presented alternatives and even proposed legislative amendments that would help the government implement an alternate model, similar to that being used in the Province of Saskatchewan.

The Liberals have chosen to grow government by almost 500 full-time positions, by their own numbers, in their first two years of office. Instead of further growing government in areas like cannabis retail, which could be handled by the private sector, government's focus regarding cannabis should be on safety, enforcement of laws, and education. Unfortunately, the Liberal government chose not to accept the constructive suggestions that we made and chose instead to unnecessarily spend millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on growing government through a new retail store for cannabis.

We want to acknowledge the work done by staff in a number of departments and thank them for all of their efforts on this and acknowledge that the decision in this area — of which model to go with — was a Cabinet decision and not one made by those employees.

Yesterday, the Official Opposition asked a number of straightforward questions of the government regarding implementation. These are all questions that government should be able to provide clear and straightforward answers in response to.

We did not get answers then, so I will repeat some of those questions today. What are the responsibilities and liabilities for employers with respect to potential impairment from marijuana at the workplace? What help will the government provide to help employers determine impairment with regard to legal cannabis? In the case of workplace incident investigations, what tools will be used to determine whether cannabis impairment was a factor? What is the government's plan to ensure accurate, consistent and reliable roadside testing? What is the government doing to ensure the Yukon's RCMP have all the tools and resources they need to enforce the new cannabis laws? How many drug recognition experts are currently in the Yukon, and how many will be added over the next several months and over the next five years? What workplace roles and procedures are being put in place to ensure Yukon government employees operating machinery are not doing so under the influence of cannabis? Will government employees have to submit to a test if they are suspected of being under the influence? Has the government provided any training or information to public service employees about their obligations and rights once

cannabis becomes legalized? These are all reasonable questions and a number of them have come directly from employers.

In closing, we want to thank employees for their work on this and acknowledge that the issues that we have are with certain key decisions made by the Liberal government — where they could have chosen to save taxpayers' money and implement a more effective and cheaper model.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for his statement and the Yukon Party for their thoughts, however different they may be from ours.

The Yukon NDP has always supported and will continue to support the legalization of cannabis. We want to thank the many, many members of the public service at all levels of government who have put in hundreds, if not thousands, of hours to get us where we are today.

Just like alcohol or tobacco, cannabis isn't without health risks. What we believe legislation does is it allows us to have a mature conversation about these risks without criminalizing an activity that many are already pursuing.

As far as where we go from here, we have these concerns. First, we do agree that there is space for the private sector on the retail side. Dispensaries, as we see in other jurisdictions, have their place alongside the government in the distribution of cannabis, but this doesn't mean that it should be a free-for-all. If the model that this government has in mind is similar to the off-sales model Yukon has for alcohol, we will not support it. The lack of emphasis on social responsibility of that model is just not appropriate. We don't believe the current model works for alcohol, and we don't see how it would be any better for cannabis.

We still have concerns regarding the regulations of cannabis paraphernalia. I don't know that a gas station or a convenience store, for example, are the kinds of places where paraphernalia should be sold if we are to put an emphasis on social responsibility.

Secondly, while this is a federal responsibility, we hope that this government will put pressure on their federal counterparts to ensure that those who have been convicted of minor offences relating to cannabis will have their record cleared. It makes no sense to maintain a criminal record for possession of cannabis once this becomes legal — especially when we know that the most vulnerable in our communities were often the people most convicted of these offences.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we still have concerns around the location of outlets. Again, if the model follows that of alcohol off-sales, we don't believe that the final outcomes will be the best thing for any Yukon community.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would like to thank all members of this Legislature who spoke and said thank you to the public servants who have been working incredibly hard. I would like to thank them as well, so thank you for that. It has been a lot of hard work over the last couple of years. Tomorrow is the big day and so I know there is a sense of arrival.

I question whether the Official Opposition does support the legalization of cannabis. From their questions today and their comments, I'm left wondering whether they do support it. I note that 80 percent of Yukoners support legalization, and we are moving forward with this legislation, not only because we have to, but also because we want to.

The \$3 million of investment was in purchasing product — sorry, that would happen whether it was private retail or not. By the way, that money will be recouped on the sale of the product.

We too are in support of a private sector model — in response to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. It won't be a free-for-all. We have a cannabis licensing board that will be in place with lots of regulations. We have worked, and will continue to work, to promote social responsibility. We have never shirked on that.

Private sector stores are coming to the Yukon in the near future. It sounds like we will have our private stores at the same time that the Province of Ontario will have theirs. Mind you, they don't have a store right now.

I will also note that in the interim or temporary government store, which will be opening tomorrow, we have hired contractors and employees on temporary assignment. This is to be a temporary model. We have no intention of being in the cannabis business in the long term. We will always be on the side of displacing illicit trade, promoting health and safety and social responsibility.

I tabled a report today. In that report, it talked about the cost of harms due to substances and it notes that alcohol and tobacco make up nearly 70 percent of the cost of harms of drugs in the country. Cannabis is fourth, at seven percent.

We have had cannabis before now. It has been used illegally. Tomorrow, it will become legal. I encourage all Yukoners to move to purchase that cannabis through one of the legal outlets or to begin to grow their own.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy that we are seeing the legalization of cannabis tomorrow.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: RCMP auxiliary constable program

Mr. Hassard: The RCMP auxiliary constable program used to play an important role in keeping our highways and communities safe. As the Minister of Justice knows, in 2016, the program was effectively suspended by Ottawa. Work by the previous government, our senator and provincial governments resulted in the RCMP agreeing to give provinces and territories the ability to choose from three tiers, setting out the scope of the auxiliary program for their region.

Fully implementing all three tiers would enhance the Yukon's ability to keep our roads safe, including supporting the checkstop program. We have been asking the minister this question for close to a year and a half now and we're still waiting for action. In March, she told us that her government — and I quote: "... absolutely supports the reintegration of the auxiliary policing program." But two years into the Liberal

mandate, we still see no sign of action. Why is the minister being so slow to act on this issue?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It's not quite two years. I hear the opposition saying "two years" all the time; it's actually not quite 22 months, but it will be two years soon enough, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Well, Mr. Speaker, accuracy is important to me and it's important to our government.

With respect to the auxiliary police program, I agree, as I've said before in this House, that it is a valuable program; it serves Yukon communities well. Our priority, of course, with respect to communities — including Whitehorse and all communities in the territory — is to provide public safety in the best possible way for our communities.

With respect to the auxiliary police program, I have recently requested an update with respect to how the RCMP intends to proceed with the options that are available from the federal government. I look forward to their review of that and to their report to me about how — and if, when — those auxiliary programs are going to be enhanced.

Safety — top priority — absolutely. The RCMP auxiliary officers, Mr. Speaker, play an important role in those functions in our communities.

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, again we hear ministers talk about top priorities — but it is 22 months rather than 24 months into their mandate and still no action.

The RCMP auxiliary constable program used to play an important role in keeping our highways and communities safe. One of the most important jobs that RCMP auxiliary constables did was to help regular members run the checkstop program, as I mentioned. The ability to do checkstops has been seriously impacted by the delay in re-establishing this program. In the spring of 2017, our Justice critic asked the minister why she has been slow on acting on this important issue. Mr. Speaker, it is now a year and half later and we're still waiting for this minister to take action.

With cannabis being legalized tomorrow, a re-established RCMP auxiliary constable program would be a big help in keeping our roads safe by checking for impaired drivers, so will the minister agree to make this priority actually a priority and immediately take action on this important issue?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. I know that Yukoners are concerned about this and have questions about it. As a matter of fact, I recently spoke with some constituents of my own about this program, who have previously been involved — again, supporting it and wanting to review what the conversation with the RCMP has been as far as moving this forward.

With respect to the checkstops, of course, the auxiliary police officers have limited abilities under the *Criminal Code*, but a lot of people help with checkstops. I know that MADD Yukon — Mothers Against Drunk Drivers — is an amazing community organization. The Minister of Highways and Public Works and I were out with them last year and intend to go out with them again to participate in checkstops. Those are important opportunities in the community to not only educate

people about drug and alcohol use and the operation of motor vehicles, but to keep our communities safe. Absolutely, that's one of our priorities.

Mr. Hassard: It is clear that the minister is certainly not on top of this file, as it has taken almost two years into the Liberal mandate now, so will the minister please take action today to reinstate the RCMP auxiliary constable program?

If she claims she is taking action, can she provide us a list of exactly what actions those are and provide us with a timeline for when the program will be re-implemented?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is not for me to direct what the RCMP should do with respect to auxiliary officers on an immediate or otherwise basis.

I certainly have reached out to them recently about what their plans are with respect to that. I will continue to do so. I look forward to their update and their plans going forward, and we will work with the RCMP in a cooperative way to make our communities safe — including what I hope in the future will be auxiliary officers.

Question re: RCMP detachment upgrades

Mr. Cathers: The previous government completed the design of a new RCMP detachment in Faro and the project had, in fact, even been tendered. It was only due to an issue with their own spending authorities that the federal government insisted on holding off on awarding a bid. The people of Faro wanted this new RCMP detachment. The design is complete and the project was ready. However, the Liberals have now decided to take away this important project from the Town of Faro and put a detachment in Carcross instead, and they did this without consulting the community of Faro.

What does the Premier have to say to Yukoners who look at this decision and see what appears to be a politically motivated decision — cancelling a project in the riding of the Leader of the Official Opposition and putting a similar project in a riding that is held by a Liberal Cabinet minister?

Hon. Mr. Silver: These inaccuracies that we hear from the opposition are truly troubling. To suggest that we are making politically motivated decisions on a build that was the responsibility of the Yukon Party — and they did not fulfill their obligation to that community when they were in power — that is an interesting call by the Member for Lake Laberge.

I am confident in my minister and the work that she is doing with the communities that are affected and in the fact that she has decided that the decisions made in rural Yukon — and even in Whitehorse — have to be made by the communities. I am confident that she is reaching out to all of the stakeholders in the communities to find solutions for builds that have been, in the past, not necessarily a priority.

Mr. Cathers: That is pretty rich coming from the Premier. He should recall that I not only wrote to the federal minister about this but that it was only due to the federal minister's refusal to move the project forward that it didn't happen. In fact, even the Yukon's Member of Parliament assisted us in making that request.

In the absence of proof to the contrary, this looks like a political decision by the Premier and this government. Replacing the detachment in Carcross was in the former government's future plans, so we do not take issue with building a detachment in that community. We do take issue with the fact that the government scrapped plans to replace the detachment in Faro, which was tendered and ready to be built two years ago. The government made a decision not to go forward with an infrastructure project in a riding that happens to be held by the Leader of the Official Opposition, and we were told by the community that there was no meaningful consultation with them. We have been told that the only communication with the Town of Faro was to tell them that the decision had been made.

This government campaigned on the slogans of "Be heard" and "All communities matter". Can the minister tell us why the government didn't consult with the mayor and council of Faro before making the decision?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Yukon government and the RCMP, after careful assessments and engagement with the affected communities, have committed to a new operational model in Faro and Ross River in order to create a unified community policing approach and best utilize RCMP resources.

I dare say that it would never occur to me that the motivation described by the member opposite would influence any decision that I would make in this House, in this job or on behalf of Yukoners — apparently it would occur to him.

I would like to take the opportunity to point out that this politically motivated decision he has described resulted in an additional officer being sent to the Haines Junction area as a result of these smart decisions made on behalf of the RCMP, by the RCMP, with careful consideration and creativity to provide services to Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: The minister, of course, will excuse us for asking that, if this wasn't a politically motivated decision, provide the proof of it.

As reported by the CBC yesterday, the Liberal decision to reduce RCMP service in Faro has become a municipal election issue. They're moving the service from that region to Ross River, making Faro just a satellite office. Meanwhile, the town, in fact, is actually increasing in size. This decision shouldn't be about Ross River versus Faro. We should be looking at how we can support all communities. If the community of Ross River needs enhanced RCMP service, then government should give them the resources they need; if Haines Junction needs service, the government should provide the resources they need, but they should not be cutting services in the Town of Faro.

We raised the issue of the Liberals not properly resourcing the RCMP as early as the spring of last year. This is about public safety and it's about the government following through on their commitments and being transparent.

Will they rethink their plans to reduce RCMP coverage in Faro, while also ensuring Ross River has the appropriate level of resources?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As I think the former minister might know, the calls for service in Faro have been consistently the lowest in the territory, which is not at all to say that Faro doesn't have matters where they require excellent RCMP services — and they receive it. The new operational model will serve the policing needs of both communities out of the main hub detachment in Ross River. We have worked with the RCMP — it was an initiative brought forward in our discussions with them about creative solutions to provide RCMP services to all of Yukon. In fact, it has been undertaken since January 2018 — some months ago, as the opposition is clearly keen to count days and months. I should note that there has been no adverse effect on the service provided in Faro. As a matter of fact, one of the decisions made going forward was that the housing would be maintained in Faro so that RCMP officers that play a critical role in the communities that they serve would be residing in the Town of Faro as well as serving that town, that area and that region in their police service duties.

This situation is but one in a decision going forward to provide the best service possible to Yukoners by the RCMP.

Question re: Opioid crisis

Ms. White: Yesterday I asked the minister for the most up-to-date number of opioid deaths in Yukon because we haven't heard anything since January of this year. The minister agreed that there is a crisis in Yukon with opioid use and deaths. She acknowledged that we are third in Canada, but the minister refused to provide a number saying that, and I quote: "It's not for me, at this time, to make note of that".

Last January, the minister did provide numbers, and we all know that accurate information helps inform decision-making. A quick Google search allows anyone to find these critical statistics for Alberta and British Columbia, two of the jurisdictions most affected by opioid overdoses and deaths.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the minister provide reliable data on the tragic toll the opioid crisis is taking on Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Just to clarify, we provided the numbers that we have from 2016-17 to the Legislative Assembly. There are concerns with, as noted yesterday, verification associated with fentanyl or opioid overdoses — they are to be confirmed and verified. Those are things that we cannot provide in time until that is provided to us by the medical authority.

We do know, of course, that there is a major crisis and I have noted that. We are doing our utmost within Health Services in the Department of Health and Social Services and with hospitals to address the opioid-related deaths. We also realize that we have a significant crisis on our hands and we need to work with the health professions and our partners to promote awareness and address the issue of prevention and preventive measures, working with the Department of Education to ensure that this happens for younger generations as well. We have not really focused on that historically.

Given that we have seen a spike in numbers, we are, of course, increasing our supports and our efforts across the Yukon and, in particular, with rural Yukon.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, it's the 10th month of 2018. Surely there must be information available. Yesterday, the minister spoke about partnerships, four opioid working groups and an action plan, but most citizens, including occasional and regular users, would suggest that word is not getting out. People need to know. Having timely information on the opioid crisis and overdoses is an important part of giving people the tools they need to make informed decisions and protect themselves.

When there are drug overdoses or deaths over a very short period of time, regardless of whether we know the exact drug, Yukoners hear nothing. There are no warnings of dangerous drugs being circulated and no suggestion to have your drugs tested. Again, we thank Blood Ties Four Directions and their drug-testing service that is available on a daily basis to any person.

Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to give timely information about compromised drugs to Yukoners who might be occasional or regular users?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has raised some really significant points and those are things that we are certainly taking into consideration — whether it's one or 15, we know that it's a priority. Any life — we need to take into consideration individuals who choose to use recreational drugs, for example, and that they are aware of the major crises that we have on our hands.

Also, we know that the illicit trade of opioids in our communities, especially in rural Yukon communities, is compromised by some very, very dangerous drugs that are out there. We do try to provide support — and thank you to Blood Ties Four Directions, Kwanlin Dün Health Centre and to the medical community. We are working with our partners to address the concerns.

Just today, I tabled a document about fentanyl. As I indicated, we are working to create more awareness with our youth and get the information out about this new trend of mixing drugs and the concerns that we have with illegal drugs, particularly fentanyl. We will continue to do the drug-testing stations in our communities.

Ms. White: People continue to die and any number of deaths is too many deaths. I asked yesterday about the positions that were created by the department to address what was happening in our communities related to opioid deaths and overdoses. The department was to hire a part-time opioid overdose prevention coordinator, and a surveillance officer to collect detailed opioid-related information in the territory was also to be hired through the medical officer's office. Instead of answering the question, the minister spoke about naloxone kits. Mr. Speaker, naloxone kits are important, but they're only one piece of the puzzle.

It was not clear from the minister's answers yesterday so I will ask again: Have the positions of an opioid overdose prevention coordinator and an opioid surveillance officer been filled and are they still in place?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the positions that have been created to assist the department under the leadership of the chief medical officer of health, my department has

established four opioid working groups focusing on harm reduction, public awareness, surveillance and Health and Social Services systems reform. We have created positions, as noted, to help provide supports. We're now in the process of signing off on an agreement with the federal government to assist the Yukon with education and an education campaign.

We are certainly working with our departments as noted; we have an opioid strategy and we are working with our chief medical officer to implement our strategy. Certainly it's a priority and we are continuing to advance our services to Yukoners.

As well, given that we have had two years to address this and we are getting new information all the time, we will continue to reach out and build on education strategies around opioid and emergency treatment strategies, working with our health professionals and, in particular, our rural hospitals and our partners in rural Yukon.

Question re: Cannabis regulation in Yukon

Ms. McLeod: During a national media interview this past weekend, federal Minister Bill Blair mentioned that, when crossing the border, Canadians shouldn't lie to US customs personnel about their use of cannabis, if asked. He also said that Canadians don't have to incriminate themselves and, if they don't want to answer the questions, they can just turn around and come back to Canada.

Many Yukon businesses have commercial operations that cross the border regularly into Alaska. What would the Minister of Community Services tell those Yukon businesses and their staff?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will try to provide some information, but I'm not sure if I will get to the specifics. In a subsequent response, I will get up again.

Our government is concerned that individuals employed in Canada's legal cannabis industry may be refused entry in the United States — across the United States border. Yukon government is working with its partners in other provinces and territories as well as the federal government to understand how Yukoners crossing the border may be impacted. This is an issue for all Canadians working in the legal cannabis industry.

We're monitoring the situation and will keep Yukon government employees, businesses and citizens informed as more information becomes available.

It's important to remember that all Canadians travelling to the US are subject to US laws at the point of entry. Canadian laws do not apply. We recognize that this may be a particular concern for employees of the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the private sector as it gets involved in retail sales as distributors for legalized cannabis in the territory. We continue to work with employees, including the employees' union and the Public Service Commission, and to learn more about the situation.

Ms. McLeod: You know, Mr. Speaker, turning around is not an option for a number of these businesses, such as the trucking industry. However, we know that if a driver who smoked marijuana a few weeks or days ago, if they are asked

by US Customs and admit to it, they might be prevented from entering the United States. I'm sure the minister would not tell anyone to lie to US Customs.

Can the minister tell us: What should those companies whose employees may have used legalized cannabis and must cross the border as part of their work do? What is the government doing to support these companies?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When I rose in the Legislature yesterday I tried to say — and I'll try to say it again — that up until now, cannabis is used in Canada and in the Yukon. There are people who have gone across the border who have used cannabis in the recent past and there will be tomorrow. I'm not advising anyone to lie.

I am working with the federal government. Through the Liquor Corporation, we are part of a national working group to try to address this issue. I know that I've been working with our own employees because they've raised concerns. In fact, what we've done with our own employees is say: Okay, who is comfortable? If they're not, we'll find them another position. We're not pressuring any employee to work in a field in which they don't wish to work.

I haven't taken the time yet to work with my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, or others to reach out to the business community. I haven't heard from them yet. When we are talking to the federal government, we're certainly asking the questions about how we should speak to citizens, including employees, across the territory.

Question re: Cannabis retail store

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation tell us how much the government has spent on capital improvements and renovations to their government-run cannabis store?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will endeavour to get an exact number. Off the top of my head, I believe that the improvements were \$400,000. I will check on that number.

What we did, Mr. Speaker, is we told the president of the Liquor Corporation how that development was going to proceed — for example, we did things like say that, when they build the cabinetry, they should build the cabinetry so that it can be reused or repurposed. We made sure that the types of investments would be ones that we could either recoup or reuse. We used the three Rs, Mr. Speaker — reduce, reuse and recycle. That's how we approached it and we built those costs into our projection about the return on the investment for the territory.

I'll look forward to further questions so that I can follow up.

Mr. Hassard: This is money that is being spent at a time when the government is taking us further into deficit and telling Yukoners that they need to tighten their belts and even look at cuts for the Department of Health and Social Services. After the Liberals were heavily criticized for growing government and squeezing out the private sector, they caved slightly and agreed at some nondescript time in the future to allow private sales.

The minister stood here today and said that the government is in the business temporarily. If the government finally does allow the private sector to get involved, can the minister tell us if the government-run retail store will be shut down or will it be competing against the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will try to give a few responses. The first one is that when we first decided to introduce retail here in the territory, we knew that we were going to have it first. We had concerns about the supply of product. The city has put in zoning regulations where they have said they just wanted to begin in Marwell. We know from talking with the private sector that they are interested in opening downtown. That conversation is ongoing between the private sector and the municipality. I think that is one of the first orders of business that they will undertake after the election. Please vote, everybody, on the day after tomorrow.

We actually put out a bid for the private sector regarding the construction of a new retail space early in 2018. We didn't get good responses back, so we decided to repurpose an existing warehouse space that the government had already used.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many points about — we will certainly be shutting down our own business once the private retail of cannabis is established.

Mr. Hassard: We still don't know how long this government plans on taking to allow the private sector to become involved. The other concern, of course, is the fact that the minister keeps talking about "here in Whitehorse". There are several communities outside of Whitehorse that there has been no consideration directed toward.

I guess another question I would have for the minister is: How long is left on the lease of the building where the temporary cannabis retail store is currently being housed?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will get back to the member opposite on that very technical question about the length of the lease that is outstanding on the existing store.

When it comes to our communities, of course, we are considering them. I met with municipalities. We had lots of discussion around cannabis. This was the largest engagement that I have ever seen for the Yukon on any issue. I stand to be corrected; it was a very strong engagement.

We should note that tomorrow, e-commerce will go online and all of our communities will have access to e-commerce. The timing on private retail sales — we are getting the regulations in place this fall for Yukon Liquor Board licensing. We will take an intake early in the new year, as we have been talking with potential private retailers — the Minister of Economic Development and I. We have been saying to them all along that our expectation is that it should happen somewhere in spring 2019. I said today, through my ministerial statement, that I hope we are ahead of Ontario in getting private retail sales in place.

We'll see how it goes, but spring 2019 — there is the answer.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 17, 2018. They are Motion No. 328, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 294, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 17, 2018. It is Motion No. 332, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 27: *Coroners Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 27, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The government is pleased to bring forward this bill to modernize the legislation governing the administration of the Yukon Coroner's Service.

In late 2017, I asked the Department of Justice and their Policy and Communications unit to perform a legislative review of Yukon's *Coroners Act* and compare it to legislation governing the coroner and medical examiner models found in other Canadian jurisdictions. The current Yukon *Coroners Act* is based on the Coroners Ordinance 1958. It has only seen minor amendments since that time.

I know that some members of this House were born before 1958; many were not. I'm just thinking back to what was happening in 1958 when this Coroners Ordinance was adopted here in the territory. I can tell you that the annual income in 1958 was about \$4,600 a year. Here is one that will probably surprise us: gas was 24 cents. I have a note that says "a litre" but I suspect that was maybe a gallon. At the time, bread cost about 19 cents a loaf. The Whitehorse General Hospital was still downtown. Mr. F.H. Collins himself, Frederick Howard Collins, was the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory. It was eight years after Whitehorse, as a city, was incorporated back in 1950.

All of this is to say that this piece of legislation and its outdated processes and tools for a Yukon coroner are long overdue.

The current act predates modern legislation such as the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, also known as ATIPPA, and it predates, of course, the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*, an act known as HIPMA.

The current act also has certain anachronisms in the legislation, such as section 16(3), which gives a special status to inquests into mining accidents and requires at least three employees of the mine, of whom at least one is familiar with the work in respect to which the accident arose, to be placed on the coroner's jury. Looked at today, this section is puzzling, but presumably it was an effort and was put there to ensure that the jury itself had sufficient expertise in mining procedures to determine what caused the accident leading to an accidental death in those circumstances.

Of course, this is not the practice in courts or other quasi-judicial settings in a modern context. Instead, witnesses and sometimes expert witnesses are brought in to provide information for the jury to assist the jury and help them to make their determinations. In the new *Coroners Act*, this rather specific provision has been removed, but what we have added is a provision that a presiding coroner could ask the sheriff to call a jury that is either representative of a specific ethnic or cultural group or that would have specific knowledge and expertise pertaining to the case at hand. This is an important change. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that any coroner's jury can be sufficiently representative and have the necessary expertise to be able to make a finding that will help prevent other similar deaths and provide the Yukon public with the information it requires.

The new *Coroners Act* defines three types of coroners, Mr. Deputy Speaker: the chief coroner, investigating coroners and presiding coroners. The chief coroner's powers and duties are set out in the act rather than mainly in regulation, as they are now. This is an important change.

Members will note that a chief coroner will have all of the powers at common law that a coroner has been bestowed over the centuries of law that governs coroners. It is centuries, Mr. Deputy Speaker — coroners were among the first legal entities involved in our constitutional democracy. In the new legislation, coroners will be bestowed with these common-law powers incorporated into the act, except as modified in this new act. They are historical powers.

The duties and the powers of the chief coroner have been further clarified under this act, as they were not clear enough under the old act, and they include the duty to administer the act to manage the manner in which investigating coroners carry out their investigations. It includes the requirement that the coroner have the power to establish policies and procedures to which investigating coroners must adhere and the power to establish a code of conduct for investigating coroners. These are all elements of this new legislation that were supported by the coroner's operation here in the territory and are supported by our research with respect to providing a modern piece of legislation — all tools that will assist the coroners.

A simple and essential matter that has not been clearly spelled out before which is in the new act is that there can be an acting chief coroner when the chief coroner is away. It seems like a pretty simple provision but something that has not been provided for in the past. Again, back in 1958, it may not have been needed and wasn't included in amendments

going forward, but it is certainly a practical matter that will assist the chief coroner's operations.

This is an important component of the act for a service that we call upon, without notice, 24 hours a day, for there is no rest for the coroners or the acting coroners in their work, and opportunity must be provided for, because what we ask coroners to do is extremely important and difficult work.

An investigating coroner is a coroner who does the initial death investigation that is prescribed for in the new act. A presiding coroner, in contrast, will preside at an inquest and is to be selected from a roster that the Minister of Justice will be required to maintain. That roster is made up of judges under the *Territorial Court Act* or a senior lawyer whose qualifications will be set out in the regulations.

There is also the opportunity to prescribe other persons who might preside over a coroner's inquiry, such as an experienced coroner or a medical practitioner from another jurisdiction. This is, in the recent past, a codification of the actual practice. We live in a small jurisdiction. The concept of conflict of interest must be respected. This is an opportunity for us to have experts in the area of law, and the complex situations that come before a coroner's inquest now will be well served by those individuals who will conduct inquiries on behalf of families and the Yukon public.

The reason for this modernization is to emphasize and take advantage of the specific expertise at each stage of a coroner's process. It is in the best interests of Yukoners that we ensure that the person carrying out each of the different stages — whether it be investigation, medical examination or presiding over an inquiry — has the specific professional skills required for the task.

I'm proud to say that the policy work and the details that have gone into this new piece of legislation were guided by those principles, which are supported by many Yukoners who engaged in this process and by the other partners — Justice, RCMP, the coroners, et cetera.

The new *Coroners Act* also has new requirements around the duty to report deaths. All child deaths will now be required to be reported to the coroner to bring our law into modern legal context. Such a requirement will trigger, at the very least, an initial investigation into the death.

All deaths that occur while a person is in custody must, of course, be reported. In addition, there is the expansion of the duty in this new legislation to report a death in custody that now includes youth facilities — again, a modernization that is long overdue here in the territory.

The act also provides that an inquest will be held whenever there is a death in custody at either an adult or youth correction or detention facility, or whenever a person dies while in the custody of a peace officer.

With respect to the managing of information, coroner's investigations and their results, either by statute or common law, have not traditionally been specifically subject to privacy legislation. In some cases, information in a death investigation may be highly personal in nature and, even though a family member may be seeking some of this information, the coroner's duty is to the privacy of the deceased.

In the new act, however, there is a disclosure section under part 7 of the act that notes that the Coroner's Service is not a public body under ATIPP and creates a general prohibition on the release of information gathered for and by a Coroner's Service in carrying out the functions described in the act that are related to situations like the investigation and the findings of the death except in certain circumstances. This part goes on to outline the exceptions to the general disclosure prohibition and what types of information can be given to family members, the public or a person with a valid interest in the information, such as the chief coroner's report or an inquest report.

Despite the fact that the old act was silent on this topic, for the purposes of openness and accountability, certainly there are parts of the Coroner's Service that must be subject to provisions like ATIPP privacy protections for that information as well as access to that information by the public. The new act is more specific and expands that responsibility.

Spelling out the exceptions in the disclosure provisions provides transparency for the Coroner's Service because, prior to this modernization — this modern version of the bill, the coroner relied on common law to manage information sought, used and stored as part of the investigation process of the coroner. By spelling it out in legislation, it becomes clearer to both an applicant for information and the investigating coroner how information that comes into the possession of the Coroner's Service may be protected, must be protected and can be accessed.

Families are an important consideration in any death that the Coroner's Service is investigating. I will take a brief opportunity to note that our current chief coroner has exceptional skills in dealing with loved ones and people who are aggrieved, of course, when there is an unexplained death or accidental death. I thank her for that compassion and skill because our Yukon families are well-served as a result. The accidental or unexplained death of a loved one is so very difficult and the grief and the questioning of what has happened are a lot to deal with and a lot to process. As I have noted, our current chief coroner handles those concerns by family members and other loved ones in the most professional and sympathetic manner.

During the summer's consultation, we asked the public a number of questions pertaining to inquests. These included how inquests are called, who should preside over them — which I have talked a bit about already — and if there should be a process for families to request an inquest into their loved one's unexpected or unexplained death when it has been determined that one is not needed after a full coroner's investigation. While a variety of perspectives were voiced in respect of the first two questions, clearly most respondents wanted a way for families to be able to ask for an inquest into a death.

The requirement to make a decision on this is not a job that anyone relishes. I am pleased to be able to tell this House that we have heard Yukoners in this regard and have included, under section 43 of this act, a right to request an inquest by a family member or another interested person. The general

procedure for this is established under this section and is an improvement on the existing act, as there are currently no provisions such as this in our current piece of legislation.

Section 44 goes on to provide a power for the Minister of Justice to call an inquest if they determine that it is in the public interest that an inquest be held. This kind of provision appears in other jurisdictions in Canada. From time to time, there may be a reason to hold an inquest to meet the greater public interest where the minister may have broader systemic knowledge of an issue or of a community concern or interest by the public, which is — the public interest — the criteria the minister will have to use.

This does not mean in any way that there can be political interference in the Coroner's Service. In fact, the criterion that the minister must use is whether or not the matter is in the public interest. I certainly expect it will be a provision that, while available to the Yukon public, will rarely need to be used.

The Coroner's Service is a quasi-judicial, independent body and this should cause any minister who is contemplating overriding a coroner's decision or making a different decision than the coroner to hold an inquest to ensure that there is very good reason to do so and that it is in the public interest and will prevent future similar deaths.

I will close by noting that much of the new act is drafted with the deficiencies of the old act in mind. We have researched across Canada. We have looked for the best possible options. We have looked for the best possible result for Yukoners to make what is such an important service for all of us respectful of Yukoners' wishes, and developed the legislation to protect them and serve Yukon citizens and Yukoners across the territory.

Members will note that this act is — again, not too concerned about page counts — quite a bit longer than the old act. That is clearly because some of the material that was previously in legislation has now been prescribed in the act or in regulation to ensure clarity of the powers and procedures that are required by the Coroner's Service — again, giving the Coroner's Service the tools that are necessary.

Simple things like the addition of an acting coroner in the act, which allows the chief coroner to be away for whatever circumstance, are practical improvements. Further, spelling out the procedures of the investigations and the inquests will allow for greater transparency and certainty. Adding sections to deal with disclosure of records and the protection of privacy give the Coroner's Service both the powers and the guidance that they need to manage requests for information and to serve the Yukon public.

Our government anticipates that the regulation package required for implementation will be completed and in force by mid-2019.

Many people in this House, and perhaps my colleagues, have heard me say ad nauseam that we can pass all the acts we want, we can try to do the best for Yukoners through legislative service, but if we don't manage to complete regulations and bring new pieces of legislation into force and effect, it has no real impact on the lives of Yukoners.

With the anticipation that the regulations will be completed, my direction to the department is always “now”, or “sooner” — or “can we have them now” — probably much to their chagrin. Nonetheless, as you can see, there are pieces of legislation that have been passed by this House and require extensive regulation, not the least of which is the cannabis and control act. Those kinds of projects take a significant period of time for a small but mighty legislative drafting team in the Department of Justice. I will take this opportunity to thank them for their efforts on behalf of all Yukoners and certainly on behalf of us in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'll now cede the floor to other members and I look forward to hearing their perspectives on this important legislative initiative. I also look forward to the questions during Committee of the Whole and the debate on this piece of legislation that I am proud to bring to this House.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to this legislation, I would agree with the minister on one point that she made, which was that the *Coroners Act* was in need of modernization. But in looking at this legislation, our primary concern is the process by which government developed it. Based on the responses to the questions that I asked at the briefing with officials, I am concerned and feel the government made a mistake in choosing not to do a broader consultation in developing this legislation.

This is a piece of legislation that is important to Yukoners. It does interact with other areas that people may not be aware of until they are in a situation where a loved one passes away. It interacts as well at an investigation scene with the powers of the RCMP versus the powers of the coroner. There are changes in this legislation to the current powers of an RCMP officer who in certain cases will be potentially replaced by the decision of a coroner.

One of the specific concerns that I had with regard to that is that we were told by department staff that the RCMP were consulted but did not see the legislation before it was tabled. Now, if the minister wishes to correct that point or provide any additional information, I would certainly be happy to hear it. If the RCMP did not have an opportunity to see sections of legislation that directly impact who is going to be in charge in certain circumstances related to an investigation affecting one of the RCMP members — or one or more RCMP members, I should say — that is something that I believe is a significant failing on the part of the minister to not ensure that the RCMP were fully aware of the fine print and had the opportunity to provide comments to the government on whether they agreed with that or whether they had concerns with what those changes are.

As I would hope the minister would agree, the RCMP are fully capable of reviewing the fine print of legislation and providing informed and specific comments to government about where they may have concerns.

The process of development here — from what we were told by officials, it appears that the act was largely developed by four government staff in a siloed, insular approach to government in doing this. Now, I want to state as well to those

who were part of that very small group that we recognize they take direction on who to consult from the minister and/or Cabinet. This is not intended as criticism of them. They were not the ones who had the ability to choose what the process of consultation would be.

There were valuable perspectives from a number of Yukoners who could have and should have been heard in the development of this legislation. I do have to remind the minister that her government actually ran on a campaign slogan of “Be Heard”. To fail to consult with health professionals and others who would have undoubtedly had opinions on this legislation and may, in fact, be affected by it in the performance of their duties is, again, an absolutely unacceptable decision by this government and a significant failure by the minister in making that decision.

We were advised at a briefing when I asked whether the Yukon Medical Association was consulted with — I was told that this had not occurred. I asked whether the Yukon Registered Nurses Association had been consulted with. I was told that had not occurred. I asked whether the Yukon Hospital Corporation had been consulted with and I was told by officials that had not occurred. I asked whether Emergency Medical Services had been consulted with and I was told — and I quote: “Briefly.”

Emergency Medical Services — both the full-time staff and volunteers who are the backbone and the heart of our EMS in rural communities — deal with situations that involve fatality. I should say, a great percentage of the times when the *Coroners Act* would come into place, it would also be a situation where Emergency Medical Services is called to respond. For them not to have an opportunity to understand an act that may affect their responsibilities and has an impact on the role of another person who has authority on a scene when someone has passed away is a failure on the part of government. What perspectives would have been heard from the full-time EMS paramedics in Whitehorse or rural EMS volunteers? I can't speak to that exactly. I don't deal with the day-to-day operations that they do in responding to calls, but I am quite certain that they would have provided thoughtful input to the development of this legislation.

Whether it was broader consultation with EMS volunteers as a whole or through the Volunteer Ambulance Society consulting with rural EMS supervisors, these community members should have had the opportunity to provide their input and either provide their support for the government's proposed approach for the *Coroners Act* or provide thoughtful and constructive suggestions about how to change it.

Another area where the government has failed to hear perspectives is — we were advised that letters were sent to the community coroners but, when I asked whether any had provided input, the government staff at that point in time were unable to tell me whether even a single community coroner had provided their input. I asked whether the then-chief coroner, who is now the former chief coroner, had the opportunity to provide input, and I was told that she also had not had the opportunity to provide input. I'm sure that there

would also have been valuable input from her perspective in that regard as well.

There are also families who have had experience with the *Coroners Act* and inquests held under the *Coroners Act* and who have perspectives on how well that worked or did not work. While, again, I can't speak to exactly what input those people would have provided, I do believe that Yukoners who have been affected by this area of law would have had some thoughtful, valuable input about the development of this legislation and that the Liberal government should have lived up to their campaign commitment of "Be Heard" and, in fact, consulted with the public in this area, considered the input that came in and, ultimately, after hearing from health professionals across the territory and from RCMP — both at the senior level in Whitehorse and members placed in Yukon communities who have to often be the person upon whose shoulders certain decisions rest for whether — RCMP members who are placed in Yukon communities across the territory, as well as the EMS personnel in those areas and the community coroners, shoulder the responsibility of making the initial decisions when there is a highway accident or other tragic incident in the community, including those that result in a death. The fact that these people were not given an opportunity individually to look at what government was considering is quite unfortunate.

Again, with no disrespect to the very small handful of staff who were involved in this, the decision on whether or not to reach out and consult with these people is a decision that is made either by the minister or by Cabinet collectively, and in choosing not to reach out to all of these people across the territory who I have mentioned — including RCMP members, health professionals and so on — the government failed to live up to their own election commitments and has left this legislation not as strong as it could have been if government had given health professionals, RCMP members and others an opportunity for meaningful input on this legislation.

As the minister mentioned, the age of this legislation dates back quite a ways — the basic model dates back. The legislative model on this certainly is older than I am, and I don't disagree that modernization was necessary. But Yukoners, including the groups and individuals whom I mentioned, should have had the opportunity to provide their thoughtful input on this legislation. Government could have easily left this until the Spring Sitting and taken the time to hear the perspectives of all these citizens. So it's very difficult for me to support this legislation simply because of the government's failure to consult with Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for her introductory comments this afternoon at second reading of Bill No. 27, the *Coroners Act*.

As she said at the outset, 1958 is a very long time ago, and I can tell you where I was in October 1958. My mom and dad had just about finished building their new home. My father's income was approximately the same as the average income that the minister had outlined. They had a mortgage outstanding at the time of about \$8,000. It doesn't sound like a

heck of a lot today in 2018, but I can tell you that then it was. They were pregnant with their sixth kid. On October 8, 1958, he was killed in a plane crash — flying a couple of guys home from an exploratory — they were oil guys. He was flying them home. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation — and there was an inquiry into the deaths of those three men who were killed. It changed the lives of three different families.

Just one anecdote in terms of legislation and perhaps its intended or unintended consequences — back in the day, workers' compensation defined "survivors" as those who were extant, so even though — the one was not born until the next spring, so he wasn't a survivor, so she got workers' benefits for five kids, not six kids.

The legislation from 1958 is dated, and we know that over the centuries since the notion of a coroner — and it goes back to one of the first functions of government, going back to King Alfred's time. It is a long-outstanding function. As the minister said, it is our duty to make sure that we are bringing these pieces of legislation forward, modernizing them and making them appropriate to the circumstances of the day.

I do thank the officials for the briefing that they provided to us. It was thorough. We raised a number of questions and we will be raising those questions in more detail as we go through this piece of legislation in Committee of the Whole.

Again, I can't say it often enough — I said to the minister when there was an indication that they were going to be working on this legislation that this was one that we really strongly felt, and feel, needs to be modernized. We have raised in this Legislative Assembly, on numerous occasions, concerns and issues with the current legislation and the significant barriers that it places before individuals affected by the death of a loved one, a family member or a colleague. We believe that the new act reflects many of the concerns that we have raised, but we do have a number of questions and a number of issues that we would like to see raised.

We have reviewed the "what we heard" document. Maybe the government is getting tired of these or the process, because I would note that this particular "what we heard" document, even though the legislation is much more comprehensive — and the minister will recall that when the survey was being done, we had sent a reply back saying that at least one of the questions was contradictory and required changes. There was a note in the "what we heard" that there was an error in one of the response fields, so one of the sets of questions was withdrawn. Even at that, it was difficult to find it. We were told at the briefing that it was going to be online shortly and I can tell you that we finally found it — today.

It's just that you want to make sure that if you are relying, to a large extent, on these public engagement tools and they appear to be the main tool being used to gauge either public interest or response to options being placed before the government as it modernizes legislation, then they need to be able to be subjected to a fair degree of scrutiny. I would suggest that this particular one does not.

Notwithstanding that, I think that we do agree with most of the changes that are being proposed. This act, and the

regulations that will follow, are important to every community in the Yukon.

We raised and will look forward to further discussion with the minister on the issues of the model being chosen with respect to the chief coroner. We recognize and acknowledge that, as the minister did, there are four jurisdictions in Canada where there are medical examiners or investigating officers and eight with a coroner kind of model.

We believe, as we see increasingly in the Yukon — and we've already experienced challenges with the current model — that when we have complex toxicology cases, it does raise legitimate questions about utilizing physicians as coroners to the degree it's compatible with the Yukon jurisdiction and how that can be made to work.

We will look forward to that conversation. We raised, during the briefing, questions with respect to the fact that it appears the legislation is completely silent on what a chief coroner is — what kind of qualifications? What do we expect a chief coroner to bring to the job that gives us comfort that they actually have the expertise and the background to do that job? We do know that the legislation says that they have to be a public servant — so they are drawn from the body of public servants — but what does that really mean? We'll be looking forward to having that conversation, as well as conversations about prerequisite training and ongoing training that is provided to both the chief coroner and community coroners.

In order to get a coroner's inquest, the requirements in the current act are incredibly narrow, and we are pleased to see that this legislation provides some expansion. We would have liked to see more — including any child in care, or any adult who is under care or supervision.

Mr. Chair, as I'm going through questions that have been raised and reviews that have been done across the country, there are a lot of different criteria or circumstances under which an inquest — a coroner's inquest — can be triggered.

I was curious — the minister made reference to the fact that, in 1958, the only requirement for an inquest was if there was a death at a mine site. Maybe I misunderstood that; it was one of the ones. Right now, it appears that this has been eliminated. So we're just curious if it is just considered as a fatality — or what? We look forward to getting that clarified because I can see from the member opposite that I've misrepresented that or misheard that. I look forward to having that clarified.

There are a number of other areas too. It seems reasonable to consider that, when a death occurs either in a hospital or where the delivery of health care is in some way connected — for example, a death in an ambulance en route to a hospital, or a death in an ER, an operating room or a recovering room — they should have the ability to be covered by a coroner's inquest. The coroner should be involved in that.

I raise that because of the very clear example of the coroner's inquest that wasn't going to happen but did eventually happen under a huge amount of pressure, anxiety and stress — a family in Watson Lake. To the point of the Member for Lake Laberge, the two most recent, significant coroner's inquests that I've been involved in in the Yukon —

those families don't live here. All of the people who are dead lived here, but their family members wouldn't have been involved in a consultation because they don't live in the Yukon. We have to be mindful of the fact that the impact of deaths by accident or, in one case, where you have a situation where unsafe living conditions in a home — there are consequences to that and you can't expect that the families are going to be following legislation across the country.

They certainly hoped at the time that there would have been opportunities. We shouldn't have to go political — we shouldn't have to use the Legislative Assembly to offer the citizens or offer families the opportunity to have their voices heard and to hear how to avoid future deaths under similar circumstances. We're pleased that there has been an expansion of those criteria, and we'll look forward to having a further conversation with the minister about that.

With that comes the fact that the minister can make a determination and we will want to hear a bit more about that because, from the way I read it, the minister's decision is final whether or not it's a yea or a nay. We would like to know — under what circumstances — how you would appeal that. Is there an appeal mechanism? For example, can an individual go to court to request that the minister's decision be overturned? Is there a public interest override? I don't know, and I can't read it in the legislation.

We're interested in talking in the Committee of the Whole about judgments and inquiry because, at one time, these were not available, and then it's our understanding and our experience as members of the opposition — and because of our engagement with individuals and families trying to sort through the process with the coroner's office over the last five or more years — that the process of posting judgments of inquiry and inquests began in August 2013.

It is our experience that this has changed again in the last couple of years, and now we're only seeing a small proportion of the judgements of inquiry being completed and posted.

What we will be looking forward to hearing in Committee of the Whole is: Will the public be able to access these unpublished judgments of inquiry? We believe, in our read of the new act, that the posting of reports will be limited and really subject to the discretion of the chief coroner as to what will be published based on a number of factors that, from our perception, are not clearly defined. We will be looking to hear why and what criteria will be followed and basically what is the rationale for the change. We know that in some other jurisdictions all reports are publicly available, so why is it proposed not to have them publicly available here and, most importantly, the recommendations — if there are any — coming from those reports? Because that's how we inform the future. We learn from the sad lessons of the past.

These recommendations, which are often to a department — we would be looking to know and to hear from the minister in Committee of the Whole what powers this act provides for the chief coroner to follow up and whether or not the chief coroner can enforce any implementation of recommendations.

We're really keen, based on what we've seen over the last few years in the territory, on making sure that the public and

the families have a right to know and to ensure that there is openness and accountability, particularly to those who are most directly affected. I note that, for example, in Alberta, not only do they post their reports, but they have put in place an online system that will publicly track fatality inquiry recommendations and the responses to them. It's only by doing this that we improve accountability and can perhaps help prevent future deaths.

As I said earlier, there are a number of other models that are used in other provinces. We will want to talk about the choice of model in terms of the descriptor of the officiant — the person who is going to be doing this, whether it is a chief medical examiner. We have talked about a chief coroner. We have talked about somebody with some medical background versus not. We understand some of the challenges that may bring to a jurisdiction the size of the Yukon.

We also raised, in the briefing with officials, questions with respect to the removal of the chief coroner — what are the provisions? It's one thing if a chief coroner is an officer of this Legislative Assembly — there is an appointment office and there is legislated — or supposedly, not always followed, as we have seen — but there is supposedly a process that is set out, for example, for the office of the Public Service Commissioner — if you are a deputy minister, you serve at pleasure. It's not clear in this legislation, so the provisions for removal of or investigating a coroner — if there are concerns — which we don't expect, but you always have to have those kinds of fall-back provisions.

I was very pleased to hear the minister speak to the importance of ensuring that the regulations are brought forward in a timely manner. We would encourage the minister to maintain her pressure to bring these regulations into force as quickly as possible, because we absolutely agree with her that, until that is done, it's basically an empty vessel: It's nice, but it's just on the shelf and it doesn't do much.

We didn't talk during the briefing; we didn't ask questions during the briefing with respect to any additional costs this new legislation may bring with respect to any additional O&M costs. One would think that, after 60 years, there may be some legitimate additional costs associated with modernizing the legislation, but we will want to hear from the minister about that.

There will be many, many, many questions when we go into Committee of the Whole. On the whole, we are very pleased to see a modernized *Coroners Act* being introduced to this Legislative Assembly. The devil is in the details. We will wait and see if there are things that will crop up here that we think are blatant oversights. If that is the case, we will, of course, bring them to the attention of the minister.

Mr. Adel: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 27. I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, the Minister of Justice, and the Department of Justice for their hard work and diligence in bringing this piece of important legislation to the floor of this House.

As the minister has mentioned, our existing *Coroners Act* has had only minor changes since it was introduced in 1958.

Mr. Speaker, I was introduced in 1953 and I have undergone serious changes.

The 60 years since have brought about many changes, including changes in legislation, technology, investigative practices and procedures. Bill No. 27 proposes to modernize the *Coroners Act* by removing the arcane and out-of-date provisions. It will also clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Coroner's Service, including who has the authority to call inquests and who can preside over them. The Coroner's Service is responsible for investigating the cause of unexpected and unexplained deaths and making recommendations to improve public safety and prevent deaths in similar circumstances.

This bill incorporates best practices around investigative procedures that promote professional, efficient and impartial investigations that will ensure the Coroner's Service continues to serve the public's interest into the 21st century.

Modernizing a piece of legislation takes a considerable amount of time and effort. This work takes place behind the scenes and it involves evaluating how policies within legislation have become ingrained into case law, assessing the relevance of acts within current technological frameworks, undertaking a public engagement process and compiling, discussing and revising data, feedback and information to shape the final proposed revisions.

A significant contribution to revisions to the *Coroners Act* was input from Yukoners with a public engagement survey provided to Yukoners in July and August of this year. We also heard from the RCMP, from First Nation governments and from the public throughout the territory, who provided feedback about the existing *Coroners Act*.

Mr. Speaker, responses to the engagement, as well as information brought forward to the department by Yukoners in various capacities, included input from stakeholders, such as the RCMP and the coroner's office, whose practices are shaped and informed by this legislation, and individuals, families and others who have been affected not only by the death of their loved one but by the investigation into that death.

The review of the *Coroners Act* and regulations, public engagement and subsequent recommendations have resulted in an updated act that is thorough and provides an all-encompassing framework for the coroner's office that will inform their practice moving forward. Mr. Speaker, modernizing the act will support the coroner's office to access and utilize the appropriate professional resources to oversee each stage of a death investigation case, and the independence and impartiality of the Coroner's Service will be protected under the act. The proposed amendments to the act will make it consistent with the current Coroner's Service processes, best practices and the technological advances.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that the Coroner's Service has operational independence from the government when undertaking investigations of unexplained deaths. The proposals under this revised act provide the Minister of Justice with the discretion to order an inquest at the request of the family.

In summary, the modernized *Coroners Act* provides the coroner's office with the ability to deal with realities in the current digital information age, expanded powers of investigation and the ability to appoint impartial adjudicators over inquests. Mr. Speaker, the revisions to this act are necessary and relevant to those who have been or will be in the situation of losing a loved one under circumstances requiring a coroner's investigation, to the professionals we entrust to investigate these deaths and to all Yukoners living throughout the territory.

Mr. Speaker, updating the *Coroner's Act* is just one example of our Liberal government's efforts to modernize Yukon's laws, programs and services so that they meet the needs of Yukoners in today's society and going forward. A modern Yukon requires no less.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I'm happy to support this bill and the broader effort to modernize the laws and operations of this government. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise to support the modernization of the *Coroners Act*. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge my colleague, the Minister of Justice, and the many public servants who have contributed the time and energy to modernize and review this act thoroughly to ensure that it reflects current times.

As others have said — and some really great points raised by the Leader of the Third Party on the legislation as being somewhat contradictory and somewhat antiquated — in fact, I wasn't born in 1958, but others were, and there is a lot that has happened since then and a lot of really great feedback received — most recently, in some of the current cases that we've heard through judicial processes and through other processes in the Yukon that address the out-of-date act.

The current *Coroners Act*, as noted, is extremely outdated and long overdue for amendments. It is no longer consistent with current processes, nor does it reflect best practices. It clearly has significant barriers that have become pretty evident to all of us in this Legislature and to all Yukoners. Our laws must respond to current conditions and practices. It is important to note that aspects of this new law are to help inspire confidence in the quality of the investigations into unexplained or unexpected deaths in our territory. One should not have to go through a public process or a political process to trigger an investigation. The new act ensures that inquests are presided over by senior lawyers, coroners or judges. It is triggered and it therefore should proceed as addressing the major concerns that should come forward through an unexplained or unexpected situation. It includes a process for families to ask for an inquest into the death of a loved one. It also provides a mechanism to reopen investigations when new evidence is found.

Furthermore, the new act places specific obligations on certain government institutions to report all deaths that occur in, or are caused by, the institution, requiring a coroner to investigate these deaths. Under the proposed changes, if an individual dies in an institution or mental health facility, in an

ambulance, for that matter, or in an RCMP cell, an internal investigation into the death will automatically be triggered. The duty to report deaths has also been expanded to include youth facilities and youth and adults in custody at correctional or detention facilities.

Additions to the act now include a note that coroners should have knowledge of Yukon First Nation culture, which is really very important, given that we have 14 First Nations in the Yukon and 11 self-governing First Nations that have a voice and have traditional practices and methodologies that need to be incorporated and respected. These changes are incredibly important and are meant to reduce barriers and improve communication with families following the death of a loved one.

It is always unfortunate when we are faced with the passing of a loved one and, at certain times in our lives, it is important to know that we are supported and this modernization of this *Coroners Act* will allow for that and will reduce barriers that we have obviously seen in the antiquated act. Reducing the barriers is an important way of making improvements. These amendments are extremely important to all Yukoners and it is important to bring them forward in a timely manner and not years from now — not 30 or 40 years — but in months and days. We are really looking forward to further discussion and certainly support the amendments.

Speaker: Is there further debate on Bill No. 27 at second reading?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard at this time?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to be long in reply. I have an excellent indication of where our conversation should happen here in the House — in the debate in Committee of the Whole.

I am saddened, however, that the Member for Lake Laberge unfortunately spent a significant portion of his time today in the House criticizing the process rather than providing any comments. I appreciate he's concerned about the process — and that's a legitimate question as well — but unfortunately, he hasn't had any comment on the substance of this bill. It is certainly something that our government is interested in — from the Yukon Party. Presumably Yukoners are also interested in a fair and open debate with respect to substantive concerns about making these changes after so much time. The opportunities for input were sought specifically and generally. Unfortunately, again, the Member for Lake Laberge has not presented accurate information here today. I take his criticisms, but Yukoners deserve accurate information.

The RCMP, in fact, was consulted. They provided extensive comments and all of their concerns or suggestions — some of each — were incorporated into the final version of this bill. Their comments, of course, are critical and they brought excellent suggestions to the table.

I personally met with a few community coroners that were interested in doing so. I met with the current chief

coroner, of course. I met personally with the former chief coroner and had the opportunity to receive written submissions from a number of those individuals, which were also taken into consideration — this is a team effort. I personally met and received written submissions, but, of course, they were brought to the drafting team to provide further advice and to take all that information into account with respect to all of what was being brought forward. We sought input from Yukoners, community coroners, the RCMP, First Nation governments and government departments on the ways we could better serve the public interest in presenting a new *Coroners Act*, while maintaining the integrity of coroner's investigations.

I will also just take a brief moment to mention that there was opportunity for the public also to more generally participate. There was an online public survey available to all Yukoners. I take the point of the Leader of the Third Party, but it was available to all Yukoners for a 45-day period. We sent targeted letters to all the community coroners. Of course, we engaged with the chief coroner, who was on the committee dealing with this matter going forward at every step of the way — generally weekly meetings with respect to that. It took a significant amount of effort and time from her schedule as well and the RCMP, of course, was contacted in addition — there were weekly meetings of the drafting group, of which the chief coroner was a part. We also engaged internally with vital statistics and policy staff at Health and Social Services on a more informal basis.

I hope there are some answers to the questions with respect to process. Again, the substance of this piece of legislation will be the subject of debate in Committee of the Whole and I look forward to that.

I'm thankful this afternoon for the careful consideration by the Leader of the Third Party. I appreciate her comments here today. It really shows, in my view, the purpose of this kind of exchange and ultimately the Committee of the Whole debate because she has presented excellent questions. I look forward to our discussions of them and any others that come forward from any members during Committee of the Whole.

I just want to take one last chance to thank all the Yukoners who participated in this process, provided comments and spoke to me outside of this formal process and any of the individuals who worked on this because their comments are always top of mind.

I also will take the last chance — not the last chance, during Committee of the Whole we will have some officials here — to thank all of the individuals and professionals, the Department of Justice and departments of Community Services and Health and Social Services that provided comments, input and guidance with respect to coming to this point in time here today where we have presented this bill for debate in the Legislative Assembly and, on behalf of Yukoners, for the improvement of the services of their Coroner's Service.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yea, six nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 27 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter now before the Committee is clause 57 in Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 20: Societies Act

Chair: The matter before the Committee is clause 57 in Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*. Mr. Streicker, you have 18 minutes and 45 seconds.

On Clause 57 — continued

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I certainly won't take 18 minutes. I will take a minute to give a few introductory remarks that my colleagues yesterday reminded me that I didn't give, so I will today. First, I would just like to once again welcome to the Legislative Assembly Louise Michaud, the ADM of Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs, and Ms. Bhreagh Dabbs, who is from the Legislative Counsel office, and Sephora, of course. It is always a pleasure to have Sephora here too.

I'm just going to give a few introductory remarks and then I will finish speaking on clause 57.

Just as a reminder to get us back into this debate, the purpose of this bill — the *Societies Act*, Bill No. 20 — was to provide a clear governance and operational framework for about 800 societies that are registered in the Yukon. The current *Societies Act* was created more than 30 years ago when the Yukon's population was smaller and the role of societies in the Yukon was much more limited.

Last fall, when we opened up engagement on this act, almost 100 Yukoners assisted in the development of this proposed new act by providing input at our public engagements. I want to thank them.

Those people who participated expressed their concerns and outlined their challenges with the existing act. Today, as we go through clause by clause, I will just try to highlight a few of those things so that they hear their voices on the record. They provided suggestions on how to streamline processes and offered insight into what they want in the new legislation.

Generally speaking, societies will be responsible for the content of their own constitution and bylaws and for filing them in the registry, but they will no longer require approval by the registrar. I think the Member for Porter Creek North was asking what issues were raised and that was one of the most significant.

Under our new *Societies Act*, the society's members and directors will be responsible for resolving disputes regarding its constitution, bylaws, governance and operations. We will provide societies with resources and training to assist with the transition to the new legislation.

Those are just a few opening remarks. I want to again thank the departments for all of their work in bringing this forward.

The clause that I wanted to talk about right now, Mr. Chair — clause 57 — talks about the duties of directors. One of the concerns raised to us when we talked with folks about societies was that they were concerned that there was nothing in the legislation that talked about ensuring that directors had integrity or honesty and diligence. Section 57 sets out the basic duties of directors and articulates that they have to act in good faith and exercise care, diligence and skill.

These are things, of course, that are rather subjective measures and challenging but, under the encouragement by Yukoners who are members of societies, they wanted us to put that out there so that, when people turn to the act, they can see that there is a responsibility — more than just a fiduciary responsibility — to act with integrity when they are representing that society.

That's all I wanted to do for introduction there, Mr. Chair.

Clause 57 agreed to

On Clause 58

Clause 58 agreed to

On Clause 59

Clause 59 agreed to

On Clause 60

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Again, thanks to the members opposite. I'll just pop up here and there. Clause 60 is talking about directors and disclosure of conflicts of interest.

One of the things that we wanted to make sure of here is that we acknowledge — especially in our smaller communities — that there are lots of people who wear many hats, and there are going to be times when directors potentially have some conflicts. We wanted to — and we were asked to — put into the act some discussion around those issues and to set out specific conflict-of-interest guidelines for directors, officers and managers. For example, there is always going to be a time when someone is the snowplow operator, they are a director on a society, and the society needs some snow clearing.

These are things that we think we can manage, and so what we are doing here in this section of the act is just making it clear how people disclose that information and making sure that everyone is aware and they don't find themselves in situations where decisions could benefit them personally and they would remove themselves from debates that might happen around them where decisions that would benefit them are being taken.

This is just the section that allows us to navigate when we are in smaller communities and, inevitably, land with volunteers who come forward who have multiple roles within their community.

Clause 60 agreed to

On Clause 61

Clause 61 agreed to

On Clause 62

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Along with the notion of conflict of interest — just one second, Mr. Chair.

Let's say that there was a contract entered into with a third party by a society, and let's say that, at some moment, we discover, after the fact, that a director did not disclose a conflict of interest and there was some benefit to that person. We were talking about, with our societies that exist today, that they didn't want to have the third party — as in the private sector — put out by that and that, if there were consequences that resulted due to undisclosed conflict, that could be dealt with internally by the director and the society without necessarily having to involve the third party and that the contract could be honoured.

Section 62(1) sets out that a conflict of interest involving a director does not automatically make a contract void. Section 62(2) sets out that a court may make an appropriate order in such a conflict-of-interest case. It is trying to protect the society if it entered into a contract to allow it to continue, especially with a third party, in particular the private sector.

Clause 62 agreed to

On Clause 63

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is a clause where we're talking about if there is good faith for directors and whether they are protected if they were acting or making decisions based on information they reasonably believed was correct or was true but turns out to be incorrect.

Section 63, and later section 65, sets out the good-faith protection provision of the statute for directors who have exercised appropriate due diligence. This is to provide clarity for our societies that shows them that, if they are making decisions in good faith and based on documents or expert opinions that turn out not to be true later on and have harmful consequences, then the directors themselves would not suffer personal consequences from those decisions.

Clause 63 agreed to

On Clause 64

Clause 64 agreed to

On Clause 65

Clause 65 agreed to

On Clause 66

Hon. Mr. Streicker: One of the challenges with the current legislation is that there are no guidelines on who can be hired to help administer a society. This section is talking about those people.

The term within the act is "officers" — officers are going to range from managers or executive directors up to even the executive officers, which would be people like the president and the treasurer, et cetera.

This section of the act is establishing rules that show societies how they can employ those people in a way that is appropriate and especially where those functions are delegated by the board of directors itself. The society forms, there's a board of directors that is responsible for the society, but they want those activities to be carried out.

Sometimes those will be paid positions; sometimes those will be voluntary positions — that depends, again, on the bylaws of the society. When we set this out in this section of the act, it is to provide clarity for those societies so they understand how to do it in a way that is onside with societies. It's one of the places where, in the past, we've seen some conflict inside societies and they expressed concerns. The purpose of this section here is to help provide clarity around that conflict.

Clause 66 agreed to

On Clause 67

Clause 67 agreed to

On Clause 68

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We have had lots of conversation with our societies about insurance and indemnification. It is a complex area. In discussion with my colleagues, as they were

explaining to me how this will be introduced here or dealt with here, it is that we are enabling. It is this section where we enable, or set out, the options for insurance and/or indemnification for directors.

Mr. Chair, we talked earlier about directors acting in good faith and working with the information that they have in hand. There are instances when some funding organizations may require that there be indemnification insurance, directors' and officers' liability insurance in place, but it's not within the scope of this legislation to require it.

If there are questions, I am happy to respond to them. The notion is that we will, through this act, enable it and then we will work with our societies, as we often do, providing training and best practices and things like that to assist them in navigating this issue. As has been explained to me, it is not the right thing to do to force it, because there may be situations where it's not the correct fit for a society.

Clause 68 agreed to

On Clause 69

Clause 69 agreed to

On Clause 70

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 70 through 90 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 70 through 90 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 70 through 90 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 70 through 90 deemed read and agreed to

On Clause 91

Hon. Mr. Streicker: In the past, we have had some real issues with societies being able to form, group together and morph over time. Dissolution — I will stand up as well when we reach that discussion. It has been very challenging for our societies.

Yesterday in the Legislature, there were some great questions from the Member for Porter Creek North. A question was around capping societies, where I said no, but what I talked about was the ability to try to encourage societies to work together and this would be one of those ways.

The challenge is that, under the current act, you would have to dissolve both societies and then form a new society. In that moment when you dissolve, suddenly things can change on you and you're not quite sure. It can be unnerving, unsettling and challenging for societies to work that way. A better solution is to provide some clear rules for how societies can amalgamate. The rationale here is that if there are two or more societies that wish to amalgamate without having to

dissolve and reincorporate, the formal process is set out here in the act and allows this to happen more efficiently.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 91?

Clause 91 agreed to

On Clause 92

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 92 through 102 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 92 through 102 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 92 through 102 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 92 through 102 deemed read and agreed to

On Clause 103

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I do have a couple of things I want to say. If you could just give me a second to catch up with my papers, I will be right up.

One of the major changes — and it might be one of the most fundamental changes to this act — is this notion that now the constitution and the bylaws move into the hands of the responsibility of the directors of the society and the society itself. The registrar is not the gatekeeper on those things and not seeking to provide legal advice to the society, so the registrar is holding those things and sharing them.

What happens when there is a concern within a society where some of the members have a concern? I think almost all of those concerns, Mr. Speaker, are going to be resolved right away by the members themselves. When they identify a problem that's within a bylaw — or something like that — they will hold a meeting that would be properly convened in order to consider bylaws and resolve that issue by debate and a vote.

Of course, the act itself talks about how that is done appropriately and the bylaws also will talk about what constitutes quorum and what constitutes a duly constituted meeting to consider bylaws.

If that's not how it's going to work out and if there remains a dispute, here is where we articulate how the society can proceed. We as a department will, of course, work through things like model bylaws and those templates to provide them with examples of bylaws that tend to work well and give them some direction, providing them with best practices. The society will have at its disposal many tools and those will be shared with them through those best practices. They can include things like mediation or arbitration, but if there is a situation where a society is not able to resolve its internal dispute or concerns or there are members who believe that there is something that is not appropriate, there is the ability ultimately for the society to turn to the courts to assist them in resolving those disputes. These sections here

underneath the complaint by members will talk about how that should unfold.

The act itself doesn't say how we will do the best practices. That is, of course, how the department will work — so it's not laid out, but the overall move here is to empower societies to allow them to deal with these issues internally and to support them with tools to be able to do that in a fashion that is effective but also to not be silent in the act — to articulate in the act if there is a case where it's not resolvable how they can ultimately use the courts.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 103?

Clause 103 agreed to

On Clause 104

Clause 104 agreed to

On Clause 105

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This about the disposal of assets. Pardon me, Mr. Chair; one moment. This is just one of the tools that are available if there is a dispute.

If there is a situation where a society is carrying on activities that are inconsistent or contrary to the purpose of the society, there is the ability for the complainant to make an application to a court to ask for a restraining order for that activity.

I think that these types of remedies are going to be in the extreme, but I am just noting them here, because one of the things that we were reminded of often is that the act doesn't outline how to take care of these situations, should they arise. This is about ensuring that we have full information in the act without expecting it to be the normal course of action.

Clause 105 agreed to

On Clause 106

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 106 through 113 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 106 through 113 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 106 through 113 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 106 through 113 deemed read and agreed to

On Clause 114

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I am not going to say much more here. Again, with clause 114, if there is a complaint and/or a situation where we have gone through all the other best practices to try to resolve those concerns, this is a time when we would end up looking into a society to make sure that there is a fair assessment of it in terms of trying to resolve the concern that is there. There is one thing that I want to note here. This section sets out that the registrar or complainant may apply to a court for the appointment of an inspector. The

inspector would then investigate the matter and report. The court can then, if necessary, make the appropriate order.

Clause 114 agreed to

On Clause 115

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 115 through 135 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 115 through 135 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 115 through 135 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

*Clauses 115 through 135 deemed read and agreed to
On Clause 136*

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Earlier, I talked about how societies can join together and amalgamate. This is now the question around how a society can dissolve.

There have been some challenges with our societies in the past decade around this issue. This whole next part talks about how we deal with the assets, how we make sure that this is done in a fair way and in a way that isn't advantaging specific individuals and how there can be restoration if a society has to cease to exist — either because they voluntarily choose to do so or it was based on a court order — so how they can reform if they wish to.

One of the challenges with the existing act is that things move somewhat into limbo because no one is quite sure. Again, one of the notions here is that we are providing a lot of clarity around this. The notion is that we are setting out specific rules about the ways in which a society ceases to exist, how it is dissolved and how those assets are liquidated.

What we have within this section — and again, one of the comments that I heard and we've all noted is how long the act is, but we chose to address the most common scenarios and that will provide some clear guidance. It won't answer every question in every case and there will always need to be context for the particular situation, but it's attempting to provide as much clarity as possible so that we can help our societies end gracefully and phoenix gracefully, if they wish.

Clause 136 agreed to

On Clause 137

Clause 137 agreed to

On Clause 138

Clause 138 agreed to

On Clause 139

Clause 139 agreed to

On Clause 140

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 140 through 183 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 140 through 183 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to standing order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 140 through 183 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

*Clauses 140 through 183 deemed read and agreed to
On Clause 184*

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I wanted to stand up and talk about these member-funded societies for a couple of reasons.

As I've described them — I think the easiest way to talk about them is like a book club. This is a group of people who are getting together, want to open a bank account but don't wish to form a formal society — we make it very easy for them to do this. If they're coming in as a member-funded society, they're not the type of society that we are looking to fund or support — they're independent and they're self-run.

One of the things that makes this act longer is that we have these parts that deal with these differences. It is an enabling thing. It allows these groups to exist and to be able to create a bank account but isn't necessarily trying to add to the length of the act that a society might need to look at. As I described it yesterday, the notion will be that, because it was written in a plain language, you are able to move to the section of the act that is important for you and get the information in a fairly accessible manner.

The other thing that I wanted to point out about the member-funded societies is that it is addressing one of the concerns that we heard, and I described it yesterday — the need to provide flexibility. The current act is trying to deal with a range of issues that societies want to address, but we don't want a one-size-fits-all sort of category. This is an example where we can have a type of society that will be supported to do its activities but is not one that will receive government funding or really be of much interest to most folks. I think that it's just to be enabling for them.

Chair: Is there any further debate on clause 184?

Clause 184 agreed to

On Clause 185

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 185 through 193 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 185 through 193 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 185 through 193 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 185 through 193 deemed read and agreed to

On Clause 194

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just as we talk about the registrar here — in the current act, the registrar has a lot of oversight. I don't want to say "coddles", but when a society that is doing good work comes forward with a bylaw amendment, I know that it's really backed up within the department, because we had been given legal advice that we had to do legal reviews of all bylaw amendments. That created a huge backlog and some real concerns for members of the community who had been doing great work, amending their bylaws just in the way that we all expect them to, and there was a real backlog.

I know that the department did a lot of work to try to make sure that the backlog moved through. I want to acknowledge that work, but ultimately, we could see that this wasn't the right approach to the registry and the registrar. That was one of the things that really motivated us to seek to amend this act and modernize it. Now the registrar has a much different role, and we as a department will be sure to provide supports for our societies.

There are still some remedies that are left in here under clause 195. There are still powers — that if the registrar, as they look at the constitution, notices an issue, they will certainly flag it. They will request the society to correct it if they deem it to be a significant problem, and they still have the authority, if there is an outstanding problem, to refuse to register the society if it's something that is considered significant.

It's not that the registrar won't be there in a supportive capacity. It's that we are empowering our societies because we believe — and this is the trend across the country — that the societies have the ability to manage their affairs, especially when it comes to their constitution and bylaws.

Clause 194 agreed to

On Clause 195

Clause 195 agreed to

On Clause 196

Clause 196 agreed to

On Clause 197

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 197 through 225 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 197 through 225 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 197 through 225 of Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 197 through 225 deemed read and agreed to

On Clause 226

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, this is the clause that talks about extra-territorial societies. By the way, I would like to thank colleagues from the opposition benches. Yesterday,

when we were here, I had not prepped them with areas where I was planning to try to get up so I had not prepared to try to clear a lot of this. There are a lot of clauses. We're nearly there, Mr. Chair. Today we are working constructively to try to get this House through all of this.

I just heard questions raised around extra-territorial corporations, so the reason I flagged this one was to just check and see whether there were any more questions. If I hear none, that's totally fine — if there was any clarification that we were seeking on extra-territorial societies.

Clause 226 agreed to

On Clause 227

Clause 227 agreed to

On Clause 228

Clause 228 agreed to

On Clause 229

Clause 229 agreed to

On Clause 230

Clause 230 agreed to

On Clause 231

Clause 231 agreed to

On Clause 232

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is probably my second-to-last time popping up, Mr. Chair. This is the part where we deal with consequential amendments. I just want to clarify that when we are dealing with extra-territorial societies, because of how they are going to form, we are addressing them under the *Business Corporations Act*, so this is where we are amending the *Business Corporations Act*. I will pop up in a moment just to talk about the *Cooperative Associations Act*, but I think that is my last one, Mr. Chair.

Clause 232 agreed to

On Clause 233

Hon. Mr. Streicker: When we had a conversation about societies — you always get groups that are sort of societies and sort of not, and you start morphing out — social enterprises, corporations that aren't just about profit and cooperatives. As we move across there, we're trying to make sure that we're placing things in the right place. Cooperatives are one of those groups. The only thing that we have as an amendment here is making sure that we can appoint a specific named individual or we can appoint a position — for example, the director of the Corporate Affairs branch — so that if there are temporary assignments and people moving out, we don't have to swap those people in and out.

The amendment that is here is really just a housekeeping piece, but I'm happy to have a conversation at some point with societies or with members of this Legislature around all those other groups that move in transition. We used to think of the spectrum as rather distinct, and I think what we are finding now is that the spectrum has a lot of grey area across many groups.

The place where we chose to draw the line is that social enterprises would be dealt with under the *Business Corporations Act* — and cooperatives as well — so wherever it is more business-like, we moved it away from societies.

Clause 233 agreed to

On Clause 234

Ms. White: I think clause 234, which talks about the ability for a member-funded society to not get a lottery licence, is an important one to discuss, so I would like to give the minister an opportunity to talk about clause 234.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This just follows with the point that I had raised earlier about member-funded societies. They really are here just to enable them to exist, but we're not thinking of them as a group where we're going to go off and start funding book clubs — but also that they are not acting as a charitable organization. They are not fundraising under the *Lottery Licensing Act*. Member-funded societies are groups that are dealing with their specific interests, and societies more broadly tend to be groups that are focusing on issues or more societal-based interests. It could be health, it could be recreation, but it's not about themselves. That's why we don't want to allow here that they could be deemed charitable organizations and become eligible to try to fundraise under the *Lottery Licensing Act*.

Clause 234 agreed to

On Clause 235

Clause 235 agreed to

On Clause 236

Clause 236 agreed to

On Clause 237

Clause 237 agreed to

On Clause 238

Clause 238 agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Streicker that the Chair report Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Kent: I would like to welcome Deputy Minister White back to the Chamber to provide support and assistance to the Premier and his ministers.

When we left off the discussions — I think it was last Thursday — I was asking some questions about the PA systems in a couple of schools in particular — Elijah Smith Elementary School, where I had information that the PA system was in need of repair, as well as the installation of a PA system in the Teslin School.

I am just wondering if the Premier or the minister have had a chance to get any updates on those questions since we talked about them last Thursday.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question by the member opposite, and I am happy to also take the opportunity to remind Yukoners and members of this House that there is no supplementary budget for the Department of Education at this Sitting. The question is regarding public announcement systems in schools. Of course, I agree with the member opposite in his conversation from the other day, in which he stated that the health and safety of students and staff is always a key priority for the Department of Education and that public announcement systems play a key role in that. It is important that school staff are able to communicate effectively during emergencies and during regular programming.

We are currently replacing the public announcement system at Elijah Smith Elementary School. The work is scheduled to be completed in November. In the interim, the school has alternative communication plans in place — although if they are, I don't have detail about what they may be and I certainly have confidence in the administration of the school to be able to manage the issue internally and within the school, as apparently they have been for quite some time. It was a surprise to me, and I know to the Minister of Highways and Public Works, that this was continuing to be a problem at Elijah Smith.

I can also say that, as we modernize school learning spaces over the coming years — not only driven by the curriculum, but in modernization of learning techniques and the ways in which children and young adults learn going forward — we also plan to upgrade the aging public announcement systems in schools, because they play, as we've said, a key role.

Details of that will be forthcoming. I will ask for more information from the department so that I have up-to-date information as we go forward.

Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the minister. So November for the repairs to be complete for Elijah Smith Elementary School — and she has indicated she'll get back to us with respect to the PA system in the Teslin School and when that will be installed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to capital projects that were contained in the mains and some of the plans that were in the mains for Education. Obviously we have had some discussions during this current Sitting about the unsuccessful tendering of a portable for Golden Horn Elementary School, but then we obviously didn't see any reflection or a decrease

in the capital budget for Education. I just wanted to check in with the Premier or the minister to make sure that the tendering of that portable is still scheduled for this current fiscal year.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: That might be one option, Mr. Chair, but I'm sure the member opposite will appreciate that the difficulty going forward is that to just put out another of the same tender without the exploration that I've described in answers to previous questions or the work being done for creative options would maybe not get us any further ahead.

So that's one option — absolutely — to place another tender out for a school portable. The department is currently working on an option where we might — as I've said before in this House — be able to take advantage of putting out a tender for more than one portable. But, of course, as the members opposite know, that requires appropriate budgeting process and application of the budgeting rules and the procurement rules going forward. It is a topic that is discussed, if not daily, certainly more than once a week in my world with the Department of Education.

It is a top priority for us to figure out how to deal with the growing enrollment in Yukon schools. Not quite at capacity — but certainly there are some schools, in particular Golden Horn, that are feeling it more than others. Going forward, we fully intend to engage, not only the department but the school itself and the school community, including the school council, in coming up with these creative solutions.

Mr. Kent: I know that it's obviously an important topic for the Golden Horn School community in particular, as they're in a space crunch. They have families wait-listed; some are home-schooled and some are attending schools out of the catchment area.

I wanted to talk for a while about the school seismic mitigation program and the 10-year capital plan that the minister has referenced during this Sitting and I believe towards the end of the Spring Sitting as well for schools.

On the Highways and Public Works website is a three-page document entitled *School Seismic Mitigation Program*. "The School Seismic Mitigation Program, initiated in 2010, recognizes the importance of schools to our communities and commits to providing safe educational facilities for our children."

Of the schools where it was deemed there was work required — there was Kluane Lake School in Destruction Bay, which we understand is part of the five-year capital program to have that school replaced and built in Burwash Landing. There is the Nelnah Bessie John School in Beaver Creek, St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction, Wood Street Centre School here in Whitehorse, Christ the King Elementary School in Riverdale, as well as Selkirk Elementary School in Riverdale, Takhini Elementary School and Whitehorse Elementary School.

Obviously there were a number of different phases. The seismic screening was done. The seismic evaluation was completed. There was some short-term mitigation, but then there was some planning as well for long-term mitigation. There was to be some life-cycle assessments completed for

each facility and then a 10-year financial plan was to be developed to identify how best to address the seismic risks for each of these facilities.

The budget, according to this document, was estimated at around \$20 million for all of the eight schools combined. That was in September 2013. Does the minister or the Premier have any updated numbers? Obviously inflationary pressures and some of the building material cost escalations would have affected that.

I'm curious if the minister or the Premier has an updated budget for those upgrades at this point.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As has been noted by my colleague, there is no supplementary budget for Education, but I am more than happy to answer this question as well.

The member opposite is well aware of what has happened with the seismic screening that was completed in October 2010. The purpose of that seismic screening was to identify medium to high seismic risk buildings for which we wanted further evaluation. The screening was based on the methodology and screening tools contained in the manual for screening existing buildings for seismic investigation, which was prepared by the National Research Council of Canada.

There was a review of available building documents and drawings, site visits, seismicity and soil conditions. All sorts of things went into this and 27 schools were included in the original assessment. Five newer schools were not assessed due to the relatively young age of the facilities.

Of the 27 schools that were a part of the screening, 19 were deemed to be at low risk. Eight schools were identified as medium to high risk, requiring a comprehensive evaluation. Phase two actually began immediately — it was completed in September 2013 — and the purpose of the evaluation was to identify seismic deficiencies and possible retrofit concepts at eight schools identified as medium and high seismic risk in the 2010 report that was conducted by a previous government.

The evaluation consisted of a review of available building documents and drawings, site visits, et cetera. The evaluation was completed in September 2013 and provides a list of recommended structural and non-structural mitigations to reduce seismic risks. Total recommended upgrades are estimated at almost \$20 million for all these schools.

Short-term mitigations were done until June 30 — I assume it was 2014 — and then they planned for long-term mitigations from November to June 30, 2015. At that point, once the life-cycle assessments had been completed — I asked for that information and they hadn't been done. I'm not sure why that's the case.

The Department of Highways and Public Works is now going through and has evaluated all of the buildings in its stable. There are many billions of dollars — hang on; let me just find that information. The building portfolio is valued at about \$1.6 billion and that building portfolio is now being managed through a digital tool that allows us to assess what work needs to be done and then dole out that work in a methodical manner.

That is where we are at the moment. I haven't got the information at my fingertips about how much in today's

dollars that \$20 million worth of work will cost, but I can endeavour to find that information for the member opposite and report back.

Mr. Kent: In the first Education annual report that the Minister of Education tabled, which I believe was for the 2016 year, it referenced the school revitalization plan, which was to be completed in the summer of 2017 — I think we talked about this either last fall or in the spring — and the minister mentioned the eight schools. Is the Minister of Highways and Public Works saying that this work wasn't completed in 2017? Sorry, if he could clarify that for me, that would be great. From his previous answer, I think he mentioned that some work wasn't complete that he asked about — but again, these life-cycle assessments and the school revitalization plan was referenced in the 2016 Education annual report as having been completed last summer. I'm assuming it was because we talked about these eight schools — again, it was either last fall or in the spring — so could I get the Minister of Education to clarify that for me?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As the member opposite knows, there have been very few schools built in the last 20 years. F.H. Collins was a replacement build. Many of these buildings are now near the end of their life cycles, and we're working with Education on long-term facility planning, which includes prioritizing based on hazard-level assessments. These plans will determine the work to be undertaken.

As I have stated, the Department of Highways and Public Works has generated some cost estimates and I will get back to the member with those costs.

Mr. Kent: Is the minister saying there was no school revitalization plan done in 2017 that informed the initial phases of the five-year capital piece that the government tabled with part of the spring budget? I'm wondering what informed the five-year plan then, which has, obviously, the work being done at Kluane Lake School. I think Christ the King Elementary is in there, as well as Holy Family, in that five-year plan.

Again, my thoughts were — when we talked about this last year — that revitalization plan informed the five-year planning, but the Minister of Highways and Public Works — I'm just curious if that work wasn't done that we talked about last fall, or is that school revitalization plan complete?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I didn't actually say that. I said that we are working with the Department of Education on — most of these schools are aged. They're at the end of their life cycles and we are working with Education to find out how best to replace this aging infrastructure that we have inherited. Long-term planning will continue to evolve and improve with each year — I have said that as well. Plans will change as community needs change and as planning continues with community partners.

The five-year plan is going to become — I mean, this is the first five-year plan the government has ever tabled. This government made good on that promise. I'm very pleased with the work that was done with the Department of Highways and Public Works as its first draft, and I can tell

you that plan is going to get more detailed and a lot more robust as the years progress.

The five-year capital plan and capital planning process was introduced to make the government's construction plans for all sorts of capital infrastructure projects more transparent for Yukoners and for those in the private industry. From what I have heard, the private industry is pretty happy with the work we have done on that front.

The capital plan that this government has tabled is realistic and achievable and meets the goals of being open and transparent for Yukoners. Communicating our plans can form a basis for shared decision-making and more collaborative processes as we go forward. We're working with Education. We're working with Community Services. We're working with the private sector and municipalities to try to make the most of the money that we have. It's not endless — the money that we have is not endless. We have to be careful with how we spend it. We have to make sure we maximize the benefit that we get inside the territory.

This government is doing that. We tabled the five-year capital plan as part of that process and it fulfills two goals: to combine a more detailed five-year capital plan with tendering forecast to meet the commitment made by the Legislature to have more seasonally dependent construction contracts tendered earlier. We did that as well, Mr. Chair. As you will note and the members opposite will know, we had a record number of contracts tendered earlier this year than in the past. It has helped with the contracting community. Right now we have three-percent unemployment. That is, I think, still the best in the country. Part of the reason why is that we have done much more robust and methodical capital planning that has helped our contractors plan for these things.

I have already pledged to get the information on the modern costs of these school projects to the member opposite. As we actually do the planning between the Department of Education and the Department of Highways and Public Works on the replacement of these aged schools that haven't been replaced for many decades, then we will come forward with more information.

Mr. Kent: Absolutely — I know that some of these schools have been around for awhile. I went to a couple of them early in my public school career here. We understand that it is going to take some time. You can't replace all of these schools at once. There is aging infrastructure, there are seismic upgrades that need to be done and there are also enrollment pressures, as we have discussed, at some of the schools that need to be taken into account.

When I look at this document, part of the work that was to be done — some of the eight schools that were identified in the seismic study were nearing the end of their life cycle. A life-cycle assessment was to be done to determine whether to complete the seismic upgrades in conjunction with other required maintenance or to replace the school. Has that work been completed?

The other questions that I will ask and give the minister a chance to answer are: When does she expect the 10-year education plan, or financial plan for schools, to be completed?

Will it just be for those schools that have seismic difficulties or will there be other schools considered as part of that 10-year plan?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't have the report in front of me that you made reference to back in 2010 and I think again in 2013, but the seismic report is one factor that is being taken into account. The member opposite is correct: it was taken into account when we were developing a revitalization plan for schools. That is, of course, now — as he properly stated — being developed and progressing into a 10-year capital plan for schools.

All of those factors are being taken into account. We have also spoken about a design and functional plan and the conceptual plan stages going forward.

The department is actively working on the completion of what will be this version of a capital plan with respect to school facilities, and that will feed into — as I said recently here in the House and publicly — the budgetary process going forward in the fall and spring of 2018-19.

Mr. Kent: I apologize to the minister if she said this and I didn't hear it. One of the questions that I asked of the Minister of Highways and Public Works was when that 10-year financial plan will be developed. If she is able — obviously not today — to table a copy of the initial school revitalization plan that was completed in the summer of 2017, that would also be helpful for us when we are talking to constituents, especially families who have children in these particular schools that are on the list.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will respond, Mr. Chair, by saying that I will certainly take that request into account. I'm concerned about releasing a document that is only one piece of a larger puzzle, but certainly I'll take the suggestion into account and determine whether or not there is information that remains current in that to the point where it would inform the members opposite and, ultimately, Yukoners and their constituents.

If we, in the development, as I've said — the revitalization plan is changing and developing into the 10-year capital plan for schools — it would be most responsible to have that completed before we issue it publicly — but something that is imminent, in my view.

Mr. Kent: When I go on the tender forecast site, which is part of the tender management system for Yukon government, the first project that pops up is the francophone secondary school. It has an estimated tender date here: July 31, 2018. We know, of course, that the tender just closed today. On here, it says that the estimated start date is October 26, with completion on November 6, 2020. I guess that begs one question for the ministers.

When was the last time that this tender forecast site was updated, given the fact that it appears to be two and a half months out of date with the very first project that pops up?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'll look into that for the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: Sorry, Mr. Chair — if the minister could repeat that. I didn't hear his response.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I committed to the member opposite that I'll get that information for him — when it was last updated. I'm sure they are updating on a regular basis, but I'll get that information and get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: Previously — not during this Sitting, but either in the spring or last fall, I believe — I brought to the minister's attention and to the House's attention that one of the contract directives states that the tender forecast site is supposed to be updated regularly and it is to reflect projects that are to be tendered in this current fiscal year. Again, looking at the site — including the francophone secondary school, there are only 17 projects listed on here. I think one of them that I saw actually was cancelled, so there are 16.

When the minister is getting back with the last updates — I assume there would be more than 17 projects to be tendered between now and the end of the fiscal year.

Let's take a look at the francophone school. It closed today. It's a design/build that's under a negotiated RFP. There were three bidders — one from Whitehorse, one from Yellowknife and one from Port Moody. We obviously recognize that it will take some time to evaluate the bids under this type of process.

Does the minister have any idea on when an award date might be forthcoming for that, given that we're two and a half months behind what the tender forecast says as far as tendering this project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate the member opposite's excitement on this issue. I share his jubilation at the close of the tender and the fact that we're going to actually award a contract, provided that all the tenders meet the guidelines and pass muster.

I can tell the member opposite that those evaluations will be done as soon as possible, and we'll come forward with that information once they're done. I am not going to rush the department. They're going to do their job and they will do it well. They will take the proper time to evaluate the three bids we have.

Mr. Kent: Again, I appreciate that the minister is going to give us an update on the tender forecast, and we've asked a couple of times about the completion date and occupancy for the francophone school. Here it says there is an estimated completion date of November 6, 2020, and so, looking at this as being two or three months behind already, it looks like it will be into 2021 before this is done.

I don't think we have ever had an answer in Question Period about when they anticipate students moving into this facility, but if the minister has that information right now, we would appreciate it so we can communicate that to members of the francophone community who are interested in that occupancy date.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: There is a lot of excitement and a lot of interest in this project. I'm very happy that we're on the cusp of the next stage of this project, but there is a lot of work to be done before we can come forward with a timeline. We're in the middle of a negotiated design/build. Once this contract gets awarded, we're going to sit down and actually start to work out the finer details of the project. In the course of doing

that, we will find efficiencies or knots. There is a lot of work left to be done. At this point, the move-in date hasn't changed, to my knowledge. I think we're still shooting for that date, and we will see what happens as we work with the design/construction team and see what sort of magic they can work in the execution of this project.

Mr. Kent: Another project on the tender forecast that caught our attention — and it is being managed by Highways and Public Works so, rather than wait for Health and Social Services, we will ask the minister here — is a group home replacement at 22 Wann Road. I will just give what the tender forecast says about this: an estimated tender date of October 1, start date of November 5 of this year, and completion date of April 30 next year. It has a cost estimate of \$500,000 to \$1 million. Obviously this is the property that was recently purchased by the government for a group home, but I will just let the minister explain what Highways and Public Works means by “a replacement”.

Again, we're asking these questions on behalf of contractors that rely on this site to determine future work plans and that type of thing. It's a tender forecast site. So again, it is a group home replacement at 22 Wann Road. What is envisioned for the \$500,000 to \$1 million? If we have missed these tender dates and start dates — if the minister either has them today or can get back to us with revised dates, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am more than happy to plumb the depths of the questions of the members opposite this afternoon when we are in the midst of this supplementary discussion. The member opposite is bringing questions forward in good faith and I will find answers from the department to these highly technical questions and report back. As he can see, I don't have my officials here with me. This isn't Highways and Public Works supplementary debate, but I know that we are in the midst of talking budgets. I am more than happy to get that information to the member opposite, so I will ask and we will find out.

Mr. Kent: We will appreciate that because, as I mentioned, this is a site that contractors rely on. When they are planning their future work, they will go to this site and take a look at it and determine what projects they could potentially bid on going forward or if there is work that they can look at.

The fact that it appears not to have been updated for some time is a concern, I'm sure, to contractors who rely on this. It is on the tender management system. There are open tenders, closed tenders and forecasts. The forecasts, unfortunately, are not up to date. Again, we will appreciate an answer on that and the other questions we have asked with respect to this from the minister.

A question that my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, wanted me to ask was with respect to the geotechnical report for the Ross River School: if the minister is willing to make that public — or perhaps we could find it on the Highways and Public Works or Education websites. I thank the minister for that.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am more than happy to talk about the Ross River School this afternoon. It will take a few minutes, but it's an important subject to the community of Ross River, with which I'm sure the Leader of the Official Opposition is well-acquainted.

As the members opposite know, the Ross River School has been settling due to freezing and thawing of the permafrost under the school. Over the years, many structural repairs and interventions have been made to the school. In May 2018, we had a series of engineers visit the site and confirm the school remains structurally stable and safe for occupancy. I have talked about this during Question Period.

I have talked about it because it's very, very important to this government that this school remains safe for occupancy and that we keep on top of this and make sure that the students and staff of this facility are safe. That remains to be the case.

We will ensure that school is properly maintained and safe for continued use until we have properly worked with the community to find out how and when to replace the facility.

We had budgeted more than \$500,000 in each of the next five years to ensure the structural stability of the school. We have also scheduled a roof re-shingling in 2021 for approximately \$600,000 and the installation of a paved sidewalk in 2022-23 for about \$55,000 is sort of on the books.

However, the member opposite was asking about a study that was done. I have reviewed that study personally. We want to talk to the community about it and, once we have actually given the study and talked to the community about that report, we're going to be making it public.

Mr. Kent: Obviously we had hoped to get a copy and have the minister commit to make that report public. He has committed to reviewing it with the community, which would be great, so we'll look to see a copy of that report sometime in the not-too-distant future, hopefully, so that we can review it or have it reviewed.

I wanted to ask a quick question to the Minister of Education about the Yukon university. I believe one of the government private members tabled a motion recently encouraging the House to support the establishment of the Yukon university — I don't have the exact wording — but if the minister can provide us with an update on progress and an update on estimated costs for the establishment of Yukon university, that would be great.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I do have some information. I don't believe I have updated information on costs; of course, that's a main budget issue and will be for the next number of years going forward. I also do not have a copy of the main budget with me. Again, I don't have a copy of the supplementary budget because there isn't one for Education, I'm happy to say.

However, the Government of Yukon is extremely pleased to be working with Yukon College as it becomes Yukon University. Again, this is a topic about which there is much work being done, both in the Department of Education and at Yukon College in conjunction with our partners — really, across Canada.

Yukon College is a leader in their world of what will soon be a hybrid university. It will offer more university-level programs and still provide programs such as diplomas and certificates in career and trades training, second language support and upgrading.

This also gives me the opportunity to note that a Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Governance degree will be the first stand-alone degree offered by Yukon College. It began this September, which is truly an amazing feat and accomplishment at the college.

We are extremely proud and working with all of our partners across the north, across Canada and here in the Yukon Territory to envision and to make a reality the first university in the north, by the north and for the north. We are extremely pleased to be working on that project.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 20, entitled *Societies Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 16, 2018:

34-2-75

Yukon Heritage Resources Board Annual Report April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018 (Dendys)

34-2-76

Financial Accounting Report — Government of Yukon — for the period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 (August 29, 2018) (Silver)

The following written question was tabled October 16, 2018:

Written Question No. 28

Re: ATIPP requests related to the Yukon Coroner's Service (Cathers)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 100

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 17, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Sergeant-at-Arms | Karina Watson |
| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 17, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming a number of people today. First, I would like to introduce the deputy chief and elder from Vuntut Gwitchin, Esau Schafer and his wife Marion Schafer and, of course, Grand Chief Johnston. Thank you for being here.

We have two other significant elders who are here from my community, Ida Lord and Beverly Bingham. It is really great to have you here. We also have Leonard Linklater, his wife Patti and, of course, Clara Linklater and her daughter Emily; also we have Paige Tizya-Tramm and Matt and Ryan are here supporting her. We're waiting for Councillor Dana Tizya-Tramm to arrive as well. I would also like to ask others to help me welcome Anne Daub and her daughter Samantha, Megan Williams, and Rosa Brown, and David Krutko, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Northwest Territories. We have also Penny Prysnuik and a lot of relatives of the late Joe Linklater. We have his baby sister with us as well, Kathryn Linklater.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm wondering if we could please welcome back to the Legislature the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities and past Whitehorse mayor Bev Buckway — and a reminder that tomorrow is municipal elections in the territory.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Joseph Linklater

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today on behalf of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the late Joseph Arthur Linklater. He was better known to the Vuntut Gwitchin and many around the circumpolar world as Chief Joe Linklater. Many Vuntut Gwitchin affectionately referred to him as "my chief."

To his many nieces and nephews, he was "Uncle Joe". To his cousins, he was sometimes referred to as "Joey".

Joseph Arthur Linklater was the youngest child born to Emily and Charles Linklater. His early years were spent in Inuvik, and once his father Charles retired, the family moved to the Yukon, where his father was from. Chief Joe Linklater attended high school and Yukon College here in Whitehorse, where he studied carpentry, northern resources and First Nation management.

His Tetlit Gwich'in and Vuntut Gwitchin families helped him to understand the values of the land, the water and the wildlife. He spent much of his youth at the fish camp at the mouth of the Peel and Tetlit Gwich'in country. Many times he visited Old Crow during the summer months and was introduced to his Giwich'in culture and traditional teachings, where he was given an education on the subsistence lifestyle of the Gwich'in people. Joe and his family spent many vacations in Old Crow where he got to know the Vuntut Gwitchin people, and that is where he spent the remainder of his years.

When Joe began his work for the Vuntut Gwitchin, he received support and guidance from his Auntie Lydia Thomas as well as John Joe Kyikavichik, Alfred Charlie, the Rev. Dr. Ellen Bruce, my dad, Donald Frost, my uncle Stephen and many others.

They helped shape his vision for Vuntut Gwitchin through education, especially cultural and land-based. A stronger, healthier community emerged from his teachings. Chief Joe Linklater served the Vuntut Gwitchin first as a counsellor in 1996 and as chief for 16 years from 1998 to 2010 and again from 2012 to 2014.

He was an advocate for the ongoing political evolution and advancement of self-government for Yukon First Nations in partnership with other Yukon First Nations as well as other orders of government.

In an interview in 2011, Chief Joe Linklater stated: "... self-government is not just for aboriginal people. Self-government is for all people, and I'm really excited to see how we develop as a society in the Yukon as a result..."

He helped to significantly advance and stabilize self-governance for Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Vuntut Gwitchin was one of the earliest Yukon First Nations to sign a final and self-government agreement in 1995.

Joe was very much a part of the journey to self-determination for our people and for Yukoners. Sorry, it's kind of hard for me — Joe was a very dear friend of mine and we spent a lot of years together. We kind of grew up together, so it's a little difficult for me right now. He spent many years working to implement these agreements.

Chief Joe Linklater believed that all the resources could not be spent on one thing; resources were required to support self-government. His analytical mind went to work. If all of our food, freight and fuel were brought into Old Crow by air, why not own the airline? If the community needed gravel to build and maintain infrastructure, why not own the gravel quarry? These investments meant there were jobs and resources for the programs needed in the community. As a result, Chief Joe Linklater was well-known for his expertise in

establishing and overseeing economic development initiatives and trust structures.

He sat on the National Indigenous Economic Development Board, served as the chair of the Gwich'in Council International, sat on the board of trustees for the Vuntut Gwitchin Trust, the Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation, and sat on the board of trustees for the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.

His passion for his people and the land allowed him to serve as an international spokesperson for the high-profile lobbying to protect the Porcupine caribou herd, which calves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and is a primary source of food for the Vuntut Gwitchin people. Chief Joe Linklater helped champion a number of education and capacity-building initiatives, such as the Yukon education reform project, and helped establish many community volunteer groups.

Chief Joseph "Joe" Arthur Linklater was born January 29, 1964, and left us on April 8, 2018 — a life jam-packed into 54 years. He was an impeccable storyteller. He had a great sense of humour. He was loved dearly by the Gwich'in and inspired many young leaders we see in our community today, including me.

Chief Joe Linklater was devoted to the care of and respect for the elders. As Chief Joe Linklater's long-time friend and colleague — and now the deputy chief for Vuntut Gwitchin — Esau Schafer says, he spoke strongly for our community and, with guidance from our elders, he set self-governance in place for our future.

When advocating on behalf of our government, he always carried great respect for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. His office door was always open, and he genuinely listened to the advice and guidance of the elders.

In the introduction to *People of the Lakes*, Joe Linklater wrote that the incredible hardships and toughness of the people were simply a backdrop to the lessons or information they were sharing. It still overwhelms me to think how tough these elders I see today must have been in their prime. Their instincts for survival are still honed and sharp, but now for survival of our culture and history that must be carried on for future generations.

He was known, loved and respected as a visionary leader and fierce advocate for Vuntut Gwitchin self-government, the protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as calving grounds for the Porcupine caribou herd and indigenous rights and self-determination overall.

In closing, I want to reiterate a true, Chief Joe Linklater motto. He said: "If anyone were to ask me to describe in one word the best advice I've ever received from my parents and Elders, it would be: 'try — just try.'"

Our world is a better place because Chief Joe Linklater shared it with us. Mahsi'.

I wish to thank his family and the community of Old Crow for sharing such an amazing and great visionary leader with all of us and all of Yukon.

Mahsi' cho.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like to just take a moment to welcome Patricia Cunning to the gallery. She is the executive director of MacBride Museum of Yukon History. Also, Jud Deuling is here. He is known to me as a constituent but also as a very dedicated teacher at the Individual Learning Centre, a school we are very proud of here in Whitehorse, and I hope he has brought some students with him today.

Welcome to you all.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming to the gallery today Regional Chief Kluane Adamek.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Today, I have for tabling a statement from the US Customs and Border Protection agency, dated October 9, 2018, regarding Canada's legalization of cannabis and crossing the border.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have a legislative return on the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement* for tabling today.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue the development of a licensing and regulatory framework to allow for private retail sales of cannabis in Yukon in a timely manner and in a way that displaces illegal activity while protecting public health and safety.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Justice to recognize the importance of the RCMP auxiliary constable program, including the key role those volunteers could play in keeping roads safe following the legalization of cannabis, by immediately supporting the implementation of all three tiers of the RCMP auxiliary constable program.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to regularly provide up-to-date information regarding confirmed and suspected opioid-related deaths and overdoses as part of a public awareness campaign to end the stigma associated with drug use.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Independent power production policy

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to provide an update on our work on the independent power production policy. I would particularly like to highlight how this work is moving Yukon toward a cleaner and more innovative energy future.

We recently updated the independent power production policy in order to fulfill commitments that our government campaigned on. The main change is that we removed liquid natural gas as a qualifying energy source. Independent power producers will now only be able to use renewable sources for generating electricity. Other important changes ensure rates remain stable for consumers as independent power production projects are implemented.

The updates we have made to the independent power production bring it one step closer to implementation. We will still have work to do, but we are moving steadily forward and anticipate that the policy will be complete and in place by the end of this year.

The independent power production policy is now a true green energy policy. It will allow First Nation governments, communities and entrepreneurs to generate environmentally sound and affordable electricity to meet local demands. This is part of the Government of Yukon's efforts to develop local energy infrastructure and increase the supply of electricity from renewable sources.

We are proud of the territory's existing electrical base, which relies primarily on clean hydro generation. The intent of the policy update is to enhance and encourage more renewable energy projects across Yukon.

Independent power production has proven to be of high interest among First Nation communities and the private sector, which have come forward with multiple projects, including the wind project and solar farm — both projects in Whitehorse — a solar farm project by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow, the N'tsi wind diesel energy project by Kluane First Nation in Burwash Landing, and, in June of this year, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation signed a 25-year power purchase agreement in principle with ATCO Electric Yukon for its solar project at the Old Crow Airport.

The purchase agreement is the first of its kind and it is subject to the implementation of the independent power production policy. We anticipate many innovative projects to come forward in the coming years as our economy grows. We offer support to all Yukon communities who are looking to

enhance their renewable energy production or reduce their reliance on diesel generation.

The next steps in implementing the policy include developing a regulation framework, interconnection standards and purchase rates. We are working with ATCO Electric Yukon, the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation on these next steps. We expect this work to be completed by the end of this calendar year.

The Yukon government is achieving and surpassing expectations on implementing various programs and innovations related to energy generation and reducing energy use in Yukon. We have adopted a multi-faceted approach, which includes promoting renewable energy generation, managing electricity and utilities, promoting energy-efficiency initiatives, supporting research and training and demonstrating leadership in the energy sector. We are leading the way in supporting and developing locally sourced renewable energy to meet our growing energy needs and promote energy self-sufficiency.

We are successfully working with First Nation governments, communities, Yukon businesses and individual Yukoners to adopt and implement renewable energy generation projects. Yukon intends to be part of a global shift to address climate change by building resilient communities. We want Yukoners to be part of the solution, whether through larger renewable energy projects for a community or smaller retrofits for a more energy-efficient home.

Yukoners can contribute and support our collective efforts to build healthy sustainable communities and environmentally responsible development in Yukon.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this ministerial statement today, Mr. Speaker.

When I heard that the government was going to do a ministerial statement on the IPP today, I was excited. I thought this was great news in that, after two years of delays, the minister had finally made his decision. He finally was going to announce something, but then we came back to reality.

The government still has no announcement to make on the IPP. The minister has still not made a decision. He anticipates he might have an actual IPP policy at the end of the year, but he won't commit to having it done by the end of the year, but he anticipates it might be done. So I was disappointed when I heard the minister confirm today that they still have not made a decision.

Because of the lack of details for any real new announcement, it's tough to respond to the statement today, but I do have a number of questions for the Minister of Economic Development that I hope he can respond to when he gets back up. As you know, the minister announced in the House last week that the Wolverine mine had been sold. Then yesterday, we saw the company say in the *Whitehorse Star* that they would not comment on this until such time as a deal is finalized. It left us wondering if the minister was authorized to make that announcement, but we do want to know: Would

the IPP provide any opportunities for a mine such as Wolverine?

Further, we're wondering about economic impacts. As you know, in April of this year, the Minister of Economic Development publicly stated that the Yukon had the worst economy in 2016. However, on October 1 of this year, the Premier tabled a document contradicting the minister. In fact, according to that report, the Yukon's GDP grew by 8.3 percent in 2016. Further, according to Statistics Canada, Yukon had the highest growth rate in Canada in 2016. Again, this left us wondering how the Minister of Economic Development could get these numbers so wrong, but perhaps the minister could tell us if he will be bringing forward an economic study of the IPP. Will it contain information on economic benefits of an IPP? Will it show impacts on the GDP? We think this would be a good idea, so I would like to leave the minister with that suggestion.

Another question we have is — Yukon Energy recently installed a third LNG generator at the Whitehorse dam. As you know, a long time ago, the minister mentioned that the Liberals were removing LNG from the IPP. So my question is: Why is the LNG that Yukon Energy burns okay, but the LNG that an IPP would burn is not? It just seems the minister has a double standard here.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for the opportunity to respond to his independent power production policy update. I was curious when we got the announcement this morning that this was going to be on the table this afternoon — curious because it talks about the fact that the Yukon government has recently updated the independent power production policy and, further, that the updates they have made bring it one step closer to implementation.

My curiosity then led me to go to the independent power production website, which tells me the policy that's on the website is from October 2015. So I'm curious as to what those updates are and when they will be tabled. Other than the welcome deletion of natural gas — I well remember that the original Yukon Party policy spoke about using Yukon's oil and gas resources — there's very little to know about what has changed since 2015.

If the Yukon government has recently updated the independent power policy, as the minister has said, where is it? Who was involved in the process to update and refine the original policy, which was put forward in 2009? It is a policy that, at the time, drew much criticism and subsequently a 2014 draft policy was sent out for consultation, which resulted in an October 2015 "what we heard" document which is now currently on the EMR website. So how does the new as-yet-unpublished independent power policy build on the efforts to get a Yukon independent power policy in place, with efforts dating back, as I said, to 2009?

Which of the constructive comments from the 2015 exercise have been built into whatever the new policy is? Fifty-six submissions were from independent power producers from municipal governments, NGOs, the research community,

individuals, industry users — all those people made submissions for the independent power policy in 2015 — constructive and critical comments.

One of the issues that the minister and I have spoken about a number of times — critical to the success of independent power policy in the Yukon — is still the outstanding matter of the scope and the terms for independent power producer purchase agreements.

There are a number of specific issues raised during the 2015 consultation on independent power production purchase agreements. The minister's statement today does nothing to indicate any movement or greater clarity in the three years since. We do look forward to a full, open debate on the latest draft, whenever it's available, on independent power production policy in the Yukon, and we would like to see that debate in this Legislative Assembly — not simply a proclamation of the policy.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I want to thank the opposition for their comments today. The reasoning today for this is that a lot of Yukoners are asking where this process is and I felt it was appropriate to give them an update. The member opposite wanted to see a commitment and we're saying that at the end of this calendar year, we will have that work completed. Again, the purpose of the statement is to demonstrate how we're moving Yukon toward a cleaner, more innovative energy future.

We have recently updated the independent power production policy, as we said we would during the 2016 election campaign. We promised to remove LNG from qualifying under the IPP policy, and we've done that. Independent power producers will now only be able to use renewable sources of energy and electricity.

Other important changes, of course — and this is something that the Member for Lake Laberge has touched on, and I'm in agreement — ensure that the rates remain stable for consumers and independent power production projects that are implemented. This was another commitment we made in 2016. We're looking at best practices — and in some cases, worst practices — across the country to learn how to cap how much IPP we will need at this particular time or that we think is feasible, taking into consideration the ratepayers.

It is interesting to hear the Official Opposition and their version of things. The Member for Kluane touches upon the fact that it has been two years. Members across the way walked in with great fanfare in 2015 and announced that this was actually in place — I think it was at the Opportunities North conference. Well, many, many years have gone by. Opportunities North, funnily enough, is back, I think, in the next week, so here we are again taking it out of the "didn't get 'er done" pile and coming back — very similar to another individual across the way who announced at maybe the same conference or at another conference the fact that we had a plan for a fibre line. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, as the individual responsible, there was no plan.

Once again, we will get this done for Yukoners. I do want to thank the NDP for their support on the change on the IPP policy, and I appreciate the points that were made.

I mentioned also that several projects we are currently working on when it comes to renewable energy — and I'll note that we're doing this hand-in-hand with Dr. Michael Ross at Yukon College. He is their industrial research chair in Northern Energy Innovation — a brilliant fellow. One of my instructions, of course, in my mandate letter was to increase the benefits to Yukon from research conducted in the territory. Of course, the project in Old Crow is a great example of that.

Mr. Speaker, I have just a couple of other points, being respectful to the Member for Kluane concerning the LNG. Yes, we are in a position where we believe that there are some common-sense approaches that we have to do now.

We have a process and a project that went through YESA. It was completed. We have put in a third turbine. We have a short-term approach to make sure that Yukoners are safe and warm and there is electricity in place. In the long term, we are looking at renewable energy. That's part of this IPP conversation.

I have no idea why we're talking about Wolverine and mining, but I can state that the day of our Committee meeting, the Member for Copperbelt South asked for an update. Earlier that day, individuals walked into the Yukon government and said that they were the new owners of Wolverine mine. That information was sent to me. I don't believe that relaying that in the House has done anything inappropriate. That's what they stated and that's what I passed on.

Other than that, I just want to thank Energy, Mines and Resources and Yukon Development Corporation and all of those involved for the great work they have done to get us to where we are.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: School capacity

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday, the Minister of Education said — and I quote: "... accuracy is important to me."

I would like to test the accuracy of some of the minister's statements.

On October 11, the Minister of Education was asked about the growing issue of overcrowding in our Yukon schools and the fact that some families have been forced to home-school their children due to wait lists.

In response, the minister said — and I quote: "... the Leader of the Official Opposition is bringing forward information that I have not been apprised of."

That's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, because according to a *Yukon News* article from last Friday, the Cabinet office was made aware of these specific issues on October 10.

Mr. Speaker, if accuracy is so important to the minister, why did she tell this House that she was not aware of any families having to home-school their children due to wait-lists, even though it is clear that her office knew the day before?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: While I never intend to make my answers with respect to the questions presented in this House personal, it happens to be that on that day I was quite ill. My staff was aware of something that I was not aware of and at the time that I spoke with the *Yukon News* reporter about 2:00 that afternoon in the scrum after the Legislative Assembly — I had not been aware that he had made those requests and that those conversations had happened. I explained that to him and he was surprised by that, but nonetheless, that was what occurred on that day.

Mr. Hassard: We have already highlighted the minister's statement yesterday about accuracy being important to her. She also stated on October 11 that she wasn't aware of any issues with children being on wait-lists. Yet, Mr. Speaker, on September 6, 2018, the MLA for Copperbelt South wrote to the minister to highlight the growing issue of overcrowding.

Just to quote from that letter: "There are nine students from the Golden Horn catchment area on the wait-list, including five for kindergarten."

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that, despite the minister's claims on October 11 about not knowing of these issues, it turns out that she was, in fact, aware. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we're left wondering why, if the minister says that accuracy is so important to her, she is playing fast and loose with the facts. Perhaps the minister can tell us why she took no action to address the wait-list that we made her aware of back in September.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The assumption is that I've taken no action. That is not, in fact, the case, as the member opposite knows. As I've said on more than one occasion in the last few days in the House — and I'm happy to inform Yukoners again — we work with every family with respect to their interests in having children go to the schools in their neighbourhoods.

It is a situation in the Golden Horn school where kindergarten is, in fact, full. As a result, there is a wait-list. I also know that is a moving list. Not that long ago, a family with four children left the area and then there were spaces that opened up. Of course, the grade that is open in any particular school has to be the grade that a particular family wants. Those two things don't always match up. They do in the vast majority of cases.

In Golden Horn, the most recent number I've seen is between eight and 11 — as it's changing — students who would like to go to Golden Horn, but those classes are — for various reasons, not the least of which is the requirement for the teachers to have only a certain number of students, as well as the facilities in those classes. Unfortunately, that's the situation at Golden Horn as of today.

Mr. Hassard: Last week, we asked the minister what her plan was to deal with overcrowding in schools. She responded by saying — and again I'll quote: "... this is not necessarily a terrible problem to have." The minister doesn't think that having students wait-listed is a problem, so I guess that's probably why she hasn't taken any action.

Let's go back to the minister's statement about accuracy and her claim that she only learned of these problems on

October 11. Mr. Speaker, we've obtained several letters to the minister dating back to December 2017 where the issue of overcrowding was raised directly. I'll quote from one of these letters: "Two kindergarten students living within the catchment area have applied to join Golden Horn Elementary School and have been denied." That's from February, so the minister's claim that she has only heard of these issues since October 11 is not very accurate.

Can the minister please tell us what her plan is to address overcrowding in our schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: We're going to have a lot of these conversations. I will stand by my concern that accuracy is critical, especially when I'm giving information to Yukoners on behalf of the departments that I'm responsible for. We're going to have a lot of these conversations if the member opposite thinks and decides that absolutely everything I've ever thought or had to do with education is the date upon which it has come to my attention.

Let's just go here. I work every single day on education issues, every single day on matters that come forward from schools, every single day on the issues that concern Yukoners — the students and their parents. I can also indicate that "overcrowding in schools" is a term that has been brought to me by the opposition and sometimes by the media.

There are issues with the fact that our neighbourhoods are growing and our population is growing. We don't control the way in which families move in and out or the demographics of particular neighbourhoods, but we do work with families every day that they bring a concern to us about having children attend the school that they wish to and that is in their neighbourhood. That has been a challenge with respect to Golden Horn. We are working with Golden Horn, with the excellent school council —

Speaker: Order.

Question re: School capacity

Mr. Kent: In a letter from the Golden Horn Elementary School Council to the Minister of Education, they cite a number of concerns with lack of space in the face of enrolment pressures. We know that the Minister of Education thinks that this isn't a terrible problem to have, but I can assure her that this is a very bad problem for a number of families who are finding their children on wait-lists.

There is a concern that next year they may only have room for one kindergarten class at the school, leaving as many as 20 in-catchment families unable to get their children into the school. They have asked for two portables to be placed at the school for the next school year — an increase of one from their original request in 2017.

Will the minister commit to two portable classrooms at Golden Horn Elementary School for next year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question, but this is the second time that only half of the quote that I spoke about a few days ago here — about how it is not a terrible problem to have — of course, the rest of that quote is the fact that our economy is booming and our Yukon population is growing. We have young families living and staying in the Yukon and,

as a result, there are enrolment pressures at our schools. Also, the rest of that quote has to do with the fact that the Yukon Party didn't build an elementary school in this territory when it was their responsibility to do so for over 20 years.

Now, to get to the question, certainly the Golden Horn Elementary School Council has written to me recently. They have focused on some excellent questions. They are all reasonable questions that they brought forward. I can also indicate that they offered that we can work together to find solutions, and I will take the opportunity to say what an important role school councils play, not only in this conversation about education, but in every one.

Mr. Kent: It would be a great opportunity for the minister to back up that commitment to work together by committing to two portables at the school next year, as the school council requested.

Last week, when we asked the minister about the growing wait-list at schools, she said — and I quote: "... this is not necessarily a terrible problem to have." Unfortunately it is for the families who now have their children on wait-lists and are finding themselves having to either home-school their children or make other arrangements.

We hope that the minister has realized that it is a problem and that she will show some urgency and take some action. The council is also asking that the tender for these portables be issued prior to December 31 of this year to allow for contractors to bid on them. Will the minister make that commitment to the school community here today?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can indicate that I am pleased to have the letter from Golden Horn Elementary School Council. I want to take the opportunity to say that this school council aspires — and we hope all school councils aspire — to such forward thinking and such forward planning. There have been recent by-elections with respect to school councils, so I would certainly take the opportunity to encourage all community members to take an active role and join their school council. There are still a few vacancies with respect to this really critical part of our school community.

As a result, we have met most recently with the Golden Horn Elementary School Council, and it would not be responsible for me at this point to say what we're going to do with the issues that have presented themselves at Golden Horn, because the school council has written and said that they want to help work on that situation. They have done so well in advance of their concerns for the fall of 2019, and I will definitely take them up on that offer.

Mr. Kent: Those were two relatively straightforward requests from the Golden Horn Elementary School Council. One was that the minister commit to two portable classrooms for next year, and the second was that she commit to tendering those portables prior to the end of this calendar year.

As we have highlighted, despite the Minister of Education's statement that the growing issue of wait-lists at schools is not a terrible problem to have, people are looking to this government to show some leadership. The minister has known about these issues for almost a year and, unfortunately, she has not shown any urgency so far.

The Golden Horn Elementary School Council has requested the minister attend their public meeting in November, which will deal with enrolment pressures and capacity issues at the school. A very simple request to the minister is: Will the minister attend the November public meeting as requested by the school council?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I can indicate that the deputy minister recently met with the Golden Horn Elementary School Council, that I received this letter yesterday, I think — one day ago. There are a number of requests in that letter and it's appropriate that we carefully consider a response. To do that, we will absolutely commit to working with the Golden Horn Elementary School Council as we go forward. I again want to express my appreciation for, not only their cooperation, but their great example of a school council working together and wanting to work together with its own school community, the administration and the Department of Education to solve these really complex issues.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre inmates' mental health

Ms. Hanson: The Whitehorse Correctional Centre made national news for the wrong reasons when the use of solitary confinement for an inmate with mental health issues went well beyond what the United Nations considers to be torture. Solitary confinement can have devastating effects on an inmate's mental health and make rehabilitation much harder. In turn, it makes our communities less safe when inmates are released in worse shape than when they went in.

To her credit, this minister finally ordered an inspection of the correctional facility to identify what changes need to take place. In response to a series of damning court judgments, the federal Liberal government has introduced a bill that would eliminate solitary confinement, as we know it, for federal inmates.

Will Yukon's Minister of Justice follow suit and eliminate solitary confinement at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address this. It's an important question brought by the Leader of the Third Party.

Of course, there has been a Whitehorse Correctional Centre inspection report. It has been released to the public. Never before has such a report been done under the *Corrections Act*. There are some 40 recommendations in that report. There is also an implementation working group determining how those recommendations should be implemented.

They have expertise on that implementation working group and the authority to speak to whoever they need to, to determine how we can make improvements at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre and to go forward. Yukon will be working to reform separate confinement practices. I was very pleased to see the federal government move yesterday with respect to the jurisdiction of federal prisoners, and we will certainly take that into account in the work of the working group and the

implementation of those recommendations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Ms. Hanson: The federal government's new law will still allow for inmates who pose a danger to themselves and to others to be separated from the general population, but critically, they will have access to mental health care, rehabilitation programs and a minimum of two hours of human interaction a day.

The federal bill is far from perfect, but it recognizes that our communities are safer when we focus on rehabilitation and mental health, and this should be a priority for Yukon Corrections, but so far, the government's response has been lukewarm to the inspection report on Whitehorse Correctional Centre. Its refusal to commit to eliminating solitary confinement is a key indication of that.

When will rehabilitation be the real focus of our correctional system, and when will Yukon recognize that solitary confinement isn't compatible with rehabilitation?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I do not disagree with some of the characterizations put forward by the Leader of the Third Party with respect to the importance of dealing with mental health issues for individuals who may be incarcerated, either at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre or elsewhere in Canada. What I can say is that I am not prepared to prejudge how we will implement any of the recommendations put forward by Mr. Loukidelis. I will remind this House that Mr. Loukidelis will be appearing here as a witness — so he will be able to answer any of the questions that they have about his work — that we have fully accepted the recommendations that he has made, going forward, and that we immediately struck an implementation working group with respect to experts in the field. Their task has been one and one only: implement the recommendations, tell us how to best do that, make it Yukon-specific and make it work for Yukoners.

Ms. Hanson: It is hard to believe that there could be a Yukon-specific response to solitary confinement. The case against solitary confinement has been made. The UN Rapporteur on Human Rights, Canada's corrections ombudsman, the Loukidelis report and Yukon court judgments going back to at least 2002 all point to the damaging mental health impacts of solitary confinement. This hinders rehabilitation, which makes our communities less safe.

The federal government isn't exactly the most reactive or adaptable machine, yet somehow they have managed to act faster than this government. This government's reluctance to change policy at Yukon's only correctional centre is embarrassing.

How can the minister justify moving at a slower pace than the federal government, when she is accountable for a single correctional facility?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am hoping that I am being clear. There is absolutely no reluctance whatsoever. The report was done as quickly as Mr. Loukidelis could do it. It was released pursuant to the legislation. The working group was struck immediately.

There have been a number of questions with respect to recommendations that have come from that group. We need to rely on the experts in the justice field to help us determine how to implement those recommendations — not whether or not we are going to.

The elimination of solitary confinement and the specifics thereof with respect to the federal government were released exactly two days ago and, as a result, need to be properly reviewed to determine how those might affect the physical facilities that we have here at Whitehorse Correctional Centre and the programs that we need to improve.

Question re: School capacity

Ms. Van Bibber: As we have highlighted today, the Minister of Education has had people telling her through letters about the growing issues of overcrowding at schools going back to at least December of last year.

Just to quote from one letter to the minister on this topic — and I quote: “We also have two in-catchment students who will be in Grade 1 ... that are on a waiting list because we can’t accommodate them.”

So far, we have not seen any action on this file. Last week, we asked the minister to tell us what she was doing to address these issues, and I was surprised also to hear the minister say that this was not a terrible problem to have. I disagree, and I think the minister needs to get on top of her files and start taking action.

Can the minister please tell us how much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity in our schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Earlier in the Sitting, a number of questions involved false information. I think I’ve tried to correct it here today. I certainly had hoped we would see a different tone this week, but I’m happy to answer questions on behalf of Yukoners, despite the fact that they might be quoting me incorrectly or causing concern where issues are, of course, being addressed. Yukoners deserve accurate information. All members of this House should have the responsibility to give that to them.

With respect to enrolment capacity at elementary schools here in Whitehorse, I can indicate that there is definitely an issue with respect to Golden Horn. There are a few families who are on a list who want their children to go to that neighbourhood school. The Whitehorse area has experienced population growth and the demographics in its neighbourhoods are, in fact, changing. The department considers student enrolment to be at capacity when a school has reached 80 percent. Of course, some classes and some grade levels might be at capacity prior to that being the case.

As of this conversation, as of the school year here —

Speaker: Order.

Ms. Van Bibber: Last week, we asked the Minister of Education to tell us how many portables her government will build this year. She told us she could not. There was no plan. Last week, we asked the minister why the government’s tender for portables was unsuccessful. She told us there were no local manufacturers, and that was proven to be incorrect. Last week, we asked the minister if she did an analysis of her

government’s unsuccessful tender to see why no one responded. She did not.

Mr. Speaker, we know the minister does not think overcrowding is a terrible problem, but we are asking her to take action today. Will she agree to meet with local contractors to figure out how we can get some portables built this school year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question on behalf of Yukoners, again with several inaccuracies included. I will not use the time here to clarify those, but I urge the members opposite to please provide Yukoners with accurate information — particularly if they are going to quote me.

I will say that I’m working with the Department of Education and the department is working with all departments in the government, including Highways and Public Works, to determine how to address the issue of school children wishing to be at Golden Horn. The portables are an issue — and I will clarify one concern.

My reference last week was to the fact that, in April of 2018, the Department of Highways and Public Works tendered business for a portable to be provided that would have gone to Golden Horn, and nobody responded.

Question re: Ross River School

Mr. Hassard: On October 9, we asked the government if they were renovating or rebuilding the Ross River School. The Premier said at the time, “I don’t think there is anything new to report...” Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday during Committee of the Whole, the Minister of Highways and Public Works announced in this House that the government has now budgeted over \$3 million to upgrade the Ross River School.

So in just seven days, the government went from nothing new to report to over \$3 million in new expenditures. It seems the government is playing a little fast and loose with the budget here, Mr. Speaker. When we debated the budget in the spring, there was no mention of this \$3 million. There’s no mention of the \$3 million in the five-year capital concept, either.

Mr. Speaker, did the Liberals simply forget to tell us about this \$3 million in the budget this spring, or are they taking this money away from somewhere else?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I’m more than happy to take this question on behalf of Yukoners. The Ross River School is an ongoing saga — as the members opposite know, because they wrote some of the script of that school, Mr. Speaker. The school was built on freezing and thawing permafrost — on not great ground. Since then, we’ve spent a lot of money trying to shore up that facility and make sure it works for the students.

I’ve said repeatedly that our goal is to make sure that school is safe and serves the community of Ross River, making sure their students and their teachers are safe in that facility. To do that, we will spend money to make sure that school is safe. Right now, the estimates go that we’ve budgeted \$500,000 — as I said yesterday — in each of the next five years to ensure the structural stability of the school.

We have also scheduled a roof re-shingling in 2021 of \$600,000 and the installation of a paved sidewalk in 2022-23 for somewhere around \$55,000.

So that information is accurate, Mr. Speaker; the members opposite are correct. I'm sure they've done their math. That's what we intend to do, and the reason that we are doing that is to make sure that school serves the community of Ross River and make sure that school is safe for the students and teachers.

Mr. Hassard: I would just start by reminding the minister that this school was actually built by the NDP and opened by a Liberal government. More importantly, I think this just further highlights how useless and ineffective this five-year capital concept is that the Liberals have provided.

Yesterday, the Minister of Highways and Public Works announced over \$3 million in capital work that isn't even in this capital concept. The government claims they want to provide certainty to industry, but the only thing people can be certain of is that they can't trust this document. I would like to quote from the Minister of Highways and Public Works from March 6, 2018, when speaking about the Ross River School: "... we are working with the community to develop that long-term plan. I'm not going to announce it on the floor of the House without actually speaking to the people of Ross River and actually working with them on this plan."

My question is this: Did he actually speak to and work with the people of Ross River on this \$3.1-million long-term plan?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I take issue with the fact that the member opposite thinks that planning for the future is useless. I know his community — between the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Village of Teslin, they have a plan. It's a 10-year plan and I would say that's a great plan. It's flexible and it moves and it breathes and it lives, just like the community does and just like our plan does.

I'm very pleased that the government has delivered on our promise to provide Yukoners with comprehensive information on the government's planned capital investment over the next five years, and this is just one example of our commitment to be open and transparent. Maybe that's not what the Yukon Party wants to see, but this is a transparency that the Yukon communities, municipalities and First Nation governments are all happy with.

The five-year plan signals Yukon government priorities. That's what it does, Mr. Speaker: It signals priorities.

Is it a comprehensive list? No. Is it a list that is going to be set in stone and will not move? No, it's not, nor should it be. We have to make sure we have the ability to move on our feet. We have to be able to use our budgeting process the proper way with our supplementary budgets, and we also have to make sure that Yukoners and Yukon businesses can prepare for the future, and that's what we have done with the five-year plan.

I'm very proud of the work the minister has done with Highways and Public Works on a whole-of-government approach when it comes to this five-year capital plan. When it comes to those plans and also our performance plans, we start

with something and every year we're building on it, and I'm very proud to deliver on that commitment to Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: I think the Premier had better go back and get a dictionary and learn what "comprehensive" really means, because he kind of contradicted himself a couple of times there.

Anyway, yesterday, the MLA for Copperbelt South asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works for a copy of the geotechnical report for the Ross River School. The minister said he had the report and he has reviewed it personally. He further committed to speaking to the community about the report and making it public. This information belongs to Yukoners, and if the government wants to live up to its commitment of being open and transparent, they should make it public immediately instead of sitting on this report.

My question is: When did the minister receive the report, why has he not already spoken to the community about it and when will he make that report public?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm not going to sit here on the floor of the House and take advice on access to information from the party that rolled it back. We are going to provide information to Yukoners in a timely manner. I'm going to go and, as I said, the community of Ross River will receive the report in due course. We're working right now to make sure that report goes to the community. We will then make it public to a wider audience, including the members opposite.

I'm more than happy to do that. We have done that with all sorts of reports. We will continue to do that. That's our commitment and that's what we're going to follow through on.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 328

Clerk: Motion No. 328, standing in the name of Ms. Hanson.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party: THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to invite Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner to appear before Committee of the Whole to address the concerns raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding Bill No. 24, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Ms. Hanson: I just have to shuffle my papers. For some reason, the list I got had the motion from the Member for Copperbelt South first, so I was sitting here thinking: "Okay, fine."

Mr. Speaker, it's October 17, so six days ago we debated at quite a bit of length — or discussed — aspects of Bill

No. 24, with particular attention to the issues and the concerns that were raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I won't go over the extensive kinds of conversations that ensued that afternoon. We covered the gamut. I think that it became very clear at the outset that the Minister of Highways and Public Works — and therefore responsible for the second reading debate on the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* — I just want to say, in summation of that conversation, that we do think of — not quite as theatrically perhaps as he — the notion of the importance of making the changes to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* that we see before us.

We thank the government. We did thank the government for taking this legislation out and following through on the commitment that was made in the framework of the legislation for a five-year review that, as we all know and as we said last week, was somewhat delayed. The Information and Privacy Commissioner had provided detailed comments to all members of this Assembly in December 2015 with respect to the need to move forward on that.

We do and did agree that the legislation, as it was amended in 2012, had set back the Yukon in terms of the core principle — the core ideas — that public bodies and governments hold information for citizens. They don't withhold information from citizens.

The core idea that we discussed last week is more the concept, as I had outlined in our discussion last week, that, as the Information and Privacy Commissioner and, indeed, one of the people that she offered to the Yukon — a number of Yukoners participated in a conversation with Toby Mendel from the Centre for Law and Democracy — has an expert who had provided significant ideas in terms of how we make our laws with respect to how we protect the private information and how we ensure that the rights to access information held by public authorities is a key part of the free flow of information.

What I didn't mention last week was the important aspect of this that it is rooted, not just in domestic law, but it is also part of the commitment that Canadian governments have made in terms of our adherence to our commitment to the United Nations *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, and, in fact, article 19 of that declaration speaks to this very important principle.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the debate this afternoon is really about having confirmation from this Legislative Assembly that the Information and Privacy Commissioner appears before this Legislative Assembly prior to third reading of Bill No. 24 to address the concerns — the founded concerns, I believe — raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding Bill No. 24.

As we said last week, the Information and Privacy Commissioner wasn't out to be unduly critical of the Yukon government or the minister in terms of the legislation that has been put forward. She quite freely commended the government on a number of fronts — and we articulated those last week in debate here in the Legislative Assembly — but

she also said that there still are some significant and real concerns, ones that she feels need to be addressed, as she said in her press release of October 9, before this legislation is put to a vote. As I said last week, I believe that we have the responsibility — indeed, the duty — to hear her out and to get her expert testimony in front of this Legislative Assembly.

Just to recap, the key areas that she indicated — I believe that we need to hear, as I said last week, from the commissioners to articulate what the implications are of us not following the advice based on significant depth of knowledge and research across this country. The Information and Privacy Commissioner didn't make these out of hollow commentary — these are grounded.

When she says that she has a concern that it is up to claimants to go to court if a public body rejects a recommendation made by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the fact that she offered some alternatives in language and suggestions during the consultation phase and the fact that neither of the recommendations that she made were accepted — I think this House needs to know why. We need to know what the implications are of what she was proposing and what she sees are the implications of not following through on either of the recommendations that she made to address this very serious issue.

Mr. Speaker, she identifies as well that the information security obligations of public bodies are not contained within the legislation. She says — and I quote: “Ensuring adequate security of personal information is fundamental.” Her concern is that Bill No. 24 doesn't specify the information security controls that a public body must have in place to adequately protect the personal information it holds.

Her concern here is that the government is intending to put that into regulations. As she points out in her notice of October 9, regulations can be easily changed. She believes that “Because adequate security is an essential element to privacy or protection of privacy, these requirements should be embedded within the legislation, rather than in regulations.”

I think that we need to hear from her what the consequences are of following this approach that the government has put in place in the legislation. We need to hear from her before this bill goes to third reading.

It's important that the Information and Privacy Commissioner indicated that she's concerned that the legislation introduces the use of protocols to exercise authority, placing too much power in one person's hands. She says that “Under Bill 24, the Access and Privacy Officer... who is an employee of the Yukon government, can issue and use protocols to define the ‘scope and description of a program or activity of a public body’ and ‘determine when PIAs must be conducted,’ as well as other matters. The APO also has authority to decide whether to accept or reject an access request.”

The Information and Privacy Commissioner has said in her note, “This places a significant amount of power in the hands of a single government employee. The degree to which this power may negatively impact citizens' rights must be carefully considered.”

I would like to know what her advice is and her experiences as she scanned the legislation across the country to understand the implications of that. It doesn't sound too far off from some of the situations that we have seen and experienced over the past several years in terms of that discretionary power. Maybe it's not there now, but it certainly seems to be exercised.

We talked a fair amount last week about the other concern that the IPC had raised as well with respect to how the bill's offence provisions may not be strong enough to encourage compliance. I pointed out to the minister that, in the recently tabled bill with respect to lobbying, the first offence brings with it a fine, I believe, of \$25,000 and a second fine of up to \$100,000.

According to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, "The offence provisions in access and privacy legislation operate as a deterrent to non-compliance." If you don't think there are consequences — and we know this from everyday life. If there is no consequence, why would you care?

She says the threshold in the legislation has been lowered from "willful" to "knowing." She said that is good, but the fines for being found guilty of an offence are too low. So if it is at \$5,000, I would like to know what a reasonable amount is. There is no offence for a public body's non-compliance. This could mean, said the Information and Privacy Commissioner, that the offences in Bill No. 24 may not serve the deterrence function. She did make a suggestion about how you could balance that out by the addition of imprisonment for up to six months if a person is found guilty. Is that something that this House wants to contemplate? What are the consequences?

The Information and Privacy Commissioner also raised a particular concern that there is no offence for failure to notify affected individuals about a breach of privacy. I think this is an important one, Mr. Speaker, that we need to hear from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, because the pervasiveness, as she says, of privacy breaches and the ease with which large amounts of personal information can be breached — she says that for that reason, most modern privacy laws include privacy breach notification provisions, with the failure to notify being an offence. She cites HIPMA as a good example of a good piece of legislation with respect to this.

She also points out in her public notice that the failure to notify individuals about a risk of significant harm can have significant consequences for them. She said under this bill, Bill No. 24, that when a public body fails to meet the obligations, there are no consequences for the public body. She makes a suggestion. I would like to know why — and the implications of her suggestion and her remedy — it should include an offence, when required notification doesn't occur that there has been a breach.

How much more serious can we get in terms of today's world? We talked about this last week. The notion of the pervasiveness of the breach of privacy — when we have the tools to try to staunch that, at least in this jurisdiction, I think

we should avail ourselves of that. We should hear from the Information and Privacy Commissioner to that end.

One of the areas in terms of the theatrics of the minister's response last week were his very strident statements with respect to not strong-arming First Nation and municipal governments in terms of the application of Bill No. 24 to municipal and First Nation governments. As I pointed out to the minister last week, he does have it within his legislative purview to make legislation that does apply to municipal governments. In fact, he started out his very theatrical speech last week referring to himself as that self-ascribed "ink-stained wretch". We were then quite thrilled to see the editorial in Friday's paper quoting back to the minister his very own words and actually contradicting his sentiments with respect to open government and accountability of public governments to the citizens. I'll come back to that in a moment, Mr. Speaker.

The minister and — I think it's incorrect to suggest this, and I will repeat this, because I think it's really important — government may and does have a responsibility to use all of its legislative tools to ensure that, with all citizens, with respect to public bodies — municipal governments that are under the purview of this government — we use what tools we can to facilitate that accountability. That's what it's really all about: accountability.

I did point out to the minister that there's a distinct legal and constitutional framework with respect to the relationship with First Nation governments. If this government was purporting to try to pass legislation — a law of general application, to put it mildly and in a correct way — and if this government was intending to pass a piece of legislation that may have an impact on a First Nation government's legislative powers, they would be required to follow the provisions of the self-government agreement in, I believe, section 13.5.4 that sets that out pretty clearly. You just can't simply say you're going to do it.

However, I think we need to have this in the Legislative Assembly, based on the experience of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and based on the fact that provincial governments across this country have not shied away from ensuring that citizens in municipal governments and local governments have access to information and their private information is protected when it's held by the public government at the municipal or local level.

When the Information and Privacy Commissioner said — and I quote: "In the view of the IPC, municipalities should be subject to this legislation as soon as it goes into effect, given that they are, in essence, public bodies." The definition of public bodies is contained in the legislation — it is imperative, Mr. Speaker.

"Citizens should have the same ability to access information held by municipalities as they do with other public bodies. In addition, municipalities hold a significant amount of personal information that should be subject to the same level of protection as other public bodies. Citizens should be able to exercise their privacy rights in respect of the personal information collected, used and disclosed by

municipalities. Not having municipalities subject to the legislation is a gap that significantly affects the access and privacy rights of Yukoners and others.”

Those are the words of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. When there’s sort of a selective acceptance by a government of principles with respect to what should or should not be included in legislation, when this legislation has been around for many years, and when there have been concerns raised, not just by citizen groups, but by the minister opposite himself with respect to the imperative of that open and accountable level of accountability of public bodies, including municipal governments — if there is a reason why this government chose not to do that, then I think we need to have that conversation and have the Information and Privacy Commissioner explain to this Legislative Assembly, as a whole, the consequences of not including municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, we don’t want to see this government follow the path of the early 2010s — 2012. We have a chance to do it right. The Information and Privacy Commissioner was asked to provide her comments. This is a government that says it makes decisions based on evidence, on good policy, and that it is open and accountable.

It is to that end that we trust they will be open to having the Information and Privacy Commissioner appear before this Legislative Assembly as a witness on Bill No. 24 prior to us being asked as members of the Assembly to make a final determination in terms of a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I’ll leave it there for now. I had been sorely tempted — it would be great fun — to read into the record the editorial from October 12 in the *Yukon News*, because it was really well written. It was just like the Information and Privacy Commissioner — it did recognize the good elements of the legislation, but it also pointed out — in more direct language, I would suggest, and I would wholly recommend to all of my colleagues here that they read what the editorial writer had to say.

I’m looking forward to the government members opposite and, of course, our colleagues in the Official Opposition supporting Motion No. 328, urging the Government of Yukon to invite Yukon’s Information and Privacy Commissioner to appear before the Committee of the Whole to address the concerns raised by the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding Bill No. 24, *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, prior to third reading.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Before I get into the meat of this discussion this afternoon, let me say that I love writing editorials and I love reading them. I need not remind this House that information is power.

Accurate information is a gift; it is the most powerful information of all. This is something that we all would do well to remember in these days when spurious, slippery half-truths and innuendo run rampant in our civil and political discourse.

This afternoon, we’ve gathered to debate whether to invite the Information and Privacy Commissioner before us to discuss Bill No. 24, the *Access to Information and Protection*

of Privacy Act. I’m happy to say that, prior to this motion, I had already extended the opportunity to the commissioner, and she graciously accepted. Her date of appearance is in the process of being scheduled. When she appears as a witness, all parties of this Legislature will have the opportunity to discuss matters with the commissioner.

The newly proposed *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* is an excellent, thoughtful piece of legislation, if I do say so myself. It was drafted with care and consideration by many people, including the Information and Privacy Commissioner, after a great deal of research. I’m going to talk about that a little bit this afternoon, because I think it’s important that we get the whole picture of what went in to drafting this 100-odd-page piece of legislation. It’s very complicated and, I would say, elegant.

The drafting of this bill was informed by my colleague, the Minister of Justice, who, in a former life, served as the Yukon’s Information and Privacy Commissioner and knows the legislation, its strengths and its problems very well. She has worked with it; she knows it intimately. She was integral to the drafting of this piece of legislation, as an information and privacy commissioner herself.

This bill was also informed by talented civil servants who researched legislation around the world — in New Zealand, in Great Britain — and across Canada in every jurisdiction. These individuals astounded me with their deep knowledge and tip-of-finger recall of many very tricky and complicated issues. They had looked at best practices and traps that other governments had discovered and then brought that information before us. That work has been done. It was broad, deep and there was a lot of research by many, many individuals coming into this piece of legislation, including the Information and Privacy Commissioner, another Information and Privacy Commissioner and a journalist.

This legislation is about maximizing a citizen’s right to know, giving them as much information as possible while balancing the protection of personal information in a digital age where virtually everything is potentially available. Fortunately, this team of talented people who I referenced earlier proved very capable of having those conversations. They answered the tough questions we posed and helped us through the difficult decisions we found ourselves navigating in the course of drafting and putting together this legislation.

The drafting of this bill was also informed by my experience with access legislation, which dates back to Tony Penikett’s government and the public government act, the precursor to our current legislation. That legislation died in an ignominious fashion before it was implemented, resulting in a revision that was, in my opinion, lesser than its predecessor. That lesser legislation is what we’re currently operating under. It’s the act this Liberal government has decided of fix — has vowed to fix — and that’s what we’re doing.

The Leader of the Third Party has referenced her participation in ATIPP debates just six years ago, and those were significant because they were prompted by a weakening of the existing law — a gross weakening of the existing law.

A former government decided to place unprecedented limits on the public's right to know. We were the only jurisdiction in Canada to remove briefing books from the right of access — the only jurisdiction in the country to do so.

I know that because the paper that I belonged to is fighting to get access to them. We are now, with this bill, reversing that.

Our government is proposing to re-establish the right to request access to information contained in a record for the purpose of briefing the Premier in relation to the formation of a new government.

This government is proposing that briefing a minister in relation to their assumption of responsibilities for a department or corporation be made available. Also, that briefing a minister in relation to a Sitting of the Legislative Assembly — that type of briefing should also be available to the public, whom we serve in this House.

We are also repealing the exception to access to information revealing the consultation and deliberations involving officers or employees of a public body because it is overly broad and included deliberations among employees of a public body. This was, again, an incredible rollback of the public's access to information in this territory — unprecedented in the country. We are going to fix that.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker. I have whole binders — inches and inches thick — that I could go through. This is part of the deliberations that this government took in drafting this piece of legislation.

I would have to go through the Blues to see exactly how the Leader of the Third Party characterized it, but we have listened to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We have accepted her recommendations — lots of her recommendations from the 2015 report — and also worked with her on this piece of legislation. We are strengthening her role. We are giving her new and hitherto unseen powers in this territory, allowing her office to conduct own-motion investigations, absent of specific complaint. This is new, and was done with the commissioner's input.

We are allowing privacy audits related to protection of personal information, including the public identity service, the management of personal information, or to confirm a recommendation that a department head has accepted. We're going to make sure that she can actually investigate and make sure that has been properly implemented. These are significant powers — powers that have not been seen in the territory before. They are now going to be administered through that office. They were added because we have listened to the commissioner's concerns and accepted them as part of our deliberations — months-long, deep deliberations on this bill.

It bears noting that this act represents a symphony of input, something well beyond the contribution of a single person. The result is a flexible, thoughtful, comprehensive, modern piece of legislation that will rank among the best in the country — I have no doubt about that — and it will fulfill this government's commitment to be more open and accountable.

I want to talk about municipalities for a minute, because the Leader of the Third Party brought it up, and I did mention strong-arming.

I don't think it's too strong actually. I mentioned Mr. Penikett's government back in the early 1990s. It was one of the first governments I had the pleasure of covering as a reporter in this territory, speaking with its ministers and the Premier at the time. At the time, we were going through a thing in this country called Meech Lake — a little bit of constitutional information on the floor of the House today.

At those early discussions, the Yukon didn't really have a seat at the table. We had a federal government that was dictating to us the terms under which we would conduct our democracy in this territory, and he fought to actually have our own say at the table and be able to administer our own affairs as a responsible government. At its heart, I think that's a noble goal. It's something that we should also look to our municipalities and give them that same respect that we demanded the federal government give us in those early days.

Part of doing that is enabling municipalities, encouraging them to come in under this access to information legislation, but not dictating that they will or they must — "Father knows best. We're going to force you into this legislation."

No, no, no, no, no. That's not where I'm from. That's not what I believe in. That's not what former NDP governments used to believe in. Maybe it's different today, and that's a sad day. This Liberal government is not going to do that. We are going to let municipalities, duly-elected governments, do the right thing themselves when they feel they have the capacity and the money and they feel it is right.

I think it's right today. I would encourage every municipal politician to opt in on this legislation. I have made it as easy as possible. One of the things I wanted to make sure is that we had on-ramps so that municipalities or any government could actually adopt this legislation, even *à la carte*. If they want the privacy elements, they can take that on. If they want the access to information, they can take that on. They can opt in and we will make it as easy as possible — taking on some of that burden for them — but am I going to dictate that they must do that today or next week? No, I'm going to let the responsible duly-elected councillors and mayors come forward and say that this is the right thing for our government now.

As I said, I don't think you will find an argument from anybody on this side of the House that it should be put off. Citizens of municipalities deserve that information. They should be brought in. Their citizens deserve the protections that this legislation will give their citizens' information. Municipalities ignore this at their own peril — at their own peril.

I want to make it as easy as possible for municipalities to come on board. I encourage them to do so immediately. If they want to, they can certainly reach out to us and we'll start looking at how that can be done, but I am not going to force them to do that.

It's the right thing to do — coming on and having good access to information and protection of privacy rules —

absolutely. Do I support them? Absolutely. It's very important and I encourage them to do so, like any responsible government.

This legislation will fulfill this government's commitment to be more open and accountable. It will enable us to modernize information distribution to our citizens — things that are currently restricted. It will enable a more robust management and protection of personal information. It will give the commissioner more power to oversee and investigate information and privacy matters within the government. It will put more information in the hands of citizens faster and more consistently.

I've said before and I'll say it again: this government's information is the citizens' information. They should have it all, except for very limited restrictions. So it will put more information in citizens' hands faster and more consistently, and because of this, it should also reduce the necessity to file access to information requests.

The bill improves access to information and protection of privacy. I look forward to having an all-party discussion with the commissioner on this act. This, too, is part of our commitment to transparency and openness. Yukoners deserve nothing less.

We are, of course, in support of the motion. As I noted earlier, we have already invited the commissioner to appear during Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Motion No. 328. I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for bringing this motion forward. Obviously we are in support of the motion. We actually intended to bring forward a very similar motion but they beat us to the punch, so we're happy just the same.

I would also like to thank the employees from the Department of Highways and Public Works and Department of Justice for the hard work that they've done in developing Bill No. 24.

I'll be very brief today, but I think that one thing that's important to mention is that it is unfortunate that the government has chosen to stand up today and say, "Oh yeah — by the way, we put this invitation forward and she has accepted." The opposition has every other Wednesday to bring forward motions that they would like to discuss on behalf of all Yukoners, and if the minister already knew that the Information and Privacy Commissioner had agreed to be here, why would he not have informed the House sooner?

I'm sure that the NDP have many other motions on the Order Paper that they feel are important and need to be discussed here in the Legislature for the benefit of Yukoners. While I'm happy to hear that the government is in support of this motion, I think that it's rather disrespectful of the government toward the opposition members to essentially use up a large portion of opposition Wednesdays with what could be considered a history lesson from the Minister of Highways and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, I do thank the government for agreeing to this motion. I just hope that in the future, if a situation like this arises, that the government would be a little more responsible.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Just a moment. I take the point of the Leader of the Official Opposition. I'll confer with Mr. Clerk at the end of the day, but it seems to me that, once the Leader of the Third Party has her answer on the motion, the rest of the debate becomes somewhat moot. As I said, I don't recall so far in this Sitting that there have been very many instances where there has been a positive answer to the motion so quickly and so definitively.

As I said, I will confer with Mr. Clerk as to how, procedurally, that would be dealt with perhaps in the future. I am in the House's hands. You can certainly continue with the debate, but the motion is drafted in fairly plain language and it seems to me that the Leader of the Third Party has her answer.

Like I said, to my recollection and my time in the Chair, this may be the first time where we have had a definite answer so quickly in the process of Wednesday private members' business.

In any event, does the Minister of Community Services wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just wanted to make a couple of quick comments to help provide information for the Leader of the Official Opposition. First of all, if I could just acknowledge that I am glad to hear that all parties in the House seem supportive of bringing in the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I am also hopeful that this also indicates that the Official Opposition is supportive of the direction that this bill is heading, but I wait to hear their direction.

What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that each Tuesday we hear, while we are sitting in this Legislature, what motions are planned to be called. We don't know before. We don't have a sense from the opposition what they plan to call. Once we heard that this was one of the motions that was coming forward, I believe the House Leader reached out to the Leader of the Third Party. I appreciate that, if this hadn't come, that it still would have happened, but I don't think there was anything disrespectful meant there.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Motion No. 328?

Does the Leader of the Third Party wish to be further heard on this matter?

Ms. Hanson: There are probably other comments I would make, but in order to facilitate the movement of this afternoon's business, I appreciate the fact that the minister has announced here today on the floor that the Information and Privacy Commissioner will appear before the Legislative Assembly. As we talked about it at quite a bit of length last week, and then more briefly this week, this is an important step and I appreciate that. I look forward to having her appear

before us and entering into conversation with all members of the Legislative Assembly. I hope this is not one of those one-sided things where government members remain quiet — that, in fact, all members of the Legislative Assembly are here as MLAs and not as government versus opposition — as we see in other times when witnesses appear.

I look forward to that. I appreciate the commitment that we will have that happen before third reading.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion No. 328 agreed to

Motion No. 332

Clerk: Motion No. 332, standing in the name of Mr. Kent.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt South:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education, in partnership with all appropriate stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive review of school busing in Yukon, including but not limited to:

- (1) bus capacity and assigned seating;
- (2) whether the wearing of seat belts by passengers should be mandatory;
- (3) registration process;
- (4) behavioural and disciplinary policies;
- (5) emergency procedures; and
- (6) service areas and standards.

Mr. Kent: It's a pleasure to rise here today and speak to this important topic. It's an important topic. I'm hoping to hear concerns from other members who perhaps listen to their parents, but opposition private members' day and private members' day in general are an opportunity for us to bring forward concerns on behalf of Yukoners or concerns on behalf of our particular constituents.

This is certainly a concern that I've heard a lot of from constituents of mine in the riding of Copperbelt South — particularly those who have children attending the Golden Horn Elementary School. Obviously, there are a couple of big issues for students and parents and staff at that school — one is busing and the other is capacity. We talked a lot about capacity during Question Period, and I'll take another opportunity to talk about that, so it is a pleasure to be able to focus on the busing issue.

I gave notice of this motion on Monday. Some may have thought it was in response to *The Fifth Estate* story that ran Sunday evening and was highlighted on *The National*, but actually this goes back to a bus meeting that was held on April 4 of this year at Golden Horn Elementary School.

I will touch on the minutes from that meeting, as well as *The Fifth Estate* story that aired and the Transport Canada response as well. I'm pleased that the Minister of Education and I — late this morning — worked through an amendment that I believe she will be introducing. We worked on wording and came to an understanding on that amendment and would be happy to support it when the time comes, and I'll have more to say on it when that amendment is introduced as well.

I think the first thing that I would like to do is thank the parents, the staff at Golden Horn Elementary School, the staff at Education who work on busing issues, the contractor, of course, Standard Bus and the school council — not only the current school council that is there, but members who are no longer there from the previous school council when this meeting took place.

I should also note that this isn't going to be, from my perspective, where there is any undue criticism levelled at the minister or at officials in Education or certainly not the contractor. It's just things that I've heard in particular from constituents at this meeting that I attended in April.

Another thing, when I reached out to the chair of the school council earlier this week to get a copy of the minutes and some of the comments from that meeting, one of the things that she said — and I'll quote here — is, “One very positive outcome of the process last year was that the bus company appears more willing to work with school administration to address behaviour issues as they arise. As a council we are confident that there is a process in place for students at our school, and that the school is engaging directly with parents and/or the bus company when necessary”.

The school council chair goes on to say — and this feeds into the motion that I introduced: “Our primary concern for the student transportation system continues to be the registration process. There are issues with a confusing and antiquated registration process that include communication of health information, communication of rider lists to bus

drivers, confusion around out-of-catchment ridership and unregistered riders, and general knowledge...” — and I’ve raised this with the minister before — “... general knowledge of which students are on the bus at any given time.”

Further to that, the question that I’ve raised on a couple of occasions here with the minister — I guess it speaks to the emergency procedures piece — is: Who does that call go to if you are waiting at a particular stop for your child to get off the bus, and he or she, for some reason or another, doesn’t get off the bus there or went somewhere else or got on the wrong bus? Who is that first call to?

I’m hoping that today the minister can provide some clarification or, as we work through this process, that hopefully gets support today, we can address that particular issue. Again, it was something that was raised by the council chair and was raised by council members at a number of the meetings that I’ve attended over the past 18 months.

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to just touch on some of the issues that were raised by parents at that bus meeting. I’ll start obviously by highlighting some of the individuals who were in attendance — not by name, of course. There were 25 parents at this meeting on April 4. I was there. The principal and the vice-principal of the school were there. The superintendent at the time was there; there’s a new superintendent now working there. A representative from Standard Bus was in attendance, as well as five members of the school council. There was a good turnout at the Golden Horn library for this meeting, and I think it was a respectful dialogue — I don’t think it was a disrespectful dialogue that was had that evening. A lot of the issues and concerns of the parents were put forth.

I know they had areas where you could write on a sticky note what your concerns were with respect to certain aspects of busing, and I’m just going to read a few of those into the record. The areas that the council highlighted for people to deal with were: registration, atmosphere, discipline, unregistered riders, capacity and health information, and there was a place for other comments and a “what I wish I knew” catch-all.

I’m going to go through a few of these comments. Again, no names are assigned to these comments. It was all confidential, but I wanted to read a number of them into the record so that members get a sense of what some of the concerns are for people that are living in my riding.

It seems, as well, that the two buses of more of a concern for parents are the ones that come in from the subdivisions in town — so Whitehorse Copper, Mount Sima area, Wolf Creek, Mary Lake, Cowley — and then the other side of the highway — Spruce Hill, Pineridge and the golf course — and then some of the other areas. There are some transfer stations at the top of the south access as well.

When it comes to atmosphere, one of the comments was that the beginning of the year sets the tone with: a formal bus riding etiquette review for kids, parents and a mix of separate older and younger kids; ensure that the bus drivers have good communication skills; some of concerns with discipline; the need to communicate the meaning behind the bus notes to all

parties so they know it’s a tool to improve behaviour; and not to have kids removed from the bus.

Perhaps there is an opportunity under “discipline” as well to temporarily have an adult on the bus to reset behaviour and tone, as it is often not possible for the drivers to manage those behaviours while they’re driving. One is to clarify and encourage timely parent feedback to inform and start corrections. Again, this speaks to an adult monitor under contract on different buses as well.

Another one was to inform the children about consequences for bad behaviour and the driver should file bus reports so we have information and let the school resolve issues with parents.

Having unregistered riders seems to be an issue that constituents brought up at this meeting. A lot of it has to do with the registration form that is used and needs to be fixed so it is clear. The department should have accurate records of who rides the bus, including out-of-catchment and students who are using other stops. Obviously some students will get on one bus in the morning and then, with the lack of after-school programming out in that neighbourhood, they will often go to a day home or an after-school program — somewhere either close or perhaps in the downtown area — making sure that you know who is on which bus in the morning versus which one in the afternoon. I know it’s obviously going to be a challenge. This isn’t a concern so much for some of the older students, but it’s a concern for the young ones.

When it comes to capacity, the parents at this meeting felt that it needed to do a better job of explaining this to the children on the bus. There are three students to a seat on these buses, which is a concern, maybe not so much for the smaller kids but for the grades 5 and up with two students per seat. Is there an opportunity for us to look at what other jurisdictions do? There was a suggestion raised to consider before-school and after-school programs to take the pressure off of the buses. That would obviously be within walking distance or even at the school itself.

The three-to-a-seat issue has come up quite a few times throughout the conversations I have had with parents. I think that, especially for some of those longer bus rides that some of the students have to undertake in my riding, it’s challenging, especially in the winter when it’s not just a backpack and runners — the kids are often wearing heavy snow pants, heavy jackets, toques and mitts, and then there is the potential obviously for some bad behaviour to occur.

Again, I am hoping that this work that is undertaken and the process we undertake can look at the capacity of the buses, look at the seating plans, and perhaps come up with a plan that is a little bit more conducive to the amount of time some of these students are spending on the bus and the age and the size of the students now as well. Even some of the younger kids are quite big — I think of my son, in particular.

I should also mention that, even though we live quite a way from Golden Horn, my son does attend that school. My wife and I, like other parents, choose to drive him to and from the school on a daily basis. We are fortunate that we have the

flexibility to do that. Obviously some parents do not have that flexibility and they do rely on the bus.

Health information is a big one as well. Having an opportunity to provide bus drivers with an information session on things like asthma inhalers, EpiPens and other specifics needed for students — there are some students who perhaps are affected with type 1 diabetes and may require insulin shots or other items to control their blood sugar level. It was felt that health information needed to be made available for bus drivers and substitutes — with maybe a laminated card on the bus — and MedicAlert bracelets worn by students as an opportunity to alert the bus drivers if there is a specific need that individual children have.

When it comes to the registration, we did mention it earlier. I am kind of hoping the minister can confirm this because it came up — I think it was at the September school council meeting that I attended. Although there is online registration for the bus, it doesn't go into a specific database right away. It is manually entered. The online form comes in and then it is manually entered by staff at Education, so perhaps the minister can confirm that, either today or at a future time in a letter back to me, and maybe get that particular registration program in the queue for one of the IT upgrades to see if that can actually be a true online registration that would have the weekly schedule — pickup and drop-off locations and home addresses for the students.

Some of the other issues that were raised include: bus drivers' only priority should be safe driving — obviously not distracted driving; prioritize some time at the beginning of the year for the driver to meet and speak to all the kids; and assigned seating was mentioned at that station. Importantly, as well — and I mentioned this off the top — is the support for the contractor, but one of the parents put “support for the bus drivers” there, which is extremely important for all parents to give and for the students to give as well.

I hope that paints a good picture of some of the issues facing the parents and the students at Golden Horn school.

I can provide to any members who would like — and perhaps I will do it at House Leaders — a copy of the minutes and the issues paper that was provided to me by the school council from that April meeting.

That brings us forward to an issue that arose this past weekend with respect to seat belts on school buses and what they could or could not have done to prevent injuries and even some deaths. I thought it was a good summary provided on *The National*, as well as what was presented on *The Fifth Estate*: a reference to a Transport Canada report that has been at the forefront of a North America-wide campaign against the use of seat belts on school buses, which was again based largely on a 1984 study that asserted that they are not only unhelpful, but they may also cause injuries. For members who haven't had a chance to watch this report, it's worthwhile to take a look at.

The CBC investigation showed that there were cracks showing within Transport Canada over its rigid position against seat belts. One of their staff members, a senior engineer with Transport Canada, actually suggested that seat

belts would be a good start. The study done in the early 1980s really looked at only rear and head-on impacts, as far as suggesting that seat belts might be more dangerous for students than not, but it didn't take into account side impacts.

The report also went on to document some actual crashes and some of the challenges the parents of the children who were either injured or killed had, but again, rather than get into those on the floor of the Assembly today, I would just encourage all members to take a look at this report. You can either take a look at an article online or watch the report on *The Fifth Estate*. They do cite a bunch of information that they felt was left out of that Transport Canada report — and again, we're going back to the early 80s here when it comes to that particular report.

I recognize, of course, that the federal government will have the key role in this, but it was also identified that there will be a role for the provinces and territories should the federal government decide to implement mandatory seat belts and seat belt use on school buses. To that end, for the report on *The Fifth Estate*, the federal Minister of Transport was unavailable but did provide comments subsequent to that, and I'm pleased that Minister Marc Garneau has decided to order his department to take a fresh look at the data on school bus safety and seat belts.

In a *Toronto Star* article that I'll quote from — “Garneau says if seatbelts are properly used and installed on buses they can provide an additional layer of safety for riders, but notes that current seat designs already provide good safety in the event of an accident.”

The article goes on to say, “The government was put on the defensive Monday after an investigation from the CBC show ‘The Fifth Estate’ suggested federal regulations about school bus safety restraints were based on out-of-date and incomplete information.

“Canada doesn't currently require seatbelts on school buses, but did introduce new guidelines in late June to regulate their use by bus operators who choose to install them.

“Those new technical requirements say restraints must not compromise existing safety features of the compartmentalized seats specifically designed to protect school children in the event of a crash.

“A 2010 Transport Canada study says seatbelts could help prevent injuries in rollovers, crashes where a pickup truck or larger vehicle slammed into the side of a bus, or crashes ‘causing significant vertical lift of the occupant compartment.’”

Again, I am pleased that the federal minister has decided to take a look at this in the wake of this report done by *The Fifth Estate*. This is an opportunity for us as legislators here in the Yukon to pass a motion where we are not responding to an unfortunate incident, where we're trying to get out in front of potential unfortunate incidents and have an opportunity to prevent it.

I hope that colleagues will support what this motion is and, again, the amendment the minister will bring forward soon and what that means. I think it certainly strengthens the

motion, especially given what I heard from the Golden Horn Elementary School Council chair yesterday.

With that, I look forward to hearing from other members on this motion. I hope it does pass and that we're able to get some work conducted on these areas I have identified and potentially other areas that arise through working with the appropriate stakeholders.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing from other members.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, education is and must be a dynamic world. By definition, to be relevant, the processes and procedures and programs and services, in my view, must be constantly evaluated to determine the needs of students and educators and to adjust and evolve to reflect the best practices and meet those needs as they change.

This government and I have tasked the Department of Education, under the able expertise of our acting deputy minister, with looking at just such systems — a variety of systems and programming in the department to see if we are meeting the needs as best we can for students and families and how we can improve those.

That work is ongoing and, as I say, it is critical for us to make sure that we are meeting the needs of students.

I'll make reference in a few minutes to a review of busing that was done back in 2014. It is my understanding that it didn't exactly result in a report but certainly some improvements or some challenges that could be met.

In the world of education, I'm concerned that we not have, necessarily, a report that we can put on the shelf and not deal with or not give the full attention. I think we need to be looking all the time to make sure that our programs, our processes and the services we provide through the Department of Education, through our schools across the territory, are, in fact, the best they can possibly be.

I am very pleased to rise to speak to this motion brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt South. I will make reference in a few minutes, but I used to be a member of his riding — I used to live there — and for that, have lots of experience, not only with the neighbourhood, but with Golden Horn school. I am pleased that we continue our work together and that he has brought this matter forward today.

There has been some recent national media, of course, on this school bus safety for students in Canada. In the Yukon, we take the safety of students extremely seriously, including as they make their way to and from school. The Government of Yukon is responsible for ensuring that students who ride the bus to and from their homes are transported in a safe, secure and efficient manner in accordance with national safety standards and regulations.

I would like to take the opportunity to provide a bit more information about the policies and the guidelines for student transportation in the Yukon and the efforts that the Government of Yukon takes to ensure students are bused to their school safely each and every day.

In the Yukon there are approximately 2,000 students who ride the school bus and who we must ensure arrive at school

safely — and on time — each and every day. Two thousand students: that is a lot of kids coming and going — a spider web of activity.

School bus transportation is currently contracted to Standard Bus. I think most of the members of the House will know that, but Yukoners may not necessarily, unless they are involved with the school system — and approximately \$4 million per year is spent on school busing in the Yukon Territory.

Every year, we work in partnership with Standard Bus, our schools and parents of students to register students for the bus and to set busing routes as a result of that registration.

In order to effectively manage our school bus routes, we urge that parents register their children or child for a school bus by the end of June for the coming year — this is where one of the issues arises. This helps to ensure that there are enough buses for all of the students and that appropriate routes are developed. Sometimes if a number of registrations come forward where there hasn't necessarily been a stop or a route before, we need to be able to adjust to that — the department needs to respond, and knowing that as early as possible is very important.

In rural communities, it is a little easier. Parents register and work directly with their local school to ensure that their child is registered for the bus — and we can all imagine a smaller community where that occurs — and that makes it relatively simple, particularly if there is only one school.

In Whitehorse, parents register their children each year by completing a school bus registration form and submitting it to the student transportation unit at the Department of Education. I appreciate that there were some specific questions by the Member for Copperbelt South, whose motion we are debating. I don't have the specific paper computer answer, but I certainly agree that the registration is a place where issues with busing arise and show themselves and need attention.

The registration process can always be improved and we will work hard to do so — we are already — and we will continue to do that. I know it is something that the deputy minister and I have spoken about very recently.

One issue is that some parents may not recognize the importance of annual registration for their child for the school bus. We have certainly heard from parents who say, "I haven't moved and my kid is going to the same school and they are on the same bus. Why do I need to register again?" Certainly there are combinations of things that occur with other families that could affect the ridership on a particular bus or a particular route, so registration is requested annually. There may be some improvements on how we deal with families to make it easy for them.

Registration continues to be an issue because accurate information about children needing to be bused and the specific details of each situation are required by the department at the earliest possible time, as I have said. Without timely registration for the school bus, we have no way of knowing how many students will be riding the school bus and from which neighbourhoods and to which schools. While I appreciate the comment that it is the same as last year,

we might be able to get an option where we can say that it is the same as last year, but it is not appropriate for us to assume that.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that this is not a new problem, as the member opposite has mentioned, but it is one that has been ongoing in Whitehorse for many, many years. We do need to come at this with some innovative, creative thinking and figure out if there isn't a way to improve this process. Each year we try to make the registration process easier, more efficient and timely. We will continue to do that as we look forward, in particular, to the comments that come from debate of this motion, always — as I have said — looking for ways to improve. If it is a point of frustration for parents, we need absolutely to address it.

This past year, we brought in our outreach efforts to schools and to parents to ensure that Whitehorse students are registered as early as possible and, of course, by the deadline. Unfortunately, we always have students who don't register until the fall or until school has started, so there is a bit of scrambling, of course, to make sure that the routes are all properly covered and that there are adequate buses. If new routes are required, they are addressed.

Registration on time for the school bus helps with setting the bus routes, as I have said, the number of buses required for the following school year and where they go to each school — an unenviable task.

The Whitehorse bus routes are also developed based on the attendance areas for schools. So each of our schools has identified an attendance area — sometimes known as a catchment area — that encompasses the neighbourhoods surrounding the school.

In addition to that, there are situations where students attend specialized programming, either at Catholic education or French immersion or French first-language schools, where they may need to travel outside of their neighbourhood. I know that was an issue not that long ago at Golden Horn when families started to move to the Mount Sima area.

It's necessary, Mr. Speaker, to establish bus routes for these students as well — the ones who go to specialized programming and/or move across neighbourhoods. Parents are informed that students are required to attend in their attendance-area schools and this requirement supports our ability to plan for class sizes, building capacity and school bus routes.

I don't think it will surprise anyone to recognize that in Whitehorse there has traditionally sometimes been an issue with children attending class in what I would call a neighbourhood school for various reasons — whether it be that they are attached to two homes, whether it be that they are attending specialized programming — those kinds of things. So all of these are complicating factors in making these programs work smoothly.

As I know the members opposite are well aware, in 2014 the Government of Yukon worked together with school council representatives to assess and make adjustments to school bus routes in Whitehorse. I would say that there have

been adjustments since that time, but there was a review at that time to address a number of issues.

As part of that work, a new and improved busing system was purchased at the department to improve bus route planning. I think that is one step forward. Adjustments were also made to bus routes to ensure greater safety for students and to reduce the amount of time that students spent on buses or waiting for buses, if there was an exchange for them to make.

I recall some figures with respect to the research I had in preparing for today that indicated that some students were waiting, at that time, from 10 to 20 minutes sometimes for an exchange. That was reduced to between three and 10 minutes, which, of course, is an improvement, but again it's just one element of the concerns that were addressed at the time.

Since that time, we've also made ongoing adjustments each year to setting bus routes and addressing specific issues as they arise. Today in Whitehorse there are 41 bus routes that bring our students to 14 different schools, Mr. Speaker. Our buses service neighbourhoods from Golden Horn to Takhini Hot Springs Road, the south Klondike Highway to the north Alaska Highway areas, from Riverdale to Porter Creek, from downtown to Hillcrest, and many other combinations of routes across the city — across Whitehorse and the extended area of Whitehorse.

In the event that a student is not serviced by one of our bus routes, Mr. Speaker, there are supports in place. For students who live 3.2 kilometres or more from the nearest bus stop, the Government of Yukon provides a transportation subsidy to offset the cost of driving to that bus stop. It is critical that all of our students make it to school, even if they live off a bus route, so we work with families to make that happen.

Our bus routes are established in accordance with the school bell schedules for each of the schools that they serve and obviously, along with safe transportation, we need to ensure that students are on time for the school day. Our busing system is extensive and serves a significant portion of our student population. Our schools and school communities help us ensure that we have the proper capacity, routes and numbers of buses in place for all students.

The bus routes and the number of buses deployed to take students to school is a direct result of the number of students registered to take a school bus. The Government of Canada, as many members of this House will know — but some Yukoners may not — sets the regulations around the amount of students who can safely ride the school bus. When we set the school bus routes and numbers of buses, we ensure that our buses are within the national safety standards of capacity. The current safety standard requires that no more than three elementary school students or two high school students occupy each bus seat. The number of students cannot exceed the limit and seating capacity that our buses are able to transport. Of course, each of our students is registered and assigned a bus number and bus route, but we must recognize that students may be registered for more than one bus route depending perhaps on their family circumstances or on

specific after-school activities, so it's often not as simple as one child going from their home to their school and back to their home again, but, in fact, they may go to after-school programs, they may go to after-school care, they may go to a different parent's home. Sometimes students ask to ride with a friend. This belongs in my dynamic world of education because it's a very dynamic situation, often on a daily basis.

Students may be registered for more than one bus route depending on their circumstances and, of course, this means that some children have a seat allocated on more than one bus, further complicating, not only the registration process, but the allocation and the calculation of bus capacities. Registration information is shared with schools at the beginning of each school year and is kept on record by the student transportation unit, which is located at the Department of Education. It's also kept with Standard Bus Yukon.

In order to further assist, all bus routes are published on the Government of Yukon website outlining times, stops, routes and school destinations so parents can access that information at any time. We try to have that information up as accurately as possible and as soon as possible during the school year, some of which can be done prior to school starting because bus routes — we don't change them every year, of course, but sometimes they can be the same as the year before and that information can be updated.

With respect to safety measures, I'll say a bit about that. With respect to safety on our buses, as with our efforts in all areas of education, from educational programming and field trips to school buildings and playground equipment, our first priority is the safety of our students. Government of Yukon's student transportation regulations lay out requirements to ensure students are safely dropped off to and from school. According to the regulations, students are to be dropped off only at designated drop-off points — again, for safety, accountability and clarity.

In the event that there have been arrangements for a student — usually the youngest of our students — to meet someone at a designated drop-off point and that person is not there, our drivers are required to stay with the student until that person arrives or return the student to the school if no one does arrive to pick them up.

When students arrive at school on the school bus, school staff are there to meet them and also supervise as they depart on a bus. In the Yukon, that is no easy task. Through long, cold and often dark winters, we have teaching staff who brave the weather for long periods of bus supervision and make sure that each and every student gets on their bus to where they need to go. I will take this chance to say thank you to all of our staff and bus drivers for their efforts to ensure students are delivered safely and securely to the place they need to get.

With respect to some further safety measures as noted in Canada, the regulations for physical safety requirements on school buses include school bus seating and are laid out by the Government of Canada. The Government of Yukon student transportation regulations, again, state that all school buses must meet the national standards and be aligned with the national regulations for bus safety.

In 2015, when the Government of Yukon transitioned to Standard Bus as the contractor to manage student transportation in the Yukon, it is my understanding that one of the criteria that the government of the day used to select the bus contractor was their commitment and record of safety.

The fleet of Standard Bus buses are regularly maintained and upgraded to ensure that they are functioning properly and are safe for our students. In the Yukon, students are only bused to school on a bus that is safe and in line with Canada's national standards.

My colleague, the member opposite, mentioned some issues around emergencies, and I can provide some information with respect to that. Standard Bus's record on safety also extends to emergency planning, which is certainly a requirement of the contractual relationship. Together with Standard Bus and the RCMP, the Government of Yukon and Yukon schools plan and respond to any emergency that may occur while our students are on their way to or from school on a bus. In the event of an emergency, the student transportation unit in the Department of Education and Standard Bus each have a list of emergency telephone numbers so parents can be quickly contacted. We are able to respond quickly to many situations, including: if a bus is broken down; if a bus is going to be running late when it's cold in the winter; if there has been an accident with the bus; if there is a health-related issue with a student on the bus; or any of the many other scenarios that may impact the safety of students on their way to or from school.

In any of these events, the well-trained staff who drive our buses, work in our schools and coordinate at the Department of Education are prepared to respond immediately to ensure students are safe. I again will take the opportunity to thank all of these professionals for their year-round efforts to ensure student safety and the safety of our school buses.

The member opposite also mentioned some issues with respect to managing the behaviours of students on our school buses. The schools work with Standard Bus to be able to respond to any situations or behaviour concerns on a school bus. Again, we take this issue extremely seriously. Student behaviour on a school bus affects all passengers, and students deserve a safe and comfortable trip to and from school. They deserve for their bus to be a place of safety.

The Department of Education transportation regulations set out the disciplinary response procedures for bus drivers in the event of a student who is not behaving properly. Bus drivers are responsible for monitoring and enforcing the school bus rules to ensure the safety of students on buses at all times.

In the event of a student not behaving properly, the bus drivers are required to report the behaviour to the school principal, and the principal is required to determine follow-up action. Such reports by bus drivers are made verbally and in writing. The school's principal is responsible for determining the appropriate action to be taken and any required follow-up — presumably in conjunction and contact with the family or parents.

In the event that student behaviour threatens the safety of any person on board the bus, the bus driver may demand that a student disembark from the bus. The bus driver would then report immediately to the school principal and wait until alternate transportation, either school administration or parents or perhaps police, if it was a situation of an alleged criminal matter, who arrive for the student to be picked up — so they must wait there.

In such a case, the school principal is responsible for immediately notifying parents or guardians of the removed student and following up with an incident report. If parents or students have any concerns about busing, they can contact their school, the student transportation officer or the Standard Bus office, and we will all work together to address the issue and answer any questions they may have.

Mr. Speaker, questions about busing, the concerns that parents may have with respect to kids on their way to and from school, are often urgent issues and very important and they must be recognized as such and dealt with the importance they deserve.

With respect to the recent media attention about the Government of Canada on the response to seat belt safety, I will note that, while it is not my common practice, I was thankful enough to have been watching *The Fifth Estate* show the other night, and like the member opposite, I recommend it to everyone, and I was additionally very pleased with the response of the federal minister and their commitment to a thorough review of this issue. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to their response and requirements for school bus safety as we go forward.

I have also asked the department about the current state of our own fleet of Standard buses here with respect to seat belts. I understand there may be some seat belts installed in some school buses, but it's certainly not required by Transport Canada — I don't think a common practice — but something we must address.

I want to again thank the staff of the Department of Education, our schools and Standard Bus professionals and their bus drivers for all the work that they do to ensure students arrive at school safely every day.

For some reason I am forging into personal anecdotes again here today, but my son was a lucky-enough student to attend Golden Horn when our family lived in the riding and attended Golden Horn by bus for some seven years. It was a great experience for him. The member opposite and I have spoken, as he has a youngster now attending that school, about the overwhelmingly positive experience of being a little kid but getting to ride a big school bus. That has to be the experience of all children, if we can achieve it, and we will work to do so.

I also would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the parents who have brought forward their concerns. I know that each and every matter that is brought to the attention of our student transportation unit is answered promptly and professionally, with a view of a quick resolution.

I have heard from many parents — completely unsolicited — that the service that they have received from

that unit has been excellent, whether it's a quick call to say, "I need to register. I haven't yet," or whether it's a situation where a child needs to ride a separate bus or a different bus, I know that the service has been excellent and they always strive to resolve matters very, very quickly. I urge any parent or concerned person to provide timely feedback to our student transportation unit, because the more information we have, the better the service can be and the more that we can improve.

As noted earlier by the member opposite, I thank him for his conversations with me this morning. I would like to move an amendment to Motion No. 332.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move:

THAT Motion No. 332 be amended by:

(1) deleting the phrase "conduct a comprehensive review of"; and

(2) substituting for it the phrase "participate in the recently announced Transport Canada assessment of seat-belt safety and to continue to review".

Speaker: Does the Minister of Education have copies for all members? If they could be distributed by the page and if I could have a copy please, and I will review it with Madam Deputy Clerk and report back to the House.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment to Motion No. 332 with Mr. Clerk and can advise that it is procedurally in order. Therefore, it is moved:

THAT Motion No. 332 be amended by:

(1) deleting the phrase "conduct a comprehensive review of"; and

(2) substituting for it the phrase "participate in the recently announced Transport Canada assessment of seat-belt safety and to continue to review".

The amended motion would read:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education, in partnership with all appropriate stakeholders, to participate in the recently announced Transport Canada assessment of seat-belt safety and continue to review school busing in Yukon, including but not limited to:

(1) bus capacity and assigned seating;

(2) whether the wearing of seat belts by passengers should be mandatory;

(3) registration process;

(4) behavioural and disciplinary policies;

(5) emergency procedures; and

(6) service areas and standards.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I'll be quite brief and I will go back to something I said I bit earlier. The purpose of moving this amendment is, in fact, to change the wording very little — and I would certainly characterize it as a friendly amendment. It's based on a very brief conversation and a few back and forth messages I've had with the member opposite whose motion we are debating. To my view, and the view I believe of the Department of Education — and certainly the task that we as a government and I as the minister have given

them is to review processes and procedures of a program — in this case, the school busing program and the procedures, the process and the service of a bus — to assess and make sure that they are best possible services we can provide.

I said earlier that education is and must be dynamic. I'm interested in an evaluation that stops — in fact, the wording choice of “continue to review” I think is, in fact, dynamic, and I've presented it here to this House for that purpose, so that we will be charged with constantly and continually evaluating to determine the needs of students and educators and, in this case, parents and the bus process. We must adjust and evolve those processes to reflect the best practices. An example of that may be direction from the federal government with respect to safety standards for buses. Of course, we will need to adjust to meet those needs.

I mentioned earlier that we have an acting deputy minister who is extremely talented and brings ample expertise about the department and all of its operations to this position. We are enjoying the value of her expertise, her careful eye and her management team to look at the department, including several elements, and assess them on the following basis: Are we providing the service that families and students need? I look forward to that work continuing.

As I've said in the amendment here today, I think we must participate by providing information and receiving information from the Transport Canada review with respect to seat-belt safety, but also we must continue this process to make sure that we're meeting the needs of families and children in the area by getting them to and from school on school buses.

I've explained that we have an extensive and complicated system of bus routes for all of the reasons that are uniquely Whitehorse and uniquely Yukon. That's not going to change. Our response to it must be dynamic.

Mr. Kent: I too will be brief. I thank the minister for working back and forth with me on this amendment this morning. It didn't take very long — just a couple of e-mails, I think — and we were able to figure it out.

Again, I mentioned this in speaking to the main motion in my introductory remarks — I gave notice of this motion on Monday and then yesterday received an e-mail from the chair of the school council. As I mentioned and talked about earlier, they felt that they are confident that there is a process for students at our school and that the school is engaging directly with parents and/or the bus company when necessary.

I think that it gave me more confidence in not asking for a comprehensive review at this point but agreeing to a continuation of the review and making sure that work gets done and a work plan is hopefully put in place to address some of these concerns that were raised by parents and concerns that pop up at the beginning of each school year.

There were constituents who contacted me from one of the subdivisions in my riding who had pulled their students from the bus for a couple of weeks in September. It's my understanding now that they have since reintroduced their children to riding the buses after some back and forth and

some work with department officials. Again, a thank you to the officials in student transportation services and at Standard Bus Yukon, as I mentioned, for their help in dealing with some of these early season concerns for parents and students when it comes to the bus.

That said, I will conclude my remarks there, other than to say — now I remember what I was going to say. I did go back and forth with the minister on perhaps coming up with some sort of a reporting process — whether we could add something to the amendment that suggested the reporting would be done in the Education annual report. She did helpfully point out for me that student transportation services were a component of that Education annual report, so we look forward to hopefully getting some sort of sense when the next report is tabled on what work has been done so far to address the concerns in this motion as well as the Transport Canada assessment of seat-belt safety that was recently announced and work surrounding that.

I look forward to attending future school council meetings at Golden Horn and other schools throughout the territory and hearing about any concerns they have and some of the opportunities they have had to engage with staff at Education on the issues that we have weighed out in this motion today.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the amendment carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 332 agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion as amended?

Mr. Gallina: I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this motion forward for debate today, and it is encouraging to see collaboration between government members and Official Opposition members in agreeing to an amendment that will see further work be done to improve school buses in the territory.

I would like to start off by saying that the matter of children's safety and support toward their lifelong learning journey is of utmost importance to this government, to me as an MLA and as a father of four children.

I would also like to take a moment to reiterate some of the considerations raised by the Member for Copperbelt South — one in particular is registration. Registration can present challenges, as raised by the member and addressed by the minister. I do encourage parents and caregivers to register as soon as possible and by the deadline. I'll speak to this a little later.

Our focus on student safety and lifelong learning has been clear since the campaign trail in 2016 with our platform of "Healthier, Happier Lives" for Yukoners.

We specifically outlined commitments that we as a government would take to ensure our schoolchildren would be able to flourish in the complete school environment and do so through listening to and addressing the concerns of Yukoners, providing additional resources where needed and fostering our partnerships with key educational stakeholders throughout the territory.

Now having formed government, the Minister of Education has received direction in her mandate letter that the minister is to work collaboratively with parents, teachers and other educational partners, including Yukon First Nations and communities, to ensure our students are able to realize their aspirations and contribute to a healthy future for Yukoners.

Specifically, this government has advanced important files that will allow Yukon children to reach their full potential in preparing for life beyond the classroom. From kindergarten to grade 12 we see examples, such as the new curriculum. We have continued to implement a modernized school curriculum across the Yukon. This year, the grade 10 classes across Yukon are using a revised school curriculum that is based on BC's curriculum but adapted to fit Yukon's northern content and embed Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing. This follows implementation of a new curriculum from kindergarten to grade 9 in the 2017-18 school year, and it will extend to grades 11 and 12 next September.

The focus of the new school curriculum is moving to skill development: literacy and the ability to read, write, understand and express meaning; critically analyze information; connect and create ideas; numeracy; and the ability to interpret information and apply math and logic to solve problems. This modernized approach to learning will provide Yukon students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in life.

Modernizing student assessments, following research and recommendations from the Yukon Education Assessment Committee, our government is changing how schools assess and report on student progress and wants feedback on the proposed changes from students, teachers, parents and community members. Proposed changes to assessments include giving more informal and ongoing feedback, collecting evidence of student learning, calculating and reporting grades and how teachers report to parents. These changes are designed to align with the curriculum changes happening across Yukon schools and support student success.

Mr. Speaker, I raise the progress that this government has made to assure members of this House and citizens of the Yukon that when we say "continue to review", we are serious in this assertion, as is evident in the examples I have shared, which began with reviews of current service delivery methods.

As my colleague, the Minister of Education, has stated, the Government of Yukon is ensuring students have safe and effective transportation to and from school every day. The Department of Education provides transportation programs to meet the needs of our students in a fiscally responsible and equitable way. This sees the Department of Education provide school busing, city transit passes or transportation subsidies to families so that students can safely travel to and from school.

Mr. Speaker, we also know, as highlighted by the Member for Copperbelt South and the Minister of Education, that the federal Transport minister, Marc Garneau, is ordering his department to take a fresh look at the data on school bus safety and seat belts. From a *Canadian Press* article on October 15, I quote: "I have instructed my department to take an in-depth look at the question of seatbelts in buses, a fresh look based on all of the evidence that has been collected since all the way back to 1984, and I look forward to their findings."

Mr. Speaker, this government and the Government of Canada are serious about ensuring the safety of our schoolchildren. I will take a few minutes now to share personal experiences from my family and experiences I am hearing from constituents.

With respect to one school in the riding of Porter Creek Centre, parents were sent forms to register their children for the school bus for the 2018-19 school year in May 2018. A hard copy was also sent home with students, ensuring that those parents who don't have access to Internet, a printer or a way of retrieving the hard copy of the registration form would be able to return it to the school. Parents were also notified of bus registration for the next school year in the spring of 2018 in the monthly school newsletter that is distributed to parents and others in the school community.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, parents may have heard radio advertisements and saw social media notifications that were repeatedly shared with the public. Unfortunately, as my colleague, the Minister of Education, has mentioned in her speech, less than 50 percent of parents had registered their children on school buses prior to the school year beginning.

This government encourages input from the community, and if there are additional ways of reaching parents so that

they may register their children for the school bus, we welcome this input. There is always room for improvement.

Constituents who have children who take the school bus shared with me that their children are not permitted to board the school bus for which they are not registered.

This policy is not arbitrary. It prevents issues such as overcrowding on buses, disciplinary issues due to the bus driver being unfamiliar with a particular child and their potential needs, and it minimizes the chance of safety issues with respect to a child getting on a bus they are not registered for and the subsequent panic their parent may endure when trying to locate their child. One of my constituents talked about her child not being able to take a hockey stick on the bus. It was left behind later for pickup. Ensuring the safety of our students as they are transported to and from our schools is important, and certain items are better transported separately to avoid accidental injuries.

When I think about experiences that I have had with my children and school buses in Yukon, I know I have options as a parent when I want my children to change buses to ride home with a friend or if they are going to miss a bus because of a family schedule change.

I want to thank school administrators, teachers, the Department of Education and the staff at Standard Bus, who respond to the requests of parents and caregivers with changes and inquiries. I want to thank them for taking the time each and every school day to make sure that children arrive at school or at their intended after-school destination on time and in a safe manner.

In closing, I have confidence in the minister responsible and in the Department of Education to continually review the ways in which the safety of our children can be enhanced. I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this motion forward. This is an important matter to the government, to this House, to me as an MLA and to me as a father. I am encouraged by the collaboration of this House in agreeing to amend this motion that will continue to see the government improve ways to keep our children safe.

Ms. Van Bibber: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 332, as amended.

If there is an issue we should take the time to debate fully and honestly in this House, it is the safety of children who ride the bus to and from school daily. I am sure we can all agree that many things brought forward are deserving of a wider discussion and thoughts from all members of this Legislative Assembly. This is definitely one issue that is important to our community as a whole and it should be something that continues to be held as a priority for this government. Governments should continuously be identifying ways to make student transportation better and safer and to alleviate the concerns that do come forward.

There are numbers of issues that were brought forward, and I believe this motion, as amended, captures the concerns in its list of areas to be reviewed. School bus safety has been a topic that has garnered much attention lately, as we mentioned, not only locally, but nationally. School councils

are talking about it, parents are talking about it and it is great that this House gets to talk about it.

Generating general discussion in the Legislative Assembly usually tends to generate more discussion within the community. There have been a lot of concerns brought forward around bus safety — concerns around bullying and concerns about dropping off children at bus stops alone or dropping them off at the wrong stop. I am pleased the minister feels that the department is looking into each of these areas and I would encourage this work to continue.

Parents should always have an avenue to air their concerns and issues they have had in the past that have not been addressed. As the safety of our children is paramount, I cannot imagine being a parent who spends the better part of an hour looking for their child after a misunderstanding over where the bus was supposed to stop or having a child bullied day in and out on a 40-minute bus ride. When your child fears for their safety on a school bus, there is a problem that definitely needs to be addressed. We should not have to wait for a serious incident to happen for the department to review all aspects of our student transportation system, such as installing these seat belts.

With respect to school bus capacity, we have seen an increase of concerns from parents regarding overcrowding. I encourage the minister to take into account all perspectives and direct a process that would be inclusive for parents, students, school councils, school bus contractors, school bus staff and all who are concerned with the safety of the children.

The very children we are educating need to be safe to and from their place of learning and we must have the mechanisms in place to ensure this happens.

Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to rise in support of this motion. I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing this forward. This is an issue that is important to my constituents as well. In the past, there have been issues within my riding regarding school busing and at one point, in one particular year when some new bus routes had been put into place, I had to work directly with a number of constituents in getting their specific concerns addressed, and I thank the department for their work in changing the schedules to meet those needs.

What I would like to note as well in the issue of school busing — this pertains to the service areas that are mentioned in part 6 of Motion No. 332 as brought forward by my colleague — is that getting a school bus to an area where there is a growing population is something that is also important for government and particularly for my constituents. There have been a couple ongoing issues that are still outstanding at this point in time that I would like to particularly draw the Minister of Education's attention to, hoping that it gets resolved. Those are the issues of a school bus service to the new Grizzly Valley subdivision area as well as service to the Fox Lake and south Fox Lake areas, both of which have growing populations of parents and children.

In the issue of Grizzly Valley subdivision, I do appreciate that the Minister of Community Services has confirmed

through a legislative return that he tabled on October 1 that the Grizzly Valley subdivision does meet the Transport Association of Canada geometric guideline requirements for safe access to the subdivision for school buses, emergency response vehicles and other users.

I'll just quote an excerpt from that legislative return provided by the minister, which noted: "The Grizzly Valley subdivision was a project developed by the Land Development Branch of Community Services. The roads meet the necessary Transportation Association of Canada geometric design guideline requirements for safe access to the subdivision for school buses, emergency response vehicles and other users..."

So I would just draw that to the minister's attention. As the minister will recall, I've written to her on more than one occasion regarding a request from constituents in the area for school bus service. There had been an indication previously from the minister that the department was not sure that the road was safe for school buses, but again, as the experts on construction have confirmed to the minister through the legislative review — and we've heard this directly at briefings from officials of both Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources — that the field experts are confident that the subdivision was designed to meet the needs of school buses, emergency response vehicles and other users.

It was designed by government; it was engineered by government; it was constructed under the watch of government and it was signed off and approved — meeting the standards by government. Clearly officials of Community Services, as well as the minister, are satisfied that it does meet the standards.

So I would just draw that to the minister's attention and note that, for parents who have been requesting a service going back for over a year now, this is a very important issue to them. Whether someone has school bus service or not often has a big impact on the lives of not only children, but their parents. While some parents, as the Member for Copperbelt South noted in his personal situation, can accommodate driving their children without difficulty, for some — including some of the constituents who had contacted me in this particular case — having to drive children to and from school can be, not only an inconvenience, but actually make it very difficult for them to earn a living because of the particular circumstances and hours of their employment.

I do want to emphasize that point because it is a very important one, and I would sincerely hope that the minister will take this point and take the confirmation provided by the Minister of Community Services and go back to the department and ensure that school bus service is provided to anyone in the area who is in need of it and who meets the other policy requirements for receiving that service.

The second issue specific to constituents that I want to draw attention to is to constituents in the south Fox Lake area at approximately kilometre 235 on the Mayo Road. At this point, there are a number of families with young children there. When I first raised this to the minister's attention, the age of several of the kids in that area was not at the school-age

criteria. As I noted back in a letter from August 23, 2017, I referenced a particular constituent's issue as well as the growing number of children in the area who are about to meet school age — that, of course, was over a year ago now — and I would just note, again, for people in that area, seeing that school bus service extended beyond the Deep Creek cut-off to the kilometre 235 area would make a big difference in their lives.

With several growing families in the area and with kids either at or about to be at school age, this is an important matter. I would hope and appreciate it if the department, as part of this review, can take a look at that specific area and look at providing school bus service as soon as possible to this area. I would also add on to that — because they would be the farthest out on that school bus route — while it would make it earlier in the morning than the current first pickup time and later in the afternoon than the drop-off time, it should not have any effect in inconveniencing or delaying other parents or children on the existing route.

A third issue related to school bus service that I would like to raise with the Minister of Education and also with the Minister of Highways and Public Works is the growing population of parents and children down Takhini River Road. That area has seen significant growth during the time I've been elected due to the development of spot land agricultural applications and some growth as well due to a subdivision in the area, as well as a number of people who have taken advantage of the option under the zoning regulations to add cabins for rent that are occupied by tenants — as a result, there are roughly 50 households down that road at this point in time.

The school bus currently only goes a little way down Takhini River Road. There is a turnaround where the school bus has — for all of my time in office and going back to before then, I believe — been used as a drop-off point. The change, of course, is that there is a growth in population down that road — more families with young kids.

The reason that this is an issue for the Minister of Highways and Public Works is that to provide school bus service beyond the current turnaround would require more work on Takhini River Road. There are some areas where — to the best of my understanding, at least — it would be questionable whether the road would accommodate a school bus during certain conditions, especially after snowmelt or a rainfall. This issue of service area, as outlined in the motion, ties directly to the request that I have previously made and will reiterate to the minister: for government to move forward with doing the engineering assessment of the road and, with what I would hope to see as a major upgrade to Takhini River Road, including improving the ditches and the road surface — building a proper roadbed — to allow school buses and emergency vehicles — being the type of traffic that I see as the highest priority — to access it safely in all weather conditions. There have been times when — this spring — I've heard from emergency responders who live down the road or have driven down there to visit friends, that they were concerned that, if there was a call for an ambulance or a fire

truck, there were a few spots on Takhini River Road they weren't sure the vehicle could get through.

I know that is a little bit broader than the specific motion but, as I noted, it does relate very directly to the service area request. To expand the school bus service to the area, which would be wonderful to see, would also require some roadwork by Highways and Public Works.

Last but not least in this area, I also wanted to mention an issue that was outlined by my colleague under the section related to the standards — that is what it was referenced in — and that being the issue of supervision of children during a transfer. I have had a number of constituents raise concerns with me about very young kids — just young enough to be attending school and travelling on the bus themselves — transferring between buses at what the Department of Education calls the “north transfer station”, I believe, but is better known to most people in the area as the pullout near the corner of the Mayo Road and the Alaska Highway. There have been concerns related to that in one specific case. A family reported that one of their children missed transferring and went on another circuit through Hidden Valley. They were worried. They didn't know where their child was. Fortunately, the issue was resolved without any actual harm to anyone, but it was of such concern to the family that they stopped having their child go on the school bus because of that incident. In another case, constituents reportedly — also with a young child involved — were concerned about the lack of supervision for their child from bus to bus and would like to see more done in that area.

I know my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, made reference to that issue around the certainty with which someone knows whether or not a child got on a bus. I would hope the government, in following through with the commitment in this motion, would take some additional steps in this area. I recognize and appreciate the challenge that is posed, but it is an issue that is very important to constituents. Regardless of political differences we may have in this Assembly, I think all members would share the common goal and the common view that we would never want to see anyone's child put at risk in a situation because of something that could have been done.

With all of these and the specific examples I gave, I just want to emphasize that whether government provides service or not does have a very big impact on people's lives if they have children. Expanding service to the three areas that I mentioned in my riding would be very much appreciated by my constituents in those areas. I would just draw everyone's attention to the fact that, while we can talk about statistics and specific examples and numbers in this Assembly, ultimately, we are talking about the lives of our fellow Yukoners who have elected us here and where we can assist them in a reasonable manner. I would certainly hope that steps would be taken by government to do exactly that and to help out the people who are asking for this assistance.

Ms. Hanson: I will indeed be very brief. I just wanted to indicate that the New Democratic Party will support this

motion as amended. There are many elements to the motion, but we are particularly interested and hopeful that the territorial government will take the aspect with respect to the regulations on mandatory seat belt use for our children riding school buses and use every opportunity, not just participating in federal reviews. I would hope that the Yukon government ministers use the opportunities that are afforded to them at federal, provincial and territorial meetings to urge Transport Canada to actually move on this and not put it on the shelf where these various studies have languished over the last number of years. Once we have those regulations — and we hope that public attention has caused the Minister of Transport to be seized of this matter and we don't subsequently see a delay in implementation in the territory.

We have already seen commercial buses with seat belts. I rode down on the Husky Bus from Dawson City on Sunday and was very happy to see seat belts installed in that bus, which is similar in size to a small school bus.

Keep in mind, the reason I say that about not delaying is that Yukon was one of the last jurisdictions to pass seat-belt legislation — 1991. That was 15 years after the first seat-belt legislation in Canada.

We also have the lowest fines and are ranked the lowest for seat belt use in Canada. If we are going to be good models for our kids, we are going to have to start doing it ourselves, but we also have to then say there are reasons why — and safety has to be one of them. If we look at the most recent coroner's judgment of inquiry — posted in 2018 — out of the 10 motor vehicle deaths reported by the coroner, four deaths were attributed to people not wearing seat belts. Those are four people who could have lived.

Let's not be the last to enforce seat belt use in school buses, and let's urge our federal counterparts to get on with this and not just debate it or talk about it — it is about kids' lives.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 332, brought forward by the Member for Copperbelt South, and I thank him for bringing it forward this afternoon. It is good to see collaboration between the Official Opposition and the government to improve services in the territory — in this case, school bus service.

Continuously reviewing and improving bus safety is, of course, very important. In fact, Mr. Speaker, as minister, as an MLA and as a father, I consider any matter involving child safety a priority. All of us have a vested interest in matters that improve the safety of Yukon's children. Education matters, including this one, are a component of our “Healthier, Happier Lives” platform commitment.

Let me assure Yukoners that our bus system is safe, but, as the Member for Lake Laberge has noted, we do have a growing population. There are more cars on our roads because of that growing population. There is also a lot more industrial activity with the uptick in the mining sector. We have a lot more heavy industry and a lot more truck traffic. We can't take our eyes off this issue and we can't get complacent.

Continuously reviewing and improving our systems are very important.

Every morning, parents send their children off on the bus, confident they will arrive safely and comfortably and return home at the end of the day. Again, our bus system is safe. Statistically, a child is 70 times more likely to arrive safely at school aboard a school bus than they are in the family vehicle — something that many of us should consider when we're driving our kids to Riverdale. We could also maybe take some of the stress off our road systems. But we have to make it easy and we have to make it convenient for parents and children and make sure that those systems are efficient.

Since the first motorized school buses hit the roads in the early 20th century, our predecessors have been working to improve the efficiency and safety of our school buses. This continuous improvement has been going on for a very long time. Today, we can see the familiar safety features adorning our school buses. Flashing lights, moving stop signs and even the eye-catching yellow colour we all associate with them became commonplace, and we also have those flashing lights on the back of the buses as well.

The federal government sets school bus regulations. They determine the number of students who can safely ride the school bus. When my colleague, the Minister of Education, sets the bus routes — her department sets the bus routes and numbers of buses — the Education department ensures the buses are within the national safety standards of capacity. That current standard, as was said earlier, requires that no more than three elementary students or two high school students occupy each bus seat. The number of students cannot exceed that limit and that determines really how many buses we have.

Each of our students is registered and assigned a bus number and a bus route, and students may be registered for more than one bus route depending on family circumstances or after-school activities. This means that some schoolchildren have a seat allocated on more than one bus, which, of course, complicates the registration, allocation and calculation of bus capacity. Something seemingly so simple gets really complicated very quickly. Registration information, as my colleague has noted, is shared with schools at the beginning of each school year and is kept on record by the student transportation unit at the Education department and at Standard Bus.

The federal government also states that buses must meet national standards and be aligned with the national regulations for bus safety.

Safety has been a huge component — a huge criteria — when we choose our bus company. Standard Bus is our current operator, which maintains a fleet of buses and makes sure they're upgraded to proper safety standards for our students. Their safety record is excellent. Our school bus system is safe, but we can make improvements. One of the places we can turn our eye and gaze to is disciplinary and behavioural policies. Those two have evolved over the years. One of the things impacting the safety of the vehicle is not external problems but driver distraction, and that the distraction is not the students the driver is carrying. Schools

work with Standard Bus to be able to respond to any situation or behaviour concerns on the school bus. This is an issue I know my colleague and the civil servants in the Department of Education take very seriously. It's also an issue the Standard Bus employees take seriously. Student behaviour will affect all passengers and everybody deserves a safe and comfortable trip to and from school.

The Department of Education transportation regulations set out the disciplinary response procedure for bus drivers in the event of a student not behaving properly. Bus drivers are responsible for monitoring and enforcing the school bus rules to ensure the safety of students on buses at all times. When a student is not behaving properly, bus drivers can report that behaviour to the school principal for follow-up action. They are made both verbally and in writing. The school principal will then determine the appropriate action to be taken and any required follow-up.

This is an interesting segue, Mr. Speaker, because what we have been talking about this afternoon is the federal regulation of seat belts on school buses. The Leader of the Third Party has also spoken about that this afternoon. That will be a very important study the federal government is doing, and it will also contribute to better behaviour on buses, because the kids will presumably, if it is adopted — and we can all hope it is — be restrained in their seats, which is not only safe for the journey but also helps keep students under control.

We're very happy to hear the federal government will take a fresh look at whether seat belts are necessary or not as part of the evolution of school bus safety. We can never, in this regard, be too cautious or proactive.

In closing, I would like to thank our many school bus drivers for doing a superb job in transferring our most precious cargo safely to and from school throughout the school year. I want to thank the many administrators from the Department of Education who work behind the scenes to ensure our school bus system operates as safely and efficiently as possible.

I want to thank Standard Bus and their crew for doing the same. I want to thank the Minister of Education for all her work on this file and the Member for Copperbelt South for bringing forward the original motion.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague for bringing this motion forward and for the discussion we've had so far.

I consider myself a bit of an expert on school buses. I rode the school bus from the day I started kindergarten, except for two weeks in junior high school when I was able to walk to Jeckell Junior High, and then I took it all the way through high school.

We talk about the number of kids per seat, we talk about emergency procedures and we talk about things like this — the reality is that school buses aren't super comfortable. They're not; they haven't changed; they're still the standard school bus that I took. You can't see out the window as soon as it's wintertime because the windows freeze over. You know

where the heaters are and you kind of have a plan, right? I get motion sickness, so I never sat in the back of the bus.

There were a couple of things. When I think about emergency procedures, never once did we ever practice how to get off the school bus safely if there was an incident. I mean, I can tell you every school bus driver I've ever had all though school, but I can't tell you how I was supposed to get off the bus. I can't tell you if there was a designated person who was supposed to open up the back door. I can't tell you any of those things because we never did that.

I think that would be an important part of the conversation when we talk about emergency procedures. I can tell you that when I moved to Porter Creek and I took the bus to both Jeckell and then F.H. Collins, my bus ride was 45 minutes long. I lived in Porter Creek and went to school in Riverdale. It was 45 minutes long because I was lucky enough to be on the bus that went down Wickstrom Road, so toward Long Lake, to pick up kids before it would loop us back around. I say "lucky" in terms of only being on the bus for 45 minutes but that's not exactly the case.

There are issues right now. I don't know if people are aware, but Standard Bus is having a hard time with the drivers. They don't have enough drivers. Maybe one of the ways that could be addressed is if school bus drivers were included in the fair wage schedule. I can't imagine, when we were talking about what it would look like to drive a school bus — I think folks who drive school buses are pretty amazing because, I tell you, if I'm driving the car and everyone in my car is yelling, I'm going to pull over and I'm going to make them get out. If you're driving a school bus and you have more than 30 kids who are all quite exuberant — I'm not even sure how you would deal with that.

So maybe one way we could look toward driver retention or actually getting more drivers for school buses, increasing the qualifications and all those things, would be if we included them on the fair wage schedule. I know, for example, that my younger sister drove a school bus last year — actually for two years — and loved it. I could tell you that it's the most feminist company in the territory because you're allowed to take small children on the bus as long as they can sit in the seat. So it's amazing for parents who have kids at home that they can still work for four hours a day, which is pretty incredible.

You know, there are concerns. For example, did you know that school bus drivers have to work split shifts? That they work a couple of hours in the morning and then a couple of hours in the afternoon? So if you see someone who's driving a school bus, it can't be their only job. If it's their source of income, it is not enough to be their only job. So you will see people who stitch together both driving school bus along with, maybe, waiting in a restaurant, being service staff in a restaurant for lunch and then going back to the school bus.

Currently, drivers make just about the same salary as they did 20 years ago. If we're going to talk about how important the safety and health of children is and how much we appreciate what is being done by school bus drivers — then I

think that is something we need to evaluate, because if we looked at even minimum wage 20 years ago, that would be a stark difference from what it is right now.

We've talked about different ways to improve safety, whether there was a ride-along adult or a volunteer — whether there was another adult on the bus — I can't even imagine — I have four nephews — I can't imagine dealing with four of them in the car if they didn't have the fear of Auntie Kate, of what my reaction might be, because having 50 kids in the bus would just be a lot of work.

I know that right now in Takhini I have kids who takes buses, because they can go to the Catholic school or the French first language or Whitehorse Elementary or the high schools — but I can tell you, every morning when I leave the house, I can hear one little human yelling at the top of their lungs, and they yell straight up until they get on to their bus, and I think, "Oh, I hope that's a way to get out that exuberance before they get on the bus" — because the idea of that little human making all that noise on the bus is just about intolerable.

We've heard both sides about whether or not seat belts would be important — and I can say from my own perspective that, after a couple of car accidents where I was hit by drunk drivers, I belong to the "seat belts save lives" club. Even if only one child between now and forever was saved by a seat belt in a school bus, then I would say whatever that investment would be, would be money well-spent. The idea of any small human being hurt because the decision was made not to include those restraints is quite upsetting.

Listening to the conversation about the registration process and how that works in that organization, I can't imagine what that goes like. I know right now that there are different aspects within the Department of Education that are struggling with technology and IT things. So what is the answer for registration? I'm not sure.

We've talked about how there's a different reality between now and what was before, and it's true. For example, one of my nephews lives in Takhini half the time and lives in Riverdale the rest of the time. He goes to the same school — he takes two school buses on his route home to Takhini, so he takes one number down from Takhini and he takes a separate number home to Takhini, and then he will have at least one bus route that he does in Riverdale. So he has a conversation with his parents — depending where he's staying — about what bus he's on and where he's going, but that is a carefully orchestrated plan on their part.

Then you have to think about the fact that that school bus driver is probably quite aware — like I said, I can name all my school bus drivers — Suzanne was my school bus driver for about five years, and she probably knew as much about the kids as our teacher would have known during the school year, especially because we had that continuity.

When we talk about things like safety — when we talk about — it was mentioned — about type 1 diabetics and what happens if a young person goes into crisis — we have anaphylactic food allergies or other allergies, and we have any continuance of things; so not only does the school bus driver

right now make the same money they did 20 years ago, but they also have to be the first responder, they have to be the controller and they have to be able to drive that entire time.

It is interesting, because we talk about distracted driving, and I can't imagine a more distracting situation than moving 50 children around at one time. It was mentioned by my colleague on this side about the capacity. When we talk about the comfort of school buses, I can tell you that, after my professional riding time, that they weren't super comfortable. If you're talking about school busing in the wintertime and you're talking about toques, mitts, boots, snow pants and snow jackets and all those things, the idea of three small humans on a bench at a time is almost intolerable. I can understand that would actually cause short tempers and some reactions and it wouldn't necessarily be ideal.

I know that I have had friends who have driven bus and have really enjoyed it. I know that they all had different coping mechanisms. I know that some rule with an iron fist and some are kind of like the cool uncle or the cool aunt. Everyone tries to develop their own way to deal with the situation of how to manage children on the bus. We have talked about how, if there is a problem, what the points there are supposed to be — and I do appreciate that, from the Golden Horn school, one of the parent's comments was, "How do we support drivers?" Absolutely — how do you support drivers?

There are some small humans who are going to be getting on the bus who quite possibly get to school and have a full-time EA, but they are being handed off to that bus driver solo. It has been recognized that they need support, but that bus driver is trying to manage that one small human among other humans without that support of the EA.

I do appreciate the amendment to tag onto the Transport Canada assessment — I do, but one thing that we have heard recently is that the assessment that was done in the 1980s, it has been admitted that it wasn't as thorough as it could have been and maybe it was a bit skewed.

When we talk about the cost of seat belts — there was the man from Texas on the television last night saying that it was \$25 a kid per year to install a seat belt. I feel like we have lots of people here — lots of skill and things here. I trust that the mechanics at the bus company in town would be able to install the correct number of seat belts, as required, to make sure that we could get from point A to point B without that concern. I did hear from my colleague from Lake Laberge when he talked about expanding those routes — making sure that places like Grizzly Valley or Takhini River Road also had access to school busing.

I think the intention for including all those points in the original motion was to make sure that the conversation on school buses was broad and that it was far-reaching. When we talk about service areas and we talk about standards, it is important. I do appreciate the partnership that happened between the Department of Education and the City of Whitehorse, because that partnership of high school students being able to do the city bus has been a huge help to the City of Whitehorse in making sure that they could improve their

transit lines, that transit is moving the way it is and advancing the way it is — in part, because of the investment of the Department of Education in bus passes for high school students.

I think that sometimes there are going to be those opportunities where there might be benefits at both levels of government or even multiple levels of government at the same time.

Ultimately, I think that one of the things that should be considered for the future is the issue of the fair wage schedule. If you take a look at the fair wage schedule, it talks about — for example, garbage truck drivers are on the fair wage schedule. We have all sorts of different driving professions on the fair wage schedule, but we don't have school bus drivers. At this point in time, school bus drivers are offered the wage that they're offered and the only way that they can negotiate that is if they unionize, which they have not done yet. There is room for government there to consider including something like school bus drivers on the fair wage schedule just because of how important the job is that they do.

I think when we talk about support again I will just say that if a child has a full-time EA then it's something important to consider that they go unmanned on the school bus and what that could do to that dynamic.

With that, I look forward to a vote and I look forward to school buses with seat belts in the future.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion as amended?

If the member now speaks he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Kent: I thank members of the House for their comments on Motion No. 332 that I brought forward and was subsequently amended by the Minister of Education after speaking with me about doing that this morning. Of course, that amendment was supported by all sides of the House.

I think that this is an extremely important topic. I can assure members that, as I mentioned off the top, busing is one of the top two issues for parents in the Golden Horn school community, which is the centrepiece school for my riding of Copperbelt South and also services the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and a number of his constituents.

The issues that I raised here with respect to bus capacity, assigned seating, wearing of seat belts by passengers and whether or not that should be mandatory, the registration process, behavioural and disciplinary policies, emergency procedures, and service areas and standards are all reflections of what I have heard at the school council meetings that I have attended. Then the addition of the Transport Canada review, of course, was necessitated by the report by *The Fifth Estate* and then the subsequent response by Minister Garneau to that report in taking a look at the possibility of including seat belts on school buses.

Like the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I can't imagine what it would be like even just driving my son to school if he didn't have a seat belt on in the back in his car

seat. It would have been old school like it was maybe for my parents driving up the Alaska Highway in the early 70s with five kids and a dog and us not really buckled in all that well and probably second-hand smoke a little bit at the time too and all the other bad things that we managed to survive as kids. I'm kind of glad I was four or five years old and have some, but not a ton of, recollection of that trip up the Alaska Highway back in the old days when it was a twisty gravel road.

That said, I think that we can get to a point where there are seat belts on the buses and perhaps get to a point where we can get to capacity levels of two to a seat, regardless of age. I know that, as some have mentioned, that's going to be a resource challenge for government adding more buses, but as the population increases and as more and more families move to the outskirts of our community, whether it's into some of the subdivided properties outside of city limits in my riding or some of the new homes and older subdivisions around Whitehorse — Copper, Wolf Creek, Mary Lake, Pineridge, Spruce Hill and Cowley Creek — more and more, we are seeing pressures on the enrolment at that school and with those will be pressures on the buses. I am sure they will be in the same situation next year at the start of the year and there will be some bumps in the road, but I think what we have accomplished here today is to re-establish a benchmark or a beachhead where we can work together as legislators to hold the government to account on what we have agreed to here today, whether it's through the education annual report or through questions in the House and exchanges back and forth between the minister and I — or others from time to time.

As I mentioned, all of the parents who raised this issue with me on social media and have raised it with me in the schoolyard at drop-off and other opportunities that they have had I think will see this as welcome news that we were able to come together as a Legislature today and come up with wording that I think will work for them and for both sides of the House.

In closing, I would like to thank those officials in Education for their work on this. I would like to thank all the school communities and school councils throughout the territory for all that they do — and, of course, the contractors, the folks at Standard Bus, for the important service that they provide on a daily basis to our children.

With that, I look forward to a vote on this motion and thank all members who spoke in favour of the motion as amended.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion as amended?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

Motion No. 332, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 294

Clerk: Motion No. 294, standing in the name of Ms. White.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to respond to the presence of plastics in Earth's oceans, fresh water and environment by working with industry and municipal and First Nation governments to:

- (1) eliminate the distribution of single-use plastic bags;
- (2) eliminate the use of single-use plastic food and beverage containers including: straws, utensils and lids; and
- (3) reduce the amount of plastic packaging throughout the retail industry.

Ms. White: The first thing I'm going to say is that this motion was tabled in April of this year. This was tabled before Earth Day where we talked about the importance of removing plastic from the environment. I appreciate that there was a motion tabled yesterday that was similar, but plastic is not a new thing here.

Mr. Speaker, plastic now includes every aspect of the world we live in. You can find it in any body of water, littering the sides of roadways and in the wild places where you would never expect to find it. If you think about it, single-use plastics require that we extract a non-renewable resource, use energy to transform it and then it gets used for a few minutes, or a couple of days at best in the case of food containers, before they get thrown out and they take up space in our landfills for hundreds of years — hundreds of years before that will go away. We have to ask ourselves how this has become easier than washing a reusable container. I don't think I need to go in any greater depth as to why single-use plastics are bad — they're bad and we all know it.

Yukoners are experts in the “think globally and act locally” movement. Yukoners are expert recyclers; they understand the importance of waste diversion, reusing, recycling, upcycling and all those things — they understand. There are local businesses like Midnight Sun Coffee Roasters who only use compostable cups and lids so everything you get from Midnight Sun can go in the compost. Then we have places like Riverside Grocery who have done away completely with plastic bags and single-use plastics like cutlery, straws and cups, and what they use now is 100-percent compostable. Both businesses made choices toward being environmentally friendly, but this motion isn’t about personal responsibility or making the right choice, because if our strategy to tackle the environmental challenges of today relies only on personal choice, I hate to say it, but we won’t succeed. This is an issue of policy and an issue of leadership. It requires government action from this government today and from every government, we would say, even years ago.

In March 2015, a motion by the NDP opposition MP and environment critic Megan Leslie called for microbeads to be added to the list of toxic substances, and she received all-party support in the House of Commons. This is worth mentioning because this is an example of government making a decision and creating a policy that banned the use of plastic microbeads commonly used in personal hygiene products. Why was it a big deal? It is because almost any fish — at this point in time, that’s cod — will have microbeads in its system. They don’t go away; they get consumed by other animals and it just gets recirculated. This became law on January 1 of this year.

From now on, plastic microbeads will not make their way into Canada’s environment, and that is an incredible accomplishment. We are in good company, having been joined by Wales, France, New Zealand, Taiwan and the United Kingdom, with many other countries aiming to be free of microbeads by 2020. In many nations of the world, there has been a phase-out of lightweight plastic bags. In 2002, the Bangladesh government was the first to impose a total ban on the single-use plastic bag. When people in Rwanda advocated for a plastic bag ban with penalties for offenders, the government followed through and the ban has been upheld in the country since 2008.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, having travelled in warmer countries, plastic bags were used for everything. Anything you would buy would be put in a single-use plastic bag. Such a ban has also been applied in countries or regions such as China, Taiwan, Macedonia and Kenya. These are bigger places than us. In 2015, the State of Hawaii banned single-use plastic bags, not through the state legislature, but instead through all four county councils, and they are now pushing for further bans. It has been two years since California banned stores from handing out single-use plastic bags to customers. It was a big deal in California. It was a referendum issue, with plastic-bag makers launching a multi-million dollar campaign to persuade voters to reject the ban. It was crazy what happened in California. The bag-makers lost; they lost the vote.

In the end, this momentous change was not a big deal. Shoppers did not revolt or launch recall campaigns against state lawmakers. Food still gets to people’s houses. Reusable bags did not spark an epidemic of food-borne illness, as some critics suggested they would, and consumers didn’t go broke paying 10 cents for the thicker, reusable plastic bags that stores are allowed to distribute now instead.

One could say that the shopping never stopped, nor has it stopped in Victoria — population 84,289. The reason I’m telling you the population numbers is because I feel that we can do this — so Victoria with almost 85,000 people and Montreal with 1.741 million people — they have both banned plastic bags. Or one in six other Canadian municipalities — this is quite inspiring — Leaf Rapids, Manitoba, population 582 — they made the choice of no more plastic bags. Thompson, Manitoba — population 13,000; Huntingdon, Quebec, and Deux-Montagnes, Brossard — Brossard, Quebec, has 85,000 people. This is a really good one for me — Wood Buffalo regional municipality of Alberta — 71,000 people. I had to look into it. Fort McMurray banned plastic bags — holy Hannah; if Fort McMurray can do it, so can we. This isn’t an issue of personal responsibility, because Yukoners — we have taken personal responsibility and we talk about how well we’re doing in that way.

This isn’t about preventing people with disabilities from accessing straws, because there can always be an exception to every rule — that is not what I’m targeting — but this is about government leadership and it’s about government policies, because if we make the policy to ban plastics, then decisions have to be made and motions will be taken toward that.

Other governments from all levels, jurisdictions and populations have shown that tackling the problem of plastic is doable. It is just a question of political will, but what I want to tell this government is that the time to slowly change our habits to protect the environment has passed. We have missed that boat. We have already been waiting for much too long when it comes to single-use plastic. If this government really wants to make the change happen, I know that they can. They can ban single-use plastic today and allow for a transition period. It could be a year, it could be two years, for instance, but it can’t be indefinitely, because we can’t just have this conversation again in 2020. We need to be looking forward to this.

If we had a transitional period, it would give time for businesses, it would give them the opportunity to change their practices, and it would allow for government to work with industry and municipal and First Nation governments to determine how this can be done, how it can be enforced and what alternatives can be promoted. There is no reason we can’t do this. We just need to make the decision here because we’re the decision-makers.

So Mr. Speaker, let’s just do this. Let’s ban single-use plastics.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for first introducing this motion back in April and for bringing it back here today and also the

Member for Copperbelt North for his motion. I'm very happy to see a motion like this being debated in the House. I think it is important that we show leadership as a government and create the policies and take actions. I will try to address that situation in a moment.

I want to talk about plastics, which are so incredibly useful in what they do in our lives. They're ubiquitous now but, at the same time, once they become part of our waste stream, they can be heinous. They're incredibly difficult — there are so many costs associated with them. There are costs associated with them when they make it into our landfills. Even if we recycle them, there are still costs because we have to transport it and we have to deal with it. There was a time when that plastic was making it into places where it was just being burned and there were a lot of toxic chemicals released and were incredibly bad for the health of the people who were nearby those places. That has been phasing out, but there are still a lot of problems with it. It gets into every phase of our environment, whether that is the atmosphere, our soils, all of our lakes, waters and oceans. As the Member for Takhini-Kopper King noted, it bioaccumulates into species. It is just an awful thing. Even when we do recycle it, there are still problems.

I want to say to the public that it is important to get rid of single-use plastics, and I'm looking forward to supporting the intention of the motion here. I have had some conversation today with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and am willing to take the responsibility and the leadership.

However, I do think it's worth saying to the public that, even if we get rid of single-use plastics, there is still a lot of plastic that ends up in our landfills, and that plastic is ending up as part of other things. I know the member opposite knows this because I have seen her work with Raven Recycling and Zero Waste Yukon where we take a look at those things that we're trying to find ways to recycle, but there are products like toothbrushes, which have a lot of plastic in them and then some other composite materials, and it makes it very difficult to get at those things. We need to deal with those costs. It is always better to reduce first, reuse second, and recycle third. It needs to be in that order.

I think that sometimes citizens or governments think: Let's get the recycling in there. But the recycling doesn't deal with all the problems. We really do need to focus on reduce first and reuse second.

I will say that it's also better to get to a polluter-pay system, or what I refer to as a stewardship model of dealing with our solid waste, than it is to use a tax-base model. There are many jurisdictions that have started to move in that direction. There is the example of the designated material regulations. I will talk about those a little bit. That's an example of us moving more toward a user-pay model, which is, in this case, really a polluter-pay model.

I wanted to give you a small example that comes from 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker. I was living in the Maritimes, doing my master's degree. I also happened to be doing some quilting. I went to a store to buy some quilt batting. In previous days, Mr. Speaker, quilt batting was made from

natural materials, but these days it is made from polyester, which is effectively a plastic. It's a plastic derivative.

I was buying this quilt batting to do this quilting, and I was frustrated because I looked at the quilt batting and it was in a plastic bag. So you have effectively plastic encased in plastic. I thought, "Okay, that's fine. I'm going to buy it this way. It's all I can get." When I got to the counter, I was speaking with the clerk and the clerk proceeded to bring out a plastic bag. It was not just any plastic bag, because this is a big thing. It was a massive plastic bag. I said, "No, no, no. I don't need a bag." I'm one of those people who always tries not to take a plastic bag. I often have a reusable cloth bag, but I certainly didn't that day.

She could see I had my bike helmet, and she said, "But you can't take that home." I said, "Yeah, I can. It's just the same as if you give me another plastic bag to go over top of the plastic bag holding the plastic." We proceeded to have an argument about it because she felt it was really important. I said, "What is the risk if you don't give me one?" She said, "Well, what if someone accused you of stealing this?" I said, "I could use the receipt, couldn't I?" She said, "Well, you know, but it's policy." I said, "How about this? You walk me out with it and then once I get out, I'm done, and don't let me back in with this thing unless I have a plastic bag over the plastic bag." She said, "No, no, I'll just put it in there for you, dear." That was a very kind way of referring to people there in New Brunswick and I ended up just so frustrated. For the past 30 years, I've sought to try to find ways to reduce first, reuse second and recycle third.

I think the member opposite is exactly correct. We have come a long way, and I think Yukoners in particular, and in the broad sense, want to do the right thing and are willing to get there. I won't say that's true of everybody, and I'll comment on that a little bit later, Mr. Speaker, but I think generally that we're there as Yukoners.

I will also say that over the past months I have been trying to volunteer at some of our solid-waste facilities. I'm calling it the Southern Lakes dump tour, and this weekend, I will finish off the Southern Lakes and I hope to get to Deep Creek as well, because I think that's another solid-waste facility near to the City of Whitehorse that is really affected by its proximity to the City of Whitehorse.

I am trying to get a handle on what the challenges are. I can tell you that one of the challenges is single-use plastics — bags. Even though you try to put them in place, they blow everywhere. They move outside very quickly. They get hung up in the bushes and on the fences — the bear fences — and they just get out.

I will give you one more small story, Mr. Speaker. A long-time Yukoner told me a story. I certainly won't name names. They lived outside of town and they said that what they used to do — maybe even before there was a landfill — they would take garbage and put it in a paper bag, and then they would just go out and shove it down into the lake because you would get rid of it that way. They said that then, along came plastic bags, and it was really hard to shove down because it would float. If you think about how far we have

come since then — and it is only a decade or so ago that we were burning our garbage — we are so far ahead down the road. I want to thank Yukoners for how far we have come, but we need to go further.

I thank the member opposite for talking about communities that have done this and how they have been successful: Victoria, Montreal — I hadn't heard about Fort McMurray. I certainly will go and look that up.

I also think that the Northwest Territories, one of our sister territories, has done some great work. They didn't actually ban it, but they put a price on plastic bags. I think it was 25 cents. They started in about 2011 and it has been incredibly effective. It didn't get to elimination but, as I will point out, Mr. Speaker, there is always more to do when it comes to plastic. There is a lot to do.

I know that there have been some local businesses — just earlier this week, for the start of a week trying to celebrate dealing with solid waste, we discussed in particular the Zero Heroes, but I know of business owners in Dawson who have chosen as group not to use plastic straws. I know there are businesses here in town. Not only did Riverside Grocery decide to change out their single-use plastics, but they also added to their myriad of available products — metal straws, glass straws and all sorts of things that would encourage us to continue to not use materials like single-use plastic.

I want talk about the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Just as we hit Earth Day earlier this year and the motion came forward — this original motion — it turns out that I was also given the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* or the recommendations from the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, which is made up of folks from across the territory. Our rural communities are there, we have some CAOs, we have some folks who work in Highways and Public Works, we also have the executive director of the Association of Yukon Communities, who is one of the co-chairs of that committee, and we have folks from Community Services and also the Department of Environment — and they developed an action plan that we adopted and presented to the Association of Yukon Communities annual general meeting.

Part of that is that they are working to help us move to a more sustainable future. As it turns out, this very morning they met. They were alerted to the fact that we were debating this motion. They have given it some thought. I am happy to report back that they are on board and excited that we're having this motion and that's a great thing, because I think part of this, as the member opposite noted, is that it's really important to work with our municipalities, our First Nations, the business community, industry and the private sector, because they're the folks who have innovation and entrepreneurship and ways to get at good solutions.

I want to say that, based on my discussion with them this afternoon and having spoken first with the member opposite about how we might achieve this, I turned around and asked for a report back from that advisory committee, which is currently in the phase of trying to recommend to me options on how to implement the plan that we have adopted. They think this would be a welcome addition to the plan. We are

working as we speak on how we might be able to work toward elimination and come up with an action plan — not pushing it off into the future but making a concerted effort.

It goes alongside with the other efforts that the Minister of Environment and I have been working toward with respect to designated material regulations.

I told them that I was encouraged that they were working on it and I looked forward to hearing back from them — their recommendations — whether we would move to extended producer responsibility, whether we would move to pure regulations or whether we would move to designated material regulations. These folks are ones who are working with solid waste across the territory and are able to provide good recommendations to us for a starting point. I think after that the next step is to get out and engage the public, because we need to hear from industry and we need to hear from the private sector. We need to hear their ideas.

Through the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*, they have a set of priorities that they are providing for us to achieve. They are making these things specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. They are working generally to make sure that we are looking at the life-cycle cost so that we don't just push this problem off to another legislature or another generation. We need to make sure that the system we develop works for the whole territory. We know that we need to focus on innovation. We know that we need to focus on polluter-pay. We understand that all of this is important, and we want it to happen as a government initiative but also to get that support and buy-in from the public.

While I am happy to try to accelerate the ideas and this action item, I think part of that action is always that we will work with the public and private sector and municipalities that deal with our solid waste facilities.

Speaker: Order, please.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 294 accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 17, 2018:

34-2-153

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Hassard related to general debate on Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement* (Silver)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 101

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 18, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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Yukon Party

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| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

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New Democratic Party

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| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 18, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming back to the Legislative Assembly the Grand Chief of Council of Yukon First Nations, Peter Johnston.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I would like to ask my colleagues to welcome to the House Phil Gibson. Phil was a legal counsel with the federal government during the days of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and also with the Kluane First Nation agreement. I noted that when I was looking at the agreements again today that Phil, along with the late Sylvia MacIntosh for the Yukon government and Dave Joe as legal counsel, all signed as witnesses for their respective governments. We welcome you Phil.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As part of the library tribute today we have several people here. I would like us all, please, to welcome Barb Wadsworth, Debbie Hawco, Marisa Whyte, Carrie Burgess, Andrea Bols, the library page Serenity Jones, Mairi Macrae and from our Tagish community library, Jane Hermanson, Wendy Gower and Lesli Barnes. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of 15th anniversary of Kluane First Nation's final and self-government agreements

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to rise today to pay tribute to the Kluane First Nation on the 15th anniversary of their final and self-government agreements. I hope that they are enjoying their celebration lunch today in Burwash Landing — it is being catered by the Kluane Lake School.

Kluane First Nation, the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon signed the *Kluane First Nation Final Agreement* and self-government agreement on this day, October 18, 2003. Kluane First Nation is one of 11 Yukon First Nations that have signed final and self-government agreements. The recognition and implementation of the rights

set out in the final and self-government agreements has been a vital aspect of advancing reconciliation and overcoming the harms done to indigenous people in our country's history.

Kluane First Nation's achievements in the 15 years since they became formally recognized as self-governing have been extremely remarkable. In their vision, they talk about creating a healthy, happy and economically stable community where people can go about their day-to-day activities in a spirit of gentleness and cooperation. These are aspirations that all Yukoners can appreciate and aspire to.

With these agreements and through their passion and dedication, Kluane First Nation is turning their vision into a reality. They are strengthening their community in many ways. They have opened a new store in Burwash Landing called Kluane Energy Store. This is the first store in the community for many, many years.

Older homes have been retrofitted to provide more housing and Copper Joe subdivision is being developed. The Kluane First Nation recreation, culture and wellness pursuits fund encourages citizens to take part in activities to promote healthy and traditional lifestyles.

The Kluane First Nation is looking after their culture and well-being and they're looking after the land too. They are lessening their environmental impact and helping to protect the land for future generations. To help reduce their reliance on fossil fuels — on diesel fuel — the Kluane First Nation is installing wind turbines and solar panels. They are working with Cold Climate Innovation at Yukon College to address the wind energy potential for Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay.

Kluane First Nation is also investing in their future through economic opportunities and partnerships, not only contributing to the overall prosperity of their own community, but increasing economic opportunity and growth for all of Yukon. Kluane First Nation is partnering with Air North to create a fuel supply service, Chieftain Energy.

Kluane First Nation and the Kluane Development Corporation are partnered with Nickel Creek Platinum Corporation on the Nickel Shāw mining project. I, along with all of our colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly today, congratulate Kluane First Nation on their achievements for the past 15 years, and we thank them for all that they are doing to benefit the territory as a whole.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I do rise today to also pay tribute to the 15th anniversary of Kluane First Nation signing their final agreement. Of course, their main centre is in Burwash Landing, along the Alaska Highway on the shores of Kluane Lake. The native language spoken by the people of the First Nation is Southern Tutchone, and they call themselves after the great lake, Lù'àn Män Ku Dän, or the Kluane Lake people.

The traditional territory extends from the St. Elias Mountains in the south, bounded to the east by the southern end of Kluane Lake and the Slims River and by the Ruby Range to the north, extending almost to the Nisling River, and on the west by the Yukon-Alaska border. It

includes the Tachal region of Kluane National Park and Reserve. A little-known fact for many people — and for those who are listening today — is that, within this region — you might not know that this is home to Canada's largest mountain, Mount Logan, and the Yukon's largest lake, Kluane Lake.

The First Nation signed their land claim agreement back in October 2003. If you read their mission statement — and I'll quote from it, Mr. Speaker: "In order to achieve the long term vision, our mission is to build political and administrative systems of governance that will respect and value the past and still be able to communicate and participate with modern government structures." Mr. Speaker, I believe they have done that.

You can see this because of the vision of those who worked so hard in getting to the signing of their final agreement and, of course, those who have made them successful today.

The Premier highlighted a few good examples, and another one that I would like to tack on is the Kluane sheep permit. That was negotiated into their agreement, and it's auctioned off every year at the Wild Sheep Foundation sheep show in Reno, Nevada. A percentage of the overall sales — a great percentage of the permit sales, actually — go back to the First Nation for the purpose of conservation and support projects, to activities for wildlife enhancement and projects within their traditional territory. You can see that with the great work through the local resources council and First Nation with trapping initiatives and many other things.

I'm not going to re-highlight some of the stuff the Premier spoke about with their development corporation, but their development corporation is very progressive and is willing to work and move forward to the future.

Today, I want to congratulate them on 15 years of success and many more to follow. Thank you, and *günilshish*.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: It gives me great pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to pay tribute to the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Kluane First Nation final and self-government agreements.

When reminded that the 15th anniversary was approaching, I confess that my mind was flooded with all sorts of memories. Everyone who was involved in any way with the Yukon First Nation negotiations process — and there were many people, over many years — you recall things through your own personal, and often your organizational, lens.

My insight into the Kluane negotiations process was through a federal lens. The federal minister at the time, Robert Nault, made several trips to Yukon early in the 2000s to gain a better understanding of the outstanding issues that were impeding the finalization of Yukon agreements and to try to work with his Cabinet colleagues to gain support for changes necessary on the federal side to help move the negotiations forward.

So you can imagine that he was happy to arrive in Yukon in mid-October 2003, to go to Burwash Landing to participate in the Kluane signing ceremony. As the federal public servant charged with ensuring the safety of the minister, I have to say that seeing him drive off that morning with then-Premier Fentie on a snowy, snowy morning did cause a bit of trepidation, given the Premier's reputation for low-level highway flying.

Kluane First Nation has had a long history of strong leadership. As a chief federal negotiator, Jim Bishop told me — one of the gifts to the whole process was the wisdom brought to the table by former Chief Joe Johnson. It is also my observation that it was the conversation and the relationships that developed among the various players at the table that allowed the federal and territorial government representatives to really hear the interests and the values of the Kluane First Nation. Understanding the deep impact of the exclusion of the Kluane First Nation from a significant area of their traditional territory when the Kluane park reserve and national park boundaries were established — it took time to get that deep understanding.

As one of the negotiators told me, the incredible patience and persistence of the Kluane leadership and their negotiating team, led by Dave Joe and Robin Bradasch, resulted in the federal and territorial negotiators being able to sway significant government resistance to what, in retrospect, seemed so obvious in terms of the recognition of Kluane First Nation's important historic connection to the Kluane area. Kluane First Nation's vision for co-management of the park area and co-ownership of important archeological sites within the park are just a few examples.

The importance of building strong relationships around the table, and the fire conversations after, is probably best exemplified by the ongoing conversations between the then-territorial negotiator, Ron Sumanik, and Joe-Joe Johnson about sheep.

The principles underlying the inclusion of a special sheep guiding or trophy hunting opportunity area went deep. They recognized that, decades after the Kluane First Nation had been prohibited from hunting on their lands once those lands became part of the park reserve, the inclusion of an exclusive opportunity for a sheep permit provided both a symbolic recognition of rights long denied and a significant economic boost.

The people of Kluane First Nation have been leaders on so many fronts for so many years. Fifteen years after formal recognition as a self-governing First Nation, they continue to lead by holding fast to their traditional principles and values and using them to embrace the future.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Library Week

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise enthusiastically today to recognize Yukon Library Week beginning this Saturday, October 20, around the territory. This is an opportunity to celebrate the values of all libraries, including the 15 public libraries located throughout the Yukon. Libraries provide

Yukoners with free access to learning opportunities, workspaces, meeting rooms and a trusted source of information.

Beyond borrowing books, libraries are where people go to explore ideas, build community connections and share knowledge. Internet access is critical for people, including youth, newcomers, visitors and Yukoners who can't afford the Internet or a computer. All our libraries offer Internet access. Libraries are an entry into the world of knowledge. They are centres of lifelong learning and directly impact the lives of Yukoners every day. They are books.

For fun, Mr. Speaker, I put together a reading list based on the tributes in the Legislature from this week. Startup Canada: *Small Business Week*, *The Food Truck Handbook: Start, Grow, and Succeed in the Mobile Food Business*, *Food Bank Nations: Poverty, Corporate Charity and the Right to Food*; for Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival* and *Medicine Walk*, which were featured on CBC this week; for the tribute to the late Joe Linklater, *People of the Lakes*; for Kluane, *Campfires in the Yukon*; and for Zero Waste, *F**k Plastic: 101 ways to free yourself from plastic and save the world*.

As Tagish elder Angela Sidney used to say, "Reading makes you wise." Libraries provide for local organizations to post notices for upcoming community events. Libraries provide opportunities for everyone. They connect Yukoners to each other and to the broader world. Think global, read local, Mr. Speaker.

This year, I saw a Yukon Public Libraries pop-up in the farmers market. Mr. Speaker, if there are Yukoners like me who have a passion for libraries and are looking for a chance to contribute to programs and services through volunteering, then look no further than your local library. Like libraries all over the world, Yukon's libraries thrive in large part because of support from dedicated volunteers.

I want to offer special recognition to the members of the library boards throughout Yukon for their passion and commitment to providing Yukoners with opportunities to connect, learn and grow.

This Saturday, October 20, I invite all Yukoners, including our newly elected municipal councillors — please vote today, Mr. Speaker — to the Whitehorse Public Library from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for juice and cake to celebrate Yukon Library Week.

Mr. Speaker, just recently, I got to do my first minister's pick for a book and it was *The Day the Crayons Quit*. Just when I was out in the gallery ahead of coming in here today, I spoke with the librarians, and they have offered to extend that offer to all MLAs here. If you want to have a library pick book, please let me know. I will pass that on. They are just very excited to support reading in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the hard work and dedication of all Yukon library staff and volunteers. They make a real difference to the daily lives of Yukoners.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party to celebrate libraries and the magical people who staff them.

Libraries are more than brick and mortar. They are more than just storage space for books. Libraries are a feeling of comfort, security and home. Libraries are important community hubs that serve as centres of learning, professional development, refuge, and even some fun.

Libraries are some of the very last free-to-use public spaces, open to all regardless of race, class, gender, social standing, age, religion or any of the other lines that are drawn to separate and discriminate. Libraries are a truly inclusive, welcoming space.

Libraries are sought out by new citizens to our country and visitors from abroad, often serving as an introduction to our communities and our languages. Libraries allow free access to knowledge, education and new media to anyone who walks through those doors. If anyone thinks that libraries are not thriving, I would suggest that they haven't visited one in awhile and maybe they would like to check it out. The Whitehorse Public Library is a busy place from opening to closing, seven days a week. Community libraries see a steady stream of patrons borrowing books and movies to take into camps or to use computers because they have no other access to communicate with family or fill out government forms.

Special libraries like the EMR library, the Yukon Public Law Library and the Yukon College library are staffed with experts in information retrieval so that researchers and students can make evidence-based decisions of vital service in today's world of alternative facts. The Yukon Archives isn't a lending library, but they have over 37,000 books, pamphlets, newspapers and periodicals on subjects including the Yukon and northern history, the environment, culture, science, and nature and exploration.

Librarians make knowledge available and accessible. They make it real. Librarians nurture curiosity, the thirst for knowledge and a love of books and learning, in whatever form they come.

Any elected person or public servant who dares to take the importance of libraries for granted will see a major backlash from the public because people depend on libraries. Free access to information is a cornerstone of democracy, and libraries are a living, breathing example of that democracy in action, so thank you to librarians.

Applause

Speaker: Are there returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling two legislative returns today: one pertaining to a question asked by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King regarding a Yukon home warranty program, and one pertaining to a question asked by the Leader of the Official Opposition regarding the cannabis retail store lease agreement.

Mr. Cathers: I have for tabling a written question to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling a legislative return in response to a question asked during supplementary budget debate on October 11 by the Member for Copperbelt South.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Smoke-Free Places Act* to include vaping.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Porter Creek group home replacement

Ms. McLeod: The tender forecast states that the government is planning on replacing the group home at 22 Wann Road. The name of the tender is, "Group home replacement at 22 Wann Road". It goes on to say that they are intending to spend upwards of \$1 million on this project.

We find this very interesting because we understood that the government had already spent \$1 million to purchase 22 Wann Road last year. Further, they have already spent \$120,000 doing various upgrades and renovations to the building.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us why, according to the tender forecast, they are now planning on replacing 22 Wann Road?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: To the best of my knowledge, of course, we just bought 22 Wann Road. We don't have any intent to replace it at this time. As I indicated to the Member for Copperbelt South in Committee of the Whole, I will get an answer back to the members opposite on this issue.

Ms. McLeod: To be clear, the tender forecast says that the Liberals are intending to spend \$1 million to replace the 22 Wann Road group home that they just purchased. We are looking for some clarification on these new expenditures.

This week, we asked the government about what they were doing with this money, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works responded by saying that he could not answer the question because it was — and I quote: "... highly technical questions..." It's shocking the Minister of Highways and Public Works thinks a question about what the Liberals are spending \$1 million on is highly technical. We know that

the minister mistakenly sole-sourced another \$1-million contract to a Northwest Territories company earlier this year, so maybe he's just not paying attention to this file.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us today when this \$1-million replacement of 22 Wann Road will take place?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let me refresh the memory of the member opposite. The 22 Wann Road project came to light when we ran into some challenges with group homes and transitional support programming for youth. The objective was to really look at sustainability and at providing healthy alternatives and opportunities for our young people who were transitioning out of group homes.

The objective of the particular project was to purchase the property. What we heard from members opposite was — perhaps they were not supportive of transitional support programming for young people; they were not supportive of the project. Yukoners and the children we have spoken to indicated that there was a challenge and an opportunity for us to address some of the concerns that were brought to our attention and that was to ensure that we better align services for youth who were transitioning out of group homes.

We have an opportunity to do that, to provide semi-independent living arrangements and supports for children at 22 Wann Road, so the property was purchased to allow us to address services for youth up to the age of 25.

Ms. McLeod: It's a bit concerning that no one in this government seems to know where the money is going or coming from.

This week, the Minister of Highways and Public Works announced over \$3 million in new spending on the Ross River School that isn't referenced anywhere in the budget. This spring, the Liberals sole-sourced a \$1-million contract to a Northwest Territories company and then later claimed they didn't know about it.

Now we find out that, according to the government's own website, they're going to spend \$1 million to replace the 22 Wann Road group home, which they just purchased. When we asked the government to explain this, they said it was a highly technical question that they couldn't answer. If the government loses track of how \$1 million is being spent here and there, then it's pretty clear they aren't paying attention to the details.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us today how much her government spent on the purchase of 22 Wann Road?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The tender management system is a planning tool that allows Yukon government departments to give notice of our needs and upcoming projects, and it's intended to let the business community know that the opportunities are on the horizon. It lists tenders valued at over \$75,000. It's updated quarterly.

That's that. As far as losing track of money, I seem to recall the previous Yukon government losing track of \$6 million in planning on a school project that was spent and then wasted. As long as we're going to be talking about the use and abuse of money, we should keep things in perspective.

As far as this tender goes, I think my colleague, the Minister of Health, has answered the question, and I thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: EpiPen shortage

Ms. McLeod: Due to manufacturing issues, there is a shortage of EpiPens throughout Canada. As you know, an EpiPen is a medical device often used for the treatment of allergic reactions. They are critical to those who are suffering from a severe allergic reaction.

Food Allergy Canada is quoted in a recent *Global News* article saying about the shortage that it has gone from an inconvenience to a “concern”.

Can the Minister of Health tell us what she’s done to ensure Yukon pharmacies have a regular and reliable supply of EpiPens?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The care, health and well-being of all Yukoners are a priority, and we are working with the pharmacists. We have an agreement and do our utmost to ensure that we have, at our fingertips, the resources that are needed. We look for opportunities to address some of the shortages that are seen across the country. Yukon is no different, so we take the opportunities to work with our partners and address the shortages, so we work with pharmacies and, of course, the Hospital Corporation.

I look forward to further questions from the member opposite.

Ms. McLeod: The shortage of EpiPens in our country has meant that some families have had to take extreme measures. CTV reported about one Ontario mother who was suffering from a severe allergic reaction and was reluctant to use her son’s EpiPen during her own severe reaction for fear that it would leave her son — who also suffers from life-threatening allergies — vulnerable during the shortage. Luckily, we have not heard of a situation such as this in the Yukon, but we need to ensure that there is a safe and reliable supply of EpiPens in the territory to ensure that it does not happen.

Has the Minister of Health spoken to her federal counterpart to discuss this issue?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Of course, safe and reliable supply is a priority — it always is. If there is an issue that comes to the attention of the member opposite — or anyone, for that matter — and there is a need, that must be brought to the attention of the health authorities.

We are working with our partners to ensure that we have an adequate supply on hand, and, to my knowledge, we don’t have an issue right now. Given that we are going into the winter season, I don’t think we’ll have issues with EpiPens for those who are outdoors, but for those who are in imminent need of EpiPens, we will ensure that adequate supply is at hand. I urge the member opposite to bring that to our attention, and we will ensure that we follow through accordingly and ensure that every Yukon child and person who requires the support is given the support. We will also work with our federal partners and our pharmacies to ensure that we have the supplies on hand.

Ms. McLeod: Cold comfort indeed. Obviously this is a situation that no one wants to be in and, as we stated earlier, this isn’t just a convenience issue — this is a critical health issue.

Yukoners need to know that if they need an EpiPen to deal with a serious allergic reaction, they can get one. What arrangements has the Yukon made to ensure that we continue to have reliable access to EpiPens in the territory? Has the government sent out a notice to Yukoners or to Yukon pharmacies with information about this?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I’m not sure what the member opposite is trying to get at here, but if there are issues and concerns then certainly we will work with our partners. Of course, critical help is necessary and critical help is essential, and we ensure that we work with our partners to address the concerns that are brought to our attention.

Again, I will reiterate that if there are issues and concerns in Yukon then that must be brought to our attention. Seeking medical attention is of the utmost importance. I certainly want to ensure that we provide proper health care. One of our key mandates is to ensure that we provide collaborative care to all Yukoners no matter where they are and no matter where they reside. We will ensure that happens and we will work with our partners to address the concerns that are brought to our attention.

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Ms. White: We have been informed that four surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital will be closed and that one less nursing staff per shift will be scheduled on the surgical unit in the coming weeks. Can the minister confirm this information?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To my knowledge, I can’t really respond to say that there are four surgical beds closing. The chair of the hospital board and the CEO will be here this afternoon, so perhaps the member opposite can direct the question to them.

What I can say at this point is that we are looking at eliminating the bed pressures at the hospital by working on the Thomson Centre beds. We are taking some new direction and addressing some of the challenges that we have seen historically and we’re doing that by working with the Hospital Corporation and working with our partners. We know that, of course, there are ongoing pressures. We have an aging population and we have pressures at the hospital. Once we move the individuals from the hospital into re-enablement opportunities or into the care facilities, we will see fewer pressures at the hospital. No bed closing is my anticipation, but I request that perhaps we direct the question to the witnesses this afternoon.

Ms. White: I look forward to that opportunity, but this is a pretty straightforward question on a critical topic for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I don’t think it’s too much to ask that the Minister of Health and Social Services responsible for health in Yukon knows if beds are closing at Whitehorse General Hospital. Just a few weeks ago, we heard from a patient whose major surgery was cancelled at the very

last minute because of a lack of surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital. In many circumstances, this can cause great distress to patients and in this case it certainly did.

Now we understand that the hospital hopes to have more beds available once some long-term care patients are transferred to the Whistle Bend Place, but this transfer hasn't happened yet. Will the minister assure Yukoners that the closure of four surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital will not lead to more cancelled surgeries?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have met with the CEO of the hospital and the chairperson to address the over-capacity issues at the hospital. We are working together to address the concerns that have been brought to our attention. I do want to note that what the member opposite describes is the reality. We have pressures and we are working to eliminate that. One of the ways of doing that was to open up the 10 beds at Thomson Centre so we can move the patients out of the hospital into the re-enablement units of the Thomson Centre and free up the 10 beds at the hospital, allowing patients to have the services they require.

What we have seen is a decrease in the occupancy. We have seen a decrease in deferred surgeries from last year by 25 percent, so we are seeing a decrease in wait times. Recognizing that there are still pressures, we will continue to work with the Hospital Corporation to address the concerns that they bring to our attention and work in good faith to address opportunities to ensure that every Yukoner is given an opportunity for the critical health care that they need.

Ms. White: I didn't hear an assurance from the minister that surgeries won't be cancelled because of the lack of beds. It is irresponsible to proceed with the bed closures until she can give this assurance to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, wait-lists for many surgeries, from cataracts to joint replacements, can be counted in months, if not years. This is a long-standing problem that governments, including this government, have promised to fix. It seems that these extra surgical beds could be needed and used if an effort was made to shorten the wait times for these surgeries.

Instead of closing the four surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital, has the minister considered how they can be used in an effort to reduce the wait times for surgeries at Whitehorse General Hospital?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am going to speak again — just to reiterate for Yukoners — that the objective is to ensure that we bring the specialized services to the Yukon and that we bring them the supports and services they need. The core funding and the supports we provide to the hospital allow operating room expansion to give the surgeons more space to do more surgeries in a day. It is unfortunate that some Yukoners are still experiencing wait times, but we are working with our partners to address the challenges and we are doing our utmost to ensure that we meet the objectives, which is to provide the best possible support. That will be done in partnership with the hospital. That is my objective. That is the hospital's objective and that is the objective of the board as well.

The expectation is really to look at our partners and work with the emergency room team through the hospital, but my job is not to control how many beds are at the hospital. My job is to ensure that I support the hospital so that they can provide essential, timely services that are required for the patients. Through that process, they manage their budget. They manage their resources and we work together through innovation and opportunities like the Thomson Centre beds and other initiatives like expansion of the operating room.

Question re: Dental care program

Ms. White: We know that everyone should have a dental examination and a cleaning done at least once a year. Without that type of ongoing care, people are at risk of tooth decay, gum disease and other oral diseases.

A dentist can identify or see signs of oral cancer, diabetes and even leukemia through a dental examination.

Individuals on social assistance don't have access to regular dental care and maintenance on a yearly basis. Rather, they may receive emergency dental care at the discretion of the director of Social Services.

Can the minister tell us why a regular checkup and cleaning would not be included as part of a person's social assistance, given how important oral health is to a person's overall physical health?

Hon. Ms. Frost: At a later point, I can provide the specific information that the member opposite is asking with regard to what services and supports that income-support clients receive.

With regard to dental supports and health supports, I'm sure that the support that is received is provided in time. What we don't want to see are members of our society suffering as a result of services not being provided to individuals.

I encourage people — if that's the case, please make that known to us and we will ensure that the services and supports are followed through on. As the member opposite well knows, they have raised many questions and we have followed through in a timely fashion to ensure that we do provide supports when they are needed. There are flexibilities, but there are also rules that have been established that guide and govern how we provide services to all clients.

Ms. White: Good dental health from a young age has implications for future health and well-being. Too often, the mouth and teeth are viewed separately from the rest of a person's health. In Yukon, through the Yukon children's dental programs, students receive free dental care up to grade 8 where dentists are available and up to grade 12 when no permanent dentist is in the community. Once past these grades, free dental care is no longer available. For a family with children and no private dental coverage, this often means that checkups, cleaning and any dental work is out of reach.

Mr. Speaker, how is a family with older children meant to access costly dental care if they don't have a private insurance plan?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Generally speaking, with respect to dental care, the dental care program is a federal initiative. We have gone above and beyond, and we have provided services

to citizens who are not covered. We know that, through the dental therapy program that pre-existed, we had many dental therapists who travelled around the Yukon to provide dental supports to those who were in elementary school. Most recently, we have made some adjustments to the dental hygienist initiatives to provide better services to Yukoners and ensure that, in time services and supports are there, so we are going above and beyond and we will continue to do that and make flexibilities where flexibility is required and ensure that children are not detrimentally impacted and their health is not impacted as a result of lack of services.

Ms. White: Seniors can apply for extended care benefits that include up to \$1,400 in any two-year period, whether that be annual dental care or dentures. This might seem like a lot, but when a person needs to have teeth pulled and dentures made to replace those, the cost is much higher.

The government website suggests that seniors submit higher costs to pharmacare for further approval, but those costs aren't always covered. Seniors and even dentists are encouraged to try to stretch the amount out over two fiscal years to pay the bills. Dental care in the Yukon is not meeting Yukoners' needs.

Mr. Speaker, this government is responsible for the health and well-being of their citizens. When is this government going to look at dental care as part of the overall health of an individual and ensure that people, regardless of their age, have access to appropriate dental care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the individual case that the member opposite is speaking to, we do, as indicated, go above and beyond, and we provide opportunities for individuals who come forward and who pose a challenge for immediate access for funding and resources for supports and services, so we will do that. We will look at policies and amend the policies accordingly. Right now we're going through a comprehensive health review, and in that process we will look at efficiencies of services, of perhaps modernizing and updating policies and ensuring that we provide supports to Yukoners. What we don't want to do is grow the cost of government, but we want to ensure that we provide efficient in-time services for individuals.

With regard to clients and the elderly population, we are going through an aging-in-place discussion right now and that will allow us then to talk broadly with Yukoners about services that they require and that will feed into what we do with the health review but also look at a comprehensive discussion around service delivery.

Question re: Health care funding

Mr. Cathers: All across Canada, the cost of health care is increasing. Health care budgets are also increasing because governments across the country recognize the need to provide health care and meet the pressures on the system. Here in the Yukon, we learned that this Premier appears to have a different solution. The Premier seems to be planning to cut health funding.

A recently leaked memo from his department directed all departments, including Health and Social Services, to look for

budget cuts of up to two percent. How does the Premier believe that a two-percent cut to health care funding is a reasonable option for him to consider?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, last week, we heard from the members opposite that they're giving inaccurate information about substitute teachers and cuts. Now we're hearing the members opposite talking again with inaccurate information about cuts, specifically to health care. I will not use the term "fearmongering" because that would be out of order; however, this argument is doing a complete disservice to the people of Yukon whom we are supposed to be representing. Broadly disseminating inaccuracies — it devalues this Assembly and it makes a mockery of the rules of opposition. Yukoners deserve better and the members opposite should apologize for misleading.

We are going to do a review of Health and Social Services for efficiencies —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: The Premier's accusation that members opposite were misleading Yukoners seems to clearly be in contravention of Standing Order 19(h). I would ask you to have him retract that and apologize.

Speaker: The Hon. Premier, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: For whatever reason that the members opposite use inaccuracies is up to them. I'm merely pointing out that they are using inaccuracies.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: All members know that Standing Order 19(h) talks about uttering a deliberate falsehood. I would have to look at the record — I would say that the Premier's comments are close; however, in my view, it does not meet the standard as set out in that Standing Order and that it is still a matter of debate in how each party is characterizing what they perceive to be the facts of the matter.

Hon. Mr. Silver: What we are doing is making decisions based on evidence and planning. We are projecting O&M and capital expenses over a five-year schedule, as opposed to doing it one year at a time. We are making major budget commitments to the mains and keeping the supplementary to supplementary issues. We are also improving capital planning. The recent investments this year — in sources of recoveries, for example — have been predominantly federal funding on infrastructure programs. Through our strategic use of external funding, our budget is extended to be a surplus by 2020-21. We're finding efficiencies; we're not making cuts.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but in fact, we're citing the memo from his department, which told every department to find reductions of up to two percent. That recently leaked Finance memo shows that Cabinet wants

departments, including Health and Social Services, to find cuts of up to two percent.

We have been warning the Premier for over a year and a half that he is underfunding the hospital. He is not taking this issue as seriously as he should. The hospital's website says that they are running at 95 percent to 115 percent bed capacity. We've heard that surgeries have been cancelled, and the minister doesn't seem to be paying attention to the file.

The Premier found \$120,000 to spray water in the air hoping for ice, \$500,000 for a new logo and website and \$3 million to needlessly expand government into cannabis retail and distribution, instead of leaving that to the private sector, as he should. Why is the Premier considering cuts to health care, and will he now do the right thing, stand up and assure this House that the Hospital Corporation will not have its budget cut?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, inaccurate information — it's almost like Groundhog Day. This is the exact same question that the member opposite brought up in Committee of the Whole, in general debate and in Question Period. It's the exact same narrative over and over again. It's almost as if — if they say it enough times — they actually finally believe it to be true.

Imagine though, Mr. Speaker, the pressure that's applied to a department of health and social services when they wake up to find out that the territorial government of the day announces a 300-bed facility without planning for it, to the tune of operation and maintenance of tens of millions of dollars. That is not the type of financial planning we want to do.

Again, we will manage our finances differently from the previous government — thank goodness. A previous government was on a spending spree, and Yukoners are not interested in that type of irresponsible approach to running the territory. The example the member opposite uses over and over again — we have already given our side, and I believe Yukoners are paying attention. I'm actually quite astonished that they're going back to this narrative.

What I'm hearing is: We are looking for efficiencies and Yukoners are happy with that.

Mr. Cathers: The recently leaked memo from the Department of Finance is available publicly and anyone can look at it. It shows that Cabinet wants departments, including Health and Social Services, to find cuts of up to two percent. The Premier has the ability to change that. He has the ability today to stand up and rule out the option of a budget cut to the Hospital Corporation.

The Hospital Corporation is appearing here today, and I'm sure that we'll hear about increasing cost pressures and demands in the health system. Leadership is about priorities. It's not good leadership for the Premier to spend \$120,000 spraying water in the air hoping for ice, \$500,000 for a new logo and website and \$3 million on needlessly expanding government into the retail of cannabis, instead of leaving it to the private sector, while he's considering cuts to health care.

It's not good leadership for the Premier to vote himself a raise while he's instructing Health and Social Services to cut

funding. The Premier has the opportunity to do the right thing — to stand up here today and take hospital budget cuts off the table. Will he do that — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will take our approach to financing over the Yukon Party's any day. The economy is growing, along with the workforce, and everything is looking good for the territory, but we still need the government to get their finances back on track after years of poor planning and overspending from the previous government.

The website example and the new vision — we have already explained that this is a cost-saving.

\$3 million for cannabis — would he imagine that the private sector would just borrow that or just get it for free? It had to be purchased. I don't know if he understands how liquor gets into the Yukon. He should; he was in this government as a minister.

Again, the inaccuracies that the members opposite are using to perpetuate their narrative are simply astounding. I think Yukoners deserve better and I wish the member opposite would appear in this Legislative Assembly with maybe a new tune.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: The Premier to, again, direct accusations to the members of the opposition of using inaccuracies and claiming that it was deliberately done clearly seems to be the Premier contravening Standing Order 19(h), and I believe that he should retract his remarks and apologize to this House.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: There can only be one person standing at a time.

The Hon. Premier, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I am using my words extremely carefully.

If the members opposite are accusing us of something, we need to make sure that the public knows that these are inaccuracies. Whatever reason that they are doing it is up to them to decide to explain to the public, but we are merely pointing out that when they use half-quotes and when they use inaccuracies, we will call them on that.

Speaker: Does the Leader of the Opposition have a submission to make on the point of order?

No? Very good.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I didn't hear an allegation of charging another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood in the last exchange. I will review Hansard later and will report back to the House, if required.

The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Motion re appearance of witnesses

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Chair, I move:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 18, 2018, Brian Gillen, chair of the Yukon Hospital Board of Trustees, and Jason Bilsky, chief executive officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to discuss matters relating to the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Frost:

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 18, 2018, Brian Gillen, chair of the Yukon Hospital Board of Trustees, and Jason Bilsky, chief executive officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to discuss matters relating to the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Ms. White: I am in a very unusual situation today of getting up to speak to this motion. I would just like to say that there was confusion this morning at the House Leaders' meeting. Never before — since 2011 — have opposition parties not been given more notice than six and a half hours that witnesses were appearing in the House. I flagged my concern this morning — that it was highly unusual and that even with the previous government we were given more notice than that. So I just wanted to make sure that it was discussed here or at least raised here in the House because it is an unusual situation.

We appreciate that we get to see the members of the Hospital Corporation, but this has not been the practice previously in this Assembly.

Mr. Kent: The Member for Watson Lake sat in on the House Leaders' meeting for me this morning, but upon hearing about this on my way into the office today, I too would echo the concerns of the New Democratic House Leader. This is highly unusual. I know we gave notice of motion asking that representatives from the Hospital Corporation appear, but it is normal to give more than, as the member said, six hours' notice.

So this is extremely disappointing for us that the government is acting in this heavy-handed way. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is worth noting that during the 2016 election campaign we did commit to having witnesses of the corporations — Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation — to appear annually in the Chamber.

Mr. Chair, if I may continue, last fall, officials from the corporation did appear on October 24, and it is no surprise that officials from the corporation will be with us this session. We will work on giving information out with more time, for sure, but it was asked for through a motion. We acted quickly and this is the time that we have.

We are taking a different approach. The corporations are appearing here annually and they will continue to appear here annually. I would ask the members opposite to be ready for the fact that these corporations will be appearing annually in the Legislative Assembly.

Now, I guess that is all I'm going to say about it.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Chair, there is nothing wrong with the notion that we will have a commitment from the government that the corporations will appear here, but it is disrespectful to the Members of the Legislative Assembly and disrespectful — I would suggest — to the corporate members who are asked to appear in front this Legislative Assembly to have them come into this venue where there is a sense that the members here are doing this under duress. It is duress in the sense that — if you are saying you are making an annual commitment, let's not do it randomly. That is not a random — well, today, we are going to announce we are doing this and today, we are doing that. Perhaps the government members are not aware that — maybe the Premier has forgotten what it is like to work in an office with one staff person to support the whole office.

We are trying our best to do our job as opposition members to represent the interests of the 60 percent of the electorate who did not elect this majority government and we want to do it in a good way.

In order to do that in a good way, we need to be prepared. I would suggest that six hours' notice of having the Yukon Hospital Corporation, one of the most significant corporations in this territory, is inadequate and disrespectful to us and to the corporation.

We will do a good job this afternoon, Mr. Chair, but we would request that the government take seriously the concerns we have expressed and respect the fact that, in order to assist us to do a good job representing all of the 60 percent of the Yukoners who did not vote for them, that we need adequate time to make sure that when we come into the Assembly to raise questions to the representatives of the various corporations, we do it in an informed and deliberate way.

They can do their part and we will do ours.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: While I appreciate the concerns expressed here today, I think it's important to point out to Yukoners that the House Leaders meet on a daily basis when the House is sitting. Every day there is a full exchange of information that I have available well into the next week, if possible, for what is going to be the business of the day, what the tributes are going to be, the visitors that we plan to have or

who have been contacted who will be attending, as well as witnesses. We have provided dates already with respect to at least two other witnesses who will be here. We are trying to arrange a third. As a result of some changing business recently, there was not the opportunity for me to provide that information to them before today.

I fully expected that the parties would be well aware. As a matter of fact, they were told at the beginning of this session that the Yukon Hospital Corporation would appear. I am not in any way attempting to be heavy-handed and I find that insinuation to be very difficult. I think I and this government have expressed extreme respect for the House business here and the manner in which it is managed.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank and echo my colleagues on this side of the House for standing and putting forth their comments on what happened at House Leaders' meeting this morning.

I would like the Minister of Health and Social Services to tell us now, today, when she decided that today was the day that the Yukon Hospital Corporation would appear in the Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is my understanding that the work is arranged by the principal secretary in contacting and working back and forth.

I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. While I'm up here, I have no idea what the past principal secretary did. I don't think it's really that germane about who does the work. I think the work was assigned and the work was done. The information that came back to us was that this was the time that worked for the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Chair: Order, please.

If members wish to be heard, could they stand and be recognized please?

Chair: Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agree.

Some Hon. Members: Disagree.

Chair: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5 agreed to

Chair: Order, please.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is it the wish of members to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Van Bibber: I have some questions about the Yukon Housing Corporation, as it is one of my critic portfolios. This is great news let out today about the Dawson City complex that was opened — or is going to be opened soon, I'm assuming. I'm sure there is a wait-list for those units. Knowing the Dawson area, it can't come too soon.

This is the second housing complex that has been built in as many years in that area. I was wondering if the Premier could tell us if this was also going to happen in other rural communities — housing complexes for the local wait-lists.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll start this conversation by giving a huge shout-out to the Klondike Development Organization. We speak a lot in this House and this government about evidence-based decision-making. When you have a non-government organization in a community that can provide you the statistical analysis of need, the different types of lots of infill that are readily available, either on a federal basis or on a municipality basis or with First Nation governments, it's so critical to have, in the communities that we serve, these organizations that help with that process and give the numbers needed to justify the builds that we want to do in the Yukon — starting out with that.

Every community has different housing needs. I remember being at an AYC meeting early in my career and getting up and making the remark that every community has housing issues, and then having the Mayor of Faro saying, "Yes, but sometimes they are different housing needs than in other communities." It was a great awakening for me to really pay attention to the specific needs of every specific community. With Faro, it's having way too many houses and not enough people to put in them, and also some tax considerations there that the municipality did a fantastic job of addressing over the years.

What we will do and commit to, and continue to commit to, when it comes to housing in the rural communities, we will be making decisions based upon evidence and we will be working with our partners in every one of those communities to make sure the housing issues, which are very specific to each different community, are identified.

I was speaking to some of the hotel owners in Dawson City and I was asking them. There was a lot of work going on for housing, and I appreciate the work of the department and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and her team. One of the hotels said that next summer may be the first time they are not scrambling to find housing for all of their employees. That's kudos to this government's approach.

Again, when it comes to all the different communities, we want to work with our partners to make sure that we make decisions based upon evidence, and that every single community has a voice.

Ms. Van Bibber: We do know there is this huge waiting list for housing. I think 282 was the last number that was given.

What is the department doing to alleviate the wait-list? Can the process be adjusted somehow to take care of this looming issue? How many empty units are there throughout the whole territory?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to rise today to speak to the questions around housing. There are a lot of great initiatives happening in the Yukon. Certainly the previous question was around the Klondike Development Organization, the second project in Dawson City.

We have recognized that there continues to be a wait-list across the Yukon. Just this last year, we have taken some really creative approaches to funding and projects. We have the housing initiative funding project and a partnership-building project. Through that effort, we are actively working toward addressing the demand by offering opportunities to Yukoners, Yukon businesses, Yukon First Nations and, of course, the corporations in the communities.

We have worked on eliminating the wait-lists by providing rents-up increases, which means that we have increased the budget by \$200,000, helping social-income clients in compliance to find eligible housing. We noted there were some questions with respect to the wait-lists. Of course, we have a growing population. We also have a booming economy, which is putting added pressures on our housing stocks in Yukon.

We also have limitations in terms of what we have seen historically, but we are now, through this effort — through the housing initiative — we are seeing now something like \$26 million in project funding over the course of this year from that \$3.2 million that was put in the budget. It allowed us to leverage funding that we were receiving from the federal government through the Yukon Housing Corporation to bridge that gap. Through the partnership building as well, we have worked in creating collaborative approaches in upgrading housing in Carmacks, Watson Lake and Dawson City.

We are looking at housing navigators, as noted. The objective there is really just to look at providing advocacy and support to those folks who are having challenges in accessing units and housing. It's really important to look at ensuring that we provide support to our key stakeholder partners in Yukon but also ensuring that all of our clients who come to the Yukon Housing Corporation are given opportunities to easier access to affordable housing in the Yukon.

In 2018-19, we invested \$39.7 million in new initiatives. We are going to take that \$3.2 million, and you will see that roll out again in January. Of that, we will continue to bridge partnerships. Our objective is really to see more units in Yukon. We indicated that, through this effort, we would see somewhere around 348 additional units, from what I understand from the department. By next year, we'll see that much more, and we'll continue to do that with the resources that we have.

Most recently, we heard an announcement from the federal government on a housing initiative for the north of \$100 million. That infuses more resources into Yukon and the Yukon economy, and that means that we will use that very efficiently by bridging the gap, and partnering with construction companies, businesses, First Nations, corporations and organizations, like the Klondike Development Organization — of course, always supporting communities like Ross River, Liard, and White River as well, to ensure that they have access to the resources that are made available to Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The minister just stated that there is going to be a couple of hundred units being built, and with the wait-list being several hundred, we're just wondering why the wait-list is not coming down. The question that I had previously asked is — perhaps it's just the process of how people can access those units.

Can the minister explain the access process — if it may be too cumbersome — and also provide us with a list of units and where they are being built and how these units are designated? Are most of them social housing, or are they part of a different program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As noted by the member opposite, the list continues to grow. That list has been growing for years and years. We see our population booming. We see communities with higher demands. Since bringing in the housing navigators and the supports, we're now seeing more individuals coming forward.

What we're doing is working with our partners. We're building the Housing First initiative downtown. We will see 16 units there. We have the 25 transition units at the Salvation Army. We just built a unit in Dawson City and will continue to do that.

We just announced this last week with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations that we have 10 additional units being built that will eliminate the pressures there as well. Our objective is to look at the communities that are most in need. Right now, what we're seeing is that Dawson City, Mayo and Watson Lake are the key critical pressure areas. Obviously, given the larger centres, we will continue to work with those communities and, of course, ensure that we will do what we can to eliminate the pressures.

With regard to the projects, we are working collaboratively — and I do have a list, if the member opposite will indulge me. I can go through the list of initiatives from 2016 to 2018: taking effect and implementing the housing initiative process by identifying a navigator; ensuring that we provide supports to the Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Safe at Home group, and working with them to address the needs. We are working with our partners in the City of Whitehorse and Kwanlin Dün. We have, through Yukon Housing Corporation, worked with Habitat for Humanity and we have four new homes there. We also worked with the Klondike Development Organization and, through a municipal matching grant, they opened their first eight affordable rental units last year. The objective is to open eight more this year. Working collaboratively, of course, with First Nations, we have

upgraded eight homes in Carmacks. As well, we worked with the Da Daghay Development Corporation and we opened up 42 units there. As well, through Kluane First Nation, we provided resources to upgrade, modernize and bring up to the standard of living eight units there. We provided support to Vuntut Gwitchin as well.

It should be noted that some of the communities that are unincorporated, like Pelly Crossing, Burwash Landing, Vuntut Gwitchin — these are communities that historically have never, ever received resources or supports. Those communities are seeing some serious housing pressures and issues, because they have taken down, through their self-government processes, units that are 30 and 40 years old.

The issue around “catch-up and keep-up” has never been considered. Therefore, the Housing Corporation has never been given an opportunity to bridge that gap and work with those communities. This was very unfair, in my opinion, to communities that have not been given the support and those are families and children who are going through hardships and having a difficult time accessing supports. Can they ever upgrade and modernize? There was never that support there. There was very little money in the budget in Yukon Housing Corporation to allow opportunities for unincorporated communities to access funding. We have made changes to allow for that so families can stay in their own communities, be comfortable in their own communities, and therefore build resources and supports there.

We also worked on and completed the project in Ross River, which allows another unit there. The list goes on and we will continue to do that — build partnerships. We are working with our expanded scope with the municipal matching grant and increasing our budget with our municipalities to allow companies and interest groups in those communities to come forward and increase the budget there to allow for that to happen. We are trying really hard to look for barrier-free initiatives.

In that effort, what we have also done with respect to the aging population is increase our budget for a Home First initiative. The objective of the Home First project is to allow our seniors to stay in their homes longer, not enter into care facilities or come into the city. We want to work with the corporation, work with our partners and build and redesign, to accommodate the aging population so that they can stay in their own home communities longer rather than adding pressure on the facilities in Whitehorse because there are no resources in the communities.

So we're really looking at, not only affordability, but efficiencies. We're looking at innovation in building and we're looking at partnerships and cooperation. We know that construction costs are rising and that properties and real estate is at a prime in some of our communities — like Mayo, for example, where it is essential that we work with the First Nations to look at expanding opportunities for land development so that we can start addressing some of the concerns.

It is very essential that we work with the Liard First Nation — never before have we worked with them — to come

forward and put resources on the table to address pressures in that community, concerns that they brought to our attention. I'm very, very happy and pleased to say that the Housing Corporation and our partners are stepping up and coming forward to look at working with the Housing Corporation.

One note I want to make before I conclude is that we're working with our housing navigators to provide assistance through the application process, so every door needs to be the right door, no matter where you are or where you reside. It's essential that we look at our growing population and look at market demand and that are able to address the market demand in every one of our communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: I do know that all of Yukon Housing is income-based. The corporation rent is set after taking into account your assets and all that you have, minus a few things that aren't counted. It's usually 25 percent of your income, based on Revenue Canada's assessment of your personal income. As income fluctuates and flows up and down due to personal life experiences or circumstances, so goes the rent. Is it at all possible to have a base rent and have it increase slowly, if merited, just as other privately owned units? This, I think, would allow clients to be able to grow some wealth and possibly be able to move out of social income housing and become homeowners. Can this process be perhaps looked at? It might also alleviate some clients' stress. Is that something Yukon Housing would consider?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Any opportunity to look for efficiencies is something we will always consider. With regard to the required rent geared to income, income testing annually is what we have done and the federal government agreement requires that. We will continue to look at efficiencies as we work with our board and we work with the president of the corporation and we work with our partners.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's partly because, when I have gone around to some of the same communities that you mentioned — Mayo or even Dawson — there are empty units, and people who might make a certain amount of income won't access them, because 25 percent of their income becomes too high for those units, and I would think a base rate would fill them.

The Housing Corporation hires people in the communities as managers to collect rent, connect with the residents and find out their issues. However, there seems to be a disconnect between the manager, the head office and maintenance departments, because if there is a maintenance problem in their units, the manager reports to the appropriate person, and then it is sort of out of their hands. They are really not apprised of what happens next — whether the job is getting done, whether it has been completed, or whether there has been no notification. So this causes a bit of a communication issue for the local person, as they are the local point of contact.

Can Yukon Housing Corporation look at this problem as soon as possible and see what help they can give the local hires?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Yukon Housing Corporation is complex. It has a multitude of units across Yukon, and I want to just take a moment to acknowledge the great work that the

staff are doing at the Yukon Housing Corporation, whether they are on the ground, or sitting in the office, or working as a housing navigator.

Under the circumstances, all of the staff are really doing an exceptional job and I just wanted to acknowledge them for the efforts that they are putting forward every day that they walk into their offices — I can assure the member opposite. Sometimes it's not easy, I'm sure, when you're dealing with a multitude of challenges and concerns across the Yukon, so they are doing their best now.

The housing managers are responsible for maintenance contracts and with regard to the interaction within the workplace. I'm not going to address any of the concerns that have been brought forward by the member opposite. Those are issues that are dealt with internally to Yukon Housing Corporation. I can assure the member opposite that the president and the two ADMs who are in the department are fully aware of concerns that have come forward. If there are matters to be addressed, they take full responsibility and they will address them.

I know for myself that the staff are doing an exceptional job and are going above and beyond and making things happen for Yukoners by the list I provided previously, by the innovation and the partnerships, and really working hard to address the pressures across the Yukon, as best they can under the circumstances they are confronted with.

Ms. Van Bibber: We know that there has been additional funding under the National Housing Strategy to address chronic homelessness. We wonder what has been done or what has been completed locally. The strategy was rolled out — I believe it was early last year. Could you give us an update?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Well, there are a number of things happening. We tabled here the housing action plan — I think that is a first good step — and the implementation of addressing current pressures across the Yukon, working with our partners to design and implement that plan, is the objective.

We have initiatives currently being undertaken by the Yukon Housing Corporation that support opportunities for those who are precariously hard to house. Of course, we look for the Safe at Home plan as a means to address some of that. That means that we are looking at implementing the Safe at Home action plan as well to end and prevent homelessness in our city.

We are working with our partners to create a single coordinating body — not to look at multiple bodies across the Yukon — but we are really trying to work with the Yukon Housing Corporation and working with our partners by providing supports to create a new position that will help coordinate the implementation of activities under the Safe at Home plan.

We are working on increasing the supply of safe, stable and affordable housing. I noted previously that we have 10 units coming on in the next year. It's a very, very creative project. Of course, thank you to Chief Smith and his community for taking the lead on the tiny-home community

project. That means that capacity is being built there with the individuals who are in the project will move into those homes. They will be successful in many ways because they have learned some valuable skills.

The increase of safe, stable and affordable housing projects in the Yukon is really our priority, ensuring that the individuals the member opposite has defined as having "chronic homelessness" — we want to ensure that we define that as providing a Safe at Home facility. As I indicated, every door should be the right door. The question is: Is housing a human right? For the most part, I would say yes. I would say that every individual should be given a home.

We are a small jurisdiction. We need to look at affordability. We need to look at our options, but we also need to look at what we have done over the course of the last two years. We will continue to do that. We will continue to work with our partners through the housing action plan, through our collaborative approaches, through our municipal matching grant, through the housing initiative, through the Safe at Home plan, and through the Housing First initiative. We are looking at the first 16-unit housing project in downtown Whitehorse.

We went ahead and conducted the point-in-time count most recently, which I am happy to say that I participated in. I spent one evening walking in downtown Whitehorse and visiting with folks who are downtown. Perhaps they may be homeless or they may have a home; that's their choice. I spent time with them and visited and heard first-hand some of the barriers and challenges. A lot of them are from rural Yukon communities.

I really want us to start looking at opportunities in 2019 and look at maximizing the federal resources that we're getting in the Yukon through partnerships and collaboration, ensuring that as we go ahead and we look at the investment in Yukon, the investment is the right investment and it's meeting the need and the demand of individuals in rural Yukon communities and in every community.

Ms. Van Bibber: The Safe at Home initiative the minister mentioned was set up to help homelessness in Whitehorse, and it says it will highlight priority areas for action. It didn't state the priority areas or the action, but I want to know if this initiative, this Safe at Home initiative, has helped any hard-to-house homeless people.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm a bit shocked by that question. I hope that Safe at Home initiatives — the projects that Yukoners participate in and the many individuals who volunteer and participate in the planning of these initiatives are there because they care. They care about Yukoners. They look for opportunities.

So when we look at our partnerships to create a body for addressing homelessness in Yukon, we provide financial support, we create the positions and we look for opportunities. They are there to provide the advice and guidance that is much needed in Yukon to give us some critical and essential feedback and to tie that in to the long-term planning to address and meet the needs of Yukoners.

The Safe at Home plan to end and prevent homelessness is not just for Whitehorse. As I indicated, a lot of the individuals in the city come from rural Yukon communities. Our objective is to ensure a collaboration with Health and Social Services, with our First Nation partners and with our municipalities so that we address and coordinate opportunities to ensure that individuals who are experiencing homelessness have access to housing and supports in their home communities or, if they so choose to live in Whitehorse, we also have an obligation there as well.

We are committed to ensuring that we increase the supply of safe, stable and affordable housing options for all Yukoners. In the past two years, we have seen an increase in affordable housing units in the city. We have seen 74 units; this year, we're expecting many more and we will continue to address the wait-list and we'll continue to address the challenges we have seen. I'm very happy to say and I want to acknowledge that there are many individuals who participate in that process. It's not just government alone, nor is it Yukon Housing Corporation alone, but Yukoners who step up and provide advice and guidance to ensure we take the essential advice they provide and make sure our resources and investments are put in the right places, which is to ensure we provide accommodations in every community.

Ms. Van Bibber: I'm sorry I shocked the minister. All I was asking was, with the Safe at Home initiative, how many people has it helped? I think it's a great initiative. If people are hard to house, then I'm hoping this initiative will work.

The online portal, "looking for housing", was launched late in 2017 to serve an easily accessible resource of information for those looking for housing. This was to provide information on housing options, services and programs. I did have a chance to look at the site, and it seems very comprehensive.

Can the minister tell us if this site has proven useful — any feedback, either from clients or the department — and is the department finding the information useful?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to how it has helped — the question on the Safe at Home plan — I made many, many, notes and comments with respect to how the plan has helped. It has helped significantly.

The question that — I guess I made that note and that is why I was shocked. It wasn't because of the question; it was because I provided some pretty pointed answers with regard to units that are being built across the Yukon and opportunities and partnerships. They are as a result of the housing initiatives — the Housing First and the Safe at Home initiatives.

With regard to advancement of partnerships and our IT systems and ensuring that clients are provided in-time support as they need them, of course, things evolve, and that's where we are right now. We're evolving into a place where we are trying our best to provide essential services and support to all of the clients that come into Yukon Housing Corporation. Of course, critical feedback is essential, and if there are concerns raised by Yukoners and concerns brought to our attention about navigating through the process, then it is essential that we're aware, so that we can make it as easy as possible. The

objective is to take down the barriers, not put up the barriers. That's our aim and our goal.

Ms. Van Bibber: The Challenge Disability Resource Group was provided \$750,000 and change for the purchase of land in downtown Whitehorse to support a 53-unit residential building with a mix of affordable, supportive, and market housing. This was done in March 2018. Can the minister tell us where this project is sitting at the moment?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm happy to speak about the Challenge cornerstone project.

We are, and we have been working with the Challenge Disability Resource Group for quite some time, ensuring that we align with their needs and trying to provide the necessary supports that they require to get their project off the ground, but also noting that it's a huge project. It is certainly not something that the government can afford on its own. My understanding is the current project is in excess of \$17 million. We are providing support and this last spring, the Housing Corporation transferred \$750,000 to the Challenge Disability Resource Group enabling them to purchase the land from the City of Whitehorse.

Other Yukon Housing Corporation program funds will be available to them as well, such as the municipal matching grant and victim of violence funding. The view of this partnership is really a strategic investment, of course. It is to be consistent with our other priorities. We are exploring our approaches to addressing Yukon housing needs and we are committed to working with the Challenge Disability Resource Group, and leveraging other funding sources from the federal government. We're certainly always open to speaking further with them.

Ms. Van Bibber: Also, Blood Ties Four Directions was provided with \$200,000 to help with the development of five tiny homes for supportive housing. Have the five tiny homes been completed and are they filled with clients at this time?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that at my fingertips, but I would be happy to provide that for the member opposite.

Ms. Van Bibber: I thank the minister for that. In the progress report, it says, "... to streamline and improve housing supports available to social assistance clients."

That is a broad statement. I wonder what these supports would include and are they working for these clients?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I apologize — are we asking a housing question or a social income support question? I am not sure where the member opposite is going with that.

Ms. Van Bibber: It's about streamlining and improving housing supports for clients.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Through the housing navigator, through the client support program and through the social income support department through Health and Social Services, clearly our objective is to provide supports to all clients in that we take down barriers, not put up barriers. Yes, we are working with the clients to ensure that we provide support with navigating our systems. It is done between two departments.

Ms. Van Bibber: We know that the lots that go up for sale are usually bought up fairly quickly. I know the

department is trying to help with access to some of these projects. When I checked, a city-serviced Whistle Bend lot at the lowest end is \$209,000. That is just for the lot. Then there are the permits, the contracts, the supplies, more permits and then the maintenance that is needed to own a home.

Are there any plans for future mobile home lots, such as Mountain View Place condo lots?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would say, respectfully, that Community Services does have a line item in the supplementary budget and will be appearing at Committee of the Whole. If the members opposite — for those departments that are appearing for the supplementary budget, please ask those questions during Committee of the Whole debate in those departments.

Ms. Van Bibber: As the big day yesterday has passed and cannabis is legal and can be consumed in the privacy of your own home, there is still much debate on the rights of renters and landlords. Is there a clear definition for every building owned and controlled by Yukon Housing Corporation, and how will it be monitored and looked after?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Smoking of cannabis — Yukon Housing Corporation follows the same restrictions as smoking in any of our buildings. All Yukon Housing units are designated as non-smoking due to the potential fire risks, the negative impact of indoor air quality and the costs associated with maintenance.

Ms. Van Bibber: Looking at the 2025 vision was very interesting. It states: “A Yukon where a diversity and abundance of housing options increases the health and stability of all individuals and communities.” These are great words, and that’s for 2025. We’re wondering what happened to the 2019 vision that is just a few short months away. Are we going to have a steady abundance of housing options?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Certainly we are.

Mr. Kent: I just have a couple of questions for the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation as well. I just wanted to get some clarity around the housing action plan that it looks like the government approved in 2017. When we were in government previously, we announced a housing action plan, and a number of programs and capital projects flowed out of that, such as the down payment assistance program and the municipal matching grant program. There was an accessibility advisory committee created during our time. Then, as far as capital projects, Betty’s Haven was built, Options for Independence, a new St. Elias Residence, two seniors facilities in Whitehorse, one in your community of Mayo and a number of other program initiatives that I may have forgotten. I am just wondering if the minister can outline what is new in this 2017 housing action plan beyond the programs that we had announced previously and had set up.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let’s talk about the housing action plan. The housing action plan was there just as a template. It provided opportunities. Certainly the implementation of that is what the Housing Corporation has been using as a model to go forward and to bridge on.

We have done some really creative and innovative things, as I noted, and projects that I have highlighted. I provided a long list of some really great initiatives.

To the member opposite — what’s new? 2017, 2016 — a housing advisory, emergency shelter, four new homes, a new eightplex in Dawson City, upgrades of houses in Carmacks, housing action plan education, 42 units, eight units in Burwash, housing affordability, 22 new family homes and home repair initiatives. We’re looking at the construction of 12 new homes. There are many, many things that have happened over the course of the last two years. We’re using the housing action plan as a guide to make sure that all Yukoners have access to safe, affordable housing. Housing is the key ingredient to healthy communities.

I’m really proud of the success we have achieved by working with our community partners on the housing action plan’s implementation. We recently issued a report on progress, which I urged the member opposite to refer to, that details many of the achievements of the housing action plan — its partners.

Some highlights include: looking for a housing web portal, support for housing navigators, a homelessness initiative, increased collaboration between housing stakeholders, education and public awareness campaigns across the housing continuum, hosting an annual housing forum to share housing issues and solutions, looking at adaptation as we merge and we proceed and recognizing that climate change is affecting the construction and builds in the north.

We also recognize that the federal government, through its national housing initiative, had never before recognized the Yukon as having unique circumstances — that there are self-governing First Nations in the Yukon that have never accessed funding, for that matter. Why is that? The opportunity was not there, and now we’re seeing opportunities for further partnerships.

The new housing initiatives and the fund will continue. We are seeing commitments and we are leveraging opportunities to increase affordable units across the Yukon. We are also looking at an expansion of the municipal matching grant. That was a great initiative and we are working with our partners to increase that. We have launched the developer build loan program and initiated the housing initiatives fund, which is the new initiative that I just referred to earlier.

The housing action plan is for 10 years, so the implementation of that is evolving. The community meets on a monthly basis, so it’s evolving and it’s growing. We will continue to look at the opportunities that are before us with our partners.

Mr. Kent: Not all, but some of the programs and projects that the minister just mentioned were started by the previous government. There are obviously some overlaps. If she doesn’t have the information here today, maybe she could provide us with it in a legislative return or a letter on what new programs have started since December 2016 when her government was sworn in and what new capital projects were

started and completed or are under construction during that time.

Maybe I will just turn my thoughts now to the Housing First model because that is one that was started by this government. Obviously there were some concerns around the consultation process with the location. We heard, or I heard from one of the neighbours — and I went over to a meeting at the home. We asked about this in the Legislature. There was just some confusion, perhaps, by the Minister of Community Services around the dates of the consultation and what exactly had been done.

I am just wondering if there was a “what we heard” document prepared or perhaps a consultation summary, if it wasn’t that involved. Does the minister have any details of that for us here?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The preamble to the question — I believe I responded to that and provided the details to the Member for Porter Creek North on what has transpired since 2016. We have done a lot, Mr. Chair.

On the Housing First project, I believe the member opposite wants to know about the consultation and engagement and how that evolved. I can say that the Yukon Housing Corporation had an open house and open-house sessions for members of the neighbourhood on two occasions. We sent out letters, as well, to the neighbourhood to inform them of the Housing First project, and we wanted to highlight that we are committed to the Housing First approach, because that was addressed by the Member for Porter Creek North, who highlighted housing initiatives for vulnerable people. That Housing First project is really to address the question that was posed to us — that is posed by Yukoners — and that is to address opportunities for vulnerable people.

We understand that it’s important to consult and engage, and we have taken initiatives to do that. We broke ground at the end of July of this year and we are on track. We’re hoping to have that project done by the fall of 2019. With regard to consultation, as noted, we had two sessions and did send out a notification.

Mr. Kent: To be clear, we think the initiative is a good one. It’s just that there are some neighbours in that area who had some concerns. They raised them with us; they invited members of our caucus — I guess it was just me at the time who went over to talk to them.

Can the minister clarify: Was the decision made and then the consultations held on that site, or were there consultations done first and then the decision was made to put it there? There seems to be some confusion, especially with the individuals whom I talked to. They seemed to not know anything about it until they read it in the paper, and they are in very close proximity to that lot.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let’s talk about the unfounded fears that are perhaps being created. I think there’s an opportunity for us to look at the initiative. That unit has been there for many years; in fact, I lived on that street in a residential setting as a young child when I was taken away from my community. That unit has been there for many, many years, Mr. Chair. Post my time in that unit, we opened it up to

provide opportunities for citizens of our community who were challenged. Post that, we opened it up with Kwanlin Dün and provided essential services where we were seeing major challenges in our city for vulnerable peoples. In partnership with Kwanlin Dün, we opened up the shelter to provide supports for those who were difficult to house. So the residents in the area have always known this unit has been there. With the housing initiative, the projects and the initiatives there — it’s very much the same as what they have been accustomed to for many years.

The staff are available 24/7 and they provide assistance to any of the concerns and questions that have been brought forward. I’m not going to get into a debate today about when these things happened. I will say that the project is well on its way, and our objective is to ensure that we provide the necessary gap to address the housing continuation and the project.

We hope to have that completed by 2019 as indicated. By the way, that is identified in the Yukon housing action plan as well — as a note.

I can say that if there are concerns, we would be happy to work with our partners. Once the facility is built, we will look at the programs that are offered there, hopefully to better align with the service needs of those vulnerable clients. Thank you.

Mr. Kent: For the minister, as I mentioned before, we are very supportive of this model that the government has embarked on, and for some reason she took the question — perhaps I phrased it in a way that offended her — but what was I asking is — we know that the St. Elias residents used to be on that site. Under our government, we built a new St. Elias Residence down by Hoge Street, I think. Again, I am wondering — obviously there are differences between the models of what is offered at St. Elias and what will be offered with this new program.

My question is: Did the consultation — and again, I ask this because there was some confusion when we were asking in Question Period and the Minister of Community Services answered a question and there were some timing concerns that we had, so we’re just giving the minister an opportunity to clarify. So the consultation was done first with the neighbours, the letters went out that she spoke of, and then the decision was made to put the building there. Or was the decision made to put the building there, and then the letters and the consultation that she spoke about went out?

I apologize if I offended the minister with my previous question. It was fairly straightforward, I felt. It was a question that we are being asked by people who live in that neighbourhood.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Of course, it’s a sensitive spot, being that it was my home for many years — not by choice.

The Housing First lot did not require rezoning. As noted, it existed there for many years and was used for different purposes, whether it was to accommodate young children that were apprehended or taken away from their communities and housed there, or whether it was to provide support to vulnerable populations. So the zoning was not required, and

engagement to inform the neighbours on the project was what we were doing.

We were informing the neighbours that the project was proceeding. We were not seeking input from the neighbours on whether we were going to go ahead or not. The project was essential and we notified the neighbours, we worked with the Wood Street annex, we worked with the Department of Education and a decision was made. The lot was already owned by Health and Social Services so engagement was limited to discuss the project.

Now, we met with the school council to address their questions. We met with the neighbours to address their questions. We provided ample opportunities to do that. We opened up the Yukon Housing Corporation's boardroom on a couple of occasions, and we gave out notification to all of the neighbours to let them know that this was happening and they were welcome to participate in a briefing session.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that response from the minister. That's a piece of Hansard that I can clip and send to the parties in that neighbourhood who were concerned and raised those concerns with us.

Mr. Chair, seeing the time, and knowing we have officials appearing from the Hospital Corporation, I move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Kent that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5, adopted on this day, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

In order to allow the witnesses to take their places in the Chamber, Committee of the Whole will now recess and reconvene at 3:30 p.m.

Recess

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

Appearance of witnesses

Chair: Pursuant to Committee of the Whole No. 5, adopted on this day, Committee of the Whole will now receive witnesses from the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

I would ask all members to remember to refer their remarks through the Chair when addressing the witnesses, and I would also ask the witnesses to refer their answers through the Chair when they are responding.

Witnesses introduced

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Chair, the witnesses appearing before the Committee of the Whole today are Brian Gillen, chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board of Trustees, and Jason Bilsky, chief executive officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

Chair: Would the witnesses like to make opening remarks?

Mr. Gillen: Mr. Chair, I would like to thank you and the Hon. Minister Frost, Members of the Legislative Assembly and all Yukoners for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Yukon hospitals today.

During my time as chair of the Hospital Corporation, I have been privileged to work with a dedicated and conscientious team who addresses the acute care needs of Yukoners, whatever they may be, whenever they may occur. With me today is Jason Bilsky, the chief executive officer of the corporation.

Together we are representing the corporation, which was established by an act of this Legislature, as an agency independent of government and overseen by a board of trustees, comprised of representatives from communities across the territory, including Yukon First Nations, medical staff, public service and the public at large.

Our role is to support the work of Yukon hospitals' dedicated team of over 600 staff, volunteers and physicians. In addition to quality acute hospital care, our staff also provides a variety of important health services, such as diagnostics, specialist care, therapeutics and patient support services, to name a few.

We are part of an extensive network of care providers that includes the home care and continuing care groups of the Department of Health and Social Services, physicians, EMS and many other professionals, all working collaboratively to ensure Yukoners who need health services receive them in a prompt and professional manner.

Today's demands on the health care system are such that caregivers need to and must work collaboratively to address the needs. No longer can we be standing on islands in isolation from others. We need to work together to address the needs, both individual and community needs, particularly as populations age.

I would like to begin by speaking about how we have become an integrated hospital system and how we are continuing to advance and improve on the care we provide. Not that long ago, we were a single hospital facility in Whitehorse. Today, we are a hospital system with three facilities and hundreds of health professionals who deliver a high standard of care in a way that meets and respects the unique personal and community needs of all in the Yukon.

This summer, we celebrated the five-year anniversary of the community hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake. Each in their own right have become health care hubs providing Yukoners an array of services all under one roof — including emergency care, inpatient observation and monitoring, medical clinics and pharmacies — supporting public health and social services.

In January of this year, after significant planning, design and construction spanning nearly four years, we opened the new state-of-the-art emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital. This new hospital wing was completed on time and on budget. It enabled us to enhance the safe and excellent care that we already provide in so many ways.

This facility features modern emergency treatment areas along with a new intensive care unit to provide more complex

critical care. We have been able to achieve optimal infection control, enhanced privacy and security and improve comfort — all supported by new technology and systems, such as the ED tracker system, which follows patients and their status while in the hospital.

Although you cannot see the pipes and tubes along with the miles of cable behind the walls, you should know that we have strengthened key pieces of infrastructure, like oxygen, medical gases and data networks. All are critical to providing timely, safe and quality care and must be running 100 percent of the time without fail.

We have also continued to partner with the Government of Yukon e-health initiatives. This has improved our ability to send lab tests and receive results as well as provide physicians with quicker and easier access to medication records.

The opening of the new emergency department was not the end of this project, as it created vacated space within the existing hospital and new shell space on the second floor of the new wing. We are planning these spaces for future use.

We are now focused on a long-term redevelopment effort at Whitehorse General Hospital, including the creation of an operating room hub with all surgical-related services located in one area. This means you can now prepare for surgery, register for surgery and have your procedure in one location. Our entire team, including physicians, nurses and supporting services, have started to develop a long-term plan for all of our surgical services in the territory. We now have an opportunity to look at expanding and enhancing surgical services into the future.

It needs to be remembered that our current operating rooms are some 25 years old and require substantial updating. New technology and procedures have changed how and why surgeries are performed. As one of the first steps in enhancing surgeries, we welcomed a new resident orthopaedic surgeon last fall, which has already enabled many patients to receive care in Whitehorse rather than having to travel Outside.

We continue to expand our ability to support emergency trauma care and are actively working to reduce wait times for elective surgeries like knee replacements. In the last year, we have seen a wait-time improvement in knee replacements from 24 months to 14 months.

We are also looking to improve the outpatient and support service areas. Most recently, we opened an enhanced lab collection area where outpatient blood testing occurs. Everything you need for this lab test, including private treatment areas and washrooms, is now located in one spot.

We initiated detailed planning of an enhanced secure medical unit to be located in the shell space above the new ED. Our current secure medical unit is becoming no longer fit for purpose. Although in the early stages of planning, our goal is to enhance our ability to provide care within the hospital and better support transitions to mental health services in the community and outside the territory.

We have embarked on a project to upgrade our health information system, Meditech. These upgrades are very necessary to both patient care and hospital functions. We plan

to begin system upgrades starting this year and continue until 2021.

Over the last several years, Whitehorse General Hospital has been able to build a strong team to support patients diagnosed with cancer. We continue to enhance care with a specialized and highly collaborative team. This team includes four general practitioner oncologists, two chemotherapy nurses, one cancer care coordinator and a pharmacist.

The cost of chemotherapy is one of our challenges. The treatments for cancer are continuing to develop and improve. New and expensive drugs, earlier diagnosis and longer periods of treatment have resulted in more successful outcomes, but it still remains one of our financial challenges.

Increasing standards, continued demand for services and sustained pressures require us, now more than ever, to use our resources to maximum potential. We have been able to make important advances in our hospitals while at the same time managing significant demands for hospital services. In the past year we had 33,500 emergency visits to Whitehorse General Hospital's emergency department. That's the equivalent of every Yukoner visiting the hospital once a year. However, more than 50 percent of those visits are for less serious needs that could be addressed elsewhere. There were about 3,000 visits to Dawson's ER and 2,500 ER visits in the Watson Lake emergency room.

We welcomed more than 400 newborn Yukoners. We performed more than 2,600 surgeries. We had almost 29,000 lab visits by individuals, resulting in approximately 450,000 tests, as well as managing 34,000 imaging scans at Whitehorse General. In the community hospitals, Dawson performed approximately 2,500 diagnostic tests and Watson Lake was over 1,700. We provided more than 2,100 MRI scans and we offered more than 1,000 chemotherapy treatments to Yukoners in need of cancer care here at home.

Meeting these demands, coupled with sustained and significant bed pressures, requires a daily, if not hourly, effort. In fact, occupancy has been so high over the last year that more than half the time, Whitehorse General did not have a bed available to meet the need.

Whitehorse General's occupancy from April 2017 to March 2018 averaged 95 percent, and for more than half of the days, we were over 100-percent full. This compares to a more ideal state when hospital occupancy is at 75 percent. As a result, our team had to take a number of steps to ensure Yukoners got the care they needed, when they needed it.

We've had to make difficult decisions of postponing scheduled surgeries — only when it is absolutely necessary — to ensure the safety of patients. Last year, we had to reschedule 13 procedures, which represented less than one percent of our yearly elective cases. We recognize that each and every deferred surgery is a serious issue for an individual patient.

We also made use of all the beds and resources in our hospital system, including those in our community hospitals. This meant that, from time to time, we had to move patients to other facilities in our system to ensure that we could maintain

safety and quality, as well as timely access to hospital services where they are available.

We've developed a collaborative discharge process involving: nursing, therapies, First Nation health, social workers, continuing care and home care, and, where appropriate, physicians — all focused on ensuring that patients can safely leave hospital to transition back to home or another health care facility.

This team meets daily to identify barriers to discharge and solutions to patients to leave the hospital. These initiatives, along with some others, have helped to reduce occupancy over the last six months to an average of 87 percent, as well as a 30-percent reduction in the number of deferred surgeries and to reduce the number of patients waiting in the emergency room overnight for a bed from three people to one.

The opening of Whistle Bend Place and the additional 10 new beds in the Thomson Centre will reduce the number of alternate level of care patients in hospital and further lessen occupancy challenges.

Procedures and processes constantly evolve, technology changes, and we constantly monitor what we do to stay current with new approaches to acute care. For example, we are in the process of changing how we perform microbiology tests. Routine microbiology tests will be sent to St. Paul's Hospital's laboratory in Vancouver. Microbiology is one of the many lab disciplines and represents a small portion of the tests we handle at Whitehorse General. This will result in greater efficiencies and effectiveness, with no impact on patients and in a cost-neutral manner.

This past spring, our hospitals participated in the Accreditation Canada survey and, once again, achieved accreditation status. This review demonstrated that we have made strides since our last survey four years ago and that we are following recognized procedures that are practised in all hospitals across Canada.

It highlighted some areas for us to focus on as we move forward, including involving patients more in their personal care. We have changed the medical staff bylaws to enable nurse practitioners to practise in the hospitals and are very actively involved in adding the practice of midwifery to the continuum of care available in the Yukon.

Everything we do is about patients, so we are focused on meeting individual health care needs. The late Dr. Lis Densmore once told her colleagues that medicine is about patients, not diseases. Each day, we focus on our patient experience and they continue to tell us that we provide excellent hospital care. In fact, in our regular survey of patients, we see about 90-percent satisfaction on average. Our patients also tell us that maintaining privacy is an important part of good care. That is why we have made this a priority and have taken a number of steps to protect patient information, including how your information is received, how it is stored and secured to how it is shared with our hospitals and with our health care partners, all in accordance with privacy and HIPMA legislation.

Our hospitals have also taken steps to ensure staff has a strong understanding of the role of ethics in decision-making.

We have developed tools to support staff and patients in making sound choices. In addition to ensuring quality programs, we also continue leading with innovations unique to the Yukon. Our First Nation health programs continue to serve as a model for other hospitals and health centres across Canada, as they strive to improve indigenous health outcomes. Based on our success with the First Nations health program, we helped develop a national report from HealthCareCAN, an association of Canadian hospitals and authorities, entitled *Bringing reconciliation to healthcare in Canada*. The report focuses on health system changes that recognize barriers faced by First Nations in accessing and receiving care.

We have also partnered with the Government of Yukon to continue offering language services, including providing more information in English and French and including improved access to American Sign Language interpretation at key places. We also continue to involve the broader community by growing our number of volunteers — now numbering 60 — who give their time and effort to make patient experiences more engaging and comfortable.

Last year when we reported to this Legislative Assembly, our hospitals had renewed our five-year strategic plan. Today we are on a journey toward the best care every time. All the activities and accomplishments that I have shared here today all stem from the plan, which was developed by listening to and consulting with over 700 Yukoners. We have accomplished much over the last year and addressed many challenges, but we look to the future so that we can be prepared to meet Yukoners' health needs — for example, recognizing that wait times are increasing for certain specialist services. We are making a concerted effort and actively working with government and physician partners to reduce wait times and increase access to specialty services, such as ophthalmology and cataract surgery, orthopaedics and urology.

We are working on meeting the needs of an aging demographic that requires an increasing amount of health care resources. We continue to be a leading organization in advancing reconciliation with indigenous people by promoting health equity. We look forward to participating in the comprehensive health system review, working toward a more sustainable health system and improving patient outcomes.

In closing, ensuring that our hospitals are prepared to meet the acute care needs of Yukoners is a constant challenge as demands for service increase, as technology and new procedures change how we do things.

I would like to sincerely thank our entire team — hospital staff, volunteers, medical staff and all our health practitioners — for the work they do and thank Yukoners for continuing to place their trust in us.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I hope I have given you some insight into the complex, challenging and sophisticated nature of what we do. We would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the witnesses for appearing today. I would like to start off by asking the

witnesses when they became aware that they would appear in the Legislature today.

Mr. Gillen: Mr. Chair, several years ago, we committed to appearing annually in front of the Legislature. We are always ready to appear. We are always happy to speak and answer questions and speak to Yukoners about issues and challenges through the Legislature.

It has been a year since we appeared, so we expected to appear during this Sitting of the House at some time. We have been preparing for this session and past experience has shown that we need to be prepared and flexible about being prepared to meet with the members of the Legislature.

Ms. McLeod: I appreciate the response from the witness. It is, of course, good to see the corporation appear on an annual basis. I am particularly interested to know when the witnesses were advised they would appear today.

Mr. Gillen: It was confirmed to us on Monday that we would appear here today.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you very much for that answer. Can the witnesses confirm for the House when they became aware of the letter from the Deputy Minister of Finance to all deputy ministers asking departments to find up to two-percent reductions in their O&M budgets?

Mr. Bilsky: We actually became aware of the letter in the media. We were not notified with that letter of any reductions to our budget.

Ms. McLeod: So with respect to the letter, has the Hospital Corporation looked at what the impacts would be for the corporation, with the hospital obviously already under pressure?

Mr. Bilsky: As I already commented, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has not been asked to cut our budgets. So I can't answer that question directly about what the impacts might be, but what I can comment on is that, as usual — or as you would expect — health care is an industry of unlimited needs and always-limited resources and pressures.

Having said that, YHC has a balanced budget for 2018-19, and it is based on the inclusion of a 2.5-percent escalation in core funding, as well as \$1.3 million in additional funding for chemotherapy drug costs, which is included in the supplementary budget, which I believe has been tabled here.

As the Chair has already mentioned, pressures continue in chemo drug costs, occupancy in inpatient units and the complexity of services that we provide. We will continue to assess and work with government to live within our fiscal constraints and we will continue to provide that quality care.

We work with government on a number of fronts, such as taking on a collaborative, system-wide approach to health delivery. This includes how we and our health system partners can better be aligned and integrated to serve health needs of Yukoners.

We continue to look at and address our top priority, which is providing safe and excellent hospital care to all Yukoners, recognizing that hospitals must live within our means while meeting significant and growing pressures. We continually look at efficiencies each and every day.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you for that response. Just before we get into a little bit more about the budget, did the Hospital Corporation see a copy of the new *Coroners Act* before it was tabled in the Legislative Assembly just this Sitting?

Mr. Bilsky: I didn't hear the question.

Ms. McLeod: It's the new *Coroners Act*. I'm wondering what effect that would have on the hospital and whether or not the Hospital Corporation had an opportunity to review it or provide comment.

Mr. Bilsky: No, we have not yet assessed the impacts and we have not seen the actual proposed changes.

Ms. McLeod: The witness has mentioned that there is a 2.5-percent escalator to the budget in addition to the additional monies for chemo treatments. Can the witness confirm that the 2.5-percent increase is for this year alone?

Mr. Bilsky: The 2.5-percent increase to our core is to this fiscal period that we are in right now. I think I have commented on the pressures that we have from chemotherapy. About 60 percent to 70 percent of our salaries are contracted wages, so there is an escalation there. We also see significant pressures in our diagnostic services for just volume pressures and complexity pressures in what we do in our diagnostic services.

Ms. McLeod: The 2.5-percent increase to this year's budget — was that the amount that the Hospital Corporation requested for this year? Would the ask for the upcoming fiscal year be the same?

Mr. Bilsky: Yes, I can confirm that the amount that was requested is something that we worked on collaboratively with the government to try to fulfill the needs that we have. It was what was requested. I cannot yet comment on what the upcoming fiscal period will be.

Ms. McLeod: Perhaps the witness could tell us or confirm maybe what the fastest-growing expenditure is in the Hospital Corporation budget. The witness has made reference to the rapidly escalating cost for cancer care. I just wonder if that's the one item or if there are others.

Mr. Bilsky: The three core services or core areas that we see increasing would be in the areas of — I have already mentioned chemotherapy. Specifically with chemotherapy, I think our chair has already mentioned that essentially what is causing that to increase is earlier detections of cancers, better treatments and longer treatments, which means that survivability has increased. That means that volume has gone up and also the cost of the specialized drugs has gone up. In particular, that area has actually doubled in cost over the last less than five years.

Just to give you an example, one of the extreme examples would be of one particular breast cancer drug that is being used. A previous protocol for that treatment would have been running for 24 weeks — it cost about \$15,000. Now that same cancer is being treated with a different drug, and it would run for two years at a total cost for that protocol of around \$250,000 to \$300,000. That's just an extreme example but an example of how that area is growing.

Another area that's growing significantly for us is medical imaging. As we do more and more closer to home and

the complexity of those tests continues to grow, medical imaging costs continue to grow with it. Another area I'll cite is our lab services. That's just purely the volume of tests that we're seeing which are being prescribed by physicians. It's growing significantly more than what you would consider to be the CPI in the territory.

Ms. McLeod: I think we're all a little shocked at some of those numbers, so thank you for informing us.

The hospital traditionally has been funded based on a 75-percent occupancy rate. I'm wondering if that's still the case.

Mr. Bilsky: Just to clarify, we don't actually get funded based on a certain level of occupancy. Hospital systems are designed to run at a certain level of occupancy, and that optimal level would be about 75 percent. You always require a certain level of surge capacity to deal with spikes in acuity and necessary treatment and service levels that need to be taken care of.

Having said that, if it's designed for 75 percent, that's approximately where we would budget and where we would try to maintain service levels. Above and beyond that, yes, we have worked with government to make sure we're adequately funded to ensure that with anything over 75 percent we can continue to maintain the service levels we have.

Ms. McLeod: I have heard today and I have also seen on the website that occupancy at the Whitehorse hospital is between 95 percent and 115 percent. That has been confirmed today. I'm wondering — just because I don't know — what 115-percent occupancy looks like in terms of service delivery.

Mr. Bilsky: I think I'm proud to say that service delivery for us, even though we have had the impact of significant high levels of occupancy, has been maintained. Generally speaking, as our chair has mentioned, our occupancy from April 2017 to April 2018 averaged about 95 percent to 96 percent, with over 50 percent of those days being 100-percent full.

As I think has been mentioned, the primary reason for high levels of occupancy is the proportion of alternate level of care patients — patients who no longer require acute care and are more appropriately cared for in other settings. We have seen levels to 30 and 40 percent of our beds being occupied by ALC.

Having said that, in collaboration with our YG system partners, we have been able to manage over the past 18 months during this period of high level of occupancy. Just over the last six months, we have been able to decrease average occupancy from 96 or 95 to 87 percent. We have decreased the number of deferred surgeries by about 30 percent and decreased the level of patients staying in ED overnight.

To answer the direct question generally, the impact is access to acute care when you are at high levels of occupancy, and what you jeopardize is the ability to maintain your elective surgeries. You end up with patients being cared for in places that aren't suitable or where they shouldn't be cared for when it comes to acute care — like Emergency. You end up

with people spending an inordinate amount of time in Emergency waiting for admit beds.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you for that answer. How many — and the witness may have made mention of this, but just for some clarity — how many surgical or other procedures have had to be cancelled or rescheduled this year because of the bed pressure?

Mr. Bilsky: On the topic of cancelled surgeries, I would first like to say that YHC takes patient safety and the provision of high-quality care with the utmost of importance. Cancelling surgeries is an issue that we consider very carefully with each and every case. It is always made in the interest of safety for that patient as well as in the interest of safety for other patients.

Before starting a surgical procedure, the team must be sure post-operative patient care needs can be met safely and an operative patient care bed is available. When an appropriate bed is not available, a surgery may be rescheduled. We have a team of experts who make this decision based on known criteria, and we certainly understand the planning and the mental preparation it takes for each and every patient to prepare themselves and their family for the day of surgery, and we are very sorry for every surgery that is deferred. We will always make sure that the patient will know when their next scheduled surgery is. We will make it a priority, and it's usually within a very short period of time — usually within hours or maybe weeks.

In 2017-18, we deferred 13 surgeries due to overcapacity, which represents less than one percent of our planned surgeries and, year to date, there were five deferrals due to overcapacity, all between April and June, with none in July, September — unfortunately, we have had a run here in the last couple weeks of being very full, and I believe we deferred two surgeries recently.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you for that. Just continuing on with this discussion, we have heard a report of a patient who arrived at the hospital for surgery. This person was checked in and put in a bed. She got to speak with the surgeon and then was sent home because there was no nurse or bed available for her care post-surgery. Obviously the surgery did not go ahead and I'm sure we all know that this was extremely distressing for the patient.

How many times does it happen that the patient gets that far in the system before they find out that their surgery is cancelled?

Mr. Bilsky: I can't comment or answer the direct question of how many times a patient has gotten that far. Having said that, I can give you the criteria that we use, and we have a team of experts that actually assess when and how — and yes, it is basically to the hour or to the minute.

The criteria that we use is: when our ICU is full, medical and surgical inpatient areas are full, there are four to six patients waiting in ER for admission beds, there are no discharges pending within six hours, and the elective slate that we have will run past the end of day. As I think you can appreciate, those are hour-by-hour decisions that have to be made. We've placed every effort that we can into making sure

those surgeries go ahead but, as I said, unfortunately, it may be at the last minute that it is decided that the surgery cannot go ahead. As I stated earlier, we are considering what is safest for the patient and what is safe for all patients in each and every situation.

Ms. McLeod: How many patients have been transferred from Whitehorse to either Watson Lake or Dawson City hospitals due to bed pressures at the Whitehorse Hospital this year?

Mr. Bilsky: As you can appreciate — and we've been speaking about the occupancy challenges — more than probably a year ago, one of the pieces of the strategy put in place was to utilize all of the resources that we have and, in particular, all the beds within our system. That includes utilizing Dawson City and Watson Lake, which are two excellent care facilities.

Yes, where it was appropriate, we would transfer patients from Whitehorse to either Watson Lake or Dawson. It has two benefits — it obviously decreases the occupancy pressure here at WGH, but it also ensures that we maintain professional staff competency in the community hospitals.

We use clinical criteria to identify the patients who would be appropriately cared for in those areas. We would not send patients who would not be appropriately cared for. Most patients are transferred there for somewhere between three and six weeks and are then repatriated back.

We fully acknowledge that the transfer process can cause stress and difficulties for all patients and families, and it is done in consultation with them. In the 2017-18 fiscal year, we transferred 22 patients from WGH to either Watson Lake or Dawson City. I believe it was 10 to Dawson City and 12 to Watson Lake. This year currently — year to date — we've transferred seven patients — two to Dawson City and five to Watson Lake.

At this point, it's expected that the number will decrease. It all depends on the occupancy levels at Whitehorse General here, but with the expectation of Whistle Bend and the Thomson Centre beginning to take patients and reducing our level of ALC patients in hospital, we do expect that number to be curtailed. Ultimately, it's about ensuring access to acute care for all patients within our system.

Ms. McLeod: Just a bit ago, the witness made reference to knee surgeries, for instance — wait times being reduced from 24 months to 14 months. I'm wondering about other procedures — other joint issues and cataract surgeries — and what the wait times look like for them. How many people are on that wait-list?

Mr. Bilsky: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I didn't hear the last part.

Ms. McLeod: I'm curious as to how many people are on the waiting list?

Mr. Bilsky: Which waiting list in particular? I'm sorry.

Ms. McLeod: I will take a wait-list either jointly or separately for eye surgeries or joint surgeries.

Mr. Bilsky: Maybe I will start with orthopaedics in general. The other topic is about cataracts ophthalmology.

To give you a bit of history about where we have been and where we are going, a resident orthopaedic surgeon started providing care in the territory in the beginning of October 2017. We had to make some significant changes to our OR space and utilization to make room for expanding orthopaedics. I can say that to this point it has been a success in collaboration with government to achieve this success. We have repatriated about 55 percent of orthopaedic medevacs, so these would be emergency procedures or orthopaedic procedures, to YHC.

The wait times for knee replacements has decreased from 24 to 14 months. There is a 70-percent reduction in patients waiting for orthopaedic assessments.

To do so — and again, with support from government — we have had to make some significant improvements in our surgical services. We have increased capacity in surgical services. We have undergone some renovations in that area to include a third flexible operative space that we were able to take endoscopy procedures and decant them into a different room to create capacity. Scope reprocessing has been improved with a new minor procedure room as well as investments in areas of sterile storage. There is also a significant investment in orthopaedic equipment, all geared toward providing services here closer to home and ensuring that people are accessing the services that they require.

On the topic of ophthalmology — wait times to see an ophthalmologist and receive cataract surgery have been growing rapidly and now exceeds three years. There are approximately 350 patients waiting for cataract surgery. The major contributing factor is retinal macular degeneration that has caused an exceptional spike in the last 18 to 24 months. The retinal therapy that I mentioned requires patients to see the ophthalmologist, which is taking time away from ophthalmology assessments and cataract surgery. Yukon Hospital Corporation and YG have identified that addressing ophthalmology wait times is a priority. Over the last several months, we have been actively working with government on proposed solutions to reduce the wait-list within the next year or sooner.

Generally, proposed solutions involve establishing a separate retinal clinic, so we take the retinal therapy and establish a separate clinic so it's not impeding general ophthalmology and cataract surgery. We would also like to increase ophthalmology clinics and OR time.

Having said that, we have recognized the pressures and some actions that we have taken to date to mitigate the clinic wait times, including triaging urgent patients and replacing aging ophthalmology equipment for increasing patient throughput. We have also increased, as much as we can and within the limitations we have, the number of ophthalmology visiting clinics that we can host here. But, as I mentioned, Mr. Chair, we are continuing to work with government to create solutions to expedite the issue of ophthalmology wait times.

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank the witness for that update. The witness made a reference earlier to nurse practitioners, and I am guessing that nurse practitioners would

alleviate some funding pressures because it does not — I presume — cost as much to have them. So how many nurse practitioners are currently working within the corporation?

Mr. Bilsky: Just to clarify, according to the assessments that we have as far as integrating nurse practitioners into our system, I'm not as certain that it would reduce costs associated with health care. Having said that, we are working toward any collaborative models that we can to ensure that people have access to care.

In the recent year, we have made sure that nurse practitioners have access to much of the diagnostic services provided by Yukon Hospital Corporation, and in the recent year YHC has changed the bylaws, and the minister has approved the change in the bylaws, so that nurse practitioners are able to practise in YHC's facilities.

Essentially there are two options for nurse practitioners working with Yukon Housing Corporation. One has always existed, and that opportunity is as an employee of the organization. That is predicated on the fact that a nurse practitioner's skill set meets the job requirements that we have. The other one, which would have been recently brought forward through the change in the bylaws, is the ability for nurse practitioners to participate in care with patients in hospital.

As far as the number of nurse practitioners who are employed by the hospital — again, like I said, we employ nurse practitioners when their skill set and job set meets the requirements that we have. None are currently involved directly in the models of care that we have. However, we have employed nurse practitioners on certain projects within the system over the last year.

Ms. McLeod: I have just a couple of questions about chemotherapy. We heard, of course, that chemo costs have doubled over the last three years — or three to five years. That amounts to about \$2 million for these drugs. I guess my question is whether or not the numbers of patients are increasing — if the patient number is remaining static and it is just, as has been mentioned, the longer lifespan and the earlier detection? I would kind of like to get a sense of what we can look at for escalating costs in the near future.

Mr. Bilsky: I won't repeat everything I have said about chemotherapy. Just to add to it, though — increased complexity, earlier detection and increasing longevity are the causes of a 22-percent increase in visits and a doubling of the cost per treatment over the past five years.

Maybe to cite just a few facts or numbers — we are estimating in this current year that the average chemotherapy treatment is in the neighbourhood of about \$2,500 per visit versus in 2015, that same number would have been \$1,300. The number of actual chemo visits has been increasing. These are not discrete patients. These are the number of visits that we are seeing in a year. In 2015, it would have been 676. In the current year, we are estimating around 850 or so. It has stabilized over the last couple of years, but it has increased over the last five years.

Again, I would say that the biggest driving factor in the cost of chemo is the actual cost of the drugs themselves. We

are talking about very specialized drugs — immunotherapy and things of that sort that are causing the cost.

Ms. McLeod: With respect to treatments that are offered in-territory at the Whitehorse General Hospital, is the Yukon Hospital Corporation considering making dialysis available here?

Mr. Bilsky: On the topic of dialysis, currently there are three types of renal replacement therapies: peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis and basically kidney transplant. Peritoneal dialysis and home hemodialysis are available in-territory currently, supported by the — I think — BC Renal Agency. In-centre hemodialysis — meaning in-hospital here or in-centre somewhere else — is not available in the territory.

At this point, we and Health and Social Services agree that the threshold, as far as just the numbers, to be able to sustain a hemodialysis unit here has not been met. At this point we are not considering establishing a hemodialysis program here in-territory.

Ms. McLeod: I have a question about the new emergency room. I wonder if the witnesses could update us on how that is working out, whether or not there are any issues that need addressing and are they contemplating any renovations to make service better?

Mr. Bilsky: As you all know, we completed in January and opened a new emergency centre here at Whitehorse General Hospital. We did that on time and on budget. It began operations in that emergency. That entire project actually also included the new MRI program, which was opened up several years ago. I do believe that we have achieved all of the objectives that we set out to achieve. The key project objectives included improving patient and staff safety flow, infection control, lines of sight, delivery of care, improved staff productivity, energy efficiency and sustainability of the building, space to support better staff, physician recruitment and retention, traffic flow and parking.

We also created a shelled second floor space for future needs — and decreased medical travel costs and enhanced diagnostic services. From all accounts that we have today, patients, people who work there, our team — we've met those standards and those objectives that we set out to achieve.

As with any large building project of this size — we're talking about a project that was in excess of \$55 million — there will always be corrections and additions through that period as you continue to operate within the space and learn more — very minor in nature. Some that I might comment on would be some areas that we have learned about through patient flow — areas of privacy where we need to alter some of the furniture or alter the flow a little bit better.

We learned that through patient flow, although we had a curb letdown in front of the building — about 50 feet from the front of the door — patient flow basically dictated that we should put a curb letdown closer to the door, even through the original curb letdown was adjacent to the parking lot, which we thought was proper patient flow. I would say that any corrections, additions or warranty issues that we have had have been fairly minor.

Ms. McLeod: We have had heard that the Salvation Army is now operating on fewer hours and closes its doors at 10:00 p.m. Can the witness tell us whether or not they have seen any increase in emergency room visits after 10:00 p.m. that could be attributed to this early closure?

Mr. Bilsky: It's an important issue, I think, for all Yukoners. Just to put it into perspective, we see approximately 33,000 visits through the Whitehorse General emergency department annually. Data that we have today shows that we see about 1,500 to 1,700 patients through the ED annually due to intoxication, so probably more than four a day. I can't comment on whether we have seen a spike, but we do see periods where it can spike up. I can't specifically relate that to anything to do with Salvation Army's services that they provide.

I can say, though, that, from our perspective, intoxicated patients can put pressure on the system, and there appears to be a gap in the system as we see it today. Our ED is not a sobering centre and it's not a detox facility; it provides acute care. It is an acute care emergency medical facility.

From our perspective, one of the recommendations made some time ago in the Beaton and Allen report was the creation of a sobering centre somewhere in downtown Whitehorse. I'm not sure if the Salvation Army is meant to service that clientele, but I think that is a gap in the system.

Ms. McLeod: Can the witness confirm how many patients were admitted to hospital for an opioid-related misuse or overdose? I'm not referring to just those who have been reported — the 15 who have been reported to have died in the last year. I'm more curious as to how much wider the problem is and what kind of pressure it puts on the emergency room.

Mr. Bilsky: It is a very serious issue. The opioid crisis affects all areas of Canada — probably more acutely in western Canada, as I'm sure you have seen through all the statistics.

I can't specifically say how many are admitted, but I can tell you how many we see, because the admission would come through the ER if they were admitted. It's only a fraction of those coming through the ER who would actually be admitted.

Having said that, opioid-related — and I said opioid-related — presentations to the ER have ranged over the last couple of years between 140 and 175 annually. Having said that, we continue following the lead of Yukon government and their response to opioid misuse and abuse, and we're actively participating in all strategies involved, particularly surveillance and information sharing, open lines of communication, communicating to those at risk, overdose response and harm reduction — and also looking at proper opioid prescribing and pain-management practices, which to date have been effective.

Ms. McLeod: Can the witness please confirm the number of alternative level of care, or ALC, patients who are currently admitted to the hospital and who are suited to reside in a continuing care facility? I think I heard a reference to 10, but perhaps that can be confirmed.

Mr. Bilsky: I want to make sure I answer the question correctly. Could I get that question repeated please?

Ms. McLeod: We know that the hospital is housing some persons who require a higher level of care and that they are in the hospital due to a lack of a more suitable spot for them. I'm wondering what that number is. How many of them are in there perhaps waiting to transfer to Whistle Bend Place?

Mr. Bilsky: Yes, we have had high and persistent rates of alternative level of care patients — ALC patients — who stay for an extended period of time within the hospital and yes, it does put significant pressure on the acute care system. It can range and has ranged over the last two years anywhere from 20 to 35 percent of the total beds that we have. This equates to anywhere from 10 to possibly up to 16 patients that are waiting in our acute care system.

What this means is that those patients no longer need acute care within our system. Having said that, as I've mentioned earlier, we've taken some extraordinary steps to try to manage that over the past two years. I think that in spite of those pressures, we've been successful in making sure that all people have access to acute care. We're very confident and hopeful that over the next period of time — a month to two months — with the opening of Whistle Bend and the opening of 10 additional beds at the Thomson Centre, this is going to reduce the pressure and number of ALCs.

As of yesterday, there are plans to move, I believe, nine patients in the last week of October and the first week of November directly from hospital to other care facilities. We look toward a system-level target of 10 percent or less, with average lengths of the stays of less than 30 days for each ALC patient.

Ms. McLeod: I appreciate that answer.

It was indicated the last time that the Hospital Corporation came to the Legislature that there was a needs assessment completed to see whether it was feasible to develop the vacated emergency department space into an area that could house enhanced mental health services.

What is the status of this idea? I would like to know whether further discussions have taken place around it and whether or not government has approved moving forward on this.

Mr. Bilsky: There are two pieces, I think, to that question. I believe when we were here last year, we would have mentioned that we were planning the second-floor shell space as a potential to improve the secure medical unit that currently exists — so basically moving the secure medical unit that we have over into the second-floor shell space. I believe the question actually mentioned the vacated ER space. There are actually two different spaces there and I will comment on both, just to make sure that I cover the bases there.

Specifically, and I have already commented on it, the former ED was vacated as a result of the new development. We moved everything over. We did a needs assessment and some of the highest priorities that we had were — one of those that rose to the top was a priority focused on enhanced surgical services and the associated support functions. Essentially what we did was take all of the vacated ER space and worked on how we could redevelop that on an interim

basis — call it a short-term basis — to enhance all of the surgical services. What we were primarily trying to accomplish there was to increase surgical capacity and improve patient flow within that system, as well as the efficiencies of operations within there.

What we did with that space is we developed a flexible operative suite to accommodate endoscopies as well as other procedures, which took them out of the main ORs, increasing our total capacity in those ORs.

We also improved patient flow by developing more appropriate waiting spaces and access to services. We increased the provision of support space, such as pre-operative and recovery rooms. We also increased the storage space for supplies and equipment and increased the central sterile storage processing area — basically where we reprocess scopes and sterilize things — for better flow and better access.

This interim step was partially precipitated by the introduction of orthopaedic surgery but also precipitated by the high-priority needs we had. Those spaces are some 25 years old and will require major redevelopment coming up, which is a long-term planning process that we are into at the moment and we will have in front of government.

The other area that was mentioned was the second-floor shell space that is above the new emergency department. Yes, we have done some extensive planning through the development of that as an improved secure medical unit. As I think our chair has mentioned, the existing SMU is a safe-room area but doesn't meet the current patient and safety standards.

At this point, we have done detailed functional planning. We have created schematic designs and options associated, as well as high-level costing.

We expect to continue that planning process, including program planning, making sure that we're looking across the entire system — so not just hospital needs, but needs outside of the hospital — and working with our partners in Health and Social Services to improve the space. The opportunities we are looking at are trying to improve the physical space, introduction of other aspects of the healing environment, improve recognition and respect for First Nation needs and cultures as well as accommodation for safe rooms, patient dining space, lounge and potential medication rooms. Our expectation is that we will have basically completed this level of planning within the next several months and have something in front of government early in the new year, as far as government considering the plans.

Ms. McLeod: Thanks for that answer.

We have had this discussion before, but I'm wondering if there has been any further discussion around providing Wi-Fi or Internet to patients in our community hospitals.

Mr. Bilsky: Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Just a slight bit of background — guest Wi-Fi here at Whitehorse General Hospital is only possible due to the generosity of Northwestel and Yukon Hospital Foundation.

To answer the question directly: At this point, YHC does not have plans to install a Wi-Fi-capable system of supporting public access in Dawson City or Watson Lake. Essentially we

haven't deemed this a priority and our resources are extremely scarce. There are other technology solutions that exist for patients to access the Internet. Capital costs for creating a system like that could range anywhere from \$50,000 to \$200,000, depending on the quality of the systems. Also, there are ongoing operating costs associated with providing guest network each month.

We definitely work in partnership with others. I would certainly say that right now, that's not a priority need. We dedicate all of our resources toward patient care at the moment.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you for that.

With the operating room at Whitehorse General Hospital, the Hospital Corporation was considering adding another shift in the operating room. Was such a proposal submitted to government? What has been the result or outcome of this?

Mr. Bilsky: I am not aware of adding another shift or extending hours beyond what we currently do. I already commented on the redevelopment steps that we have taken in there. Adding a third or a flexible operating room, taking endoscopy procedures out — it reduced our utilization rate within those two ORs that we currently maintain from approximately 90 percent down to less than 70 percent.

We don't have anything from government; I don't believe we requested anything. We will continue to monitor and make sure that we do, and we have long-term planning steps underway right now to look at surgical services into the future to make sure that we meet the demands of Yukoners.

Ms. McLeod: I thank you for that.

I just want to have a brief conversation now about Meditech. We know that last year the witness advised us that the system is currently 20 years or better and also that there has been some forward movement and this year some money has been committed. Can the witness tell us how much money has been committed in this budget, what the total cost is and how that's going to roll out?

Mr. Bilsky: Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. Maybe a slight bit of background. The Yukon Hospital Corporation system, which the member mentions, is called Meditech. It's an Enterprise computer system and it's 30-year-old technology that we use. It's what we call our health information system. Currently, the platform that we're working on, as I said, is 30 years old.

It's functional, but it has a dated user interface and I'll say it's difficult to use. The analogy is comparing DOS to a Windows-based type environment. Although Meditech, the company itself, continues to support the version we're on now, updated functionality is either not available in this platform or only available years after it's available on newer platforms.

We have had this on our radar for some time now. Without updating our system, we won't be able to move toward advanced clinical systems, things such as bedside medication verification, electronic medical records and so on. Adding the new functionality to the current system will be a huge undertaking but also a huge benefit.

Right now, we have been working with government, and I can't say exactly what has been allocated, but we have been working with government. Our expectation is — and it all depends on the scope of the project and the scope of the actual upgrade that we do — that it can range anywhere from \$6.5 million to \$8 million and will span over a period of probably 18 to 24 months, as far as the project. It touches every corner of our operation and reaches beyond even our operation, because there are other organizations in the territory like community nursing that have access to it.

Ms. McLeod: Can the witness tell us whether or not there has been any discussion around continuing care, the Whistle Bend Place, tying into the Meditech system in cooperation with the Hospital Corporation?

Mr. Bilsky: Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair. We have been actively planning the scope of Meditech and certainly it begins with us as the core user. We're very hopeful that we can begin a project sometime in the new year that actually looks at upgrading this.

We have discussed this with our partners in Health and Social Services to find out whether any of their needs, not just within continuing care but elsewhere — whether there are any needs that can be met through Meditech, and that includes GoldCare with continuing care. I think it would be a prudent move to make sure that, as we make an investment this large, we're leveraging as much as we possibly can so we're looking at every possible opportunity that we can.

Ms. McLeod: I just have a couple more questions and then I will turn it over to my colleague to my left.

I have just a couple of brief questions about ATIPP and HIPMA. The government has indicated that they have dedicated 0.1 of a position to deal with ATIPP for the Hospital Corporation. Of course, the Department of Health and Social Services added 3.5 persons to deal with ATIPP and HIPMA. I have a couple of questions about that. What does 0.1 of a person get you as far as ATIPP is concerned? Is that enough for the hospital's needs?

Mr. Bilsky: I think the comment may stem from: What are the dedicated resources of 0.1? That would be, I think, administrative resources that are meant to service the ATIPP requests directly. Having said that, privacy itself — ATIPP, HIPMA and other pieces of legislation that we need to comply with — we take these very seriously.

Privacy itself can be a great access or barrier to care if people don't believe that their privacy will be maintained within the hospital system, so we take that all very seriously. That goes right from the board level through to leadership and right down to the front lines.

To say that it's 0.1 — maybe I'm speaking beyond what the direct question was, but there are people who are very dedicated to making sure that privacy is important to us. That flows through IT systems, through ethics, through the front line, through even hallway conversations — policies, procedures and education — so making sure that we do it and making sure that it's in the best interests of what we do. How we can make sure that people feel very comfortable and confident accessing services helps us in the long run.

Ms. McLeod: Yes, I appreciate that security of our information is important to everyone. My question is: How many hours of staff time does it take to deal with ATIPP or HIPMA requests that go through the Hospital Corporation? Or perhaps none go through the Hospital Corporation. I'm just trying to work my way around the flow of information.

If the Hospital Corporation has 0.1 of a person who is dedicated performing this task — I think I understand that there are probably many more hours of time spent by other people in the organization — I'm wondering how many hours it takes. Does 0.1 of a person do it? What really does the Hospital Corporation need to adequately provide this service?

Mr. Bilsky: That's a very difficult question to answer. As I have said, the 0.1 that is being referred to may be a portion of our ATIPP officer. But as I have said, we have a privacy officer, and each and every ATIPP request that comes in is different and requires attention by different people, depending on what the ATIPP request is and what area of the hospital they are requesting from.

I'm sorry — I don't have the direct answer to that question, but I can say that each and every ATIPP request could vary, based on the type of request and how much information is being requested.

Ms. McLeod: With that, I'm going to wrap up and pass this over to my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King. I want to thank the witnesses for appearing and answering the questions today.

Ms. White: I was letting the witnesses know before that this is the awkward part because of my location in the room. My questions need to be directed to the chair, but really — it's weird — I have to look away from that.

Earlier today, I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services if she could confirm that four surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital will be closing, with one less nursing staff per shift, in the coming weeks. Can the officials confirm or disconfirm that please?

Mr. Bilsky: I think what is being referred to is not a surgical bed. Earlier, I mentioned a number of strategies that we undertook about 18 months ago to deal with the overcapacity that we have at the hospital. One of the initiatives that we undertook, among many, was to set up a temporary holding room. Initially that was set up with four holding beds. It was actually a converted inpatient room — one converted inpatient room in a storage area — and we initially intended to have four beds in that area. It turned out that trying to put four beds in that area was not going to work. We ended up with three holding beds in there. Those three holding beds — it was a temporary measure. It has been up for more than a year, and it was staffed temporarily.

One thing I will note is that these are not inpatient rooms; these are transition beds. Either people are flowing and waiting to be admitted to an inpatient bed or somebody we can take from a room and they are about to be discharged and they are held there until they are discharged. So they are not full inpatient rooms by any means.

Our expectation is that with Whistle Bend and Thomson Centre coming online here with beds and decreasing

occupancy — and also in conjunction with the recently vacated ICU space — we will now convert this holding space as well as the previous ICU into inpatient rooms. So we will take the holding room, which I think is what is being referred to here — but please excuse me if that is not the question — and convert that back into a proper inpatient room, and we will take the previous, old ICU and convert that into two inpatient rooms.

Certainly these holding beds have helped us to deal with the overcapacity issues. As we expect capacity to come down — as I said, we do not believe that we need these holding beds anymore and we will convert them into what we require as inpatient beds. I don't believe it has had any impact, or will have any impact, on services going forward — actually, it should improve services because they will be considered standard inpatient rooms.

We also have long-term plans to make sure that we introduce new beds as we need them — this is part of those long-term plans — to keep pace with the increasing and changing demographics that we have.

Ms. White: Just for clarification, has the closure of this holding space already happened or will it be happening in the coming in weeks?

Mr. Bilsky: No, it has not happened. Actually, as of today, there were people being held in those spaces.

As I've said, because we've had a bit of a surge over the last couple of weeks, we expect it to happen sometime in November or December, and that's as we decrease the ALC rates — with moving ALC patients over to Whistle Bend.

Ms. White: With the closing of that holding space, though — that sounds like it is post-operative. Will that affect surgery cancellations? Will there be any risk of people not having surgeries completed because there aren't these holding beds to go to?

Mr. Bilsky: Just to clarify, these are not post-operative beds. These are not part of the surgical bed unit. These are, as I've mentioned, holding beds for people waiting to be admitted, usually through the ER. Our expectation is — no. I have two reasons to say that it won't have an impact on surgeries going forward. One is that we expect a decreased level of occupancy overall in the hospital because Whistle Bend and Thomson Centre are coming online, and two is that we expect to convert these back into inpatient rooms and increase our bed status that way.

Ms. White: There was mention about the curb going into the emergency room. It's a good one — the curb letdown in front of the emergency room. When is that actually going to be complete?

Mr. Bilsky: Just to go back a little bit — for those who have been there — and I don't want to drag everybody through infinite detail here. There was a curb letdown. There is a curb letdown that was originally planned, and it directly aligns with the access from the parking lot across the driveway that goes directly in front of the emergency department and then up. I would estimate that it's about 50 feet from the direct opening of the front door.

Since that time, and since we've assessed patient flow and where people are getting dropped off, we've now actually created another curb letdown that is about, I would say, 15 or 10 feet from the front door. It's not directly in front of the opening doors, because the distance from the doors to the curb is too shallow to create a letdown there, but — it's hard to describe it — it's right in the bend, and I would say it's about a quarter of the distance from the other letdown. Now there are actually two letdowns, and that work has already been completed.

Ms. White: The reason for that question is, when we talk about accessibility, especially for our friends with disabilities — that was highlighted by an advocate as being an issue — going to the emergency room and having the accessible entrances up on the other side. I'm pleased to hear that has happened.

Does the hospital have a trans patient policy on how hospital staff — or how trans patients are treated?

Mr. Bilsky: I don't know if this is proper protocol but, just to go back to the previous question, I do appreciate the accessibility issues. We went to significant efforts to improve accessibility in our facility as we went through a major redevelopment. We brought the parking lot significantly closer to the front of the building. We increased the number of accessible parking spots and made sure that width and access to the building was improved substantially.

As far as a transgender policy was the question, I do believe that we have one. I can't cite it myself personally, but I do believe that we have one as far as interactions with patients.

Ms. White: Was the trans community consulted when developing that policy?

Mr. Bilsky: I can't comment on that. I don't have any knowledge of that.

Chair: Mr. Gillen, did you have a comment?

Mr. Gillen: Yes, I did. In relation to the previous discussion about accessibility to the hospital, as people may know, my daughter is in a wheelchair. We have taken her to the hospital for blood work, for other things, to see specialists, to go to Emergency, to go to the cafeteria for the barbecues. I pride myself on being someone who constantly wants to make sure that accessibility is looked at, is managed and is appropriate. There are lots of places in Whitehorse where it's not, but I know from practical experience that the accessibility, the letdowns and the width of corridors that exist in Whitehorse General Hospital meet my requirements, and I have no issue with them.

Ms. White: I appreciate that. Emma is a super lucky human. I do appreciate that, but it was highlighted by someone who does have accessibility needs, so I do appreciate that the Hospital Corporation addressed it.

How many permanent nurses are currently on staff? How many are term, on contract or auxiliary on call? What are overtime rates for nurses working full time?

Mr. Bilsky: Specifically nurses — I don't have the exact numbers for nurses, but I can comment on full-time, part-time, term, casual, and I will comment on it by union,

which generally will denote whether they're nursing or support staff, if that's okay.

We have a total of 595 employees. Of those, full-time are 247, part-time are 140, term are 33 and casuals are 175. In the PIPSC, which is generally the nursing category, although there may be others in the other union, we have 67 full-time, 85 part-time, 21 term and 79 casual, for a total of approximately 252. I would approximate the total number of nursing staff we have to be probably around 250 to 275.

Ms. White: Is the Hospital Corporation still hiring — I'm not sure of the term. When I worked in England, I was an agency chef. I would get called in to fill in. Are there still agency nurses being hired at the Hospital Corporation?

Mr. Bilsky: Just to be clear, we utilize agency nurses. We don't hire them because they're under contract. We do have contracts with two different agencies in order to provide sufficient coverage at YHC across the year. It is one method for us to maintain a flexible workforce. What we do to try to create that flexible workforce is that we have a casual pool for general duty nurses. We continue to grow that; however, in special areas such as in maternity, emergency department, ICU or potentially the OR, it remains a challenge to source people locally. Obviously, it's our intent to make sure that people are permanently employed here whenever possible and whenever we can train them.

The main triggers for using agency nurses is when we fall short and cannot fill them locally during peak vacation times. It approximates between three and four percent of the total nursing staff requirements so it's not a large or significant portion. Where possible, we minimize the use of agency nurses and we try to do that through training internally or increasing or maintaining casual pools.

As I said, in specialty areas, oftentimes this isn't sustainable nor is it economic to try to maintain a massive casual pool of specialized nurses because they are in demand elsewhere and we just can't retain them if they're not fully employed.

Ms. White: With those agency nurses, is accommodation included in the pay? I know when I was an agency chef, I would go into these places and I would make substantially more than the people who work there permanently, so if we can just talk a bit about whether or not accommodation is included and what the cost is relative to someone who would be a permanent or casual person with those skills.

Mr. Bilsky: Yes, there are costs that are paid in addition and those would include incidentals such as accommodation. I am going to estimate that it's probably between a 25- and 30-percent premium that is paid. When I say that, I'm comparing the direct salary cost — loaded salary cost — to an agency cost; but I would also have to factor in the ability to maintain and sustain people here, which is not possible in some of the specialty areas. We do employ people and maintain people in those specialty areas on a full-time basis, but what I am talking about is when those people go on vacation and you need an agency nurse or you need to fill that spot for a short period of time. It is pretty much impossible to

maintain a casual pool just for the short periods of time of sickness or vacation. Those peak periods of time are usually in the summer or at Christmas.

Ms. White: It's not a criticism; it's just a question. The reason why I asked the question — for example, I have friends who went to learn to become nurses and who are nurses and specialized nurses, in some cases — who are not able to come home to work. I was just trying to figure out what that was.

Is there a minimum amount of time that an agency nurse would come in or a maximum time that a contract would last? Are we talking about an extended — is it six weeks, two months, three months or six months? What does a contract look like?

Mr. Bilsky: We have standing contracts with two different agencies that provide the agency nurses. This is very commonplace across Canada — across the world, actually — and not just in the profession of nursing, as was mentioned. It could be in many professions.

Having said that, when agency nurses come here — if you're talking about a discrete nurse, it could be anywhere from weeks to months. Sometimes it would be because we may have a position that's very difficult to fill and recruit for and we're not finding somebody, but we still need to provide service. We can rotate different agency nurses through that same position.

Ms. White: When we talk about the ophthalmologists — I'm not sure if I have that right. We're just going to talk about the eye doctor. One of the reasons we were told that there were such lengthy wait times for cataract surgery was because of the delays in getting the initial scanning and assessment done. Once that is completed, the time frame for cataract surgery is relatively short. One of the concerns raised to us is that the local optometrists were told that the hospital was going to replace the aged and often malfunctioning equipment for that first critical assessment. I was told actually that some of it is now a manual measurement and a confirmation on the computer to get that right, whereas equipment exists where it is a scan of the eye and it's done — if the officials could talk about that please.

Mr. Bilsky: I think I mentioned earlier that we have seen a significant spike in those requiring ophthalmology services, and it's caused by a certain retinal therapy that has just come online within the last — it was there previously but we have seen a real spike in the last two years, which has really caused a significant spike. As I mentioned earlier too, we have invested in equipment. I believe two years ago, we updated probably \$250,000 worth of equipment in that area. I believe that right now, we're in the final stages of procurement for some new — I believe it is, but I will probably get it wrong — OCT equipment, which again improves throughput. I believe that is the equipment that is being spoken of here.

Ms. White: I think it is probably the OCT that I am focusing on about cataract surgery. Part of the challenge is — I understand the spike. I guess the challenge for me is that I see day to day someone terrified about losing their driver's licence in their 70s. Once they lose it, to get it back, to be

perfectly honest, is next to impossible. With the equipment the official just mentioned is coming online, when is that expected — the OCT equipment?

Mr. Bilsky: I can't comment exactly when the equipment — I don't know the manufacturer lead time on that, but I would expect that it's within weeks or months to have that equipment.

Just to clarify, I believe that throughput itself is part of the equation to decreasing wait times and increasing the amount of surgical services that we can provide. But having said that, we have been working very aggressively with government on proposed solutions and I believe that there is a strong appetite to move forward with increasing the number of clinics that are held, increasing surgical service time — which is really what the throughput is all about — and also, as I said, establishing a separate retinal clinic to separate the retinal therapy from cataract and ophthalmology consults.

Ms. White: I just look forward to a time when the witnesses come into the Assembly and we're not talking about up to 350 people on a wait-list that can go for multiple years. I will celebrate that along with the officials when they're here.

Just a quick clarification: Is the secure medical unit similar to a secure forensic unit?

Ms. White: Sorry, Mr. Chair — if I could add something to that. If it is not the same, could they just explain the differences between them as opposed to the basic answer of yes or no?

Mr. Bilsky: I will start with the basic yes or no, and say that, no, they are not the same. A forensic psychiatric unit is not the same as a secure medical unit. At Whitehorse General Hospital, currently, we have a five-bed-plus-two-seclusion-room secure medical unit. Its purpose is to provide a safe environment for acute mental health patients while we assess, stabilize and provide basic interventions and transition to community supports in or out of the territory to specialized hospitals. It does not include psychiatric programs available, and any patients requiring specialized assessments or long-term treatments are transferred, basically, out of the territory.

At this point in time, the difference would be the ability to treat longer term patients with those specialized needs that psychiatric patients require. As I said, the unit that we have today — the mental health support that we provide — is basically for transition periods.

Ms. White: I thank the official for that clarification as I wade through terms that I am trying to get a handle on. The *Chief of Medical Staff Annual Report 2017-18* actually has an entire point that talks about the secure medical unit. It says: "Planning is ongoing to develop an enhanced Secure Medical Unit in the shelled, second floor space above the current Emergency Department. Our priority is to improve the facility so we are better able to support Yukoners' acute mental health needs within the hospital..."

One of the questions I have is: Since this report came out, is the plan still to locate the secure medical unit in that shelled out space that was in the new construction?

Mr. Bilsky: I think I mentioned earlier that, based on functional planning and a needs assessment performed as we

were completing the construction of the expansion, it was determined that moving or creating an enhanced secure medical unit was a priority for us, among a couple of other priorities, including surgical services.

Right now, we have been planning. We have created a functional plan, which includes schematic diagrams and some programming.

Yes, right now it is planned to be on that second-floor shelled space but, having said that, nothing has been approved and we are still working with our partners to absolutely finalize the details and scope.

Ms. White: It is going to come as no shock to anyone that the state of my desk right now is making it hard for me to find the document — but is there not a discussion now to create a simulation facility for doctor training? Could the officials tell me more about that and where that is going to go, and why we are looking at doing that? I will go from there.

Mr. Bilsky: YHC, with support from the Yukon Hospital Foundation, is planning a simulation-based learning environment and space within the Yukon Hospital.

The foundation is now currently engaged, and has been engaged for the past year, in fundraising to support the associated capital and start-up and operating costs for a period of time. Key components of what we would call a sustainable program include planned curriculum that meets current and evolving needs, a multidisciplinary inter-agency approach, a team approach, dedicated and appropriate space and equipment and engagement of all Yukon communities and expert assessment and feedback.

Really what a simulation-based learning environment is — it is exactly as the words would say. It's a learning environment where you simulate the actual circumstances that you're going to be operating under. As you can appreciate, similar to somebody flying a plane, you wouldn't want the first time that a clinician actually lays hands on you to be the first time they have actually ever experienced something like this. It's an important piece of maintaining competencies and a learning environment. It was brought forward by physicians as an important piece, and we're partnering with physicians and the Yukon Hospital Foundation to bring this forward.

I think, as long as we build a sustainable program and not just invest in pieces of equipment, it could have some very significant impacts, not just on the Hospital Corporation, but from an inter-agency perspective and from a community perspective. Through simulation-based learning and through practices like that, you really find out where the gaps in systems are and you find out how people actually work together who don't typically work together, whether it's EMS or mine rescue or people who are in the emergency department or dispatchers — people like that. Those can all be put together in a simulation environment.

Ms. White: Is there a fully costed estimate of what this facility will cost in the end? I say this because the original MRI announcement talked about \$2 million, and then that was matched by Yukon government so then it was \$4 million, but then I think the fascinating part was that we needed to build the space for the MRI, so that wasn't part of purchasing the

MRI — and then it kind of ballooned into this \$70-million project.

It was great that we could purchase the MRI, but if it didn't have a home that we had to build after, then saying it was going to be \$4 million was maybe not the most honest way of talking about the cost of it. So is there a fully costed estimate of what this simulation facility will look like and cost?

Mr. Bilsky: Just to clarify with the MRI — it didn't cost \$72 million. It actually cost \$6.8 million.

As far as simulation-based learning, right now with the estimate that we have, we're looking at between \$400,000 and \$500,000 for equipment, and we're going to repurpose space that currently exists within the facility, so we're expecting minor renovation costs to make it available for simulation-based learning.

Ms. White: I thank the official for the answer. I'm just going to go back to the MRI. If the MRI itself was \$6.8 million, what was the cost for building the space for the MRI to be hosted in — the construction of that space to house the MRI?

Mr. Bilsky: I'm going from memory here, because I don't have this in my notes, but I believe the MRI equipment was approximately \$2 million to \$2.5 million, and I believe the actual building itself was another \$2 million to \$2.5 million, and then the rest would have been planning and whatnot.

Ms. White: Great — that is way less than the note I had, which is fantastic. I can find that in other places.

There was an announcement that microbiology was going to get moved over to St. Paul's because there were existing contracts. This is a big deal. When we look at the strategic plan and it talks about meeting Yukoners — there is a line and I'll try to find it — but it was about meeting people where they were to get what they needed. The first thing I want to ask is how many people worked in the microbiology lab prior to any changes that have happened?

Mr. Bilsky: To answer the direct question about microbiology, three microbiology employees were affected by the change and of those, all have positions within the lab. We have replaced those people, so there were no job losses because of any changes that we've made. Maybe to expand on microbiology services overall — the transfer of microbiology samples to St. Paul's Hospital/Providence Health — the whole purpose here is to ensure that we maintain high quality, safe and excellent patient care.

The factors that went into making this decision really come down to several: our lack of critical mass — microbiology represents less than 10 percent of all lab samples at Yukon Housing Corporation — and lack of an on-site laboratory physician makes it difficult to sustain a highly subspecialized service. WGH's lab is not equipped or resourced to maintain today's standards for microbiology testing, and supporting microbiology to the standard required is not practical or sustainable in the Yukon at this time.

Low-volume sites across Canada have experienced the same challenges, so YHC is not alone on this. Evidence

suggests that a consolidating microbiology service is effective in improving the quality and sustainability of microbiology services. St. Paul's Hospital, which we have had a contract with for — I'm going to say — 20 years to provide other assessment of testing, they do have advanced equipment on-site medical microbiologists, which again are not practical for us.

What I can say is that the decision followed consultation with physicians, laboratory employees, union partners and community partners, including full assessment of all the transportation and the logistics implications of doing so. So it is true, yes, our routine microbiology samples have begun actually — in a phased approach — to start being transferred. As I said, to answer the direct question: staffing — there were three who were affected by this change and all have positions, including retraining for those positions.

We did consider other options that were not viable at this time. Primarily, the first and probably most important thing that I will say is that there was no negative impact on patient outcomes. The reporting time, the turnaround time on reporting — although transportation logistics has increased, the reporting time for results has not changed, so that, as far from a patient's perspective, it is intended to be seamless and the actual health outcomes are not negatively impacted by this change.

Ms. White: It is interesting because when the whole conversation was going on about transferring microbiology to St. Paul's in British Columbia, I think there's an interesting thing which is that, at that point in time, St. Paul's was actually trying to get as many of the smaller outside hospitals to send their results — their testing — to them, because they were in the process of actually trying to fight for their own ability to keep lab testing.

I guess my question is — when you look into the situation at St. Paul's, which is that they were actively targeting rural hospitals for those test results, meaning there were other discussions about other locations — in the end, does it benefit Yukon or does it benefit St. Paul's more? Or is it an equal partnership?

Mr. Bilsky: I cannot comment on the benefits to St. Paul's, but what I can say is that, after extensive assessment that included expert clinicians, laboratories, employees, physicians and specialty physicians, including an economic assessment and patient outcome assessment — everything, right down to testing logistical timelines and whatnot — this is the best option that we had for us at that point in time, and we have done extensive planning to make sure that all the outcomes that we expect will be achieved, all the objectives we have will be achieved and there will be no negative impacts.

Ms. White: Has the Hospital Corporation ever thought about creating a review board to supervise decisions and clarify communications between departments of the Hospital Corporation?

Mr. Bilsky: I know it seems like a simple question, but can I ask for clarification on what is meant there?

Ms. White: In Hansard, they are able to slow down the speed at which I talk. We have very few minutes left so, has the Hospital Corporation thought about creating a review board to supervise decisions and clarify communications between different departments of either Whitehorse General or the Hospital Corporation as a whole?

Mr. Bilsky: To answer the direct question exactly, I would say no, but I'm not sure. If I knew more about what was entailed and what a review board was, I would possibly be able to elaborate on probably what the interest was there or what the intended objective was of a review board, because we may have something that exists or processes that exist in a different format. I'm just not familiar with that.

Ms. White: When the whole discussion around microbiology was happening, the union was saying one thing, people within the lab were saying something else, and the management of the hospital was saying something else. It seems to me that if there was a board within the Hospital Corporation made up of different people from different departments who were able to kind of go through those decisions and be able to break it down and explain it to the other wings, that could be helpful. It was just in those terms.

Mr. Bilsky: Thank you for that clarification. Absolutely — in this particular circumstance, there was a whole team that was put together at a working level to assess the situation, and it took an extensive amount of time to make sure that every angle of this decision was being assessed.

Ms. White: On March 16, 2018, the Information and Privacy Commissioner made recommendations directly to the Hospital Corporation. The Hospital Corporation accepted three out of the four recommendations. The one that wasn't accepted was encouraging — I'm just going to quote it right off the bat.

It says, "(c) in the future, where the Custodian does not seek consent from individuals to disclose personal health information for the purpose of providing them post-partum at-home, follow-up health care, I recommend the Custodian adopt the practice of informing these individuals about the disclosure of their personal health information and their right to refuse consent for the disclosure so that they may exercise control over that information."

This is a case of someone from a community coming in to have a child and information being disclosed without their consent. The Hospital Corporation accepted three out of four of the recommendations, and I just want to know why recommendation C wasn't accepted.

Mr. Bilsky: As I'm sure you can appreciate, this was a complex situation. I won't comment specifically on the details of the case, just to maintain privacy.

Having said that, I believe that the difference we have with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on this particular issue is a difference between a couple of things. One is implied consent versus explicit consent. In this case, the Information and Privacy Commissioner is requesting or recommending explicit consent in every case. In our case, we're saying that there is implied consent. We do communicate with patients about the collection of their

information and making sure that the information is used to care for them within the circle of care of clinicians, and that's what we believe happened in this case.

Along the continuum of care, it's very important that there's an exchange of information, and it wasn't released outside the organizations that were providing care to this individual.

Ms. White: I think the concern is that, if we don't look at the individual situation at all — but if we talk about someone coming into Whitehorse for medical care and they are leaving their community — I'm not looking at this case at all — but if they're coming into Whitehorse for medical care, to not have the care given to them in their community, then transferring that information could actually be a breach of privacy.

When we talk about implied consent as opposed to explicit consent, then it becomes challenging. Is the hospital looking at their procedures as far as whether or not they are getting explicit consent when people come in from communities for medical treatment before that information is disseminated into the community they came from?

Mr. Bilsky: We have assessed the situation, including legal review of these types of situations, and it is our firm belief that we inform our patients of the use of information, how it will be used and where it will be used. It is, in certain circumstances, an implicit consent, and, to be quite frank, when we're unable to transfer information or use information within the circle of care — we'll call it that — it can be quite a barrier to providing care if we're not able to do that in a seamless and effective way.

Ms. White: The last point I'll make is that there are all sorts of reasons why a person from the community could come into Whitehorse for health care, and there are all sorts of jobs they may do in that community. I can understand the concern of the barriers, but there are times where that information being shared could actually create barriers.

My plea to the Hospital Corporation is that we reconsider the difference between implied and explicit consent. The Privacy Commissioner even said it can be as much as there is a sign that says that your information will be shared with medical practitioners — however the sign is — but understanding that, sometimes, sharing that information could actually create barriers, because we could be talking about many different situations.

I will just put that there and, of course, I look forward to the next time that the officials appear in the House.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Seeing the time, I would like to just take a moment to thank Mr. Gillen and, of course, Mr. Bilsky for your time today. I really do appreciate you coming in here — I know this is your second time that you have appeared — and for answering the questions from my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly.

I certainly want to look at advancing our partnerships and look at your key priority areas, and you have highlighted some of that very clearly for us today, as we clearly look at our strained budgets, but we also realize that health care and health models that you do so well at delivering are really

exceptional. You're doing an exceptional job at the hospital — and all the staff there and the partnership and the excellent work. Thank you so much for your honesty today and for your openness and for participating in the discussions today.

Chair: Thank you, Ms. Frost. The witnesses are now excused. Mr. Gillen, you have some parting comments?

Mr. Gillen: I just want to sort of close this. Earlier in my comments, I said that I hoped I had given you some insight to the complex, challenging and sophisticated nature of what we do, and I trust that the comments and the answers to the questions — great questions that were posed to Mr. Bilsky — will enhance that and will give you something to think about, that it is not always crystal clear and cut and dried and that there are so many aspects.

I know that people think that in the hospital, we want to do this, so we can go off and do it. I hope Mr. Bilsky has given you the information — particularly in discussions about the SMU — about the depth of analysis and the depth of planning and the depth of consideration of people's needs and where we are going in the Yukon in terms of that stuff.

That's not just with the SMU; that's almost with everything that we do in the hospital. We plan it out because we have to — because it affects individual Yukoners' health. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: The witnesses are now excused.
Witnesses excused

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

Also, pursuant to Committee of the Whole Motion No. 5, witnesses appeared before Committee of the Whole to discuss matters related to the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following legislative returns were tabled October 18, 2018:

34-2-154

Response to oral question from Mr. White re: home-warranty programs (Streicker)

34-2-155

Response to oral question from Mr. Hassard re: cannabis retail store (Streicker)

34-2-156

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Bill. No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — Yukon Language Centre personnel (McPhee)

The following written question was tabled October 18, 2018:

Written Question No. 29

Re: competition for position of chief coroner (Cathers)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 102

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Monday, October 22, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

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DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 22, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of Visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues in the House today to help me welcome some individuals who are here for our tribute to the Opportunities North conference. I would like to welcome Mr. Peter Turner, president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Kells Boland, first vice-chair of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; and Mr. Philip Fitzgerald, treasurer of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. We also have a visitor from the Northwest Territories, Mr. Liang Chen, director of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce — as well as some very successful and bright business leaders and entrepreneurs: Ms. Luann Baker-Johnson, whom we have had visit us before — it is good to see you again — from Lumel Studios; Mr. Sonny Gray, president of the Yukon Agricultural Association is with us here today; and Mr. Ben Asquith, CEO of Da Daghay. Please help me welcome them here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: I ask my colleagues to please help me welcome individuals who are here today for Foster Family Appreciation Week. I have Marilyn Lawrence, Ellen and Zoran Petrovic and their daughter, Magdalena. We have Sheila Brown, Brian Walker, Ann Smith, Sandi Haryett and her son Jayden, and we have Angela and Seamus Venasse and Terri McCallum. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Opportunities North conference

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, the Yukon Party and the Yukon New Democratic Party to pay tribute to the Opportunities North conference and the conference organizers and the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Edmonton chambers of commerce.

I would like to recognize some of the people involved in organizing the conference and the evening receptions: Mr. Peter Turner, president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Kells Boland, first vice-chair of the Yukon

Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Philip Fitzgerald, treasurer of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Janet Riopel, president and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; Trevor Wever, president of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Liang Chen, director of the Northwest Territories Chambers of Commerce; Renee Comeau, director of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Peter Clarkson, regional director of the Government of the Northwest Territories; Mr. Mike Lalonde, president of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; and Deneen Everett, executive director of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, the Opportunities North conference brings together business, government and community leaders from across the globe to discuss issues affecting the economy. It rotates between Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Edmonton. Fascinating speakers with very different careers and backgrounds will share their experiences, successes and failures. They will inform and inspire a wide range of organizations, from microbusinesses to academic institutions. Even the most dramatic disruptions to society and the economy open up new opportunities and are worthy of exploration and discussion. This is exactly what Opportunities North delegates will explore this week.

Yukon is the perfect setting for this discussion. The territory has the highest percentage of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the country. Many talented Yukoners are bringing a fresh and dynamic approach to entrepreneurship. You can find a large number of them at YuKonstruct's newly opened NorthLight Innovation workspace here in Whitehorse, an incubator for start-ups and entrepreneurs. In fact, Mr. Jaret Slipp, executive director of YuKonstruct, will be participating in the conference, sharing his views on outside-the-box approaches to addressing disruption in business.

We have some exceptional Yukon business owners who will be presenting their experiences and ideas at Opportunities North, for instance. Individuals I welcome today are: Ms. Luann Baker-Johnson, owner of Lumel Studios, a glassblowing microbusiness that has become an integral part of the Whitehorse community for families, youth, the elderly, schools and businesses; Mr. Sonny Gray, CEO of North Star Agriculture — an agricultural-based company based in Whitehorse that aims to provide northerners with locally produced food year-round; and Mr. Ben Asquith, CEO of Da Daghay Development Corporation, which, in partnership, has a portfolio of over 80,000 square feet of commercial and residential properties throughout the city, and leases and develops land in partnership with its shareholders and various other strategic shareholders.

These are just a few of the many Yukon businesses on the agenda and this conference allows us to celebrate them and tell their stories, as well as learn from others around the globe.

The Government of Yukon is delighted to support Opportunities North. We are eager to discuss positive changes and to support projects that benefit Yukoners and the economy. I want to take a moment to thank the many businesses, government and community leaders who have

gathered from inside and outside of the territory to share their experiences.

Applause

In recognition of National Foster Family Appreciation Week

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise in the House today to acknowledge National Foster Family Appreciation Week, which takes place this week from October 21 to 27.

Today I am paying tribute to the 64 Yukon families and the 38 extended family members throughout the Yukon who have chosen to open their hearts and their homes to children whose own families are temporarily unable to look after them. Healthy families are the heart of healthy and strong communities. We celebrate the foster families — the aunts, the uncles, the cousins, the grandmothers — who have stepped forward to open their homes and create a safe and nurturing environment.

Fostering is primarily about helping children to return to their own homes or to move to a new permanent home if necessary. The extended foster family program helps children to maintain contact with their own families and culture. They do not work alone but work as part of a bigger team, which includes the biological family, First Nations, Family and Children's Services staff and other community supports, and they try to provide a stable environment for children. During this very important week, we would like to say how much we've appreciated the great work and services that all these members of our community have contributed to the well-being of our children.

Being a mother myself and a former extended foster parent and extended family caregiver, I know that parenting is challenging and demanding at times, but it brings out the best in all of us and it is very gratifying. I know how hard it is — especially to raise teenagers — but it also makes it all worthwhile in the end when we see our children succeed, knowing that they had the love and the care given to them by such great members of our community.

Family plays a very important role. They are the keepers and transmitters of our culture and language and are what keeps our communities alive and vibrant. This is why opening our homes and the differences you are making are so very important to all of the children who come into our care. The integration of traditional knowledge, practices and cultural teachings and rooting a child in their history and culture are very significant in all the great work that you do.

I'm calling out to everyone who might be interested in becoming a foster parent or who is an extended family member and may be able to help to give Family and Children's Services a call to learn more about the program and hopefully lend some support to the children who are in temporary need.

Foster parents can come from many culturally diverse backgrounds — single, married, same-sex, homeowners or home renters. I believe that an inclusive foster care force is key to healthy family care systems and that all Yukon children deserve the best.

This Friday, Health and Social Services is hosting a special appreciation evening for all Yukon foster families. Again, I would like to thank you all in the gallery and those who are listening at home in Yukon for providing such an important job to Yukon society and to our children. I invite you all to come to the celebration on Friday night in appreciation of all of you for your contribution and for nurturing the next generation of Yukoners. Mahsi'.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the foster families across the Yukon.

It is an admirable thing for families and individuals to open their hearts and homes to children and youth in need. One of the most important things to help foster a child's future is stability, and the care that is provided by foster families is critical to this.

I have heard foster families being referred to as the backbone of our child protection services, and it's true in many ways. A good foster parent will not only provide care and essentials, they provide children and youth with love, guidance, advice and reassurance. Here's a quote from a foster parent: "It is so rewarding to be a foster parent. I get to be a part of someone's life and they get to be a part of mine. I wouldn't change a thing." I can imagine that taking on that role with someone who needs care, love, attention and stability would be a fulfilling and extraordinary journey.

I would like to encourage Yukoners to take a look at their own situations to see if there would be any possibility that they too can join the ranks of Yukon foster parents. Some individuals or families may be able to provide only emergency care and others may be equipped to welcome a child for various amounts of time. Fostering is not a one-size-fits-all program, but rather it can range from respite to long term.

Thank you to all those who have served our communities as foster parents, past and present. There is no greater satisfaction than making a difference in a child's life.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Yukon foster families during National Foster Family Week. It is the concern and love for children that brings foster parents to this challenging yet rewarding job. They open their hearts and homes to provide safety and emotional support to children who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in crisis situations.

Fostering is a way to make sure that kids in our communities always have a safe and loving home to go to. There is no greater place to invest what we can than in the hearts and minds of children. No one says that being a foster parent will always be easy, but ask any of the special people who take on the task and they will all tell you that it's deeply rewarding and that they wouldn't change a thing.

We offer our profound thanks to all those individuals and families throughout Yukon who open up their homes and hearts to children and youth in need of a safe place to land,

because once you give kids that firm place to land, they can move the earth. Thank you.

Applause

In remembrance of Canadian National War Memorial and Parliament terrorist attack

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to pay tribute as we acknowledge the fourth anniversary of the violent and deadly terrorist attack at the Canadian National War Memorial and Parliament in Ottawa in 2014.

Just a few days before the Ottawa attack on October 22, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was also killed by an ISIL-inspired terrorist in Quebec. On the morning of October 22, 2014, 24-year-old Corporal Nathan Cirillo was on the ceremonial sentry duty when he was fatally shot by a gunman at his post by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial, the sacred monument dedicated to all those Canadians who gave their lives in conflicts past, present and future. As Corporal Cirillo stood on duty, his rifle, in accord with standard practice, was unloaded. Shortly before 10:00, the gunman attacked this brave young man and tragically he passed away. The shooter then entered the main Parliament building, where he fired some more shots before he was shot and killed by the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers and RCMP officers.

This terrible event is a reminder of the compassion and courage of Canadians. From civilians to first responders, many people came to Corporal Cirillo's side as he lay at the foot of the National War Memorial fighting for his life. Further, the police and security forces around Ottawa worked above and beyond as the entire city went into lockdown as they tried to understand what had just happened.

This event was also a reminder that Canada is not immune to terrorism. This senseless strategy shook Canadians across this country. The entire city was shut down for a day. Parents were prevented from picking their children up from school as those facilities went into security protocols. Families were prevented from returning to their homes as security forces swept the streets and sections of the city were cut off.

That is the purpose of these attacks: To scare us, to terrorize us and to shake us from our daily lives. We cannot let them do this.

On that note, I would just like to quote from the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in his national address to the nation at the time, who said — and I quote: “But, let there be no misunderstanding. We will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated. In fact, this will lead us to strengthen our resolve and re-double our efforts and those of our national security agencies to take all necessary steps to identify and counter threats and keep Canada safe here at home.”

The next day in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister went on to say — and I quote: “We are here, in our seats, in our chamber, in the very heart of our democracy and our work goes on.”

That is important. One of our country's greatest strengths, Mr. Speaker, is our democracy. Canadians and Yukoners alike

rely on it. It is strong; it is resolute and it must be unbreakable, so showing up in this Legislative Assembly every day matters. We must not let anyone stop us or prevent us from showing up and doing our important work. Despite our political affiliations, we are all Yukoners and we are all Canadians. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau vowed to not let the threats define Canadians. He said that they do not get to change us.

Just to close, I have one final quote. This is from the former Leader of Canada's Official Opposition Thomas Mulcair in response to his attack. He said — and I quote: “We will stand up, and we will stand together. We will preserve, we will persevere, we will prevail, because that is what Canadians have always done together. That is what we do best together.”

It has been four years since the terrorist attack. Two Canadian heroes were tragically killed in their service to our country and we will always remember them, but we have seen the words of our leaders ring true. We have not been intimidated. Our democracy has continued and Canadians persevere.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have for tabling a legislative return that relates to matters from discussions on a ministerial statement on cannabis legalization on October 16.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the development of a climate change, energy and green economic strategy that sets out a coordinated approach to climate, energy and economic planning.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to encourage recycling of cannabis packaging by establishing a recycling surcharge and refund system similar to beverage containers.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to hit the pause button on Bill No. 27, the *Coroners Act*, and conduct meaningful consultation on the text of the bill prior to

proceeding with further debate with people and groups including:

- (1) the Child and Youth Advocate;
- (2) Yukon Medical Association;
- (3) Yukon Registered Nurses Association;
- (4) Volunteer Ambulance Services Society;
- (5) Emergency Medical Services staff and volunteers;
- (6) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;
- (7) former Yukon chief coroners;
- (8) community coroners;
- (9) families who have had personal experience dealing with the Coroner's Service;
- (10) First Nation governments;
- (11) municipal governments; and
- (12) the general public.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal-provincial-territorial status of women meetings

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Last week, it was my honour to represent the Yukon as we hosted the 36th federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women. The last time Yukon hosted was in 2002. I was very pleased to be able to hold last week's meeting on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün and the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

As we had done last year, we met with national indigenous leaders and representatives prior to the official Status of Women ministers meeting. Indigenous leaders told us about how their communities are leading change and the need for partnerships at all levels of government. They spoke about racism and the police, the sex trade and the need to keep our children safe at home. They told us about economic opportunities and grassroots projects being developed by indigenous people for indigenous people. We travelled to Carcross, where we met with Yukon First Nation women leaders who spoke about the impressive work taking place in their communities.

The official Status of Women ministers meeting touched on many issues of importance to women in the north, including gender-based violence and meaningful engagement with our indigenous partners both locally and nationally. One of the highlights of the meeting was adopting a common set of gender equality indicators that will allow us to clearly measure and track where Canada is doing well and where we have outstanding gaps with respect to gender equality. We also collectively agreed to create a dedicated access to funding task team focused on identifying ways to increase access to funding for organizations working for gender equality and making information on various existing funding programs more accessible.

I have heard from local organizations about the need to improve access to funding. Our government has taken the initiative to leverage resources at different levels of

government to support the critical work of equality-seeking organizations. I was proud last week when, together with Canada, we announced over \$1.6 million in joint funding for three Yukon indigenous women's organizations: the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. We also identified further opportunities to support other equality-seeking organizations in Yukon to access new federal funding programs.

Another focus of the meeting was women's economic empowerment. We discussed research related to the gender pay gap across the country so we can consistently track women's economic well-being and pay equity. I will co-chair this task team with Canada. As a result of our discussions, Yukon will be taking part in several other task teams in the coming year, including one on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. As well, one of the joint decisions was to create a team to explore mechanisms and initiatives on human trafficking. Yukon will share the excellent work of the Yukon Status of Women Council and their research on the northern sex trade.

Some of the most interesting discussions took place around sharing best practices, which provided an opportunity to hear about innovative programs and initiatives across the country. I was proud to share the information on community safety planning in First Nation communities throughout the Yukon. We believe that the key to making lasting change is by supporting community-driven initiatives that have buy-in and participation from the grassroots level.

While ministers and senior officials are in touch throughout the year, these face-to-face meetings are invaluable. They allow us focused time to discuss issues in-depth and to arrive at decisions together. The work we do together makes a real difference in the lives of women throughout the country, and we're proud of that.

Ms. McLeod: I would like to thank the minister for updating us on the federal-provincial-territorial meetings on the status of women last week.

I did have some questions about what was discussed at the meeting that the minister did not really mention in her remarks. The communiqué that the minister signed off on from the meeting says that she has agreed to address human trafficking as an immediate issue and a priority area of concern. I'm surprised to not see that overtly addressed in the minister's statement.

As you know, the issue of human trafficking and the sex trade has come up in Yukon previously. A CBC story from January of this year, entitled "Sex trade 'alive and well' in Yukon, researcher says after 3-year project" shed some light on this very important issue. Here is a quote from that story: "It's becoming more common and widespread for women to sell sex to cover basic necessities like food, shelter and transportation in Yukon..." It was really quite a disturbing to hear, and I encourage the minister to read it if she hasn't a chance to do so yet. The story quotes the project researcher as saying: "Most of the time, they don't see any of the profits, they don't have any control over their lives'..."

‘They’re just used and then tossed aside when they’re used up, when they’re no longer young and pretty, or when they’re too strung out’... ‘They’re just tossed out like some thing, rather than a person.’” For those who are listening today and who have not read this story, that quote is referring to the women who are working in the sex trade in Yukon.

I and many Yukoners were shocked to hear these things about our community. That these things could go on right underneath our noses is very upsetting. No one should have to live in these conditions, Mr. Speaker. It is completely unacceptable.

If the minister, in her response, could update us as to what her government is doing to combat human trafficking and the sex trade here in the territory, I would appreciate that. Has there been more funding and resources provided to address these issues? Has the minister done any analysis to see if the \$80,000 cut that her government made to the Yukon women’s equality fund has had any negative impact on the resources that are provided or available to women in these terrible situations?

Thank you, once again, to the minister for her statement, and I look forward to her answers to these questions.

Ms. White: We thank the minister for her reflection on the broad range of subjects discussed at last week’s 36th federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women. One of the ongoing challenges facing women since the federal status of women’s council was created almost 50 years ago is that, despite repeated statements of best intentions at various federal, provincial and territorial meetings over the years, change has been slow to happen on the ground.

We appreciate the minister’s commitment as stated in her release to address and do yet further research on the gender pay gap. We hope that this will include a review of the decades of research and outcome of successful legal cases that somehow have still not resulted in closing that pay gap. We look forward to the day when the minister can confirm that gender-based analysis is one of the primary lenses applied to the development of all Yukon government policies, along with measurable outcomes associated with that analytical framework — then perhaps the minister will be in a better position to explain how various funding announcements and government programs actually affect the on-the-ground outcomes in terms of the lived experience of both women and girls throughout the territory.

Similarly, while we are pleased to see the recognition of the importance of the work led by Charlotte Hrenchuk from the Yukon Status of Women Council about the realities of human trafficking and the sex trade in northern Canada, we look forward to hearing about the measures being taken by the Yukon and federal governments to address the findings of both the Yukon and other major research initiatives across the country on this important subject matter.

The Yukon setting for this federal-provincial-territorial meeting provided an opportunity to focus on the unique challenges and solutions that Yukon women’s groups, both

indigenous and non-indigenous, have and are developing in response to the very real, systemic issues such as poverty, inadequate housing, substance abuse and violence.

We look forward to the ongoing reports from the minister on the measures used by this government to demonstrate how the commitments made last week at this national conference will be implemented in Yukon and, importantly, how these same commitments materially affect the lives of women and girls in the Yukon now and into the future.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I thank my colleagues from across the way for their thoughts, for sure. I know that we in this House share the goal of advancing gender equality and improving the lives of women and girls in Yukon and across Canada. I think that we are absolutely more effective when we work together in partnership with grassroots organizations and across all governments. I think that was very, very evident in our meetings that we had last week. I’ll address some of the direct questions that my colleagues have raised specifically around human trafficking.

This was a huge topic of discussion during our deliberations last week and was of keen interest to all of us across the country — very timely, given the work around the northern sex trade report — and, yes, I will confirm to the member opposite that I am very aware of the issue, I have studied it, I have read the reports, I have watched the documentaries and I have taken the time to understand the issue — absolutely.

This is why we have agreed to work with the task team with the Status of Women Council over the next year to really put action behind this issue across Canada. It is a huge issue and one that is directly related to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country. So we are well aware, and I thank the member opposite for emphasizing that, and I hope that we all take the time to really, truly understand the issues that our communities are facing.

In terms of the women’s funding, we created a new fund — IWEF, or Indigenous Women’s Equality fund — last year. We are attempting to create more equality among women’s groups. There are huge opportunities for funding, and we will work with our partners and NGOs to leverage funding going forward for all of our equality-seeking groups in Yukon.

The gender-based analysis — there are specific working groups that will be working on this. We made huge strides in our discussions. In the communiqué we talked about the adoption of the common set of gender equality indicators and the collaborative portal approach for sharing gender-based analysis. We have been doing work around this since 2015 with the launch of our website. The approach with Canada now really lines up and will be a huge advancement for Yukon.

As I mentioned, this was the first time that Yukon hosted the meeting since 2002. Yukon was in the queue in 2015 and I’m not sure why the government chose not to proceed with that. We were so honoured to host all of our colleagues from across the country. It gave us a chance to really highlight the great work that is being done here in our territory and the local

organizations that are providing critical advocacy, support and leadership that breaks down barriers and empowers Yukon women and girls.

This FPT meeting — we hosted the entire conference in traditional ceremony, and I wanted to highlight that just as we wrap up the discussion. It set a different tone. I really thank my colleagues for the discussion.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding to Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding a remark made and two points of order raised during Question Period on Thursday, October 18, 2018.

During last Thursday's Question Period, in his response to a question from the Member for Lake Laberge regarding health care funding, the Premier said: "I will not use the term 'fearmongering' because that would be out of order..." There are three issues to be addressed with regard to the Premier's statement.

First, a review of Hansard reveals that the term "fearmongering" has a history of some use in this Assembly. Its use has, at times, led members to raise points of order. In those cases where the Chair has ruled the use of the word out of order, it is usually the case that the word has been directed by one member toward another member regarding a specific statement by that member. Such rulings not only address the issue of unparliamentary language but also advise members against personalizing debate.

On other occasions, the Chair has intervened without a point of order being raised to advise a member not to use the term. At yet other times, the use of the word has elicited no comment from the Chair or from the floor.

Briefly — for the record — to the best of my recollection and after a quick review of Hansard with the able assistance of Mr. Clerk, I do not believe I have provided an opinion or ruling on the term "fearmongering" in the 34th Legislature, but my memory is by no means flawless.

So it is not the case that there is a single, standard response to the use of the word. As the Chair said to the House in a statement of April 10 of this year, "The role of the Chair is not to police a specific list of words or phrases; the role of the Chair is to maintain order during the proceedings."

As the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* says on page 619: "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day. The codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical as it is the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used.

Expressions that are considered unparliamentary when applied to the individual Member have not always been considered so when applied 'in a generic sense' or to a party."

The second issue to be addressed is the manner in which the Premier used the word "fearmongering". In the statement on April 10, the Chair reminded the House of the well-established parliamentary principle that members "cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly." It is not orderly for a member to use what they perceive to be an unparliamentary expression in the midst of a sentence where the member is claiming to not use it. The Chair would advise the Premier and other members to refrain from doing so in the future.

Finally, in saying that he would not use the term "fearmongering" because that would be out of order, the Premier prejudged how the Chair would rule. The Chair will therefore take this opportunity to remind members that, while they may raise points of order, it is up to the Chair to make the rulings.

The Member for Lake Laberge also raised two points of order during last Thursday's Question Period. Both had to do with statements made by the Premier. In both cases the Member for Lake Laberge asserted that the context in which the Premier used the words "misleading" and "inaccuracies" amounted to a violation of Standing Order 19(h).

Standing Order 19(h) says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member... charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood."

The Chair ruled at the time that the words uttered by the Premier did not contravene Standing Order 19(h). However, the Chair also committed to review the record. Upon further review, the Chair is still of the opinion that the Premier's words did not violate Standing Order 19(h). However, in ruling on the first point of order, the Chair also said that the Premier's comments were close to contravening said Standing Order. The Chair would advise members that it is their responsibility to ensure their statements and their intent are clear when they initially address a matter, rather than offering a clarification during discussion on the point of order.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention to this statement.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Cathers: Last week, we asked the Premier about the leaked memo from the deputy minister of Finance that shows that Cabinet directed each department to find cuts of up to two percent in their O&M budget, and we asked what that means for the hospital.

We were asking a straightforward and important question, but, at the time, the Premier dodged the question and seemed to lose his temper. The Premier has had the weekend to think about it, so we're going to ask again.

Cabinet instructed each department to find cuts of up to two percent. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What I will not rule out is this government making decisions based on evidence and planning. What I will not rule out is us projecting O&M and capital expenses over a five-year schedule as opposed to one year at a time. We will make sure that we have all major budget items to the mains. We will leave supplementary budgets for unseen expenses, and we will continue to find efficiencies to make sure that uncontrolled, unsubstantiated and unsupported growth in departments gets curbed so that we can make sure that we find efficiencies as opposed to growing the expenses of this government without growing the revenues to counter that growth.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has very carefully avoided answering that question directly. It certainly sounds like he's considering cuts to the hospital. This is an important issue. Last week, the House found out that the wait time for cataract surgery is now roughly three years long. We're hoping to get a straight and clear answer from the Premier on this issue.

The CBC revealed a leaked document showing that the Liberal Cabinet has directed all departments to find cuts of up to two percent. We're giving an opportunity to answer a very clear, straightforward question. Again, will the Premier rule out any cuts to the hospital budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The way in which the leaked document is being analyzed by the member opposite is quite interesting, and I'll let Yukoners read that document to see exactly what it says. If the members opposite believe the only thing that we can do — the only thing that we can do — to reduce the growing rate of a department is to make cuts, well, maybe Yukoners are happy they're in opposition, because there are more things that we can do than cut programs and services if we're going to, again, decrease the growth of these departments.

The members opposite make it seem like we're cutting budgets. No, what we're doing is we are reducing the increasing costs of those departments. It's pretty easy for Yukoners who run businesses to realize that you don't have to cut programs and services to reduce the growing rate of spending in departments. You can look for efficiencies. We forecasted certain deficits, and the reality is that those forecasts are reducing because of these efficiencies.

So again, I want to thank all of the departments for their whole-of-government approach when it comes to looking at efficiencies. We talk about them all the time. We make certain references to certain efficiencies. The Yukon Party just will not listen to it and they believe that all we can do is make cuts.

Mr. Cathers: Again, the Premier is running into the problem that, once again, his talking points are contradicted by the facts — in this case, a memo that is available online for all Yukoners to see from his own Department of Finance.

The pressures on our health care system are growing. This is an important issue. Again, we're asking for a straight, clear answer from the Premier. The Liberals instructed all departments to find cuts of up to two percent. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the hospital budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would offer that the member opposite's speaking points counter reality. The reality is that this government believes that the departments can look internally and find efficiencies to make sure that programs and services don't get cut. The Yukon Party is the only one talking about cuts. They are talking about it over and over again. We talk about growing efficiencies when it comes to visual identity; they say that we're growing government. It is just simply incorrect. When we get these efficiencies, we are showing them again — visual identity is a great example of us finding an efficiency that will reduce the cost of every department, yet that is being countered by a narrative that is hard to follow actually.

We will continue to find efficiencies. We will continue to reduce the growth of the departments, we will do it by finding efficiencies, and the Yukon Party will try to convince Yukoners that they think only cuts are going to make the cut.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. McLeod: We are asking the Premier a question that is very important to Yukoners. He is accountable to this Legislative Assembly, and we would hope that he would just, for once, give a straightforward answer.

The Liberals told all departments to find up to two-percent cuts. Any Yukoner can find the proof of this in the leaked letter from the Deputy Minister of Finance.

Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we are getting close to contravening the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly — asking the exact same question over and over. Just because the members opposite do not like the answer to the question does not mean that I am not giving an answer to the question.

The Yukon Party believes that the only thing we can do to do better than them is to cut programs and services. That is just simply not true. We can look at efficiencies. We can make sure that every single department reduces the amount of growth. It is called "increasing at a decreasing rate". I will explain it to the members opposite. But again, I don't think they are listening to the answers anyway, so it would be an exercise that would not gain any traction.

We will continue to answer the question. We are focusing in on efficiencies. The Yukon Party wants us to make cuts. We are going to focus in on efficiencies and try to make sure that we can sustain the programs and services that Yukoners have come to enjoy in the north.

Ms. McLeod: Yukoners expect the Premier to show up in this House and answer questions that matter to them. The wait-list for cataract surgery has grown to three years long. The Liberal government told all departments to find up to two percent in cuts. Such a cut would have a negative impact on these wait-lists. This is not a trick question, so could the Premier please put politics aside and just answer it?

Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we keep on answering the question. We are going to continue to look for efficiencies.

We have to make sure that our government stops growing at this rate because the revenue that we gather — the own-source revenue that we gather — is not enough to sustain the situation that we are left with from the Yukon Party. So we are going to commit to this to Yukoners: We will manage our finances differently from the previous government, a government that was on a spending spree.

Yukoners are not interested in this irresponsible approach to running the territory. We will continue to look for efficiencies.

Again, answering the question, to reduce spending you have to look at efficiencies first — the human hours that went into processes, the duplication of services, the overtime required for a government that previously used politically motivated decisions as opposed to evidence-based decision-making. I'm going to stand behind this approach, and I believe that Yukoners support this approach and support this work.

Ms. McLeod: The lack of accountability that the Premier is showing is disappointing. Yukoners expect him to answer questions about the decisions he and his government are making. He's the Finance minister. His deputy minister wrote all departments and told them to find up to two-percent cuts in their O&M budgets. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will start with the fact that members opposite — the Yukon Party — are simply incorrect as to what the content of that letter actually says to begin with. Let's ask the Yukon Party to put politics aside because they're even misquoting the leaked document; however, we will talk about what we are doing here. Improving capital planning is one of the main reasons that this government was able to table a fiscal plan that includes only a small deficit this year, much smaller than forecasted in the 2017 budget.

In recent years, the source of recoveries has predominantly been federal infrastructure funding programs. Through our strategic use of external funding, our government is intending to return this government to surplus in the 2020-21 fiscal year. That's what Yukoners expect of us. Yukoners agree and support the work we are doing and we intend to deliver on that promise.

Question re: Mine closure security

Ms. Hanson: Two weeks ago, in a rather unusual move, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced the sale of Wolverine mine in this Legislative Assembly. This is a mine that went under after only three years in operation, leaving many Yukon businesses receiving cents on the dollar for work done for Wolverine mine. This same mine was fined for violating the *Quartz Mining Act* less than a year ago and this same mine still owes the Yukon government \$25 million as a security deposit for environmental remediation. The jobs this mine created were short-term. They are now long gone and there is no guarantee that Yukoners won't be on the hook for the mess left behind.

What lessons has this government learned from the short-lived operations at Wolverine mine, and does the minister

have a plan to ensure Yukoners actually benefit from this mine's operation if the sale goes through?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for a very good question.

Just a bit of background — in July 2018, the Government of Yukon informed Yukon Zinc Corp. that if it did not undertake the water treatment and water management measures required to reduce the risks on the Wolverine mine site, the Government of Yukon would take on these urgent works, financed by the company's security funds. Yukon Zinc Corp. has not taken these actions, so the Government of Yukon commenced risk-reduction urgent works on this site on October 3 and these actions include constructing a water treatment system to treat water from the underground mine portal and make repairs.

First of all, as we talk about the future of security in the Yukon, I want to thank the Government of British Columbia and the deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources there. They have invited our mines team to the table. We are now working free of charge; there is no cost to us. They have invited us to the table as the BC government looks at how they will identify security and reduce risk for governments on major mine projects. I am happy to continue to answer questions as we go through the other two supplementaries.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, keeping to the Wolverine mine, we understand the Wolverine mine has posted \$10.5 million of its owed security deposit, and as the Minister said, the Yukon government is already planning to use \$6.5 million of it to increase the water treatment capacity at the site. Mr. Speaker, this mine is fully flooded, with the tailings pond filled above what is permitted in its water licence.

Wolverine mine is in temporary closure under the *Quartz Mining Act* and in permanent closure under its water licence. The former operator still owes \$25 million to Yukoners for its security deposit. At what point will the potential new owner of this mine be expected to pay the \$25-million security deposit Wolverine mine owes Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, first I will touch on the fact that the member opposite from Kluane touched on this and now it's the Leader of the Third Party. To the first question, we had individuals with the Yukon's incorporation, as well as individuals who walked into the government the day that I was asked by the Member for Copperbelt South some questions on Wolverine, and essentially said, "We are the new owners of the Yukon Zinc project." So later that day, I was asked a question and I said yes, there seemed to be new owners.

Well, what we have heard from Yukon Zinc since then is that they are still working through the end of the deal. So with the new owners, on conclusion of that ownership deal, what we will see is our technical team at Energy, Mines and Resources — which is fantastic — leading a discussion with the company to move to receive the funds that we are still missing. This is a long story. The chronological order starts in about 2012 and certainly I was early on the job. It was

December 30, 2016, when I saw the first numbers come back on this project.

We will strive to get the money back, and the key in the Yukon is to make sure that these situations do not happen anymore. We will continue to work with the BC government and continue to look at our own systems to make sure that we have the proper security in place.

Ms. Hanson: The members on this side are very familiar with this history — that is why we are asking the questions. The minister's lack of clarity is cold comfort to Yukoners. We are not talking about a model corporate citizen here. We are talking about a mine operator who left Yukon businesses out millions of dollars and left an environmental mess, while shortchanging the government on its security deposit.

Yukoners are right to ask for guarantees before a new owner can take over. Unlike Faro or Mount Nansen, the federal government will not be footing the bill for this mess. The Yukon government is now responsible for these decisions. Little has changed in how this government oversees the mining industry since the previous Wolverine mine fiasco. As the mine is about to change hands, it is hard to see how Yukon is better protected than it was when the mine first opened.

What specifically is the minister doing to ensure Yukoners will not be left with an even bigger financial and environmental liability when a new owner takes over Wolverine mine?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just when I am about to commend the Leader of the Third Party for some great questions, and then it's a dig at the end.

First of all, what we're going to do is we're going to get the right number of what it takes to clean this up. Certainly, we didn't have that number. There were millions and millions of dollars that were not calculated. Some of my friends across the way know this file well. That is the first thing. The second thing we're going to do is have active conversations with the company that hopefully has the funds to pay for it so Yukoners are not on the hook. We're going to ensure, in the short term, that we use the security that is in place, because the health and safety of Yukoners comes first, beyond anything that we're doing. That is what we'll do.

With a commitment to Yukoners moving forward as we see this sector grow, we're going to ensure that we have the right protocols in place and the right ability to calculate so that we don't see Yukoners on the hook. This is something that I inherited in month one. I'm going to work through it, but certainly I don't think that we've done anything since coming into government — or the team I get to work with — that would say that it is the days of the past when it comes to some of these liabilities that we have seen. We're trying to make sure we have the right policies in place so we don't see those situations occur again.

Question re: Diabetes statistics

Ms. White: The prevalence of diabetes is on the rise across Canada. In fact, Canada has the highest rates of

diabetes among 34 developed countries. More than three million Canadians have diabetes, both type 1 and type 2.

We've been asking for many years, including to this minister, for a clear picture of the number of people in Yukon who have been diagnosed with diabetes, but have never received a clear answer.

Does the minister now have accurate statistics on the prevalence of type 1 and type 2 diabetes for all Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the great question. With respect to comprehensive data, what I can say is that Health and Social Services has been working with the Canadian Institute of Health Information to acquire detailed information on the data that has been collected for generations, but we have never really analyzed here in Yukon. At the moment, I'm not able to give the specific number. I would be happy to provide that once we get the information.

Taking into consideration the pressures that we're seeing with diabetes and the rise of diabetes, we are working through the comprehensive process to address the concerns that are brought to our attention and ensuring that we provide the necessary supports to individuals through a collaborative care model working with our health professionals. We will ensure that, as we evolve as a government and we look at our health priorities and initiatives on policy direction, we will look at that as a key priority. It is a priority, as everyone realizes. There are many pressures, that being one.

We have made some minor adjustments early on with the concerns that have been brought to our attention with children, ensuring that children are provided the necessary supports, as they have been experiencing some health challenges.

Ms. White: It is important that someone has these numbers. I was hopeful that the Minister of Health and Social Services would actually have them.

Diabetes is a growing health concern across Canada and has huge implications for long-term health planning. Appropriate treatment and management of diabetes can prevent or delay serious complications, including: heart disease, kidney disease, blindness and nerve damage. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease, and this can lead to end-stage kidney disease and the need for dialysis. Institutional hemodialysis is not available in Yukon. The CEO of the Hospital Corporation indicated that the numbers don't indicate the need for this type of hemodialysis services in the territory.

If we don't have the numbers of individuals with diabetes or kidney disease, then how do we know if we have reached a threshold for institutional hemodialysis?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say is that the information that we have available to us — what I have at my fingertips right now — is the information that we have with respect to pediatric chronic diseases relating to diabetes that has been brought to our attention and that we have addressed. Health and Social Services is clearly working with families and children who have chronic conditions such as diabetes, ensuring that we provide them with the supports.

As I indicated, we are working with our partners. We are working with the Canadian Institute of Health Information to get the numbers, get the data and quantify the need for the programming. We certainly see it as a priority. There is no doubt about the fact that the health and individuals with diabetes in the Yukon, especially in rural Yukon communities — it is really essential that we provide them the services and supports that they require. That is why this government is taking a collaborative approach to health care, working with our partners and the medical profession to ensure that all patients in the Yukon have the services and supports that they need, within reason, of course. As we evolve as a government and as we look at collaborative health care and the comprehensive review, we will take those things under advisement and consideration in our rural hospitals and with our health centres.

Ms. White: Still no number — not even on the threshold required for hemodialysis. Mr. Speaker, Yukoners have had to permanently move away from Yukon in order to receive hemodialysis in a hospital in Vancouver. We know individuals who have had to quit their jobs, sell their homes and leave this territory, which is a tragedy. Most are not even able to return for a visit because not everyone is able to maintain themselves through in-home dialysis. When we look across Canada, Yukon and Nunavut are the only jurisdictions without institutional hemodialysis. Even the Northwest Territories has hemodialysis available in both Yellowknife and Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that Yukoners must leave their jobs, their homes and often their families in order to survive due to the lack of institutional hemodialysis. Will the minister please explain what the threshold needs to be for Yukon Hospital Corporation to offer hemodialysis at the hospital?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I certainly respect the member opposite and the questions that are put on the floor of the House today. The hemodialysis threshold and the work that is being done right now with our partners will determine where we land in the future around the services that are critical and essential to the health and well-being of our partners.

What the department is doing is ensuring that the patients who come to the Department of Health and Social Services are provided the supports they need. Whether it is here in the Yukon or Outside, the service is provided. Ideally, we would like to have the services offered in our communities and in our Whitehorse hospital. That is not possible at the moment. It is certainly something that we will work toward and will work with our partners to ensure that we provide the best possible support to all Yukoners where they reside, and with those supports, we hope in the future that will happen.

With respect to specific numbers, Mr. Speaker, I don't have those numbers at my fingertips, but I will be happy to provide the member opposite the information as I acquire the information.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Kent: We are really just hoping for a straightforward answer to a straightforward question. What we know is that the Liberals have asked all departments to find up to two-percent cuts.

What we want to know is if the Premier will rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: You can only cry wolf so many times before the village stops listening to you.

What I will do is I will talk about the efficiencies that we have already been talking about — let's say, improving capital planning, for example. It is one of the main reasons why this government was able to table a fiscal plan that includes running only small deficits this year — much smaller than forecasted in the budget of 2017 — and returning to surplus over the coming years. Along with our response to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, our government's approach to capital planning will serve this territory well now and into the future.

In recent years, the source of the recoveries has predominantly been federal infrastructure programming, and we continue to take advantage of federal infrastructure programs and funding moving forward. Despite an increasing net financial position, we will not allow our territory — our infrastructure — to fall behind and into disrepair and strain those governments that come after us.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to find efficiencies. We are going to continue to reduce the forecasted deficit and finally get this government running into a surplus moving forward so that next generations of Yukoners can continue to enjoy the programs and services that the Yukon Party is trying to convince people are going to be cut.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. Van Bibber: We are going to be persistent on this topic today — if the Premier could just please answer the question.

His government, in the leaked document, asked all departments to find up to two-percent cuts. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We keep on hearing from the Yukon Party narratives that just simply are factually incorrect. We heard it with substitute teachers last week — somehow connecting this leaked document to the substitutes. We heard it with carbon pricing and with diapers, and we hear it again now with the Yukon Party. This is a great way to get them through a Legislative Assembly when we have a hot economy and low unemployment — when they just keep on asking the same question over and over again. I don't know if they expect me to say something else, other than the fact that the Yukon Party thinks all we can do is cut programs and services. We think that we have a whole bunch more tools in our tool belt and we will use those. We have already shown examples of using those tools in our tool belt.

Again, infrastructure investment, partnering with the federal government, leading to healthy and vibrant

communities, while reducing the annual budget — I think this is something that Yukoners are proud to see happening in the Yukon. What we keep hearing when our phones ring off the hook is: “Yes, please, find efficiencies. Yes, departments are growing at a rate that is not sustainable. Please do something about that.” We have committed to Yukoners — and so we will.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Istchenko: I am going to try this again, because this is an important question and one that the Premier should be willing to answer on the floor of this House.

Wait times are getting worse for certain procedures such as cataract surgery — that is a fact. Chemotherapy treatments are getting more expensive — that is a fact. The Liberals have instructed all departments to find up to two-percent cuts.

Will the Premier just answer the question? Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don’t think this is playing out as well as the members opposite think that it will. I would expect Yukoners would say, “If you have all these questions, you should probably ask a few more than just one a day.”

We have a four-pronged approach when it comes to the Financial Advisory Panel. This government is going to address near- and medium-term options from the panel. The results of the impact of the financial forecast of these activities will be reflected as we go forward through the main estimates. We will be doing a comprehensive review of health and social programs. We believe that delivering high-quality health care programs and services that meet the needs of Yukoners and enhance the lives of Yukoners is extremely important, and this review will provide us with the direction to improve programs and services so that they can be delivered in an effective and sustainable way. I don’t see the word “cuts” in here at all actually, and it’s really too bad that the Yukon Party is bringing not necessarily an A game to the Legislative Assembly by asking the same question over and over again when we keep on saying to Yukoners what our four-pronged approach is — long term, short term, five-year capital plan and performance plans. We are doing so much more for consultation. We are doing so much more for Yukoners, and I think that those efforts are appreciated, so we make sure that we don’t cut programs and services, and instead we find the efficiencies so that we can keep those programs and services that Yukoners have come to expect.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call the House to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Kent: When we left off debate last week, we were having some discussion with the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, and I have a few other questions for her this afternoon to start things off. I have additional questions for the Premier on some IGR and USMCA questions following our briefing last week. We will have some Highways and Public Works questions and a few Education questions before I turn it over to colleagues that have questions about other departments that won’t be coming up for individual debate.

I just wanted to turn the minister’s attention to some of the programs that are being offered under Yukon Housing Corporation. I am just trying to get a sense of where the expenditures are at, if the programs are expected to be fully subscribed to — or oversubscribed or undersubscribed to — this year.

We will start with the home-repair loan program. It is on page 20-8 of the main estimates. The estimate for 2018-19 is \$1.7 million. Is that full amount expected to be expended this year, or are you looking at additional funds being required or perhaps less funds? I go back to the comparable items in the budget, and the 2016-17 actual was \$798,000 and the 2017-18 forecast was \$1.764 million. The \$1.7 million is just slightly under that.

Can the minister update the House on where we are at with respect to expenditures in that program so far in this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I just want to comment on and again remind the Legislative Assembly — the members here and anybody listening as well — the reasons why we are not calling all of the departments for debate in Committee of the Whole during this supplementary budget session of the Fall Sitting. If there are no budgetary increases in expenditures, there is nothing to debate.

In the context of the parliamentary model of the Legislative Assembly, we would get through a Committee of the Whole debate on the department and, at the end of the day, we would have to vote on those increases. If there are no increases, what would you be voting on? This is part of our attempt to make sure that all of our main considerations are done in the mains and our supplementary budgets are used for unforeseen expenses. I am very proud to say that we have committed to that and that is going to continue moving forward.

With that being said, Mr. Chair, it is a different approach for this government. If you take a look at previous governments, this hasn't necessarily always been so. We are trying to accommodate the opposition parties by having all of the ministers available to answer questions now during general debate. Again, I just thought it was important to reiterate the reason why it is not just a general rule that Committee of the Whole would debate every single department, especially if you are making sure that your supplementary budgets are used for what supplementary budgets are supposed to be used for, and that is, again, those unforeseen circumstances. So if it pleases the opposition, I will cede the floor to the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation to answer the specific question as well.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the question around the home-building loan program, perhaps a little note for those who may not understand, Yukon Housing Corporation owns a grant program that is there to help support the development of quality, affordable housing stock that meets the needs of all Yukoners. Because each Yukon community is unique and different, we look at housing needs, programs and services, and then we design flexibility responsive to the needs of each individual community and the unique circumstances of some of the communities that are not able to access some of the more conventional financing methodologies that are there and available to them, be it through conventional financing or some of our other initiatives through Yukon Housing Corporation.

The loan program helps Yukoners — homeowners and landowners — buy, build and fix their homes. Our grant helps to increase affordable rental housing stocks throughout the Yukon by providing capital grants to developers, contractors, individuals and community organizations. These grants and loans can help to diversify our housing markets, working in collaboration with our municipalities, First Nations and private developers. The various loan programs are for Yukoners who need to buy, build or fix their homes and are, as indicated, having trouble getting conventional financing from various banks.

We are working to improve the loans program and learning a lot about that and looking at the deficiencies with our partners as well — the partners being the lending agents. As a note, we are looking at expanding our loans program. We are looking at ensuring that we provide opportunities for all Yukoners. On the question specific to the homebuilding loan program, we are currently on track to spend the budget this fiscal year, but we are looking at opportunities to expand that, as well, in order to address and the meet the needs of all Yukoners, looking at housing challenges currently faced by Yukoners.

Mr. Kent: Could the minister just clarify — sorry; are they looking at expanding the budget amount for this year or are they looking to spend to the budget amount within this revised program that she was talking about?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Currently, we have 22 repair loans approved. At the end of September, our objective is to stay within the budget to the end of the year. My note was that we are looking at other programs and initiatives that I noted previously in the Legislative Assembly around our partnership-build initiative and other opportunities to ensure that we address the needs of Yukoners by not just staying within the loans program but by trying expand the scope and allow broader opportunities for unincorporated communities and indigenous communities that have never historically had access to funding.

Mr. Kent: Moving over to the first mortgage loan — it is on 20-9 of the main estimates — again, it is budgeted at \$4 million for the entire fiscal year. Can the minister tell us how much has been spent on the first mortgage loan so far this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To my understanding, we've spent just over \$2 million.

Mr. Kent: I'm going to continue along that same line of questioning. I will include the next two programs that are under capital as well. There is \$500,000 budgeted for the down payment assistance loan and \$1.25 million for the owner-build loan. Can the minister let us know how much has been spent on both of those line items so far this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As noted, when we're speaking about specific items in the budget specifically related to projects within Yukon Housing Corporation, the member opposite should know that I don't have direct access to these numbers as I don't have my technical staff with me, but I will give some general information from my knowledge and what I've been briefed on.

With respect to the \$500,000 and \$1.25 million — the owner-build loan program — we spent just over \$1.1 million.

Mr. Kent: I can appreciate that those numbers wouldn't be at the minister's fingertips, but if she could commit to getting us exact numbers on expenditures so far. Rather than go through the other programs — we've talked about home-repair loan program, first mortgage down payment assistance, owner-build — there are a number of other projects, including a municipal matching rental construction that are going through, developer loan and a number of other ones that are on 20-10 of the mains.

If the minister could just commit to getting us, via letter or legislative return, a summary of how much has been spent so far this fiscal year in those various programs that are offered by the Housing Corporation, it would be helpful for us to communicate to our constituents.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to commit that I will attempt to get the numbers for the member.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. That concludes the questions that I had for Yukon Housing Corporation. Some of my colleagues may have questions later on in the day before we turn the floor over to the Third Party at the end of the day.

However, I wanted to ask a few questions of the Premier — I guess he has his Executive Council Office hat on when answering these ones — with respect to the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement* and the briefing that we had last week, as well as some intergovernmental relations questions.

The one I am going to start with is with respect to the staking bans that are in place in the Ross River and the Liard First Nation areas. I am just wondering if the Premier can provide us with any updates on those staking bans. If the government is actively engaged in meetings with the First Nations, when was the last meeting held and when is the next one scheduled to be held? Obviously we would hope for an idea of a timetable to resolve this. I note that the bans were recently extended and I don't have the extension dates at hand, so perhaps if the Premier has them he could let us know when those two staking bans are scheduled to come off and hopefully, obviously, we get some resolution on identifying lands within those traditional territories that won't be available for staking and, just as important, lands that will be available for staking going forward.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Concerning the moratorium on staking in the southeast part of the Yukon, which I believe the member opposite is referring to, we continue to have discussions. It is not a scenario where there is a once-every-six-months meeting. Our Energy, Mines and Resources teams are consistently in discussions with Liard First Nation, even as of last week, I believe, if not the week before, and I know we have meetings set with Liard in early November. As well, we continue to have our ongoing dialogue with Ross River.

We will continue to have those discussions. They have put a number of priorities on the table. We have committed to a holistic approach as a government, directed by the Premier, where we are having discussions on a number of items, so not just on lifting the moratorium but ensuring that we look at all the needs of the territory. We will continue to do that. There is no dollar figure connected to it, but certainly we will update the Legislative Assembly as information comes in.

Mr. Kent: Can the minister advise the House — aside from the staking moratoriums and talking about them — what the other items are? He mentioned that other items are being discussed as part of this holistic approach being directed by the Premier. Can the Premier or the minister tell us what other items are being discussed with Liard and Ross River with respect to these meetings that are going on?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If there is a specific item that the member opposite wants to talk about then we would love to

answer specific questions. We do have a Government of Yukon and Liard First Nation — we've signed a government-to-government accord to advance our joint priorities. We have the whole-government approach when it comes to the MOU signed with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources when it comes to mining issues as a whole — again a shared priority item as well.

Back to the accord and the accord from the Liard perspective — it's part of our commitment to develop and maintain strong government-to-government relations with Yukon First Nations and also with transboundary aboriginal peoples. Cabinet did approve a government-to-government accord with Liard. It was in August of this year. They shared priorities identified through that accord — things like capacity development, mineral sector agreements, consultation and engagement, traditional knowledge, traditional use, roads, infrastructure, housing and also economic development.

The identification of these joint priorities under this accord is intended to enhance collaboration and reconciliation in Yukon government's government-to-government relationships within a jointly established time frame, to support Yukon government's commitments to working with Liard First Nation and to help build capacity and bring some tangible economic and social benefits to the community. I applaud the direction of Chief George Morgan. I have had some meetings with him and, again, it's quite clear that his priority is the well-being of his community.

When it comes to our government work with Ross River, we continue to bring some positive outcomes to those First Nation members and members of the Ross River community. We're working together on matters related to housing, infrastructure, capacity development and resource development as well. The government is also in discussions with the First Nation concerning other issues when it comes to wildlife management and conservation. We are very committed to working with Ross River Dena Council on a range of matters to find solutions that fulfill our obligations, our consultation obligations — and are respectful of other First Nations as well — and engage Ross River Dena Council in development and other economic opportunities.

As the member opposite understands and knows from his time in government, there is a mineral staking prohibition that continues in the Ross River area in response to two court declarations from Ross River Dena Council litigation regarding mining. Through these whole-government approaches, through memorandums of understanding and through accords and other commitments, we are trying our best to make sure we move together with these governments.

Mr. Kent: No, I did not have anything specific that I wanted to ask about. My question was obviously about the staking bans that were in effect, but then the minister mentioned these other items that were also being discussed at these meetings.

The Premier gave a fairly substantial list, and I can review Hansard to take a look at exactly what he talked about. Are all of those things on the table at current meetings, or is there a priority? Where is the work on identifying lands that

can be staked? Where is that stacking up in this priority list that the Premier gave us just now?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't know if it was mentioned by the minister responsible, but as far as these staking bans — for the record, if it was not already added into Hansard today, Ross River is extended to July 31, 2019, to complete consultations and negotiations, and also Liard First Nation is April 30, 2020.

There are conversations that are based upon litigation and then there are other conversations that we are talking about with the government-to-government accords — with federal conversations and with Yukon Forum conversations as well. I applaud Grand Chief Peter Johnston for his efforts to see at leadership and at CYFN — seats are open at the Yukon Forum for not just the self-governing First Nations, but for all First Nation governments to be at those conversations. When we speak about the different things that we are doing, it is not necessarily just with the memorandum of understanding, but it is also my responsibility — responsible for Aboriginal Relations — to come to the table to have, as many times as possible, meetings, accords and forums that have joint priorities and joint agendas.

There is nothing new to update as of today, but I applaud the work of our departments, of Aboriginal Relations specifically and the good work that they do, as far as identifying issues of mutual concern and mutual interest, but also ones that are being brought to us by the communities to which we have the responsibility to help serve.

Mr. Kent: The two dates that the Premier mentioned — I believe he said July 31, 2019, for Ross River — and he can correct me if I am mistaken — and April 30, 2020, for the Liard First Nation. Does he anticipate that the staking bans will be removed from Ross River and Liard at or before both of those dates — obviously recognizing that some additional lands may be set aside to have staking bans on them within their territory, rather than the entire traditional territory, as we see right now?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have committed to working with both the Ross River Dena Council and with Kaska — with the Liard First Nation as well. The government has put mineral staking prohibitions in place to allow time to address the court declarations. We are continuing to move forward, working with the Ross River Dena Council. We are also working with the Kaska Dena Council on mining cases. We have taken a lot of steps to comply with the court's secondary declaration, which the member opposite knows a lot about from his time as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We are implementing a notification and consultation regime for class 1 mining exploration activities throughout various regions across Yukon.

We are extremely committed to fulfilling our consultation obligations and the work that we are doing with the First Nations to ensure that the court declarations regarding mining, staking and exploration are met. At this time, no further mineral staking prohibitions are anticipated as a result of litigation, which is good. Specifically, when it comes to the Kaska, we are committed to working with the Kaska to

identify solutions that respect both First Nation and Yukon government interests in land and resource management and providing certainty to industry as well. Tangible benefits to Yukon communities are also extremely important to this government.

Specifically when it is talking about the Ross River area, we have extended the mineral staking prohibition to Ross River. Ross River — just for complete clarity, July 31, 2019 — that is to allow time to complete consultation and negotiations with the Ross River Dena Council on how best to address the declarations. Again, Liard First Nation is April 30, 2020.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to now move on and talk a little bit about some intergovernmental issues that are top of mind. We will start with the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*.

I certainly wanted to start off by thanking the Premier and officials, I believe, from the Executive Council Office and Economic Development for the briefing that was afforded to opposition parties last week on this topic. One thing that did come up in the briefing was impacts on the prices of pharmaceuticals. As we understand it, the agreement will allow for patents to stay longer on some biologic drugs, meaning that it will be longer before our health care system could access cheaper, generic drugs.

I was wondering if the Premier, either as Minister of Finance or maybe in his work as a member of the Council of the Federation, could comment on any work being done to analyze what sort of financial impact this will have on Yukon or perhaps the country as a whole.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll preface any comments today on the fact that, again, the negotiations are federal and do absolutely impact the regions, for sure. It is worth stating for the record that these are federal negotiations — three federal governments. There is nothing really new to report in terms of those conversations other than that they are ongoing. These are important issues when it comes to small jurisdictions. We are absolutely striving to provide as much collaborative care as we can through our health care system and through our pharmacare system — and we ensure the access to the drugs that we need and the treatments that we need, and we need to make sure that we can do that in the most efficient way possible.

We are very keen to lend our support to the federal advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare when it does come to — I believe it was last week that we had that council conversation. It was great to have that conversation, and it is great to be able to provide information to that. We are very supportive of the collaborative work being done to explore the development of national pharmacare and what that means to Yukoners specifically. We are cautiously optimistic, I would say, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite, because there are still many unanswered questions that we need to address to achieve a redesign of this scope and of this nature. This is a huge undertaking, and we always examine our pharmacare program to ensure that access and

affordability for life-saving treatments are of utmost importance.

So pricing impacts — they are very dependent upon volume of users. These are the concerns that we bring to these national tables. For Yukon forecasting, the number of Yukoners who need these medications is of a much larger uncertainty than price escalations per se due to patents expiring a little later. We are going to continue to showcase the special case that Yukon and living in the north brings to the table as we continue these conversations at the federal forums.

Mr. Kent: I believe the Premier mentioned in that response that, at a recent COF meeting — I think he said within the last couple of weeks, and he can clarify this or I will look at the Blues — we were happy to provide Yukon information. I'm just wondering what information was provided and if that is specific to pharmacare or if that is specific to the new — I'm just going to call it the new NAFTA because it's easier for me — NAFTA agreement, which is what the question was about and the patents that will be staying longer so that it will take us longer before our health care system can get some of the cheaper, generic drugs that may be available.

That's my question. The Premier mentioned in that response that we were happy to provide information to — I think it was COF — and I'm just wondering what information was provided specific to the Yukon to assist in those conversations.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll reiterate again that we're speaking to the federal government. Pricing impacts dependent upon volume of users is extremely important to Yukon as we have conversation on the national stage. Forecasting the number of Yukoners who need those medications is a much larger uncertainty than those price escalations. What we bring to the table is that conversation.

The costing work still needs to be done by everyone, including the pharmaceutical companies. That conversation is being plugged in as well. This is what we bring to the table when we have our conversations. This is part of it that I can share today — the price impacts dependant on volume of users.

Mr. Kent: Previously, we asked the Premier if his government had done an economic analysis on the impacts of Canada's retaliatory tariffs and what those impacts have been on Yukon consumers. Obviously, this was in response to steel and aluminium tariffs put on by the United States. We certainly support Canada's efforts around trying to have those tariffs removed, but there are impacts of the retaliatory tariffs here on Yukon consumers and contractors, as well as retailers. For instance, boats are captured as part of the retaliatory tariff package. We heard in the summer on CBC from one of the owners of Listers Motor Sports here in town, who spoke about what this could mean for his industry. There were some CBC reports about some significant concerns from — I think the one I read was from Nova Scotia — and what it would mean for the recreational boating industry there as well.

At the time we asked these questions, the Premier hadn't done the economic analysis, but I just wanted to clarify if the government intends on doing any sort of analysis on this, as this part of the trade irritants with the United States continues. I'm just curious if there is any analysis being done. The federal government is obviously compensating people in the dairy industry and other industries — soft wood lumber, the aluminum and steel industry — so perhaps there is an opportunity for some federal compensation if we're able to make the case to Canada, as far as what economic impact this is having on businesses here in the territory.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have had several conversations on the floor of the Legislative Assembly about this analysis, whether it be with tariffs or with the new USMCA agreement. It is extremely important to reiterate this for the members opposite. The analysis we talk about, as far as this agreement and about trades — this is a tariff process. I did meet with the US Congress and administration early on in these negotiations. I also had frequent conversations with the Prime Minister and counterparts in provinces and territories.

Throughout, I have been briefed by the Canadian ambassador — Ambassador MacNaughton — as well as our government trade policy experts. The Department of Economic Development has also worked very closely with my department, Intergovernmental Relations, and the good people there. Our government has had a representative at all of the NAFTA/USMCA negotiation rounds.

On September 30, the agreement in principle was released, and it is important to underline that this is not the final text. Intergovernmental Relations worked with Economic Development and a consultant to provide a preliminary analysis of the agreement in principle. Once that final text is released in early 2019, as the government has done with all agreements, a thorough analysis will be undertaken to identify any regulatory and program implications for Yukon, Yukon government and Yukon departments.

When it comes to specific questions about steel and aluminium tariffs — as the Yukon does not produce steel or aluminum products, the direct impact of recent tariffs by the United States is small; however, there has been a noted increase in the cost of construction materials, and the member opposite has provided some specific examples of businesses like Listers.

The US tariffs, as well as Canadian retaliatory tariffs — they have the potential to increase costs for local construction activities and also for increases of the price of some imported goods, and we're always monitoring these increases to the trade disputes and also attempt to identify actions that may be considered for local consumers and businesses, as well as for the Yukon government.

It is interesting to note that, overall, steel prices have risen by over 40 percent in recent months, affecting both the cost of the materials and the prices of manufactured items that are used in steel and aluminum. The International Monetary Fund, the IMF, warns that the current wave of protectionism is the biggest risk to the global economic outlook, and it's very

concerning for our local mining sector, given the relationship between global performance and the demand for minerals.

The threat of US tariffs on vehicle imports looms very largely over the Canadian auto industry. This action would cause far bigger impacts on Canada's economy and would undoubtedly lead to further retaliation from Canada, so we continue to monitor the situation.

A little bit of the background — it was May 31 of this year that the United States administration announced the imposition of these tariffs on steel, at 25 percent, and aluminum, at 10 percent, imported from the European Union, Canada and Mexico. The Department of Commerce implemented these tariffs on foreign metals in the States. It's under a rarely used clause in the United States trade law — one that allows the president to put tariffs on imports where they threaten to impair the national security — an interesting fact. We've heard the response from the federal government on how that is just an interesting fact.

July 1, 2018, the Canadian government imposed our reciprocal tariffs on imports of steel and of aluminum and other products from the United States. This is a lot; it is far-reaching — \$16.6 billion worth of retaliatory tariffs — and they launched dispute settlement proceedings under the World Trade Organization and under NAFTA, as well, — fighting back for the rights of Canadians and Canadian businesses.

The Canadian tariff targets goods that are considered easier to source from Canadian companies or non-US trade partners in an effort to limit the adverse impacts on Canadian consumers — these are the Canadian tariffs. In addition, the Canadian government announced spending of up to \$2 billion to support Canadian steel and aluminum industries, including the extension of employment benefits, work-sharing agreements, funding to help companies to diversity where they export and also liquidity support for affected businesses.

There was a study from Statistics Canada released this summer that estimated that the portion of price increases directly felt by consumers from the imposition of Canadian retaliatory tariffs to be relatively small, resulting in only a 0.07 percentage point annual increase to the Canadian consumer price index — just a little bit of background and some statistical analysis based upon the tariffs going back and forth.

I think it would be safe to say that businesses on all three borders in all three countries would like to see the relief of these tariffs, and we will continue the conversation and engage with our federal counterparts to that end.

Mr. Kent: During that response, the Premier mentioned, when talking specifically about the impacts of the US-imposed tariffs and what that has meant for our construction industry — and he also spoke to what I had mentioned about the impact of the retaliatory tariffs on consumer goods coming into the Yukon — he said that we're always monitoring increases — is what I jotted down here on my paper.

He obviously won't have those figures at his fingertips, but if he could commit to getting those to us, we would appreciate what the impact of the retaliatory tariffs and the

initial tariffs have been on the prices of construction materials, as well as those goods that Canada has put tariffs on, such as boats. That seems to be the one that my colleagues and I have heard the most about from local consumers and local retailers. Obviously we would appreciate any of the items that the government has been monitoring the cost increases on — if he could provide us with any of that analysis, that would be great. I'll sit down and just let him make that commitment.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would be happy to forward to the member opposite the statistics from Statistics Canada that I have provided to the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify, the Statistics Canada statistics that he is talking about — do they specifically single out the impact on the Yukon, given that we are a higher cost jurisdiction with additional freight and other things, or is it more of a holistic impact on the entire country?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The analysis was done Canada-wide.

Mr. Kent: Obviously this was something that was announced the day before we came in to this Fall Sitting, which started October 1. The Member for Copperbelt North gave notice of a motion to congratulate the three jurisdictions for completing the deal. We then asked a couple of questions of the Premier on the second day of the Sitting. He talked during that Question Period about how he received — or perhaps during questions from my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin in general debate — a report by the end of the day on October 1 from his department going through all of the different components of the USMCA. On October 9, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked the Premier for a copy of that report. In response, the Premier did table a report on October 17, and we received a copy at our briefing. We thank the Premier for that. I just want to confirm that the document we received — that the Premier tabled and was given to us at the briefing — is the same document that he received on October 1.

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is an example of the Yukon Party parsing out some words. What I was talking about was analysis, not necessarily a comprehensive review at that time. Again, analysis of the agreement is an interpretive process, and that is what I got from IGR at that time. What the members received was an analysis in time. That is the most important piece.

I am not sure what the Yukon Party is specifically looking for here. They can rest assured that Intergovernmental Relations is continuing a dialogue and continuing to work with the federal government and the analysis is ongoing. As I said, my job is meeting with Congress and administration in the renegotiations of an extremely important piece, and my department analyzing the situation is also an important piece. The members opposite asked for a briefing and we gave it to them. We are sharing information on the negotiations and we will continue to keep the opposition abreast of the process.

Again, Mr. Chair, this is an agreement in principle. It will maybe take years, but definitely months, to figure out for all countries the implications on a national level, let alone on a sub-regional level. I am quite happy with the work of Economic Development as a department and also

Intergovernmental Relations as that analysis continues to roll out.

Mr. Kent: I will take a look back at Hansard from October 2 and October 9. The Premier had previously talked about how he had received a report or I guess an analysis, as he has mentioned here today, by the end of day on October 1 from his department. It sounds like the document that he tabled on October 17 and the one that was provided to us at our briefing is different from what he reviewed on October 1. Will he commit to give us a copy of what he received on October 1?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would have to maybe do a puppet show because, again, it was not a formalized document. A report is a report from the department. I had people from Intergovernmental Relations come in and we had the discussion; that was the report. What we did since then —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: For the Premier, in response to a reasonable question from the Member for Copperbelt South, to respond and suggest that he needs to do a puppet show for that member certainly appears to be in contravention of Standing Order chapter 3, section 19(i) — "... uses abusive or insulting language... in a context likely to create disorder".

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: For simplicity's sake, Mr. Chair, I'll retract my statement and just continue on, if that pleases the opposition.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The Chair would find that acceptable.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Again, so a report, an analysis — again, this is not a formalized document that they are looking for. I am not sure exactly what the line of questioning is that has been going on for a couple of weeks now. I'm not sure if they are trying to catch me up in wording.

Again, this analysis is an interpretive process. We gave a briefing to the opposition. If they can ask questions on the issue, as opposed to trying to parse out the "he said, she said" of whether there is a report or document that somehow is floating around that we won't — they got the information and I would be happy to answer questions based upon the briefing that was given to the members opposite and if there are any other specific questions that they can bring forth on behalf of Yukoners. Again, the date — the first date that we talked about an analysis is exactly what it was. The date that we talked about the report is exactly what it was — Intergovernmental Relations verbally reporting to me that the analysis is ongoing.

I want to thank Intergovernmental Relations and also Economic Development for their work, again, with providing the briefing to the members opposite and answering questions that they had there as well.

Mr. Kent: It's our job as the opposition to hold the Premier accountable for the statements that he makes on the floor of the House here, so that is what we are trying to talk about. We asked specifically about the new NAFTA on October 2, and I'll quote — I now have the Blues from that day. The first quote attributed to the Premier on that day is: "My department has read through most of the details of the new agreement already..." The second quote from that date is: "I had a report by the end of the day yesterday from Intergovernmental Relations going through all of the different components of the new agreement." We are just trying to make sure that we have the same information and that we are working from the same body of information as the Premier. It sounds like the document that he tabled on October 17 and gave us at the briefing is different from this report — he called it a report; he did not call it an analysis at the time, so I will use his words — that he received by the end of day on October 1.

Kudos to the department — I understand it's an extremely lengthy document with thousands and thousands of pages — for, as the Premier said, being able to read through most of the details of the new agreement already, which is what he said here in the House on October 2. What we're just trying to find out is if there is a different document that the Premier initially saw versus the one that was provided to us last week.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will report that report was a verbal report. Again, what we talked about was the entire agreement with various chapters and provisions, as far as the entire document goes, providing Yukoners the right to import and export, to work, and to invest in both the United States and Mexico. Yes, there was a report on that. It wasn't a physical document, just to set the members opposite at ease. It was a verbal report.

Virtually all tariffs on goods remain at zero, as was the case under NAFTA, which means that the Yukon's current exports in the United States — mostly minerals — will be unaffected. That would be a verbal report I was given at the time.

We went through all the chapters. We went through the temporary entry on chapter 16, for example, or customs and trade facilitation on chapter 7. Cultural and cultural industries, general exceptions — this is an important chapter, for sure, when it comes to self-governing First Nations and the fact that Yukon is leading Canada in that pursuit. That maintains Canada's existing cultural industries' exceptions, which is fantastic. Yukon obtains its flexibility to support the creation, distribution and development of Yukon's artistic expression or content, including the digital environment. Rules of origin chapters — we went through that.

What I'll just say, in wrapping up, is that the members opposite got their briefing. They got a chance to ask questions on the analysis that was provided and the good work that the departments did going through thousands of pages of this report. To say that we read it on the first day and finally came out with some kind of diminutive analysis — no, that's not what I meant when in the Legislative Assembly. I'm glad that the member opposite is giving me the opportunity to talk

about how the report that I received at the end of the day was exactly that — a verbal report. I'm very glad to provide a briefing to the members opposite when they ask for them — something that is new to this government, to have the opposition having briefings outside of just budgetary briefings. It is something that we continue to do for the opposition.

I think I've made myself very clear as to what kind of report happened in the first day. I think Yukoners listening in as well would be aware that we do have a government that does very well and contributes more than should be expected, and they do a great job of that.

To have a complete, final report after a day — that's not what I meant. Good thing that we can put the members opposite's minds at ease.

Mr. Kent: For the Premier, this is his quote from October 2: "My department has read through most of the details of the new agreement already...", and then today he laughs it off, saying that this would be impossible. Perhaps the Premier didn't have the correct information on October 2 at his fingertips, and that's also an acceptable answer, but it certainly isn't one that the Premier seems willing to give on very many occasions, which is unfortunate, because he was floundering through that on October 2, and he was floundering through talking about — he said "I had a report", which now turns out to be a verbal briefing on the new agreement.

These trade agreements, while we are not a huge manufacturing jurisdiction, will still have an impact on us as consumers and on the cost of living up here and other things, and that is why we ask these questions.

Just before we leave the trade file, during the month of June Canada conducted consultations on the retaliatory tariffs that they were going to put in place. Did the Yukon government — I know the Official Opposition sent a letter with our concerns to Minister Freeland. I am curious if the Premier can let us know if the Yukon government made representations about any specific concerns with respect to those retaliatory tariffs and, if so, would he provide us with a copy of that correspondence?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What I will do is I will check in with Economic Development as well to see their correspondence. I don't have a list of the particular letters here or the timeframes, and with the member opposite I have to be very specific about dates and titles, so I will get back to the member opposite with that information.

Again, there's no floundering. If the members opposite want to decide that a report means something specific as opposed to something general, that is up to them and I stand behind the good work that the Intergovernmental Relations branch does. I am happy that the members opposite wrote a letter to Minister Freeland. I am thankful for them doing their part when it comes to talking about the importance of NAFTA negotiations when it comes to regional-specific concerns we have in the Yukon.

Mr. Kent: Actually that letter was specific to the retaliatory tariffs put in place with respect to the steel and aluminum, so the Premier is clear what we are looking for —

just to get a sense if, during that 30-day consultation window, the Government of Yukon did any representations to Canada with respect to concerns they had about the fairly extensive list of items that were being considered for the retaliatory tariffs that are still obviously in place.

Perhaps this is a question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works or the Premier. Today we saw a joint news release — Yukon and the State of Alaska applying for \$25 million USD to a new government fund called the "United States better utilizing investments to leverage development" — the BUILD fund. This was a joint announcement between the two governments. I am just wondering if the minister could provide us with some details as to what this \$25 million will be spent on. I know it says that it "... would support maintenance and reconstruction activities from 2019-20 through 2024-25." I am assuming there would have been additional details provided in the application, so I am wondering if the minister can share with us exactly what the \$25 million will be spent on.

I do note as well that the estimates — work to stabilize and upgrade the road into Alaska — is estimated to cost \$340 million CAD, so obviously this \$25 million will have to be prioritized along the route on some of the more difficult areas or areas of concern.

I'm just curious if the minister can give us some details on what exactly they are looking at spending that money on if — and again, recognizing that they still have to be chosen as a successful applicant and that's not guaranteed at this time. I think it's in December. That is what I read in here — that the decision on the application is expected in December 2018.

If they are successful, where will that money be spent?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just before the Minister of Highways and Public Works responds the member opposite's question, I do want to, again, comment on tariffs. Having the Leader of the Official Opposition sending letters to me and also to the federal government on this is extremely important, and we're glad that they are taking an active stance on that.

For the record, as well, we as a government have notified the three chambers in Yukon of the public consultation, and we're encouraging Yukon businesses to provide feedback on the proposed tariffs, which is an extremely important narrative for all of Canada. We remained in close contact as well with Canada and receive updates and information as it becomes available. That's our job.

But again, we recognize the potential impact that the tariffs have on pricing of materials. It is extremely important to recognize, particularly steel coming from the United States as a result of Canadian tariffs that may be applied on the federal government. Each tender that is led by the Yukon government is examined on an individual basis, and bidders have the ability to adjust their proposals and their proposed costs based upon market conditions — consumer price indexing or tariffs, et cetera.

I would like to assure the members opposite that Yukon government construction contracts include clauses from the Canadian Construction Documents Committee — documents stating that taxes or tariffs added to material prices at the point

of entry will be paid by Yukon government. We will continue to include these clauses in our construction contracts. In the coming months, as we move into another hopefully hot construction cycle here in the Yukon, contractors submitting bids for Yukon government contracts will be taking that market price into consideration when they're putting in their bids.

But again, but we appreciate the efforts from the Opposition. We will continue to advocate at the Council of the Federation table, the First Ministers' meetings and the financial ministers meetings. Those are the three tables where my voice is heard on a national basis.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. As members on this side of the House, we consider the Shakwak program along the north highway to be very important, and I know members of this House consider this to be a very important project, so we have debated it and have had discussions on the floor of this House in the last year about its importance.

As the members opposite well know, funding provided to this government — the Yukon government — through Shakwak has been vital, and that cost-sharing agreement has run out of money. We no longer have it. I think this year we're spending the last of it, and \$1.4 million will be contributed to our GDP through the final money of this program, which has been transferred to the Yukon government for many, many, many years.

We have been working closely with our partners in Alaska to try to secure funding to continue the Shakwak project. We are talking about the section of highway from Haines, Alaska to Beaver Creek, Yukon.

In July 2018, Yukon government staff worked with Alaskan partners to support an application to fund permafrost remediation and rehabilitation on the north Alaska Highway to fill the funding gap left by the exhaustion of the Shakwak funds. What we came up with was bridge funding. There is a new program — sort of a bridge funding program — for transportation initiatives across the United States. It is a very big pool of people, but we identified the need and, working with our Alaskan partners, we got the application in on time. My department and Alaskan officials worked very closely together to meet a very tight timeline. I want to take this moment to commend the Yukon government staff who worked on that project. I know how difficult it was and how tight the timelines were. I know how hard they worked to get that in on time. It was tremendous.

We are now in the running for some bridge financing on the Shakwak project. The maximum available is about \$25 million. That is not a lot of money, Mr. Chair, as the members opposite know. We spent hundreds of millions of dollars repairing the north highway, and it is going to need a lot more work into the future. This is bridge funding until, perhaps in the future, we get another agreement with Washington, with federal transportation officials, to fund this internationally significant, strategic transportation asset that links Alaska — Anchorage — with the Lower 48. This government doesn't have the means to do that alone. In July,

the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Commissioner, Marc Luiken, and I collaborated on the application.

As I said, it was our department officials who actually did the heavy lifting on that work, and they did a tremendous job. We are now waiting to see how that application is handled by Washington. We are hopeful that we will be selected, but we will have to wait and see. As I said, it is a big pool of people asking for a limited budget, and we will be competing alongside the rest and hopefully we are successful.

As for the question, I don't think we are going to deviate from the work that has to be done on the north highway, which is permafrost and road remediation in an area that requires it. As I said, it is a strategic asset for the continent. It is important for both Canada and the United States. The work on that highway hasn't ended just because the money ran out. We have a lot of work to do and we are hoping that this \$25 million — should we be successful — will go a little way to keeping that road operational into the future.

Mr. Kent: The minister said, I think, that they would continue to do some of the work that is already underway with respect to permafrost issues and that type of thing. Do they not have to put more details in this application with Alaska as to exactly what projects you were looking at, or is it just sort of, "Give us \$25 million over this time frame and we will spend it on maintenance and reconstruction activities." I'm assuming there were more details that needed to be provided in this application.

Again, if the minister doesn't have those details — and if he can provide us with an non-confidential summary of the application — if the actual application itself is confidential until it has been vetted, that would be helpful, especially for my colleague, the Member for Kluane, who has a number of constituents who will be interested in the type of work and where that work will be taking place on the north highway. That would be important for him to be able to share with those Yukoners who live up in that neck of the woods.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Like my good colleague opposite, I'm very excited about this announcement — this news release that we were able to put out today in collaboration with our partners in Alaska. The Governor of Alaska, Bill Walker, and Marc Luiken have been very complimentary, as am I with them. It has been a great partnership. I appreciate the collaboration we have put together on this. It is tremendous. We have taken a tangible step toward securing money for Shakwak, which has been absent — we've been running on fumes for a long time. I'm very happy that there is a potential for new money, at least for the short term — \$25 million.

But the member opposite — there are a couple of things here. First of all, he is getting a little bit ahead of himself. The application is in. We haven't been approved yet. When that approval comes, should it come — and I'm hopeful we will be approved but we'll see. As I said, it is a competitive process. If it is approved, then we will then start to plan out the projects according to the stipulations in the grant program.

The member opposite wants specifics. I know the Member for Kluane and the member opposite know full well the work that has to be done on the north highway. That work is underway this year, but \$1.4 million is added to our GDP because of the work on the north highway to remediate and fix some of the frost heaves and work on the north highway to improve the road for the traffic going up there. That work is what we're talking about. It's not going to change.

The application was — I'm sure the member opposite isn't disparaging the work of the department. There is a lot of detailed work that went into that in a very short period of time under very tight deadlines to meet the requirements for the funding application. There were cost-benefit analyses laying out why this is an important project for the State of Alaska, for the country of the United States and for Canada, the Yukon and BC — a lot of places. That work was laid out in our application. I'm hoping that, when that application is vetted by the people in Washington, they see the merits in continuing to fund this program, which provides land access to a number of Alaskan cities — Fairbanks and Anchorage — strategic points of interest in Alaska. I hope they look favourably on our application.

Mr. Kent: I guess we'll wait until we see if the application is successful to get a detailed work plan for 2019-20 through 2024-25. Hopefully that will spell out what I'm assuming is included in the application, which is a little bit more detail on what portions of the road between kilometre 1680 and kilometre 1902.5 of the Alaska Highway will be worked on.

While I have the Minister of Highways and Public Works, I wanted to ask him a couple of questions about progress on the *Public Airports Act* regulations, as well as the establishment of the aviation advisory committee. On October 31 of this year, the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association Yukon sent a letter to the minister that they posted on their Facebook page with a number of concerns about the set-up of the committee, specifically. They had concerns on composition, committee meetings and committee functions. I'm just wondering if the minister has had a chance to respond to this letter that was written to him by COPA Yukon and, if he will commit to table his response here, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm very glad to see the Official Opposition has come around to support the *Public Airports Act* and the aviation advisory committee.

Last year, as you know, we spent an awful lot of time here on the floor of this Legislative Assembly discussing the legislation — having a very robust discussion about it. I'm really glad to see that they have come around and actually support the legislation.

We have reached out to Yukon aviation companies for their nominees for the advisory panel and received a number of nominations to date. We are going to consult with the aviation industry stakeholders on the Yukon advisory committee's terms of reference. The terms of reference — I have not yet seen them. When they are prepared and I have vetted them, we'll provide them to the advisory committee and aviation industry stakeholders for feedback.

We're still fairly early in the process, and we'll take the time to get this right.

The member opposite has spoken about the letter that was posted publicly on a public website. That's where I first saw it. They brought forward concerns and we'll work collaboratively to address them. They're not very onerous, the concerns that they brought forward, and I'm sure we'll be able to reach an agreement with them.

We've been working to set up a meeting and haven't had a chance to do that yet, but we will. The advisory committee will include up to 10 representatives from a variety of backgrounds, including representatives from the aviation industry, the tourism industry, the business committee, the mining sector and Yukon communities, as well as members of the Yukon public — a diverse group.

I look forward to striking that committee and then getting on with the work of starting to come up with the terms of reference with the committee and then managing any issues up at the airport.

Mr. Kent: Again, recognizing that he is going to be addressing the concerns of COPA that were raised with him in this August 31 letter, when does the minister anticipate the actual airport advisory committee being in place?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Like the member opposite, I am very excited about this work and anxious to get on with it, but we are not there yet. When I am ready to make an announcement on the formation of such a committee, I certainly will do so and share it with this House and the members of the public.

Mr. Kent: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate that from the member opposite. Just to clarify — he will be setting up the aviation advisory committee, establishing the terms of reference for that committee and then working with the committee to develop the regulations that accompany the act that we passed 11 months ago or so. If he can just perhaps give us a timeline of what he anticipates being done with that, that would be helpful. It doesn't have to be exact times, but just some sort of a general appreciation of the steps that I have laid out and whether they are correct or not and when we can anticipate getting these regulations in place.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is clearly excited by the passage of this piece of legislation and the opportunity to have an aviation advisory committee in place. This aviation advisory committee is going to provide a chance to vet any regulations we bring forward. Once we have the committee in place, I will make announcements and will clarify some of the timelines the member opposite is looking for. I am not prepared to do that this afternoon — no spoilers. I don't want to tip our hand on all of the great things we are going to be doing on the airport advisory panel.

I know the member opposite is excited about it and I applaud that. I think that is great. That is a good change of heart. I know there were some misgivings. I am glad that he is on board with us. I am glad he is excited about seeing the committee struck and, as I have more information, I will certainly give it to this House and to the members of the

public and to the aviation community that so depend on this work.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that response from the minister. Again, we concluded debate and received assent last November. We would have hoped that the minister would have been a little bit further along than he is in establishing this airport advisory committee, which he shall establish thanks to the change we made to the legislation last year. Again, we are looking forward to getting a chance to review the regulations and have the industry be full participants in the review of those regulations, unlike the establishment of the legislation.

I won't take us for a trip down memory lane, but it was a pretty bumpy ride for the minister last year when it came to consultations and having to pull quotes from news releases and taking news releases down. Hopefully he gets the regulations right when developing regulations that he said were much more important than the act itself when we were talking about this last year.

I have a couple more questions before I turn it over to my colleague, the critic for Tourism and Culture. They are on education-related matters. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining — I think the members know — was established a number of years ago and has a governing council that provides advice on what courses will match up with opportunities in the industry. One of the initial things that we did as part of the Yukon/Alaska accord and an educational sub-accord was to set up cross-border training opportunities where Yukon students were trained at underground mine training centres — I think close to Delta Junction, Alaska. I am just curious if that cross-border training is still taking place.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: If the member opposite can just go through the last part of that question again, then I will speak to the CNIM curriculum and programs that they are undertaking.

Mr. Kent: One of the initial successes with CNIM was transboundary training. Yukon students travelled to an underground mine training facility close to Delta Junction. I am curious if that exchange is still happening or if there is something different going on now.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: For those Yukoners who are listening — for those interested, the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining falls under the jurisdiction of Yukon College — soon to be Yukon university. The centre was funded a number of years ago. I think the member opposite played a role in that and there was a great deal of Yukon support. I think our previous senator worked on it, as well, along with the executive team at the college.

The challenge was that part of what was negotiated at that time was that the previous federal government had committed that there would also be O&M. Once again, we are in a position where there is a beautiful space in a beautiful building, but the O&M commitment was not fulfilled.

I have worked with my colleague, Minister McPhee, and I believe that we have continued to have the \$1.2 million in place — I believe that is the number; I am sorry, but I don't have the Education budget with me. We are continuing to provide that funding. There have also been multiple

conversations at the federal level. We provided industry leadership and opportunity last year during Yukon Days to go to Gatineau to speak with some federal officials — with industry and college leadership — as well as having ministerial meetings with Minister Hajdu to talk about a go-forward.

So the specifics — of course, the industry, on that advisory committee, works with the college to define what the curriculum should look like based on industry needs. At this particular time, I am not sure if they have another trip to Delta Junction in place. We certainly are continuing to have dialogue — actually even this week, continuing to have dialogue — with my counterparts there — Shelagh Rowles, who is a VP and continues to work there. We also received a long-term training proposal just last week. We have reviewed it with some ideas — some great partnership concepts from Goldcorp, looking at what a workforce should need and what the core competencies and essential skills are that we have to make sure are in place.

Then, of course, last week at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, we saw that there was an accreditation based on the geo program — the technology program. So I once again commend CNIM on that work and gaining that important accreditation. We continue, as they move into the status of university, to have a discussion and not only talk about how we look at building an appropriate workforce when it comes to extraction, but understanding that we have an enormous amount of reclamation work — so also continuing to take a look at mining and reclamation as another really important aspect of what the curriculum looks like.

We're very supportive also of — Tosh Southwick has now taken a senior role. We have had discussions as well about maybe a knowledge-based curriculum as well — looking at relationships and bilateral relationships and how we can help companies work through some of that. That ties in, of course, to their degree that was just launched in September — that first homegrown degree north of 60, which focuses on self-governance. Of course, that all has key components when you're talking about bilateral relationships, whether from a series of governments or from mining sector leaders.

I think there's great strength in the program that was delivered in conjunction with the post-secondary in Alaska and, of course, with Delta Junction, but also broadening that conversation so that you continue to look at underground. Of course, we are: watching closely what will happen with Minto, understanding that you want to put your priorities where, of course, you're going to need that workforce; thinking about what Eagle looks like going into production in open pit; understanding what is going to happen potentially in Coffee if they go through the appropriate processes and are permitted; and again, looking at Kudz Ze Kayah. So in many ways, understanding that there could be and there should be an opportunity for an underground workforce — if we see Minto come around and they define that resource, increase the deposit and look at that as probably the most efficient way — which they've informed us — to make that project work, but understanding too that we will need, at CNIM, to talk about

innovation and the digitization and automation that we'll be seeing in the workforce.

As we look at other projects that some of these key players are doing in other parts of Canada — how do we make the workplace safer when you're dealing with explosives, large equipment and things such as that, and how do we still improve people's quality of life and have them in a position where they can live in a community or work remotely from Whitehorse and still be at home at the kitchen table with their family at the end of the night versus maybe in a camp atmosphere, which puts more challenge and pressures on people and their families.

Those are just some of the things that the college is taking into consideration. I want to thank my colleague, Minister McPhee, for giving me the opportunity to work hand in hand on some of those curriculum items and working with leaders in the department and also with my deputy ministers — both of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources, which have also had an opportunity to work in conjunction with Education on the important curriculum at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining.

Chair: Just as a reminder, Mr. Pillai — when referring to your colleagues — to refer to them by a portfolio as opposed to by name.

Mr. Kent: So one other question with respect to Education — and it is a structural question within the Advanced Education branch. Have there been any changes — if the minister can advise us of any changes — to the leadership format in Advanced Education? I guess the question I have is: Does Advanced Education still have an assistant deputy minister, or an ADM? We have heard otherwise and I just want to give the minister a chance to clarify whether that is the case or not.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. There is not often an opportunity to comment on or provide information in this format with respect to some of those kinds of changes at the department level.

The Department of Education was reorganized in April 2018 with changes made to some branches and units in order to better align services for Yukoners. The new structure is based on a service delivery model that reflects Yukon's cradle-to-careers approach to lifelong learning. The changes to the structure take a more holistic approach to meeting learners' needs, and the changes also aligned with Education's service delivery and program planning for early learning through K to 12 to post-secondary and labour market training, so the concept of all of those things taken into account. As an example, the former Advanced Education services such as training programs and student financial assistance are now part of the schools and student services branch with Education's other programs that serve current and former Yukon students.

There were no changes to the overall budget or FTEs of the department in making these changes. It was really an opportunity to reorganize and align the priorities of the department with the important and skilled folks who work there. Prior to the reorganization — I think, as the member

opposite knows — the immigration unit had already been transferred to the Department of Economic Development, so as part of that evolution, those are the changes that were made back in April.

I'm happy to report that they are very successful. Under the guidance of our current acting deputy minister, the senior management team of the Department of Education is working diligently on the priorities set forward, not only in my mandate letter but in the business plan and developing the business plan, and going forward with the priorities of the Department of Education and to align all of those things for the services of students from cradle to end of career — lifelong learning.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Van Bibber: I have one final question for the Department of Education. It is just a request. The member was just about to wrap up and then we had a break, so I will just take over that. We are looking for an Education department organization chart — if we could have that for our perusal.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will get one from the department. I will probably table it and provide it to members opposite with that method.

Ms. Van Bibber: Tourism and Culture — in the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy — Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future.*, under the heading, "Action Plans" and "Governance", it states that a new government agency will be established and we are sort of left wondering why. A government agency is usually something that is owned by everyone or a Crown corporation, such as CBC, whose mandate is to deliver programs to all Canadians or a postal corporation which is available for all Canadians. In the Yukon, we can look to the Yukon Energy Corporation, which delivers fair market value of electricity to all Yukoners, or in the case of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, where it ensures all Yukoners have access to health services.

Can the minister tell us the rationale behind creating a new government agency, as suggested in the tourism strategy?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The draft Yukon development strategy lays out a vision for Yukon to be a vibrant, sustainable component of Yukon's economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

The vision is guided by — as the member opposite has pointed out — eight core values, three goals and measures for success for interrelated pillars that outline 24 strategic actions. This draft was developed with the guidance and expertise of Yukon tourism development strategy steering committee,

which is comprised of 15 individuals who represent Yukon First Nations, municipalities, the arts and culture community and the tourism sector.

Where we're at right now with the draft Yukon tourism development strategy is that our last consultation ended on October 3. The committee has reviewed — they have more comments that they gathered during that two-week period. I understand that they have met one more time. I have not received the final recommended draft Yukon tourism development strategy.

The entity that the member opposite is talking about is one of many proposals that have been made. We will consider that. As I haven't received the final draft, I'm not sure what the final wording is on that particular proposal. When we receive it, we will do our due diligence and review it within government and determine if that is the path that our government will embrace.

Ms. Van Bibber: As we know, under the umbrella of Tourism and Culture, there are many departments, such as heritage, archaeology, palaeontology, museums and, of course, the cultural centres. As opposed to the marketing agent, would all these arms of the department be under a government agency as well?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I haven't received the final draft of this strategy. This is a Yukon tourism development strategy, and once we receive that final draft, we will bring it into our system and we will do our analysis and due diligence to ensure that we're making the right decision and moving tourism forward in the direction that Yukoners have guided us.

During Question Period and other various times, I have been able to talk about the draft Yukon tourism development strategy. This is the first strategy — a new strategy — that will be introduced in Yukon since 2000, so it has been 18 years. I'm looking forward to moving tourism to the next level in Yukon. There are many proposals within that draft strategy. I'm not sure if the member opposite is interested in any of the other proposals, but I would be happy to talk about some of those ones as well.

Ms. Van Bibber: A notable inclusion in this tourism strategy was the creation of this new government agency. On the 15-member board, there were also two deputy ministers who were a part of this process, so it is wide and encompassing.

We did notice that the “what we heard” document contains zero mention of anyone asking for a new government agency. Does something as major as creating an entirely new government structure seem like something we should do with the document, as it summarized with “what we heard”?

Can the minister or the Premier tell us where the idea of this new government agency came from?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee is comprised of 15 members. That's quite a wide range: the Tourism Association Industry of Yukon, the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Arts Centre, the Department of Economic Development, Yukon First Nation

Chamber of Commerce, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Association of Yukon Communities, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Yukon Historical and Museums Association, YG Department of Tourism and Culture, Association franco-yukonnaise and the Klondike Visitors Association.

The committee was co-chaired by Rich Thompson, who is the CEO for Northern Vision Development Corporation, and the deputy minister of Tourism and Culture. We received a lot of feedback from the public. Over 600 Yukoners participated in a broad engagement from January to April 2018 either in person or through written submission or via the online survey. A total of 12,000 comments were received, which helped inform the draft strategy — 115 online surveys were submitted, both in English and in French, and 55 sessions were held with First Nation governments, their development corporations, municipalities, tourism stakeholders, tourism businesses, other Yukon departments and the public.

I have the full list of all of the engagement sessions that happened. This was the most extensive consultation that has been done to date for Tourism and Culture.

There were many written submissions — in fact, that is where the suggestion of a Crown corporation came in. It came from two members of various associations who are members of this committee.

We engaged and followed the direction of Yukoners. Last year — over a year and some months ago — we held a round table that included 50 members, stakeholders and partners in tourism, and I asked them how they wanted to proceed with this. We have followed the exact direction given by our partners. They have tabled a draft Yukon tourism development strategy that includes a public entity, as the member opposite has pointed out, and it is one of many proposals within the strategy.

We relied on the expertise around that table and that is, in fact, why we put together a table such as this to develop a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. This is a Yukon development strategy; it is not a Government of Yukon strategy. Some of the proposals are absolutely going to be the decision of Government of Yukon, but the task was to develop a tourism strategy that reflects what Yukoners want to see, and that is what the committee is tasked with.

So they have brought forward a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I have not received the final draft. I expect that it will come soon and I will bring it into our system and make the decisions that are appropriate for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: With respect to the tourism strategy, the government's website states, and I quote: “Over 500 Yukoners shared their thoughts through an online survey, through formal submissions, or in-person at one of our 55 engagement sessions.” As the minister just mentioned — I believe her number said 600 of those — she suggested that we should create a new government agency. There were two mentions. Were there any other mentions in the 55

engagement sessions that a new government agency should be formed?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Again, yes our numbers are for sure not lining up. I will go back to the department and ensure that I have proper numbers or if the website is correct or not. We received many, many comments. We engaged the tourism industry to its fullest and relied on the expertise around that table to bring forward a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I will be receiving that, I'm sure, very soon, and we will then make the appropriate decisions based on what is best for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The draft tourism strategy argues that the Liberals need to create a new government agency because — and I quote: “The Government of Yukon should get out of the business of doing business and change its governance structure.” Again, I had mentioned this before in the House — according to this year's budget documents, the Department of Tourism only generated \$16,000 in revenue and zero dollars in profit. So I am wondering what business the department is doing. Can the minister explain to us what private sector business the Department of Tourism is currently involved in that the government is contemplating getting out of? Could she also explain why the creation of a new government agency removes government from any area of private sector business?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We haven't received the final draft of the Yukon tourism development strategy, but I expect to receive it soon. When we receive it, we will do our due diligence and make the decisions that are best for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: One of the goals in the strategy states that we hope to double the revenue to Yukon tourism businesses to \$525 million. I am assuming that this is for a year. Does the new agency have anything in mind to accomplish this goal?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. We have yet to receive the final draft, which I am expecting to have in my hands soon. We will assess it and look at the opportunities. There are many sectors that are still untapped in Yukon. Our intention is to bring tourism to the next strategy. This is the goal that the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee recommended, and when we receive it we will assess it, do our due diligence and make the best decisions for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The document states that we want to: “Ensure at least 80% of Yukoners have a positive attitude about tourism.” That seems to me to be a wonderful idea; however, I do know that unless visitors are directly involved with you somehow — through employment or your own tourism business — it is kind of difficult to order people to have a positive attitude toward tourism. I realize that this is a draft, but this is a draft that was given to all of us to ask questions of the minister. Could the minister tell us by what avenues the department is planning to meet the goals of ensuring that 80 percent of Yukoners have a positive attitude?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will make a couple of comments, but again, I reiterate that this is a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I haven't received the final draft as of yet. We will do our due diligence and make the best decisions

for Yukoners. In terms of a comment on community satisfaction, that is incredibly important.

We were just at a TIA conference recently and we had the pleasure of listening to a presentation from the Māori tourism association from New Zealand. They talked about exactly that — that it was a critical point in tourism development in their country and they have been very, very successful in terms of sustainable tourism that is culturally enriched and truly sustainable around the environment. They talked about community satisfaction being one of their highest considerations — that you cannot lose your community in tourism development, and that balance is absolutely critical in the success of tourism in any destination but particularly when we have the pristineness that we have within our Yukon Territory, which is something that we want to protect. That's what we heard from Yukoners.

I think this is a critical element of any type of tourism development. So hearing the Māori talk about that being a critical component of theirs tells me we're on the right track.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer.

Airport facilities were mentioned. It is stated that government will work with national and international carriers. Can the minister tell us which national and international carriers that would be? Would it just cover Air Canada, WestJet and Condor, who currently come to Yukon? Or is the Yukon government reaching out to others as well?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Given that this is — actually, I just want to clarify one thing: We do not have items in this supplementary budget. I just wanted to clarify that. We're diving deep into areas that we're happy to answer questions about on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, but I just want to clarify that we do not have any requests within this supplementary budget from Tourism and Culture.

I would like to get back to the member opposite with this information. Again, it is part of a draft Yukon tourism development strategy and we're waiting for the final draft. The draft that the member opposite is currently reviewing is a draft that went out to consultation. More information was received. Other meetings have happened since then with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee. I'm expecting that we'll have a final draft soon.

Ms. Van Bibber: In the tourism industry we're always talking about recruitment, retention and training for our front-line workers. It was very noticeable this year, as it appears that there are a lot of people looking for staff and who are unable to keep staff.

What are the initiatives that will ensure a steady supply of workers and retention in the territory?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is one of the areas identified for an immediate plan and one that we know has caused pressure in our industry, so it's one of the immediate action plans that would happen as a result of the implementation of the tourism development strategy. It certainly is something that weighs heavily on our operators and is an area that we will work on from our perspective as a one-government approach, but we will work with all of our partners in the

industry to ensure that we have the best plan going forward and that we are addressing operators' needs.

Ms. Van Bibber: On June 20, the Minister of Tourism and Culture attended a conference of the tourism and culture ministers. In a joint communiqué that the Minister of Tourism and Culture signed off on, she committed to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review of the *Copyright Act* currently being conducted by the House of Commons. Can the minister provide us an update on what actions the government has taken in a follow-up to this commitment, and does the Yukon have any concerns or given any input into the review of the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I just want to clarify that this meeting that is being referred to — are you referring to the culture and heritage ministers meeting that happened in June of this year? Because it's not tourism, it's culture and heritage. I just want to clarify your question.

Ms. Van Bibber: It was held on June 30 and I understood it to be a conference of tourism and culture ministers.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It is, in fact, culture and heritage. Tourism — they have a separate federal-provincial-territorial meeting. That is something that we — I was part of the communiqué out of this meeting. Ministers agreed to continue to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review on copyright currently being conducted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

That's something that was a broad area of concern for our ministers of culture and heritage and something that we're continuing. As it says in the communiqué, our department is working at the officials level.

Ms. Van Bibber: Does the Yukon have any concerns with the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is an area — when we're dealing with artisans — we've had a lot of discussion at this FPT about cultural appropriation and issues such as that. So I think it is right across the board with all culture and heritage ministers. It is a concern in the entire country, which is why it is being discussed at the level of the federal-provincial-territorial ministers of culture and heritage.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer, minister. At the same meeting, the minister also committed to strengthening work to promote safe workplaces for those working in the tourism sector. What new initiatives has the government done since June 20 to follow up on this commitment? Are there any new training initiatives or funding for tourism operators and employers to promote safe workplaces?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I'm really happy to have this question again. The ministers had a very thorough discussion and agreed that everyone working — again, this was not a tourism ministers' meeting. This was for culture and heritage. I just wanted to clarify that. So the ministers agreed that everyone working in the arts, culture and heritage sectors are entitled to a respectful work environment free from any form

of harassment, abuse and discrimination, and they agreed to work together to promote safe workplaces and to strengthen collaboration between jurisdictions through sharing of models and approaches.

When you're talking about ministers of culture and heritage, we have to remember that this is the entertainment industry as well. In light of the Me Too movement and what has happened in that industry, it's incredibly important that we have safe workplaces for those who are working in these industries.

When I was at this meeting, I was happy to discuss with the ministers there for culture and heritage that, being the Minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, we had just passed legislation for safe workplaces — for workplaces that are free from psychological injury. That includes harassment. That is directly in line with this priority that the culture and heritage ministers had put up as one of the high priorities for us to discuss at this meeting.

I was really happy to have that discussion. We have started considering mechanisms with our own funding agreements to ensure that we are funding projects and organizations that have policies in place that protect against harassment, abuse and discrimination and that all workplaces are safe. From every angle that we can, Mr. Chair, we are trying to ensure that people are free from this type of harassment and discrimination.

Because the member opposite has referenced this question around tourism — again, this was not a tourism ministers' meeting — I will just go into an answer around safety and training for tourism and other industries under the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is always focused on enhancing the safety of Yukon workers and industries, including tourism. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board provides safety and outreach to all industries, including tourism. Examples of outreach activities include: the volunteer, education and career fair, the Kwanlin Dün volunteer fair, YG's industry conference and Skills Canada Yukon.

Training activities include: assessing and minimizing risk for community summer camp operators; safety training for workers new to Canada, which includes many workers in the tourism industry; and workplace solutions, which is a forum to provide education and training to any Yukon employer on timely and relevant topics like mental health in the workplace and impairment in the workplace. Age-specific workshops are also delivered in Yukon schools on topics like safety at home, online safety and mental health. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board also developed industry-specific educational materials on request — for example, a pamphlet addressing risks and hazard assessments has been developed for wilderness tourism operators. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is always working to engage industry associations and other groups in partnership to enhance workplace safety.

That is a bit of a snapshot of some of the work that we are doing around tourism, but again, that specific meeting was for culture and heritage. I am glad that I had a chance to clarify that, because that question was framed in an awkward way during a previous Question Period that didn't allow for a thorough answer, so thank you very much.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thanks for the extended explanation. It was well done. The goals around tourism have not changed much since I first became involved in tourism. Being from Dawson, that has been a heck of a long time. Perhaps the catchphrases have changed a bit over time, but the story is the same: build and share great products, care and ensure that tourists enjoy a visit and, of course, the staff issues are still with us.

It is a short, intense season, and if you love working with people, that is the business to be in, but the pillars and goals have to be revisited time and again as demographics change, travel interests and destinations change — and it is all good.

Does the minister see any new trends that should be looked at immediately — perhaps which may have been identified during the TIA conference recently held in Dawson?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We had great discussions at the TIA conference. I was a keynote listener, really — that was my role, to listen, and that is what I did.

I listened to what is important to tourism operators, and for sure, we heard all of those same issues that have been around for a long time, which is exactly why we need a Yukon tourism development strategy. That is exactly why. Tourism has plateaued a little bit in terms of increase of GDP and increase of where we want tourism to go in a good, sustainable way that really holds the values of Yukoners, which is really very important. Having said all of that, having a good, new lens on tourism and having some very specific action plans that address all of those areas is really vital.

You had made one comment that it is a short season. Our goal is to make it a much broader season. Yukon should and could be a year-round destination, and that is exactly what we are aiming for, to keep the level — we have the highest number of tourism-related jobs in Canada, and our GDP related to tourism is the second highest in Canada. We represent 3,500 good paying jobs in the industry that can go year-round and increase — that is for sure.

In terms of trends, we work very much from an evidence-based approach, always. With tourism, that is the way we make our decisions. We work very closely with our partners at Destination Canada to help us to determine the markets that are really looking at Yukon, or destinations like Yukon, as a possible place for them to visit. We work very closely with Destination Canada and that's really how we determine the markets that we market to.

In terms of other trends that I may have heard about at TIA, I think we have talked about a lot of them. I think that there is a real optimism in Yukon about where we are going. I attended TIA last year and I attended TIA this year, and the level and the closeness of the discussion seemed to change from one year to the next, and that was really noticeable for

me as minister. Again, I was a keynote listener. I listened intently to what's important to our industry, and we have an industry that works hard. They work hard. They have invested their time. They've invested their money, and I think that there is a real optimism in the industry right now about having a lot of focus on tourism as a distinct industry in Yukon.

Ms. White: I just have very few questions for, interestingly enough, the Department of Education so I will give it a shot with the Premier.

When the announcement came out that there would be water testing done in schools for lead in the water, one of the questions I just had is — if a child is in a school for, let's say, eight years, if you go from kindergarten through grade 12 — that is one thing, but you could have educators who had been in the schools for much longer. You could have someone who served their entire career for 20 years in the same school, having consumed water from those schools. Is there any thought about looking toward staff to make sure that people who had been in schools identified as having high lead content in the water — if there were any concerns around the staff consumption of water?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will let the Minister of Education answer that question specifically, but if it's the health of the staff or the health of the students, both are extremely important, and I believe that the department has been very proactive in this — taking a look at all schools as opposed to just as those problems arise.

I will let the minister respond but, coming from an ex-teacher, for all of the individuals who are in these schools, it's an important consideration, and I will let the minister responsible have a more thorough response when it comes to that. I think the minister has been on her feet quite a lot with this question, talking about the safety of our students. I'm sure it extends to our teachers as well.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will address this question in general because I stepped out for a moment to work on something else. Unfortunately I didn't hear all of the question, but I'm happy to try to answer what I think is the question. This was certainly a situation of concern when it came to our attention. There was a report of elevated levels of lead in a Yukon school, and we took action to proceed to test all of the schools because that wasn't something that was happening before.

It certainly started with all the schools that were built around the same period — before 1990 and of that vintage. From those tests, we learned that a number of schools required a replacement of water fixtures. Now, of course, my first question was: Was it piping? It appeared to be isolated to the fixtures themselves in the schools, which was good news because it meant that it was a relatively succinct and specific repair job. So a replacement of fixtures began.

I'm pleased to say that the mitigation work is done in some schools and ongoing in some others. The recent tests that have been done of the new fixtures show that levels are well within the national standards, so that's also good news for schools. I'm also told that the information has been put on the website and that they are continuing to update that website

information as changes are made or as the mitigation work is done, and they anticipate that all of it will be completed this fall.

Prior to this current process, there were no requirements — I'm sorry to say — to regularly test water or water fixtures in schools, and that clearly will not be the case going forward. All of the testing and mitigation work marks improvement from this government in the monitoring of water in the schools. The chief medical officer of health has assured us that there is no short-term risk to health. We're happy to have that mitigation work done and well underway.

I also understand that part of the question may have been around teachers in schools. What I want to clearly say is that this concerned some fixtures in some schools. There were lots of fixtures — water fountains and sinks. They were primarily sinks. I do not want to misspeak about this, but my understanding is that they primarily were faucets and sinks that were used during that period of time and installed in schools and that they had not been updated.

I will retract my comment about water fountains because that is my recollection, but if you are looking for more specifics about that, we can probably get a list.

What I am keen to say also is that, based on the way in which this was revealed and the work that is being done, it is certainly a concern that people who have been working in those buildings long term may have been exposed, but the chief medical officer of health advises us that he does not see any short-term health risks and that presumably, unless someone was drinking only from that water for a prolonged period of time, there would be no ill-health effects.

I am not the chief medical officer of health and I am not a medical professional in any way, so I am not going to comment any more on what the effects might have been other than to say that we have clearly wanted to mitigate that with schools. Any concerns of staff that might come forward are being dealt with by administration and at the department level. They certainly are welcome to bring any of those concerns forward.

Ms. White: I thank both the Premier and the minister for that answer. This is not a criticism about when the testing started because — not being a building professional and certainly not understanding the codes prior to 1990 — this would never have crossed my mind. The reason why I am specifically asking about staff is I can tell you that between when I graduated from high school awhile ago to now, the attention around hydration has changed.

You would typically fill a water bottle, not from a water fountain — because we have all tried to do that before — but from a tap. I am just asking if staff had been informed. For example, you could have an entire career — a two- or three-decade career — in the same school and you could have a favourite tap, and that tap could have been one that was changed. It was just to be sure that teachers have been informed and that the conversation is ongoing and that, if someone makes a claim with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, it is viewed with the seriousness that

all claims are. It would be an unusual one, for sure, but it would definitely have merit — just to flag that.

The last question I have is around the equipment room at F.H. Collins. The minister and I have been in an e-mail exchange. I can let the Legislative Assembly know that the Minister of Education is responsible for the weight room and the Minister of Community Services is responsible for the track. Everything is sorted out on the track at this point in time, but I haven't had confirmation about the weight room.

My question around the weight room had to do with the access door. In the existing plan, it is a 36-inch door, which I appreciate. Concerns were raised by the faculty at F.H. Collins who will be using that facility that the room is not big enough for the Olympic lifting station that was constructed for the school. The thought by the department was that it was built in three pieces. I was assured by the user groups that it wasn't three pieces; it was one piece. What they had been asking for was the opportunity to have a rolling door, like a garage door, so equipment could easily move in and out. I believe my last e-mail communication was that we were waiting to find out. So here I am, and the reason I am asking about this very specific question right now is that the building is under construction. If we are to make any changes, now is prime time to do it. It is just about the new weight room at F.H. Collins and whether or not the door is adequate for the uses as identified by the primary user groups.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Chair, I do not have the e-mails in front of me. I probably have them here somewhere, but I don't have access to them.

I do have information from September 5, but I know that I have spoken with the deputy minister since then. The short answer is that I am assured that the doors that they are going to put on that building will accommodate the equipment that needs to go in that building. That is the short answer.

I am hoping that is satisfactory to the member opposite. I can say that, for Yukoners listening and for other members of the Legislature, the construction of this stand-alone — I sometimes refer to it as the sport building or the gym that hosts the materials for the portion of the sports school at F.H. Collins — was an outstanding part of the original F.H. Collins replacement project. It was not — I am not aware of the reason — included in the original plans. New F.H. Collins — great — no space for all of the sports school equipment.

Last year, I worked diligently with the administration at the school and with the department to make sure that there were some immediate improvements to that building, including some proper electricity and some proper heat. That, unfortunately, cost the taxpayers some money because it wasn't done initially, but it made that building more comfortable for the students who are in there every day during the school year for the time being, and then plans were immediately put in place to build the new spot. The new spot is under construction. I don't have a date for completion. We are hoping it will be near the end of this month, although I haven't been over there myself recently. We expect that it may be a little bit longer than that and a request for an

extension may be coming, but completion during this school year is anticipated.

I very much appreciate the details being brought forward by the member opposite because, while we have great faith in the planners and in the designers of this particular space, we do want to make sure that we can deal with any questions or concerns about that before it costs more taxpayers' money to fix it. We want to solve the problem now. I am assured that this is, in fact, the case, and I will ask for an updated piece of information with respect to that and with respect to the dates. Hopefully the member opposite and I can continue our e-mail exchange to make sure that information gets to her. I have great confidence and I am very pleased that this piece of the F.H. Collins saga, as I will call it, will be completed in the very near future and that those students will have access to new and appropriately heated and appropriately designed space for them.

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise here again in debating the supplementary budget. I am going to begin by asking the Premier some questions about the budget and its basis just so we can understand what is in the budget, what isn't and what may have been adjusted.

From the spring, the last adjustments in the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18*, which, of course, reflect on the starting position in both the budget for this year and what is included in the supplementary estimate this year — have there been any adjustments to the 2016-17 fiscal year since the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* that haven't been tabled here yet in the House, or are we seeing the final numbers in there? Have there been any lapses, revotes or significant changes in accounting policy that have an impact on the closing position as of March 31, 2018, and, of course, a corresponding impact as shown in this year's supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It brings me great pleasure to talk about the supplementary budget and some budgetary considerations. As members opposite know, the 2018-19 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* requests \$4.76 million in additional O&M and \$8.63 million in additional capital. In addition, O&M recoveries and forecasts are decreased by \$6.24 million. The forecast spending increase is offset by \$8.8 million in additional revenue and nearly all of those revenue increases are a result of land sales, as we have talked about in the Legislative Assembly before. The strong demand for lots was evident in the recent land lottery in the Whistle Bend subdivision.

As far as our annual deficit — \$4.5 million that was tabled in the Spring Sitting in the 2018-19 main estimates is now forecasted to be at \$4.8 million, and the net debt forecast at the end of the year went from \$21 million to \$28 million. The increase in net debt of \$7.4 million to \$28.4 million is due to changes in investments and tangible capital assets which support and improve services to Yukoners, as well as changes to the amortization expenses.

When it comes to any changes from the mains of last year's budget — the Public Accounts will be tabled by October 31, and any of those changes that the member

opposite is looking for will be calculated and reported in the Public Accounts.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the portion of the Premier's response that was an answer to some of the questions related to the budget; however, there are some outstanding questions. The reason that I'm asking the Premier this question directly about any changes since the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* is that, in going through the Public Accounts — many Yukoners may or may not realize the Public Accounts do reflect the government's year-end position, but it's a pretty thick document. When one is in opposition or is a member of the general public and you're trying to piece together and determine significant changes made by the government since the last legislation debated here in this Assembly — for example, in going through the Public Accounts from the fiscal year 2016-17, which is the most recent one we have here — that's a 388-page document and does take some time, even when someone like me has some familiarity with the budgeting process, to go through that and try to find those significant changes made by government.

That's why I'm asking in a much simpler and more direct fashion if the Premier could tell us of any significant changes that we may see that change what the financial situation was as of what was presented in the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* that was voted on in this Assembly. I'm asking in terms of lapses, expenditures and any significant changes in accounting policy.

If the Premier doesn't have that information now, I would be happy to hear from him the next time we rise to debate this legislation, but I am asking a simple, straightforward question, rather than requiring me as the Official Opposition Finance critic or any interested Yukoners to go through the entire Public Accounts and try to find significant changes in the document that presumably, like last year's, will be around 380 pages. Having that information provided in a short summary would be helpful and would avoid Yukoners having difficulty or being confused by the numbers they see in those Public Accounts for the last fiscal year once they are tabled in the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's a hard question to answer. With the tabling of the Public Accounts, there are always changes in accounting and changes in processes, and that's what the Public Accounts documents are for — unless the member opposite can maybe tip his hat a little bit to ask a question about what he's looking for specifically — what type of changes. If we went to the Office of the Auditor General and how that process works, no changes have happened there. A cross-comparison between Public Accounts to Public Accounts, whether it is 2016-17 or 2017-18, would show the member opposite any of these changes that he's looking at in general. If he could give me some more direction as to what processes he's looking for or what particular line items he's looking for, then I would be happy to try to accommodate.

Mr. Cathers: I guess I'm not going to get more of an answer here this afternoon, but to help the Premier out and hopefully get a more detailed answer from him during the next time we debate this legislation, what I'm looking for are any

significant changes. I'm not looking at specific line items. The Premier has the detailed financial information regarding the last fiscal year that I currently don't have. I presume that the Public Accounts for the year have probably either been approved by Management Board or are about to be prior to tabling, and so I'm just looking for that information about significant changes.

By significant changes — I'm not going to point to a particular dollar amount. I think it's fair to say that we're not interested in a dollar here or a dollar there but \$1 million here and \$1 million there.

We are starting to talk about significant impacts on the last fiscal year. It is information where I can and have gone through all 388 pages of the Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, but for the average citizen who is trying to understand the information, and even for me or an accountant or somebody else with some financial background, it does take a significant amount of time to go through the Public Accounts. It is not always apparent, even when those numbers show change, exactly what the reasoning behind that adjustment in the Public Accounts was. I would hope the Premier would undertake to provide more information later.

I am going to move on to a specific item in these supplementary estimates. One of the significant changes seen is the increase in Protective Services due to fire activity in Watson Lake and the surrounding areas requiring additional Outside resources — that latter line being the explanation provided to us in the information handed out by officials. The question I would ask the Premier is: Are the costs of assisting the Province of British Columbia with firefighting in BC this summer fully shown in the supplementary estimates, or are we expecting additional costs to be reflected in the next supplementary estimates for the cost of suppression? Secondly, and very importantly, what have we received from the BC government in terms of revenue recovery for mutual aid? How much does the Premier anticipate receiving from the Province of British Columbia in payment for the services that Yukon Wildland Fire firefighters provided to them this summer under the mutual aid agreement?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It has been about 11 hours of debate in general Assembly. It is good to have a question on the supplementary budget. This is a particular department that will be appearing in Committee of the Whole. Community Services will be appearing in Committee of the Whole, so I would ask the member opposite to reserve his question for that time — for Committee of the Whole — when department officials are here with the minister and they can have a thorough conversation about a concern that his government has gone through as well. It is always an interesting conversation about the agreements between different regions. We have relied on BC before or Alberta has relied on us. It is a great arrangement — well, I don't have to tell you about that, Mr. Chair, with your vast experience in this field.

With all due respect to the member opposite, we do have the Minister of Community Services appearing here in Committee of the Whole for a specific department because there is a supplementary budget item, and this is it. Those are

great questions and the minister has heard them, so he will be ready with some answers as well.

I know that the member opposite understands the process of the Public Accounts. He knows that we are finalizing those processes as we speak and that the information that he is looking for is in those Public Accounts. He has spoken a couple of different times about it being a lot of work, so we can, if he needs the help, offer a briefing from the officials on the Public Accounts.

Mr. Cathers: We would certainly take the Premier up on the offer of a briefing on Public Accounts. We do appreciate that information from officials. Again, primarily the reason for it is that my colleagues and I can read the Public Accounts and compare numbers, but having the explanation for those numbers and the significant changes is not always, in all cases, fully captured in the Public Accounts. There will be an explanation that meets the standards for accounting disclosure, but it does not always provide a good explanation of the full story behind it.

I note — again if the Premier is not able to answer the question that I am asking related to the BC wildland fire costs — again, what I'm actually asking about is primarily not what is in the budget, but whether the amounts in this supplementary budget fully account for the costs of what have already been expended by the Department of Community Services and perhaps other departments, if others did provide that support.

The question I am asking is: Are we expecting to see an expense come in and be shown in the next supplementary estimates?

The government should be aware of that information by this point, since they should know whether the number that was included in the supplementary budget reflects the final costs for the year, or whether additional costs came in after that point; and if additional costs did occur after that point, I'm quite sure that both the Minister of Community Services and the Finance minister have been provided an explanation of those additional costs in the Department of Community Services — so we're just asking for them. The question, in my view, is very appropriate to ask of the Minister of Finance, since it relates to the accuracies of the budget projections and would help us understand and would help Yukoners understand whether the amounts contained within this supplementary estimate are accurate or were already out-of-date before the ink was dry, as it pertains to Community Services.

I want to make clear that I am certainly not criticizing the mutual aid agreement with the Province of British Columbia and other provinces. That agreement is one, as the Premier correctly noted, the Yukon has taken advantage of on numerous occasions and provided support on a number of occasions. It is really an excellent example of where provinces and territories working together can help complement each other's resources and provide some surge capacity in times of higher firefighting years. The result of those agreements, of course, has been, quite literally, saving homes and property and effectively suppressing wildfires in the Yukon and

provinces and territories, which jurisdictions would otherwise either have been unable to fight or paying a far greater cost to provide those services.

The only two questions I am asking about this is whether the supplementary estimates fully show the cost that the Yukon government has already incurred for suppressing fires and sending firefighters to the Province of British Columbia during the summer of 2018 or whether there is an additional amount that has already been expended. If that money has been expended, how much is it? Last, but not least, how much are we expecting to recover from the Province of British Columbia as their payment for the services that we provided to them during the summer?

Those are the questions I had hoped that we could get more information on at a later date.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank and acknowledge our firefighters from across the territory who went to British Columbia this summer, for putting themselves in harm's way — as they did in many situations — and as well as fighting fires, which is rarely easy work. We should be proud of the work that they did on behalf of all Yukoners and our fellow Canadians in British Columbia.

I'm going to move on to a couple of other specific areas that hopefully the Premier can provide an answer to when we are next here in this Assembly in debate on the supplementary estimates.

The first of those questions is: What is the current projected annual growth of the TFF — the territorial funding formula — for each of the next three fiscal years? Next, could the Premier and Finance Minister please advise what the current cash position is of the Yukon government, as well as current holdings, in terms of term deposits, GICs, et cetera?

I understand that the numbers, as of March 31, will be reflected in the Public Accounts that are to be tabled before the end of October, but as the Premier will, of course, know, a number of months have passed since the end of March and we're simply asking for a current update on what the government has in terms of its short-term investments and how those are being held. There have been problems, as the Premier will recall, in the past with investments, when the Yukon government has had temporary issues.

There are also concerns, of course, as markets are volatile, about the exposure of certain types of deposits, and we're simply interested in hearing information. Much as members receive an update on the MLA pension plan through Members' Services Board, we're simply interested in hearing an update of where the government has its money invested on a long-term, short-term or medium-term basis and the current status of each of those accounts.

I'm going to move on to another question, and that relates to the government claims regarding trying to reduce the growth of government. We have seen positions posted, I believe most recently, for the Department of Health and Social Services for what appears to be a new position — a senior advisor to the deputy minister. We have heard of that in a couple other cases with other departments, so these do appear to be a new class of position and appear to be positions that

look like they are growing government, unless we're provided with an explanation of where a different position may perhaps be closing. It certainly looks like the growth of government and growth of government at the top, rather than at the service-delivery level.

The question is: How many departments have senior advisor positions to the DM? How many of those positions are currently being contemplated? What is the total growth of government as a result of those positions?

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 22, 2018:

34-2-157

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Cathers related to a Ministerial Statement on cannabis legalization (Dendys)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 103

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 23, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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| Hon. Ranj Pillai | Porter Creek South | Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation |
| Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee | Riverdale South | Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice |
| Hon. John Streicker | Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes | Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission |
| Hon. Pauline Frost | Vuntut Gwitchin | Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation |
| Hon. Richard Mostyn | Whitehorse West | Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission |
| Hon. Jeanie Dendys | Mountainview | Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate |

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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
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Yukon Party

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| Brad Cathers | Lake Laberge | Patti McLeod | Watson Lake |
| Wade Istchenko | Kluane | Geraldine Van Bibber | Porter Creek North |

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New Democratic Party

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| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 23, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 325, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We have a few special guests here today for our tributes: Lance Burton — also known as Lancelot — Skyler Isaac and Alexander Gatensby. From the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we have Samson Hartland, Kathleen Napier, Daniel Little and Mike Burke, as well as Jonas Smith from the KPMA. I would like to welcome all of them to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you so much for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Although he has just been recognized, I would like to acknowledge Samson Hartland. I think he is our first elected municipal person since municipal elections were held last Thursday. I would like to welcome him as a re-elected Whitehorse city councillor.

Applause

Ms. White: I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming the one person in the gallery who hasn't been introduced, Mr. Chris Madden, who is visiting us from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Thank you for coming, Chris.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Kate Carmack's induction into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It is truly my honour to rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to Kate Carmack, a true Yukoner who will be inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame in Toronto on January 10, 2019.

I would like to take a moment to thank *Shakat Journal* and the Yukon Chamber of Mines for working together to create this winning nomination. Kate will be the first indigenous woman to be inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame. She is such an important figure for Yukon and this national recognition shows that she is an important figure for Canada as well.

The story of Kate Carmack is well-known by Yukoners, and I'm sure many would agree with me that it should be better known across Canada. Being inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame is a wonderful and significant step in that direction. Kate Carmack will be joining the Klondike discoverers group of four men who were inducted almost 20 years ago in 1999. Those men are: George Carmack, Kate's husband and father of her daughter; Skookum Jim Mason, Kate's brother; Robert Henderson; and Dawson Charlie.

Kate Carmack was fishing for salmon with those four and her daughter on August 17, 1896, when they discovered gold in what was then known as Rabbit Creek. This is where the Klondike River enters the Yukon River. That was the famed discovery that caught the imagination and attention of people around the world and launched the Klondike Gold Rush.

History has it that George Carmack, the only white member of the group, discovered the gold because he staked the first claim. The other three men have also been credited with helping to make the discovery.

It has long been suspected, however, that it was not any of those gentlemen who found the first nugget in that creek. It was actually discovered by Kate Carmack — Shaaw Tláa, as she was known by her own family. We will likely never know for certain who saw and picked up that first nugget of gold, but the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame now acknowledges and celebrates that Shaaw Tláa was also an important member of that group. Indeed, it was her skill in sewing mukluks and mittens and marketing them to fellow prospectors that supported the group's work.

Shaaw Tláa was born in 1857 and grew up in a Tagish village near Carcross. She was the daughter of Kaachgaawáa, the head of the Tlingit crow clan, and Gus'dutéen, a member of the Tagish wolf clan. Shaaw Tláa played a major role in changing the course of the territory's history, and it is very fitting that Yukon Women in Mining has renamed its annual Yukon Women in Mining champion designation to honour her.

We congratulate Tara Christie, president and chief executive officer of Banyan Gold Corporation, who will be the first to receive the Kate Carmack women in mining award on November 17.

It is especially important to highlight Shaaw Tláa's inclusion into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame now, as October is Women's History Month.

This year's theme, "Make an impact", celebrates the women in Canada who have made a lasting impact. All too often women are overlooked when telling the story of Yukon's rich and colourful history, so it is fitting that Kate

Carmack is being recognized for her substantial contributions to the mining history of Yukon and Canada.

Yukon has been a global mining destination ever since that fateful discovery over 120 years ago. We are very lucky to come from a territory with a rich history of women in leadership, from matrilineal indigenous cultures to politicians who have broken the glass ceiling to contributors to our Yukon story like Kate Carmack. Women have played a key role in shaping the territory and we are better for it. Perhaps next time we take our families and visitors to Bonanza Creek, as Rabbit Creek is now known, we can take a moment to recognize Kate Carmack and how she impacted the life of everyone who calls Yukon their home.

Applause

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, it is estimated that one in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This is now the most common cancer among Canadian women and the leading cause of cancer death. I would venture to say that every one of us in this Legislative Assembly knows at least one woman who received a breast cancer diagnosis in the past 12 months. She will be one of 26,300 who have been diagnosed in the last year, which means 72 women per day nationwide.

Breast cancer does not discriminate. It also impacts men — 230 men received a diagnosis of breast cancer last year. In Yukon, about 25 women per year are diagnosed. These numbers may seem high but, in fact, the incidence of breast cancer death has decreased since the 1990s and has remained stable for the past five years thanks to an education campaign and early diagnosis.

With new treatment regimes and new drugs, there is new hope. Last week, we heard in the House of the increase in the cost of cancer drugs. Some of the money that goes to support chemotherapy supports breast cancer patients. In the last 20 years, more than \$360 million has been invested in breast cancer research by the Canadian Cancer Society and the former Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation combined, funding more than 1,000 research projects. I'm pleased to say that the rate of breast cancer deaths has dropped by 44 percent since the 1980s. Work has been done to increase the rate of detection and treatment of breast cancer. This work happens on many fronts.

On the local front, I would like to acknowledge the individuals who make the Run for Mom part of their annual Mother's Day celebrations, the local drugstore that supports fundraising for Karen's Fund — which provides financial aid to Yukon women with breast cancer — and the local firefighters who proudly wear their pink shirts and hang up coats at the biannual Mardi Bra fundraising event. We thank the volunteers who donate their time and, last but not least, the health care staff who make the journey as comfortable as it possibly can be.

I acknowledge the artists whose work has graced the Run for Mom t-shirt over the last 20 years, including the beadwork of my sister Shirley that proudly hangs in the mammography unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital. This beaded pink ribbon was her generous contribution in memory of the Old Crow women we have lost to the disease, including our dear sister Sharon and our Auntie Minnie.

But I am hopeful, as we all should be. We have made great strides with the donation, and the work of dedicated research, health care providers and volunteers. For women who may be listening, I encourage you to get your mammogram.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which takes place in October.

Cancer is so widespread in Canada that it's almost impossible for anyone to say they haven't been affected by the disease in some way. Of the many types of cancers, breast cancer has been recognized as one of the highest diagnosed, affecting one in eight women in Canada at some point in their lives, and it doesn't discriminate.

While women have the higher likelihood to be diagnosed with breast cancer, it affects men as well. We have heard the numbers already — an estimated 26,300 women and 230 men will be diagnosed each year. Here in the Yukon, we continue to make great strides to help those suffering from cancer. We raise funds to make the lives of those with cancer just a little easier.

When Karen Wiederkehr passed away at age 37 from breast cancer, her husband created a fund, Karen's Fund, to gift money to Yukon women suffering from the disease. He also created a beautiful and quiet space at the Whitehorse General Hospital, Karen's Room, for Yukoners to receive their chemotherapy treatments.

Through continued innovation in research, treatment and early detection, we will continue to make gains in the fight against breast cancer. There is a growing desire across our country to beat this illness.

Be aware, check yourselves regularly, and be optimistic if you receive a diagnosis of breast cancer. Know that improvements to the survival rates are made every day.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to acknowledge October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

We're fortunate to live in a place where we're surrounded by problem-solvers — people who see a problem or a need and, instead of sitting back and feeling hopeless, they tackle the problem head-on and figure out the best way to help. You could say that breast cancer has been knocked back here in the territory.

With successful fundraisers like the Run for Mom and Mardi Bra, money is raised in the territory and then directed to where it can do the most good, from things like Karen's Fund — which helps families and individuals deal with the often

unexpected costs that arise when dealing with a diagnosis of breast cancer — to the special environment created by Karen's Room, where chemotherapy treatment is provided in a quiet and comfortable place. These initiatives are good examples of what Yukoners do best. We see a need and we respond.

We thank all those who donate their time and energy to supporting those facing the challenge of breast cancer. Thank you to those who donate their hard-earned money to support Yukon women and men with breast cancer. Thank you to the many people who continue to fundraise, volunteer, advocate and support those living with and fighting breast cancer. A special thanks to the visionaries who knew that money raised in Yukon for breast cancer prevention and awareness could stay in the Yukon and directly help Yukoners and took the steps to make that happen.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling a response to the question raised by the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King on October 18.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to consult with northerners on improvements to the Nutrition North program.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to confirm that school bus service will be provided to the existing lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision as well as to the 20 new lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision that the government recently put up for sale via land lottery.

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

THAT the Yukon government produce a copy of the terms of reference for the Health and Social Services review.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, last week the Yukon Hospital Corporation appeared before this House and told us that the current wait-list for cataract surgery is 350 people. They said that this problem has been getting worse and, in fact, to quote them: "... wait times to see an ophthalmologist and receive cataract surgery have been growing rapidly and now exceeds three years."

As we highlighted yesterday, the Liberals have asked each and every department to find up to two-percent cuts to their O&M budgets. Every department has been given the same target regardless of what services they provide to Yukon families. The Yukon Hospital Corporation has told us that the wait-list for cataract surgery is growing rapidly. Many Yukoners are desperately in need of this surgery.

Why isn't the government doing anything to reduce this wait-list?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will absolutely rely on my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, to comment further on the specifics of wait-lists.

The way in which the issues are being characterized, again, is inaccurate. We keep hearing from the members opposite about a two-percent cut, and I want to quote from the document that the member opposite is quoting from. It says directly on it — and I quote: "A corporate approach to finding ongoing O&M savings has been deemed better than including a savings target in individual departmental budgets, as all departments do not have the capacity to contribute equally." To correct the record again, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about efficiencies; we are not talking about cuts. From the document that was tabled by the opposition themselves — they should probably read the contents.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure what question the Premier was listening to, but I was talking about wait-lists for cataract surgery. He's quoting from a different piece of material.

The cataract surgery, as we know, is important to improving the quality of life of Yukoners. We're talking about people's vision, and unfortunately, the government is doing nothing to reduce this rapidly growing wait-list.

As we've said, the Hospital Corporation has told us that this problem is getting worse, and there are 350 Yukoners currently waiting for cataract surgery. Yet the Liberals have instructed each department to find up to two-percent cuts to their O&M budgets — not just certain departments. Even departments like Health and Social Services are expected to find the same amount of reduction to their budgets as everyone else, despite issues such as rapidly growing wait-lists for cataract surgery.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services agree to give the Hospital Corporation the proper resources to reduce the cataract surgery wait-list?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If there's going to be an inaccuracy that is being portrayed here by the Yukon Party, I feel obligated to stand up and to correct the record. We will absolutely allow the continuing dialogue about cataract

surgeries and other wait-lists that the member opposite is talking about, because it is a really important issue.

But again, when we hear the preamble to these questions — they're brought up in a way that is just inaccurate — the members opposite are clearly not fully informed by a document that they tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Again, Management Board notionally approved an ongoing one-percent reduction to begin with — so again, inaccurate information.

Really, the job of the opposition is to do the critique of the departments — for sure — but to bring in inaccuracies like that is concerning, to say the least.

I'm quoting from the leaked document: "A corporate approach to finding ongoing O&M savings has been deemed better than including a savings target in individual departmental budgets, as all departments do not have the capacity to contribute equally."

I'll ask the members opposite: Why do they continue to say that it's a two-percent cut across the board when their own document — the document that they tabled themselves in the Legislative Assembly — clearly does not say that?

Mr. Hassard: Actually, our job is to come here to this Assembly and ask important questions on behalf of Yukoners, and if the Premier would like to talk about responsibilities, his responsibility is to answer those questions on behalf of Yukoners.

As we've highlighted, the wait-list for cataract surgery, which I'm talking about here today, is rapidly growing in this territory. Not only did the Liberals have no plan to deal with it, they have asked each and every department, including Health and Social Services, to find up to two-percent cuts. Meanwhile, the growing cataract surgery wait-list is having negative impacts on Yukoners.

As I have said, there are 350 Yukoners who are living with this condition and are currently waiting for surgery. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services please tell us one — just one — specific action that she is taking to reduce this wait-list?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to respond to the question, as there appears to some confusion. We had members of the Hospital Corporation here last week speaking about their budget, speaking about the programs and services they are receiving. I believe they highlighted the success and the significant partnership that we have worked toward in addressing some of the current pressures that we have experienced over the course of the last year.

For the sake of clarity, the Hospital Corporation is not getting any cuts. We're working at expanding services. In fact, they received a 2.5-percent increase over the last year in their funding.

The obligation there is to provide services and supports and to work with them on expansion of services. We have enhanced the operating room. We brought in the supports that they require, and we are looking at the changing demographics and we are increasing the demand for specialist services, especially by the visiting specialists who address the concerns for Yukoners. We know that there are significant

wait times, as addressed by the hospital, and we are working closely with the Hospital Corporation to address the cataract surgeries and the wait-lists.

We hope that this effort that we are addressing over the course of the next year will address the wait-lists and the serious issues that have been brought to our attention. Of course, it is something that we take seriously and will continue to address with our partners.

Question re: Coroners Act review

Mr. Cathers: We have learned now that the Yukon Liberal government did not properly consult a number of important stakeholders before tabling Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, including first responders and health professionals. We have heard testimony from the Hospital Corporation on Thursday, where they confirmed that they had not been consulted on this legislation. The Liberals also did not consult with the Child and Youth Advocate.

As we stated last week, we are in favour of modernizing the act, but it has to be done right. The government needs to ensure that stakeholders and the public have their say on the act.

Will the Minister of Justice agree to press pause on the bill, go back out and consult stakeholders from the public before the end of the Fall Legislative Sitting to ensure their input can be incorporated into the bill? If there are any changes required, based on this consultation, will the minister agree to do the right thing and bring forward amendments to the bill?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak about doing the right thing with respect to the *Coroners Act*.

As some Yukoners know, and others will be surprised to learn, our current legislation is based on an ordinance that was introduced in 1958, with very few changes since that time. Modernizing this important piece of legislation is absolutely critical for the benefit of Yukoners and for the benefit of the Coroner's Service to have modern tools and abilities to carry out their investigations for families and the public to receive answers when there is a death that affects them. The Coroner's Service needs those tools. We have introduced them in Bill No. 27, and I look forward to the debate in this House of that bill.

Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, what we have seen is that there has been no proper consultation with families who have been affected by this legislation or with health professionals. This is starting to sound a bit like the airport act debacle. You will remember last year when the government rushed forward that bill without proper consultation, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works was actually forced to retract his news release in which he claimed certain groups were consulted after those groups said it wasn't true.

Now we have the *Coroners Act* debacle. The Minister of Justice forgot or chose not to consult with key stakeholders, including the hospital, the Child and Youth Advocate office, the Yukon Medical Association and the Yukon Registered

Nurses Association, and she only briefly consulted with Emergency Medical Services.

Can the minister tell us why she did not properly consult on the *Coroners Act*, and will she agree now to consult on the text of the bill with all of these stakeholders as well as with community coroners, former chief coroners and rural EMS supervisors before proceeding?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is an issue that clearly required leadership. It is a piece of legislation that I have worked with over many years and found to be inadequate and not properly serving the Yukon public.

As early as the spring of 2017 in this Legislative Assembly, I noted that the *Coroners Act* was being worked on. It was one of the first questions I brought to the Department of Justice when I became responsible for this portfolio in the late fall of 2016. As a result, we have brought Bill No. 27 here, which has a lot of modern changes that will serve Yukoners and the Coroner's Service well.

With respect to public engagement, the member opposite and I may disagree. There was public engagement. There was targeted engagement. There was input from a number of organizations and professionals who work with the *Coroner's Act* on a daily basis, and I look forward to the further debate of this bill in this House.

Mr. Cathers: But an officer of the Legislative Assembly, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, would not send a letter suggesting specific amendments if she was satisfied with the consultation. The minister's style of ivory tower leadership is not what Yukoners voted for when they elected that government.

Last fall, the Yukon Liberals brought forward the airports act. They claimed that they consulted with groups who later said that those claims were not true, and the government was forced to delete their press release. Even the City of Whitehorse came out and said that the claims of them being consulted were not accurate. A year later, we would have hoped that the Liberals would have learned their lesson and would do proper consultations on this legislation. From a government that campaigned on the slogan of "Be Heard", I think Yukoners expected more.

There was no meaningful opportunity for families who have been affected by this piece of legislation or for health professionals to provide proper input on the text of this bill.

The minister has the opportunity to do the right thing: Agree to press pause on this legislation and consult on the text of the bill with these stakeholders and with the public. Will she do the right thing: Yes or no?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The member opposite and I clearly disagree on what the right thing is. I think new legislation that hasn't been touched for 60 years is the right thing. I think modernizing the Coroner's Service, giving her the tools that she needs with respect to serving Yukoners when they are in a situation of extreme stress and sensitivity is absolutely required.

There was public engagement. There was targeted engagement. There were letters. There was consultation with former coroners, with community coroners and with the

RCMP. We received input from all of them. I received a letter from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate last week. I'm very pleased to have her suggestions. I will be working with her, working on a response to her and also working with her to incorporate the suggestions that she has made either in the regulations for this legislation or perhaps in the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate review, which has also been long overdue despite the fact that it was legislated.

Question re: Acutely intoxicated persons at risk, treatment for

Ms. Hanson: In December 2010, Dr. Bruce Beaton and Chief James Allen released the *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report*. This came out of the inquest into the death of Raymond Silverfox in RCMP cells in 2008. The report came up with 10 recommendations on how to better respond to people who are acutely intoxicated.

Mr. Speaker, today intoxicated persons are transported by the RCMP to the arrest processing unit at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The Beaton-Allen report said that the time has come to share responsibility between law enforcement and health care.

Their first recommendation is that we — and I quote: "... assure that all acutely intoxicated persons at risk receive treatment with compassion, respect and dignity."

What treatment do people receive at the arrest processing unit?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say to the member opposite with respect to options for Yukoners is that we are working with our partners, we're working with Yukon First Nations and we have increased our contribution and our funding to ensure that every Yukoner in every Yukon community is given an opportunity to access pre- and post-care supports.

We're looking at expanding the medical care model as well as the mental wellness units in every one of our communities. We have four mental wellness hubs, and the objective is to ensure that we have supports and timely supports for those individuals who have come upon perhaps some much needed support, meeting them where they are within their respective communities and ensuring that they are given the treatment, whether it be land-based treatment or an addictions treatment program through the Sarah Steele initiative or through a community-based model.

Ms. Hanson: Another recommendation was to rewrite the legislation that authorizes non-criminal detention for intoxication. With the Salvation Army unwilling to admit acutely intoxicated individuals and no supportive sobering centre, that only leaves the emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital or the arrest processing unit. So 10 years after the death of Raymond Silverfox, we are still sending intoxicated people to jail. These individuals are released when sober. No mention of treatment, counselling or supports or even a choice of what they might like to do. If acutely intoxicated individuals are ending up at the arrest processing unit at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — the

jail — how has anything changed since 2010 when the Beaton and Allen report was released?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Certainly, I can advise the member opposite through this question that these are very serious concerns on behalf of, not only the Department of Health and Social Services, but the Department of Justice, as well, and our work going forward is, of course, to address these and serve these individuals who find themselves in these extremely difficult situations.

I can recall that — although I stand to be corrected — in fact, the APU, the arrest processing unit, at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre where it happens to be located was, in fact, a major change as a result of the case that the member opposite is speaking about. In fact, it was moved from downtown for the purposes of providing better, more appropriate service for individuals who are held for a short period of time for their own safety — or the safety of others — but primarily for their own safety so that they are not harmed while in that particular state. Of course, medical attention is provided for individuals who require it and these improvements must continue.

The comments made by the member opposite are not taken lightly. This is a situation that we must address at all times, case by case, and provide the best service possible.

Ms. Hanson: In fact, Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen made clear that the placement of people in the APU was directly contrary to all 10 of their recommendations.

Eight years later, and nothing has substantively changed in that time. We do have a new Sarah Steele Building and we still send intoxicated people to jail — now the arrest processing unit — or we send them to Emergency. Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen focused on the need for a sobering centre that would embrace the philosophy of harm reduction and be a refuge of safety and security during a time of personal vulnerability. This centre would be capable of accommodating acutely intoxicated persons and provide a continuum of care and support, including medical withdrawal supports. So 10 years since the death of Raymond Silverfox and eight years since the Beaton and Allen report — Mr. Speaker, what has changed? When will this government put into place a safe sobering place and stop forcing people to Emergency or jail?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for a great question. It is certainly something that we have experienced over the course of the last two years. There are immense pressures at the hospital and immense pressures at the Sarah Steele facility. We are working with our partners in our communities to address and alleviate some of the pressures. It is not by any means all of the answers.

We have enhanced and supported the Jackson Lake treatment facility. We are working with our partners. I know that a supportive sobering centre is something that it is much needed, and we are working on ensuring that we provide the supports necessary — the supportive measures that we have in our community. It is certainly long overdue, and it is necessary when we look at substance abuse in our communities and looking at ensuring that we provide supports

— I absolutely agree, and it is something that we are working toward as a government.

We will continue to work with our partners and address the concerns that have been brought to our attention. As well, we will ensure that we have an enhanced scope of collaborative care in all of our communities using the mental wellness model and the land-based initiatives in our communities. We are now working on a strategy with our communities through the mental wellness land-based healing initiative. We have provided \$600,000 last year to do some bridge supports so that communities can start working on a model that works for them in their respective communities.

Question re: Ross River School

Mr. Hassard: Last week, I asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works some very reasonable and straightforward questions about the geotechnical report for the Ross River School. At the time, I certainly didn't get any answers, so I am hoping, now that he has had the opportunity to think about things a little bit, I can re-ask those questions.

When did the minister receive the geotechnical report? Why has he been sitting on this report? Why has he not already spoken to the community of Ross River about the report? When will he make that report public?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am not a mathematician, but I think that was four questions. I will deal with them one at a time. I didn't realize we were asking multiple questions in Question Period.

Our number one priority continues to be the health and safety of the students and staff at that school. I will repeat — as I did last week — that the school continues to be a safe place to work, learn and socialize.

In the past two years, we have ordered a number of engineering reports to both monitor the safety of the school and provide us evidence-based options on next steps. This decision on the school is not one that we take lightly and we have taken the appropriate time to conduct the reviews and analysis necessary. Currently we have two options before us. The first is a long-term option to extend the life of the school to 2040, with substantial and continuous repairs to the school. The second is a short-term option and outlines what is necessary to maintain the school for the next five years while the replacement to the school is designed and constructed.

This is not a decision our government will make unilaterally. We will work with the Ross River Dena Council, listen to the community's needs and jointly determine a long-range solution for the future of this school.

Mr. Hassard: Apparently I should ask five questions because maybe we would have gotten one answer.

Last week, we used the Ross River School to demonstrate how the Liberals five-year capital plan was rather useless. The other day the Minister of Highways and Public Works randomly announced \$3.1 million in capital improvements to the school right here on the floor of the Assembly but, of course, we know that this \$3.1 million is mentioned nowhere in the budget. The \$3.1 million is mentioned nowhere in this capital concept. If a major project like this is isn't in it, then

the only thing you can be certain of is that you can't trust this capital concept.

We know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works regularly loses track of how \$1 million is being spent, as he did when he sole-sourced the contract to a Northwest Territories firm.

Will the minister be able to tell us where we can find this line item in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am troubled by the member opposite — by the Leader of the Official Opposition — as he just said he used Ross River for political purposes. I take exception to that, Mr. Speaker. This is a school that is occupied by students and teachers. It is a school that is safe — and we are keeping it safe — but it is not the greatest structure and it is not the greatest structure because —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: The accusation that the Minister of Highways and Public Works just directed against the Leader of the Official Opposition certainly seems to be in contravention of Standing Order 19(g) — imputing "... unavowed motives to another member..." — where he accused the Leader of the Official Opposition for having a reason other than bringing forward issues on behalf of his constituents when making his point. I think the member opposite should be asked to retract that point and to apologize to this Assembly.

Speaker: Are there any submissions on the point of order?

Minister of Highways and Public Works, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, this is political theatre right here. That is exactly what we engage in — we are politicians. In fact, I just referenced what the Leader of the Official Opposition said himself, which was that he used this school to illustrate, et cetera. I am going to stand by that statement and I will await your ruling.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I will review Hansard, but in my view, there is some merit to what the Minister of Highways and Public Works is saying in that we are all politicians and you are putting forward your perspectives as you view it to be, presumably to the good of your vision for Yukoners. There is, of course, a political narrative.

If I'm missing something, as I said, I will review Hansard, but it seems to me that the debate in the Assembly is intrinsically and inherently political.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have released engineering reports for the Ross River School showing that it is structurally sound and safe for use. I'll read that again: We have released the engineering reports. That is something that is rare. It is a new thing — that we are actually releasing

information to the public, to the community and to the media. That is something that hasn't been done before, and I'm more than happy to discuss the contents of those documents in public. It is important that the public get the information that the government collects on its behalf, and I'm more than happy to do that. That is another change that we are doing.

We're also making sure that this school that we inherited is safe for occupancy. That is the golden rule here. We want to make sure that we keep that school safe and operational until we have a chance to talk to the community and decide what the next steps are.

Mr. Hassard: We just mentioned the Liberals' five-year capital concept and its unreliability. We've raised the issue of this — over \$3 million that the minister said he is investing in the Ross River School. It isn't in the budget documents and it isn't in the five-year concept.

We do know that Holy Family School is in the document. When we ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works why it was in the five-year concept, he told us that it was going to be rebuilt, but later the Minister of Education told us that the Minister of Highways and Public Works was wrong. In fact, not only were they not rebuilding this school as the minister claimed, but the government can't even tell us why the Holy Family School is listed on the five-year capital concept. They can't even tell us if it's for painting or renovating.

If Yukoners can't trust this five-year capital plan, they can't even trust the minister.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is interesting to hear from the members opposite that they don't want to see a government planning for the future.

We have been very pleased with the reception that we've received on this capital plan given by industry to date. We've been told by companies like Northwestel, for example, that this is a cost-savings for them as we plan for the future.

The intention of the plan — as the members opposite know — is to create awareness of Yukon government capital plans among Yukoners, the private sector, the municipalities and the First Nation governments. Communicating capital plans early allows all levels of government information to work toward fulfilling the highest priority needs for Yukoners in all of the communities. It allows the private sector to prepare for these government projects, and we've been hearing a lot of great responses from that.

As the members opposite know, long-term planning will continue to evolve. It will improve every year. These plans are flexible for that determination. Plans will change as community needs change as well and as the planning continues with the community partners.

The Minister for Highways and Public Works said exactly that. We are ready to go to the community and talk to the community of Ross River and to see what they want us to do, as far as these options and these papers.

Releasing documents — I remember the opposition tried to make an attempt with that school as well. I don't remember them being as open and as accountable to the good people of Ross River when that determination was being made.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Introduction of visitors outside of the time provided for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask all of my colleagues here to help me in welcoming a wonderful individual from Dawson City, Alex Somerville, who is the curator of the museum in Dawson.

Applause

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called on Wednesday, October 24, 2018. They are: Motion No. 340, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North; Motion No. 319, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre; and Motion No. 326, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter now before the Committee is Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 21: *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to start first by welcoming Bhreagh Dabbs from Justice to the Legislative Assembly today and Valerie Royle, who is the deputy minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. Thank you for being with us today and for all of your hard work on the bill that we are considering today.

In my earlier remarks in second reading, I reviewed the legislative changes that we have embarked on in the last two years, changes that led us to the act that we are considering today. Today I will discuss some historical context, talk about the bill a bit more in-depth and consider our present and future directions. I will leave any in-depth discussions on legal matters to my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. However, I know that the law and our Yukon laws are living documents — they are not set in stone. Like all of us, they must be responsive to change in society.

Here is an example: Until fairly recently in human history, a woman was considered less than a whole person, particularly if she was married. The *Married Women's Property Act* is an example of those values. That is why we are proposing to repeal that act. Later, once women obtained rights equal to men's, society moved slowly to recognize gay rights and same-sex marriage. It took the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and a number of high-profile court cases and changes in the law for same-sex marriage to be legal across the country. Now trans people and others with non-binary genders are demanding equality before the law. Like most other Canadian jurisdictions, Yukon took a piecemeal approach to making legislation more expansive and inclusive and, as in other places, the movement toward change has often been a court case, but we are rapidly catching up.

In my second reading speech, I detailed the progress our government has made toward making our legislation more inclusive of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. The bill we are considering today marks the next step in this process. Let me go through the bill in detail. A recent review of Yukon legislation found references to domestic partners in 46 enactments. Today, we are amending nine acts. They are: the *Dependents Relief Act*, the *Estate Administration Act*, the *Evidence Act*, the *Family Property and Support Act*, the *Government Employee Housing Plan Act*, the *Income Tax Act*, the *Marriage Act*, the *Spousal Compensation Act* and the *Judicature Act*. Most of these acts are amendments to be inclusive of same-sex partners. Two acts need amendments to be inclusive of non-binary genders.

Rather than give details on each change, I will tell you about some of the examples that we plan to do.

The *Estate Administration Act* will replace the gendered term "widow" or "widower" with the gender-neutral phrase "surviving spouse". Amendments to the *Marriage Act* would replace the gendered terms "widow" or "widower" with the gender-neutral phrase "previously married person whose previous spouse is deceased". To be more inclusive of non-binary persons, we want to amend the *Spousal Compensation Act*. We propose to take out the gender terms "his" or "hers" and remove references to the gendered phrase "persons of opposite sex".

We also want to repeal the *Married Women's Property Act*. In the second reading speech, I described the origin of the *Married Women's Property Act* in jurisdictions across Canada, Britain and elsewhere. It came from a time when women had legal status somewhat above that of a child, but definitely less than equal to a man. Single women could buy and sell land or property and enter into contracts, but the status of married women was much more diminished. Women lost their legal identity upon marriage. Married women could not hold or dispose of property, enter a contract, sue or be sued, or act as a guardian. These common law rules were eventually abolished by statute starting in the 18th century.

In Canada, some married women's property acts like Yukon's were amended when women acquired equal legal rights to men but, since 1982, when equality of the sexes was enshrined into the Canadian Constitution by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, there has been absolutely no reason to keep the Yukon *Married Women's Property Act* as one of our pieces of legislation. It is certainly a remnant of a bygone era and it is time for it to be repealed.

As the bill itself states, it no longer reflects the current state of law or modern society. Along with repealing the *Married Women's Property Act* is a proposed amendment to the *Judicature Act*. This amendment would abolish the doctrine of unity of personality. The doctrine describes the old legal concept that a husband and wife were considered to be one person under the law and note the heteronormative terms "husband" and "wife".

Further amendments to the *Judicature Act* affirm three essential factors. First, in section 29.01(1), a married person is separate and distinct from their spouses with their own rights and duties under the law. Secondly, in section 29(2), a married person must be given legal capacity, meaning the power to make their own decisions as if they were unmarried. In fact, it recognizes each spouse as a separate person. Finally, in section 29(3), it states that the purpose of subsections 1 and 2 is to make the law apply to everyone equally regardless of sex or gender.

All of these amendments, taken together, are part of our ongoing work to make good on our government's priority to make Yukon a more diverse, fair and equal society. Of course, there is more work to be done. Many members of LGBTQ2S+ community have told us that changes in legislation are not enough and we agree. Changes in law are not enough. We need services that meet the needs of our LGBTQ2S+ community members. This bill is a start in the right direction.

I want to emphasize that this bill is far from the last step we will take to make our legislation more representative of all Yukon citizens, no matter someone's sexual orientation or gender expression.

With regard to the bill we will consider today, we did not engage directly with the public due to the legal nature of the amendments. The amendments confirm changes to common law. They are necessary to ensure that Yukon legislation meets our obligations under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This bill affirms the present state of the law and modernizes our legislation. Consulting with the public on

this would not change the need for these amendments; however, we are very conscious that we need to continue moving forward or improving our legislation and services relating to LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

Let me tell you how we have engaged with the community for the last two years. In 2016, a deputy ministers committee on transgender issues was struck to review internal practices related to non-discrimination. This committee's mandate expanded. It was formalized and it eventually became the deputy ministers committee on sexual orientation and gender identity. Deputy ministers from the Women's Directorate, Justice, Health and Social Services, the Public Service Commission, Education, Community Services and Highways and Public Works have been meeting since then.

Our policy staff and legal staff are also identifying instances where legislation will need to be amended. To ensure our efforts are well thought out and to ensure we are engaging the LGBTQ2S+ community in a safe and dignified way, we have hired a contractor from a BC-based organization called QMUNITY. QMUNITY is trusted in the LGBTQ2S+ community and their leadership will help us to engage the community. Ultimately we are working to help identify and prioritize the needs of this diverse community. With our contractor from QMUNITY, we are building a public engagement plan for later this fall, which will inform our action plan. These three initiatives mark the beginning of significant progress in updating our legislation and ensuring that we deliver the right services to our community. We are confident that we are continuing to make sure our legislation meets the rules and social standards for LGBTQ2S+ non-discrimination.

I look forward to further comments and questions from members of the House.

Mr. Kent: Thank you to the minister for her opening remarks. I would also like to welcome the officials who are supporting the minister here today, as well as all the officials throughout government who worked on putting this legislation together.

With that, the Official Opposition will have no questions during Committee of the Whole on this bill. I will turn it over to my colleague from the New Democrat Party.

Ms. White: I echo the thanks made by the Official Opposition. We thank the minister for bringing this bill forward and the government for moving forward on equality. We're happy to see this, and we have no questions for Committee of the Whole.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 21?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I guess I will have short closing remarks then. Since we have no questions, I just really thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly today for hearing this bill and for supporting it. I think it is a huge step forward for Yukon. We are very pleased to be bringing this forward in this way, and to have consensus among all of us in the Legislative Assembly.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 21?

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

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 10 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Dendys that the Chair report Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cathers: Just in resuming general debate here this afternoon, I will just cap off briefly to remind the Premier and the officials with him of where we finished yesterday in the hopes of getting answers to a few specific questions that I had noted at that point.

I appreciate the Premier's offer of a briefing on Public Accounts and we will certainly take him up on that. I had asked a number of questions, including whether the cost of the Yukon government providing assistance to British Columbia

for the fire season this year was accounted for yet in this first supplementary estimate and, if not, what the additional anticipated expenditures are that will be shown in the next supplementary estimates, as well as what the anticipated recovery is from the Province of British Columbia. I know that if that information is not contained in the budget yet, it will certainly be information that both the Minister of Community Services and the Finance minister have. In the interest of public disclosure and providing us with an updated picture of the finances of the territory to understand whether they are both recoveries and costs yet to be booked — what we can anticipate in the next estimates.

I would also just ask the Premier: How many departments have senior advisor positions to the deputy minister? It would seem that there are some new ones, including a new senior advisor to the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, which we had seen posted. Again, it seems that we are seeing a growth of government at the top level that is out of line with some of the government's statements on no growing the size of government. The question is simply: How many of these senior advisor positions have been created since the Liberals took office about two years ago? How many are currently posted? How many do they anticipate creating?

I would also ask again about the projected growth of the territorial funding formula for the next three fiscal years.

I won't repeat the question — I remind the Premier of the question I had asked about the current cash position of the Yukon government, as well as current holdings in terms of areas such as long-term deposits, GICs, et cetera.

I would just note that — to cap off where the Premier and I were debating the Public Accounts and the Premier made reference that members could go through the Public Accounts once they are presented — while we're certainly capable of doing that, I just have to remind the Premier that even some of his own caucus members have been confused in going through the Public Accounts. I would specifically note that on October 10, 2018 — on page 2931 of Hansard — the Member for Porter Creek Centre, when attempting to take a shot at me, misstated the government's financial position in April 2011 by some \$108 million. I just point out that this is why we're encouraging the government to be a little more proactive about explaining the significant changes from budgets to Public Accounts and provide it in a manner that is more understandable for not only members of the opposition but for the general public who may be reading Hansard and trying to understand what changes had occurred with their tax dollars.

Hon. Mr. Silver: That's a whole bunch of questions added on to the questions that we left from yesterday, so I will do my best to address first the questions from yesterday and then move into the litany of questions that started this session — I think maybe our 16th hour of general debate here.

We will start with the Public Accounts briefing. I do have a time for the member opposite. There will be a briefing for the opposition parties for Public Accounts on November 2 at 10:00 in the morning — if it is not 10:00 and it is 10:30, I will reconfirm with members opposite. It's nice that the member opposite now sees the need for this. I remember five years in

opposition without these briefings from the previous government.

I will go through some of the questions from yesterday. The first question was: Are the costs associated with assisting the Province of BC fully shown in the supplementary, or are we expecting additional costs in the next supplementary? What have we received from the British Columbia government in terms of revenue recovery from mutual aid? How much do we anticipate receiving? The amounts included in the supplementary estimate for fire suppression under Protective Services are net of recoveries. At this point in the fiscal year, the amounts anticipated are only estimates. Our government does not anticipate having final figures for recovery until later this fiscal year. The roughly \$4.5 million — to be specific, \$4.449 million — in the supplementary estimate includes \$5.749 million in additional costs and also \$1.3 million in recoveries. The Minister of Community Services can respond in further detail if needed, as that is one of the departments that is presenting a Committee of the Whole debate because that is one of the departments that has extra expenses.

The second question from the end of yesterday's session was: What is the current projected annual growth rate for the TFF agreement in each of the next three fiscal years?

Again, these are the total anticipated transfers over the next three years and are as follows: for 2019-2020, we anticipate \$1.025 billion; for 2020-21, we anticipate \$1.052 billion; and for 2021-22, we anticipate \$1.078 billion.

The third question from the Member for Lake Laberge is: Could the Premier please advise on the current cash position of the Yukon government, including GICs and investments? This is a question that has been asked quite frequently by the member opposite. The government reports its cash position, including GICs and investments annually in the Public Accounts — as the member opposite knows. As of March 31, 2017, on a non-consolidated basis, the government had cash and cash equivalents of \$18.7 million and temporary investments of \$214.5 million, for a total of \$232.2 million. On a consolidated basis, Mr. Chair, the government had cash and cash equivalents of \$31.2 million and temporary investments of \$214.5 million, for a total of \$245.7 million. There is \$138,000 included in cash and cash equivalents and \$1.5 million included in temporary investments that have been designed by the government for use in meeting certain post-employment and retirement benefits obligations for the Members of the Legislative Assembly. Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash on-hand, balances with banks and short-term investments that have terms to maturity of less than 90 days from the date of acquisition. Temporary investments include treasury bills, GICs, term deposits and other short-term investments having terms of maturity of 90 days or more, but less than one year from the date of acquisition.

The government also holds portfolio investments totalling \$27.1 million on a consolidated and non-consolidated basis. Portfolio investments are investments that are expected to be realized that have terms to maturity greater than one year from the date of acquisition. Portfolio investments include

\$27.1 million that has been designated by the government for use in meeting certain post-employment and retirement benefit obligations for the Members of the Legislative Assembly. When the Public Accounts are tabled, which will occur by October 31, the information will be available for March 31, 2018.

Another question from yesterday was — the government claims to be trying to reduce the rate of growth of government. We see Health and Social Services has posted a senior advisory position. That appears to be new. How many departments have these positions? How many are currently being contemplated? Mr. Chair, senior advisory roles have been added to a few high-volume departments where additional capacity has been required for day-to-day advisory responsibilities to the deputy minister. These positions are intended to help define the strategic direction for respective departments by providing expert senior management advice and recommendations on government and departmental policies.

To date, these positions have been or are in the process of being recruited for the Department of Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works, Finance and the Department of Economic Development. Within the Department of Finance, the position is a potential efficiency, as the director of Corporate Services will not be hired during the two-year TA for senior advisor.

That is, I believe, the list of questions from yesterday. We can check on the Hansard reference, but the good news is that government's best forecast of the current fiscal year is actually in the supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answers I got from the Premier.

I am disappointed though that he has not yet seen fit to provide the information about the government's current cash position. The Premier made reference to annual disclosures in the Public Accounts, but this is another opportunity to update the public and it's a perfectly reasonable question to ask on behalf of Yukoners — what the government's current financial position is in terms of cash in the bank and investments. It has been asked in the past by other members. Whether the Premier himself asked those questions when he was in opposition or not does not change the fact that I believe this is information that is both pertinent and appropriate for the Official Opposition to know at this point in time but also information that every Yukon citizen has the right to know about their tax dollars and what government is doing.

A lot can happen in the course of a year. To suggest that the public can only expect, perhaps, four updates on the government's cash position and investments over the course of a government's term in office is certainly doing a disservice to Yukoners. I would remind the Premier that it's not in keeping with the commitment he and his colleagues made in the election campaign about increasing openness and transparency. If the Liberal government will not be open with Yukoners about the finances of the territory, what is it being open about? People need to understand what is happening with their tax dollars and they have a right to that information.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The insinuation in that question about somehow being less open or accountable than the previous government is insulting, to say the least. I don't recall ever getting that information on the fly from the member opposite when he was in government — I don't. I don't know if the NDP ever did either.

I will say that the information that Yukoners deserve to get is in the budgets. The forecasts are in the budgets. The Public Accounts is the scrutiny from the federal government as well for that oversight. Unless the member opposite wants us to grow government further every time that he has a need to find out what the current balance statements are, that would take an investment in human capital, I would imagine. I can tell you that the good work of the Department of Finance is quite extensive already. They do a fantastic job with the financial health of this government, especially under the new changes to that department.

Again, your financial health is not necessarily determined by your balance in your chequing account. What you're getting when you check your account is how far away you are from payday. The best information and the information that the member opposite is looking for is in Public Accounts. It is in the budget, it's in the supplementaries and that's what we're here to debate — the supplementary budget. I haven't heard a question from him on it yet.

Mr. Cathers: I know the Premier seems to like to tell members of the opposition what questions they should or shouldn't be asking on behalf of Yukoners, but we do have both the right and duty on behalf of Yukon citizens to ask the questions that we believe are appropriate to ask.

The Premier, as I need not remind him since we have debated this at length in previous Sittings, has removed a significant amount of information from the budget totalling some 77 pages that reduced the information available to Yukon citizens about where their money is being spent. For the Premier to suggest that to provide an update in the fall on the government's current investments — and I did not ask for a detailed breakdown of those investments; I asked for the main categories of investments — he needs to grow the Department of Finance before he can provide that information is quite hard to accept or believe.

For the Premier to suggest that no one knows where the money is invested or how long it is there for, certainly that information is something that officials from Finance will have. I did recognize when I asked about it yesterday that it might not be information immediately available at the Premier's fingertips. If the Premier needs another day or two to provide that information, I would certainly accept that, but I'm a bit surprised to find out that the Premier is indicating that he doesn't know what those high-level numbers are. What information is being provided to the Premier in his departmental briefings on the finances of the territory? What information is being provided to Management Board if the Premier actually isn't able to answer that question?

As the Premier points us back to Public Accounts, I do again have to remind him that one of his own back-bench MLAs made a \$108-million error in reading previous Public

Accounts, so for the Premier to suggest that this is the simple answer to everything is really not living up to this government's campaign rhetoric of being more open and transparent with Yukoners.

The question we're simply asking is: What's the cash in the bank? What is the current balance of both long- and short-term investments? If the Premier isn't able to answer now, I would be happy to hear that information back from him later this week.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The good news is that if the member opposite waits less than a week, the Public Accounts will come out with all of the information he is looking for. Again, the full economic forecast that we are now putting into the budgetary considerations as well is more information that the Department of Finance does as far as keeping people, not only abreast of where we are currently, but also the forecast into the future. Also the supplementary budget as well is another exercise in economic pursuit in the finances of the government.

The fall economic and fiscal statement, again, is something that is new. This is new information from the Department of Finance. Again, we are giving out more information than the previous government, and if the member opposite had any questions on the supplementary budget, we would be able to talk at length of the money that has been sent outside of the mains but is in the supplementary, yet the member opposite refuses to go there.

I believe that the Public Accounts is good financial information, I believe the supplementary budget is good financial information and I believe that the mains budget is also good financial information. The fall economic and fiscal statement — new information, more information than the previous government so, again, we are accountable for the taxpayers' dollars that we have the privilege of managing. I look forward to more questions on the supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: It is interesting that in the Premier's world, 77 pages less information and budget details are somehow more, in his mind. Unfortunately we are not likely going to get an answer from the Premier here, but I would remind the Premier that if he claims that the information is already in the budget, can the Premier explain why the \$3.1 million for the Ross River School, which has been debated in this Assembly this Sitting, is not contained in the budget of the supplementary estimates and is not in the government's five-year capital plan? If that information is indeed public, where is it?

I do have to make the point that the information I am asking about — the status of Public Accounts — although the Premier himself may not have asked those questions in opposition, I am not the first Official Opposition Finance critic to ask for that information in the Legislative Assembly. Although the Premier was trying to imply to the casual listener that in debate with me, perhaps I had not provided that information when I was apparently the Finance minister — although I have never served in that role — the Premier did not ask me the questions that I am asking him. But I am asking him questions that are very similar to what previous

Official Opposition Finance critics have asked the Finance minister of the day regarding where the government's money is and both its cash position and its short-term and long-term investments. It is not unreasonable for Yukoners to expect that the Premier might see fit to disclose that information to the citizens of the Yukon more than once a year.

Hon. Mr. Silver: A lot of inaccuracies there. Again, just because I didn't ask doesn't mean that a government is, by supplying supplementary budgets, special warrants, main budgets and now fall economic forecasts and statements — the information that the member opposite is looking for is in the Public Accounts. The information he is looking for is in the budget.

He says that the Ross River School is not forecast anywhere. The \$3.1 million is there in the budget for the Ross River School over five years, but it is in those smaller pieces on the statements in the budget documents. It is there — again, inaccuracies, Mr. Chair.

In two years, as far as being open and transparent and giving more information than less — in two years we have supplied over 150 legislative returns, and in five years I believe the Yukon Party supplied one legislative return. That is a good ratio — 150 to one — as far as information coming out the door from this government. Changes to the ATIPP act as well — I believe it was the members opposite who clawed back some information in the ATIPP act. Again, we are trying our best to be more accessible to the public.

Before October 31, the Public Accounts will come out with the information that the member opposite is seeking. If there are any other questions about the supplementary budget that we are supposed to be debating today, I would love to answer those questions.

My whole team is here ready to answer general questions, as well, as we enter into probably hour 15 or 16 of general debate on a supplementary budget that is one of the smallest in Yukon history.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier is failing to recognize the fact that, although the change in the supplementary budget may be a smaller one than in comparison to some years, overall the amount of money that this government is spending on behalf of the people of the Yukon, or on behalf of itself, is the largest amount in any fiscal year in the history of the territory. Debate on the budget is the opportunity all members of the opposition have to hold the government to account for that and to ask questions on behalf of Yukoners, such as: Where is their money right now?

The Premier said \$3.1 million for the Ross River School is indeed in the budget. I would invite the Premier to point to what page it is on, because I know that my colleague, in looking through this looking for information about what is very important to his community, has not located that. Perhaps it is included in another line item, but again, this is an area where the Minister of Highways and Public Works appears to be changing his story on this. If the Premier can point to where that money is, we would be happy to see it.

I do have to also point out for those listening or reading this in Hansard that a substantial portion of the legislative

returns provided by this government have been follow-up to questions they have been unable to answer in Question Period and have responded to with very high-level — often meaningless — rhetoric and talking points. They have been forced to follow up later via legislative return with the actual response to the question.

The question to the Premier is: Where is this money for the Ross River School? Please point to a page in the budget and a line item. Last but not least, I would just encourage him to have a change of heart and to recognize that it is not unreasonable for the opposition or the public to ask the government as much as twice a year where their money is and what the current cash position of the territorial government is.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The mains are a good opportunity for knowing where our money is. The supplementary budgets are also a good exercise in knowing where our money is, and the financial statements, the fiscal statements and the outlooks that we are providing as well are good, timely and regular — for the first time ever — reporting of where we are forecasting our money.

The member opposite categorizes it — because we have done 150 legislative returns, that somehow means that the government doesn't know what the government is doing. That is quite insulting to the government and to the members sitting here in these seats. I remember being in opposition and being very frustrated — maybe a similar frustration that the member opposite is feeling — thinking that my questions that are designed not to have any answers aren't getting any answers. At the same time, what we are doing is providing more information and yet, somehow, through the lens of the Member for Lake Laberge, that means less — so more is less no matter how much we try to provide more. That is some good math.

I will say, though, that I am very pleased with our government's ability to develop on our promise to provide Yukoners with more comprehensive information on the government's planned capital investment over the next five years. This is just one example of our commitment to be open and transparent with Yukoners, with municipalities and with First Nation governments. The five-year capital plan is a signal to the government of the priorities and will allow Yukon businesses to be prepared for upcoming projects. It was developed with the best information available as to what capital projects are needed, but it is flexible, and that is the beauty of the design. It will evolve over time, unlike some people.

This long-term capital plan allows us to address planning and forecasting and the timing of the procurement for the development and the maintenance of contracts, providing greater certainty for Yukon vendors and other vendors. We will put tenders out at the right time, not just in time, so that vendors will have a better opportunity to prepare for the seasonal projects.

I am not hearing from the private sector that this five-year capital plan is — to paraphrase the Yukon Party — a waste of time or somehow useless. I am not hearing that. I am hearing, "Thank you for putting that out. Thank you for coordinating

with the other communities and taking a look at a Yukon perspective” — a community-by-community perspective when we coordinate our efforts to build Yukon for our future generations. I don’t hear that the five-year capital plan is a waste of time. I hear from major corporations, saying, “Do you know how many thousands of dollars we save by knowing the direction that you’re going in?” They don’t sit there and say, “There is one project that wasn’t on that plan; therefore it’s a complete failure.” No, it’s the Yukon Party saying that.

What we are hearing is, “Thank God it’s flexible. Thank goodness that we can have a plan that, with more debate and with more flexibility, allows us to plan for unforeseen things. It allows us to do more with less. Again, it allows us to coordinate. You know, Yukon is a boom-and-bust society, and we know that from over the past generations. To have a five-year capital plan that is flexible, that allows municipalities, First Nation governments and the private sector to coordinate their planning. That, to me, helps to build a competitive, capitalistic market in the cities and towns in which we serve.

I will not be apologetic for a five-year plan. As opposed to being apologetic, I will always bestow the virtues of such a pursuit and I will congratulate and thank the public servants who have worked on this whole-of-government approach. It means a lot to the communities we serve, so I want to thank them very much for their hard work.

As far as looking through the different pages — if the member opposite would take his Budget Address 2018-19 and turn to the five-year capital plan, which is at a tab in that, and if he takes a look at page 2, “Table 1: Five-Year Capital Plan gross expenditures by category”, under “Real property (buildings)”, that line would include the \$3.1 million for Ross River School.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer but, as the Premier should acknowledge, to expect the average citizen or even an MLA to look at that line item and say, “That must include the Ross River School” — it is certainly not transparently disclosing that. Anyone who wishes to compare this government’s budget documents to that of the previous government will see that it is not more transparent now; it is more opaque. The Premier removed 77 pages of budget detail and reduced the budget highlights from 11 down to four.

I am not going to spend a lot more time on this particular issue, because I know we are going to get the same talking points back from the Premier that he has been parroting since we first began debating this. I am going to ask him a few specific questions related to areas that we have raised with government and for which we are still waiting for any sign of action or even a response.

I will ask him a question that relates both to the *Coroners Act* but also to several departments across government and what he likes to call his whole-of-government approach. In the spring of 2017 during debate with the Premier, I mentioned some of the issues related to the surge in homicides, as well as issues related to an increase in opioid deaths, and I suggested that there was a need to review the structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders and people in other

front-line services, including ensuring that there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions.

I also suggested — again, in Hansard — on May 9, 2017, that the government should assess whether or not the Coroner’s Office needs a second full-time coroner position. We haven’t heard any steps from government being taken to improve this support structure of critical incident stress management for any of these government staff or first responders, including volunteers. Since I first raised this with the Premier about a year and a half ago — and it does cross departments, including the Department of Justice, the Department of Community Services and the Public Service Commission — I would appreciate it if the Premier could tell us: Has the government done anything in this area, and, if so, what?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We were just working on that supposed whole-of-government approach over here. Sorry for the delay.

If it pleases the members opposite, we do have a couple of different responses from the minister responsible for workers’ compensation, also from the Minister of Justice as well.

We recognize, on this side of the Legislative Assembly, the importance of the work that is done by our first responders. When it comes to the crises that we find in our communities, whether it has been from alcohol abuse or drug abuse — and that’s why one thing that we did that the previous government refused to do was to provide post-traumatic stress disorder legislation for our initial responders. I think that has gone a long way.

When the member opposite asked what we have done — well, we’ve done what they wouldn’t do. I’ll start with that.

I do have two other ministers who would love to get up here and talk specifically about some other initiatives, if it pleases the member opposite. We can start with the Minister responsible for the Worker’s Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I’m happy to rise today to discuss a couple of things. Last fall, we did amend the *Workers’ Compensation Act* to introduce post-traumatic stress disorder presumption for emergency response workers.

I will move on to the other act that was added, as well, as another tool for us to address psychological injury in the workplace. When we passed that legislation, it was a very proud moment for our government. It was a very profound moment to be able to recognize the psychological stress that our first responders deal with on a day-to-day basis. This was very welcomed by all of those who are directly impacted. We remain committed to safe workplaces for our first responders.

When the House amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* last fall, it opened the door to important new regulations aimed at preventing psychological injury in the workplace. As we are all aware, this is a spectrum of risk that could affect the mental health of Yukon’s workers, from exposure to traumatic incidents to the threat of violence. New regulations are necessary to provide guidance to workplaces

on how to establish measures to prevent psychological injuries from occurring. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working toward consultation on this matter and I'm confident that they will be able to do some very good work around this. Consultation with Yukoners in the summer of 2017 revealed strong public support for regulations aimed at preventing psychological injuries in the workplace. Causes of psychological injury include direct exposure to traumatic events, real or perceived threat of violence in the workplace, bullying and sexual harassment. There is a link between psychological injury and a worker's sense of real — sorry. Enforcement can currently occur under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, although it does not contain provisions that specifically relate to preventing workplace violence or bullying or protecting the mental health of workers.

The Government of Canada, as well — I will just touch on this — consulted Canadians in the fall of 2017 to develop regulations under federal health and safety legislation in the *Canada Labour Code* to address violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. This is something that we take very seriously. Our work toward making our workplaces safer and the prevention of psychological injury is certainly a priority for our government and one that the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working on as we speak.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will speak specifically to the question about the Coroner's Service. I am happy to have a chance to do so again today because I can implore the Members of the Legislative Assembly to support the new *Coroners Act*, Bill No. 27.

Of course, the present *Coroners Act* is outdated and best practices have surpassed the act's provisions. The Department of Justice has conducted a thorough review of the existing act and its regulations and has drafted Bill No. 27. I won't spend too much time on that, but I can note that the public engagement survey was available to Yukoners. There were targeted engagement letters to First Nation governments and the RCMP. I personally met with community coroners and with a former coroner, and there were weekly meetings of the drafting committee and the *Coroners Act* committee for many months with respect to bringing this bill to the House.

The Yukon Coroner's Service needs the support of modernized legislation. The updated law will also ensure that the correct professional resource oversees each stage of the coroner's case and that the independence and impartiality of the Coroner's Service is protected.

I note, as my colleague has, that we ask a lot of our first responders. Currently, of course, the Coroner's Service, coroners, the chief coroner and community coroners are often involved in first response. They are certainly involved in the investigation of situations that would cause many of us to cringe — that is the difficult job they have — and they take on the responsibility on behalf of Yukoners and need to be supported in that.

I think part of the original question was about a second chief coroner. What I can note for this House and for

Yukoners is that there are provisions in Bill No. 27 that allow for an acting chief coroner to be appointed. They don't exist in the current legislation. We have also put provisions in that piece of legislation that allow the coroner to properly instruct community coroners and others who might be working in the Coroner's Service with training manuals, investigative skills and techniques. There is education that goes with those positions already, but I know that the chief coroner is keen for that to be an integral part of the duties that we request of community coroners and, in fact, of the chief coroner. While there is not a provision to hire a second, full-time chief coroner — and I have a bit of trouble with the idea that a chief coroner is more than one person — but the chief coroner herself, in this case, has provisions in the new legislation that will help her to have modernized practices and support in, not only the role that she takes on, but the role of the community coroners on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: I do appreciate the partial answers provided by both the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Minister of Justice, but they actually missed the key issue. I do have to point out that, in addition to raising this issue first with the Premier and others of his colleagues who were here during debate in the Legislative Assembly on May 9 and 10, 2017 — I would just remind members that my remarks in the House and my letter in follow-up were predicated by the increase in volume that the RCMP, the Coroner's Service, Victim Services, first responders and others were dealing with as a result of the increase, not only in homicides that had occurred, but also the increased problems related to the misuse of opioids as well as the number of tragedies in that area — and that prompted me to raise the point.

The key point of the letter, which the Premier apparently missed and the Minister of Justice and the minister responsible for workers' compensation didn't know — I really want to emphasize this part because it's still a key issue — is the need to review the support structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders and people in other front-line services, including ensuring that there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions. Just for the reference of Hansard, that part can be found in a letter that I wrote on July 14, 2017, and is a tabled document in this House with the date stamp of March 6, 2018. That is when I tabled that. That's the key part, and I would appreciate it if they could provide an update on that.

Another question that I would ask is: Is the Premier confident that the government, since taking office, has lived up to all of its legal obligations to employees under part 6 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite is quoting from a letter sent to be caseworked over a year and a half ago. What I will endeavour to do is I will look up the response that we gave him at that time and I will determine whether or not it needs an update.

As far as the specific questions on part 6, I do not have that information in front of me and we will endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Cathers: I will look forward to hearing that response from the Premier about whether the government is confident it has lived up to its legal obligations under part 6 of the *Workers' Compensation Act* to all of its employees.

I'm just going to again go back to the letter and note that, yes, I did receive a response, but the key thing that seems to be missed by ministers in this is — what I was asking is: What action has government taken on that area? I'm not the first person to raise that issue. Staff have raised that internally from a variety of different perspectives in the past. There is a growing recognition as well in the field of research related to first responders dealing with critical incident stress management that those things can be cumulative and lead to post-traumatic stress disorder.

I know I'm not going to get more information from the Premier here now, but I want to point out that this is an issue. It's an important issue. I will raise it again after the Premier and his colleagues have had time to consider it. My question is — citing that key part from my letter of July 14, 2017, which was in follow-up to my remarks in the House on May 9 and 10, 2017 — the issue is — and again quoting from the letter: "... the need to review the support structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders, and people in other front line services, including ensuring there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions." This is an issue that affects people across a number of government departments. It affects people in the area of victim services. It affects employees in the area of emergency medical services, as well as volunteers who provide our emergency medical services in rural Yukon communities. It can also affect people in the coroner's office as well as community coroners. It can also affect others, including firefighters who respond to an incident, whether they are full-time firefighters or volunteer. It can affect highways employees and others who are the first to arrive on the scene of an accident.

This issue I outlined to the government about a year and a half ago and have reiterated on two occasions since then, both through my letter and reminding of the letter through its tabling — I maybe even mentioned it more than I am recalling at the moment, but I have raised this on a number of occasions. I am raising it again. The reason I am doing so is that it is an important issue for Yukoners in these areas. I would like to know what the government has done and what steps they are planning on taking.

Stepping away from that, I do recognize and thank the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for tabling the legislative amendments that were in relation to the presumption of PTSD for some employees but, as the government themselves know, they heard during that consultation — and it was clear, as well, from a number of Yukoners who had been affected by PTSD or simply dealing with trauma in the course of their duties as

an employee or in their service as a volunteer — the message to government was also that more can and should be done.

I am asking: What has the government done and what are they going to do in this important area?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the member opposite was going over the issue, I had a chance to take a look at Hansard. The Minister of Community Services did answer a very specific question for general debate — answered it in the Legislative Assembly. We did the casework. There were two different pieces of casework on this. I will endeavour again to look back at the answers to the very specific questions that the member opposite asked. This is an important issue and we did respond to it. If there any updates on our response that we gave to the member in a timely fashion, I will pass that along to him.

Again, the question was asked and answered in the Legislative Assembly. Casework was done on this particular, very specific question — a very important relevance with the rehabilitation issues in this particular section. I agree with the member opposite of the importance, as it pertains to our initial responders and others. We have answered his question and, if there are any updates, I will happily provide them in a response to the member opposite.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate that response from the Premier and I will move on from this issue, while noting two things.

I look forward to hearing the update and I would also strongly encourage the Premier and his ministers with the key affected departments to make this issue an ongoing item that they keep reviewing with their departments — and that it is a top-of-mind issue — which is: What is the government doing to act and improve its services to both its employees and its volunteers in the area of critical incident stress management, and provide them with the appropriate structural support so that they are safe, as well as so that there is a reduced chance of them suffering from PTSD or other challenges as a result of what they are exposed to in the course of their duties as a government employee or volunteer emergency service provider. I would hope that they keep this as a top-of-mind issue going forward, and would not only be prepared to answer when I ask those questions but also expect and ask the senior staff of the department to regularly report to them what else is being done in this area to support our employees and volunteers.

I'm going to move on to the specific one that I've raised several times, both through a letter and in the Legislative Assembly, regarding whether or not Grizzly Valley subdivision can get school bus service to that area. I know the Premier may prefer that we discuss other items in budget debate, but the reason that I'm asking is that constituents do feel they've been getting a bit of mixed messages from government. I have an outstanding request to the Minister of Education on this subject. The minister has previously sent me letters indicating that Education would not provide service to my constituents in this area. We have received a confirmation — I thank the Minister of Community Services for his legislative return dated, I believe, October 2 — in which he

confirmed that the subdivision was designed to allow for school bus service.

The government has now recently in another department taken steps to release 20 lots in the Grizzly Valley subdivision phase 2 for sale by land lottery. That announcement was put in the paper on Friday and is currently out for application by Yukoners. For both my constituents who live in the area and for potential future constituents who are considering whether or not to buy one of the 20 lots that are out for sale, the question is this: Is the Minister of Education going to provide school bus service to people in the Grizzly Valley subdivision?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is important to put into Hansard right now that the Yukoners who do live in Grizzly Valley subdivision do have bus service — it's just not up on the loop. There are issues with the loop. The previous government did design and develop this particular subdivision. I remember that it was one of the first files that I got in 2011, where the government was asking for \$1 million for a moose culvert for this area. The road was not necessarily completed to stand the test of time. If you go up there now, the loop is not continued. We're dealing with this issue.

It is worth saying that the safety of students is extremely important. It is our first priority. It is not always safe for school buses to travel on the Grizzly Valley Road in the winter, as winter conditions affect the ability of school buses to safely travel on this road that was developed and designed by the previous government.

When it comes to the safety of students, we err on the side of caution. We are not necessarily prepared to potentially put any students at risk when safety concerns are an issue, so we need to get those safety concerns identified from this road. That is the time we are taking now, so as of now, there will not be bus services on that road until this is figured out.

Students who live on the Grizzly Valley Road can still access a school bus, but they do it at a designated school bus stop at the end of the road where it is safe for the buses to travel. I believe this was brought up in Question Period already and I believe the answer was given by the Minister of Education. We are working on it and we will update the member opposite as updates become available. It was mentioned by the minister as well that the families who live in Grizzly Valley are being provided subsidies for the inconvenience of having to get their kids — their students — to these designated bus stops.

Thank you to the Department of Education for providing those subsidies for the students who live in Grizzly Valley.

Mr. Cathers: I am certainly very disappointed by that response and would encourage the Premier to reconsider it. I also have to point out that it leaves me thinking, well, so much for the whole-of-government approach, because we have heard directly contradictory messages from the Minister of Education and from the Minister of Community Services reflecting what his staff indicated, which was that the road was designed, engineered and built to allow for the safe use by school buses.

To use the excuse that school bus services are provided ignores the fact — or doesn't recognize the fact — that for my constituents living in the Grizzly Valley subdivision, for their kids to walk to the bus is about two miles or maybe a little more. If the Minister of Education wants to take a drive up either one of those accesses, she would see that neither one of them have sidewalks. I would question whether any member of this Assembly who has children would want their kids walking along the side of that road in the early morning or afternoon without supervision. To say that services are provided, but that they will be a couple of miles away or maybe three miles away, really doesn't cut it. We are getting directly contradictory messages from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources officials have indicated in the past that they agree with the Department of Community Services that it was actually built to meet the standards. I would not disagree with the Premier's statement that we don't want students at risk, but to suggest that students should walk along the side of the road would be to put them at risk. To suggest that their parents have to be there to drive them to the bus stop, both morning and night, places a significant impact on the ability of people to work and restrictions on their availability to be employed if the only way they can get their kids safely to the bus is to drive them.

I am not going to push this issue that much this afternoon. I would rather that government had an opportunity to step away from this, think about it and recognize that the right thing to do is to provide that school bus service. I would point out that this is a very important issue.

I would note, as well, that, both for people who bought the existing lots and people who are considering buying the 20 lots there, the fact that the government may not ever see fit to provide school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision is a significant issue that has a significant impact on property values as well as whether people choose to purchase those lots, because effectively, for some, it may be indicating to government that, if you live in Grizzly Valley subdivision, your only option really is to maybe home-school your kids because they can't get bus service.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It isn't necessarily the best of circumstances to have parents using their own vehicles, but it is being subsidized. It would have been great if the previous government, when they designed and built this road, had taken into consideration maybe a path to be walking on, but there isn't one. So we can't use a walk path because they spent \$1 million on a moose culvert as opposed to putting that money into having a road that could be a complete loop, which it isn't now, and maybe with those walking paths designed into it. Again, the previous government designed and built that road, and we're dealing with it now.

The most recent advice was from Standard Bus — and that this was a safety concern. I will let Standard Bus know that the members opposite disagree with that. Initially we are discussing with Community Services and Highways and Public Works to do a joint briefing note about that and to give more information here. We may be asking Standard Bus to

check the road again this year to ensure that their advice still stands — that's the due diligence we're doing. We will let them know at that time that the members opposite believe that they designed a great road.

Transportation does allow up to \$13 a day per household, and it's based on kilometre rates in our travel directive — that's great, and thank you to the department for that.

Bus drivers also — and this is important as far as safety goes — have the right to refuse to drive a road if they have safety concerns. The member opposite seems to believe that there are no safety concerns. I'm going to take the advice of the bus drivers who have our kids with them. We're taking their advice seriously. We encourage the members opposite to do so as well. We always encourage drivers to assess driving conditions and ensure the safety of these students on board, and that's what we're going to listen to — the companies that are busing our students.

This road is designed and engineered to meet the standards. The school bus provider has expressed concerns about winter conditions and we're dealing with it. That's the bottom line.

Just to reiterate, three departments are working on this. This is extremely important to us. We're trying to solve this problem and I would rather have a whole-of-government approach to that. I'm glad for the departments that are taking on this initiative and I'm glad that we have provided subsidies to make sure that these students have equal access to education.

As we all know, in different rural communities we have a lot of students who are walking quite a distance in certain cases, and we have a lot of students who are being driven by their parents to school on a regular basis. I just want to give a shout-out to those parents, thanking them for making sure that education is an extremely important part of the development of their children as well.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate part of the response provided by the Premier. I just do want to note that this is an issue that goes beyond political differences of opinion. It is a very important one for my constituents in this area.

I do have to point out to the Premier that Grizzly Valley subdivision and the roads were designed and engineered by government staff. I am not an engineer — I don't pretend to be one — but when those staff who are engineers signed off on the road, it was designed by the government, it was engineered by the government and it was signed off by government inspectors, and, as both the Department of Community Services and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources officials have confirmed, from their perspective it meets the technical requirements, including — as the Minister of Community Services confirmed in a legislative return — that it meets the Transportation Association of Canada standard for a road of this type.

I would encourage the government to look at it. The Premier said he would take the opinion of the bus drivers over mine, and I don't disagree with that, but I would point out that, in saying so, the Premier is also saying that he is going to take the opinion of employees of Standard Bus over the

opinion of staff of two Yukon government departments that have the technical — pardon me, three Yukon government departments, since Highways and Public Works would also be involved in an assessment of the TAC standards for the area. I don't want to belabour this point. I would rather that the government step away from it and, rather than digging in their heels, come back with confirmation that they will provide school bus service to my constituents.

I do also have to note that, since government just released 20 lots via land lottery that are currently out for sale, the fact that government still hasn't decided whether they are going to provide school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision is a pretty relevant point for any Yukoner considering purchasing one of those lots who has kids. This is something that I would urge government to get sorted out before the lottery closes on, I believe, November 14, because I would suggest that this will have a major impact on the purchasing decision of any Yukoner who is aware of this potential issue around the ability to get school bus service in the area. It not only affects those who have children or are planning to have children, but a lack of school bus service is certainly a negative influence on your property value now and down the road as you develop your home — your ability to sell your home if you can only sell it to someone who doesn't have kids who are of school age. It is going to have a significant negative impact on future property values.

Last but not least on this issue, I would suggest that, until government has decided whether they are providing school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision, they should put a warning label on the 20 lots that are out for sale that they may not provide school bus service to people who purchase those lots.

I am going to move on to another area related to rural land development. It looks like this year, most of the budget was spent in Whitehorse. We have also heard that some was spent in Dawson City. Could the Premier or one of his ministers indicate how much was spent in municipalities other than Whitehorse and which ones those were, as well as what they are looking at doing — as they are in the planning stage for next year's budget — with rural municipalities to address their needs in land development?

I know that a number of my colleagues, including the Member for Watson Lake, heard about the availability of land being a very high priority for her community and her constituents. I think it's fair to say that the Town of Watson Lake, the citizens of Watson Lake and, of course, their MLA would appreciate hearing about it. As well, I'm sure that my colleagues, the Member for Kluane and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, would appreciate hearing about any work that is underway in the communities they represent.

I know that some of those decisions may not be finalized for next year's budget. We're asking what work is ongoing, looking at the planning for next year's capital budget and potential lot development in any of those rural communities I've mentioned or any others.

Hon. Mr. Silver: As Community Services is one of the departments that has a budgetary consideration in the

supplementary budget, I would ask the member opposite to bring up those questions specifically to the Minister of Community Services when they appear here in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Cathers: I would hope the Minister of Community Services will take note of that and I look forward to hearing an update on what work they're doing and what work they're looking at doing, including discussions with rural Yukon communities about their needs.

I would also note — and the Member for Watson Lake can correct me if I'm wrong on this point — I think it's fair to say that the Department of Community Services could perhaps — and the minister might want to check in with the newly elected mayor of Watson Lake, Ms. O'Brien — and congratulations to her for that role — about the pressures within the Town of Watson Lake, as well as what the priorities are of the Town of Watson Lake for seeing some assistance from the Yukon Government in terms of addressing their pressures and developing more land within the Town of Watson Lake.

I am going to move on to another issue related to — we've heard the Minister of Community Services musing about implementing tipping fees, and we know that the Premier has stated on a number of occasions that they're looking across government in their whole-of-government approach at increases to fees and fines. I would like to ask two questions: Are they prepared to make public the cost analysis of what tipping fees would be and what the cost would be of administering that at any dumps run by the Department of Community Services?

Secondly — and this falls over into at least two other departments: the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Department of Environment — following the implementation of Whitehorse's tipping fees, there was a noticeable spike in illegal dumping in rural Yukon near Whitehorse, including in my riding. A number of those areas include — I'm going to give a few specific examples where there have been problems with illegal dumping: just off the Mayo Road, behind the Yukon Energy substation, actually on YEC's right-of-way. We did have that cleaned up through work by myself as MLA and through the actions of the Department of Environment.

There were also issues around illegal dumping on Kwanlin Dün land, as well as Crown land in Ibex Valley. There have been issues with illegal dumping off Scout Lake Road, and there have been a number of times when the Deep Creek transfer station has been closed — and I assume the same happens with other dumps.

The Deep Creek transfer station's gates are closed. There have been a number of occasions where people have dumped small or large volumes of garbage at those gates. This has all gotten worse after Whitehorse implemented tipping fees. The question that I would ask is: Is the government looking at implementing tipping fees? Have they costed out what those would be and what the cost of administration would be? Do they have an environmental cleanup plan to address the increase in illegal dumping that will likely occur? If they do

have an environmental cleanup plan, I note that there are already issues that haven't been fully addressed related to both illegal dumping on Crown land and an increase in abandoned cars. There was an e-mail that one of the ministers will recall getting from a constituent of mine regarding a car abandoned along the Alaska Highway coming into Whitehorse. It was sent to the minister and me. There was also another vehicle that I had personally noticed and reported to the RCMP out along the Mayo Road this summer, which, upon investigation, they determined appeared to have been abandoned likely with the intention of avoiding tipping fees in Whitehorse and due to Deep Creek being closed at that time.

If government is looking at increasing fees and fines — and perhaps they could elaborate on whether indeed they are — what is their plan to deal with the increase in illegal dumping so that we don't have that spillover effect of trash and, in some cases, even toxic materials being increasingly dumped in the Whitehorse periphery, affecting my constituents as well as those on the south side of town and the west side of town?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, there were two parts to that question. One was specific to Community Services and the other was based upon a fee review that we have mentioned. Again, I will ask the member opposite to reserve all of his questions about Community Services for when they appear in Committee of the Whole. I know that my minister is champing at the bit to get to that conversation. It turns out that there has been illegal dumping probably for a long time. You can talk about community landfills like Dawson City that haven't been able to take certain fluids from the mining industry for a long time — years — and under the previous government's watch as well.

It's interesting the way the question was phrased, but I will leave that to the Minister of Community Services, who has an excellent understanding of the current situation and the issues that his department is facing. I look forward to that debate in Committee of the Whole when Community Services gets here.

When it comes to the fees and the fee review, as we know from the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, they did present a number of options to the government to return ourselves to a healthier financial position. This includes raising revenues through fees and fines. The panel did note that fees and fines in the Yukon were considerably lower than other Canadian jurisdictions and that the cost of providing those services to Yukoners was considerably higher than the fees charged by the government. It would be interesting to see if the members opposite agree with that statement or not.

Our government is working on a preliminary review of all fees and fines and the sale of government goods and services as well. The numbers quoted — it's quite interesting — the total number of government spending in the Yukon is barely over five-percent funded by user fees.

That is five percent in Yukon. The national average is 13 percent. This is a type of own-source revenue. The Northwest Territories currently raises approximately 10 cents for every

dollar through fees. We haven't seen an increase in those fees and fines, in some cases, for decades.

Again, during the Financial Advisory Panel's public engagement, Yukoners were generally not supportive of raising additional revenues through new or increased taxes. Fifty percent of surveyors responded and identified a reduction of government spending as the preferred option for returning to a healthier financial position. Should there be any new revenues raised through fees and fines, this will lessen the need for us to curtail other investments in Yukon. Many Yukoners support raising revenues through those increased fees. We are doing a preliminary review, and it should be noted again that most fees and fines have not been raised in over 15 years, and they have not kept pace with inflation either, over the years.

That is an update on the fee review and we will reserve questions and answers to the departments that do have supplementary budgets for when they appear here in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Cathers: It is disappointing that the Premier is getting a little bit worn down here in general debate and is hoping that we can get into other departments, but I don't know where else he has to be. This is an important part of the job — being accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

I would just note that in this area, as I mentioned, a potential increase in tipping fees. Because of the impact that this has had in the riding I represent as well as in other areas, there was a notable spike — this is not just my assessment; this is what I have heard repeatedly from constituents — following Whitehorse opposition against tipping fees. Because this is a concern that is out there with my constituents — and I know others — about whether an increase in tipping fees will lead to a significant increase in illegal dumping, the question was not just whether government plans to implement tipping fees and what those fees are, it was the question of whether those fees, because of the costs of administration, would actually even make the government money.

The other related question is: What is the cleanup plan? If there is an increase in illegal dumping, does any one of these affected departments — whether it is Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources or Environment, or in the case of illegal dumping on the powerline right-of-way, the Yukon Energy Corporation — have a cleanup plan for dealing with an increase in illegal dumping? That is not just a Department of Community Services issue; that is, as the Premier likes to call it, a whole-of-government issue.

I would ask the Premier to answer those questions or to have one of his ministers provide that information — or those questions. I would note as well that, based on a previous analysis that had been done, it was suggested by Community Services officials in the past that implementing tipping fees because of the cost of administration and the cost of equipment would in some cases at certain dumps result in government spending more money than it anticipated making. I would ask that if they are doing a cost analysis of tipping fees — whether they would agree to make that public to Yukoners so that we are not just asked to trust them and sign

off on the blank cheque or accept that there's a pig in the poke, but actually show us the details and let all Yukoners know what the costs and what the revenues are in this area, as well as what the cleanup plan is and the cost of that, if indeed there even is one.

I'm also going to touch on a couple of other areas. We have asked in the past but are still waiting for information — we have seen that the government has launched the innovative renewable energy initiative. At this point, they have spent about \$1.5 million over two years. We have still not heard what the rates will be for these projects. The question is: Has government spent all this money without knowing what rates will be paid to IPP projects, or do they actually know the answer to that and have just not seen fit to tell taxpayers?

We will ask one more question in a related area, that being the microgeneration program, which has been quite successful since it was implemented during our time in government. Does the government plan to keep the rates and structure the same as they have been in the long term, or are they planning to make changes to the program and, if so, what might those changes be?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is a change to the YDC budget this year; therefore, Yukon Development Corporation will have an opportunity — and I would love to have a thorough discussion with the Member for Lake Laberge on any issue concerning YDC at that time. We just need to complete this very tenuous and robust conversation around the supplementary budget so we can get to those questions the member opposite feels are important to ask.

Mr. Cathers: I would thank the minister for the answer if I had gotten one, but I guess we'll have to revisit that issue again. This is one that crosses several departments, which is one of the reasons we have chosen to ask that question in general debate.

I noted with the innovative renewable energy initiative that we're not saying that this structure may not be a reasonable approach. What we're looking for is that transparency and accountability on whether government has spent money on projects without knowing what the rate of return and the cost of those projects would be, in terms of the rate per kilowatt hour or whether government actually does know what that will be and has just not seen fit to tell Yukoners.

It is ultimately taxpayers' money and ratepayers' money, so it's reasonable for people to expect government should give them an answer to those questions, should provide that information when asked of members of the Legislative Assembly, and that people should have the ability to judge those programs on their merits or on their weaknesses.

Also, both with the innovative renewable energy initiative and with the microgeneration program, we don't yet have clarity from this government on what area they're being funded from. What I mean by that is, if there is a subsidy being paid for the rates, if the proponent of either a home generation project or an independent power production project is receiving a rate per kilowatt hour that is more than what that

energy is being sold for, then the question is: If it is being topped up, which pocket is that coming out of?

Is it coming from the Yukon Development Corporation side? Is it coming from Yukon Energy Corporation and being put into the rate base? Is it coming from Energy, Mines and Resources? As the minister will recall with the microgeneration program, it was set up as a pilot project with the funding initially coming from Energy, Mines and Resources with the long-term idea that those costs might be folded into the rate base at some point in the future. As the minister will know, the cost of going to a rate hearing and allowing those costs to be passed on to ratepayers far exceeded the cost of running the program within Energy, Mines and Resources, so it simply made sense to do that as a pilot project in that manner. All that we are asking for is that long-term clarity on whether the program is continuing and who is funding it — which area is it coming from. Hopefully the Premier or the minister will see fit to provide us with that information this afternoon.

I am going to ask one more question before what I anticipate might be an indication by the Chair for the standard afternoon break. I am going to ask about emergency medical services and particularly how it relates to the ability to have the medevac plane dispatched to and land safely in Yukon communities. Which airports and aerodromes can the medevac plane currently fly into? Which ones of those have all-hours strip capability? What steps, if any, is government taking to upgrade any airports where the medevac plane is not currently able to land?

Again, I have to point out to the Premier that the reason we are raising this in general is that this touches multiple departments, not all of which will necessarily come up for debate. That includes the involvement of Highways and Public Works in managing airports, the involvement of Emergency Medical Services in being responsible for the ground units and, of course, last but not least, the involvement of Health and Social Services in being responsible for the actual aircraft contract with Alkan Air for the medevac plane. I will leave off with those questions for the moment, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I can speak to a few items, Mr. Chair, from some of the previous questions that were tabled by the Member for Lake Laberge. There are a couple of components. First, there was the conversation on the IREI program. That is our innovative renewable program that we have used to support communities across the Yukon. We are happy to discuss more during our presentation of the Yukon Development Corporation budget, but certainly we are excited because we have had the opportunity to work in Old Crow, in Teslin, in the Whitehorse area and in Burwash, as well — just a number of communities.

My sense is that we are really talking about numbers. The member opposite wants to ensure that the taxpayer and the individuals who pay for electricity in the Yukon are not burdened with any extra costs of this program or speaking to that model we're looking at.

We have taken that into consideration and, as we move the work that we need, there was really a gap in work. There was an announcement that was made that there would be independent — there was a line item of about \$1 million for Burwash, but there was no — it was sort of all spaghetti and no meatballs. There was really a lack of language there and tools to do what people — the previous government — said they wanted to do.

We have had the Yukon Development Corporation, Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon ATCO — all the players — come together to do that work. Energy, Mines and Resources is certainly leading that to be able to have the tools and gazette that work. Really there was a lack of clarity to Yukoners about what was really there compared to what we found in the work that we have had to do. The officials have done a lot of great work there.

I look forward to the Yukon Development Corporation discussion where we have had a change. Yes, the micro program was put in place by the previous government. It is a program that is highly subscribed to, which I think is great. It will be good to have a discussion about that because, again, we're in a position where it has been very robust, but it continues to pull more dollars from other areas.

I would say that I think if we're going to talk about the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy and if we're talking about dollars, I think what we really need to think about — I think the biggest strain that we have had is — and you might remember; we discussed this before — the \$40-million loan. I really think that has probably put the most pressure on our staff. We're looking at our cash flow and now — we didn't — I find it really — I don't know, I'm actually — believe it or not, I'm at a loss for words. We're talking about cents on rate — we've made that commitment — but what we're not talking about is — you want to talk about a boulder that we've been pushing up the hill, it's the \$40-million loan that was put in place with a three-year amortization, I believe — I might be off a year — and no plan to pay it back.

As I sit through hours of discussion and listen today about our ability as a government and our Premier to provide financial stewardship, I think two things: I always think about the \$1.50 spent for every \$1 we have coming in — very simple finance — and I always think about the \$40 million that was borrowed with no plan to pay it back.

What we have done is, YDC has now amortized that over a longer period of time. At least two generations of Yukoners will take on that responsibility to pay it back. I would say that is the biggest strain at YDC, but we certainly take into consideration that, as we put in an IPP, that we want to reduce risk and not have it as an open-ended program so that we have a tremendous amount of interest, like lessons learned from Ontario and British Columbia, but also that we handle some of that previous liability, that we make sure we have a financial analysis, which is great. We will be able to come and maybe discuss some of that work, as we have had — I believe it is PricewaterhouseCoopers, an international brand that can come

in — and we can talk a bit about some of the decisions that were made previously.

I think even some of the members who are here today who shared some of this work that I'm doing and they have done — we can talk about those decisions. I think that's probably going to be the great work that we can talk about.

I look forward to talking about YDC. I stand behind the staff at YDC and our decisions on how we look at renewable projects, how we have been creative, how we can reduce the cap ex on those and bring them to market and how we can have a larger, diversified portfolio of energy. If we want to talk about financial stewardship, I'm always excited to jump in and share with the Premier on that discussion.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would like to respond to some of the questions that were raised by the Member for Lake Laberge on airports in his previous run of questions.

He was talking about safety of our aerodromes and airstrips across the territory. Medevacs, I think, were mentioned and the work of Community Services and Health and Social Services. Airports certainly fall squarely under the mandate given to me by the Premier to improve the economic opportunities by airports and also improve their safety. I am more than happy to talk about this a little bit this afternoon and contribute my few minutes to this 19-hour debate on the supplementaries as it continues this afternoon.

At Highways and Public Works, we are at the beginning stages of planning the future of all things Yukon aviation. A comprehensive, multi-year investment plan will make sure we are meeting Yukon's current and future aviation needs. Over the next year, Highways and Public Works will engage with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation system should be. Stakeholder feedback will inform an investment plan that combines safety, efficiency, stakeholder needs and operational requirements for Yukon aviation.

We are going to be doing a number of things in the coming year to improve the economic viability and economic potential of airports and aerodromes across the territory, as well as their safety.

In your riding, Mr. Chair, we are going to be doing some work. At the Mayo aerodrome, we are expecting increased resource industry activity in the Mayo region. I was just recently out at the Victoria Gold mine and saw the tremendous work that is being done on that site to prepare it for gold mining operations next year. It is absolutely incredible.

Our aviation branches work with two local carriers and Transport Canada to obtain a one-year aerodrome authorization that allows the two carriers to provide temporary scheduled air service into Mayo. We are using this year to assess the present and future needs of the aerodrome to inform future investments at the site, and we will be moving forward with a multi-year strategic investment plan for the Yukon aviation system over the next year, as I have said. We will be meeting with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investment in the Yukon aviation system should be.

We are starting work on Mayo right now. The members opposite will remember Mayo. They had requests for years to fix the Mayo aerodrome and those requests fell on deaf ears.

There was very little if any work done on Mayo. As a matter of fact, I know that those requests had come in and very, very little was done. There was another promise, Mr. Chair, that the members opposite made to pave the Dawson City airport. Do you know what? It wasn't done, Mr. Chair. They didn't pave that runway either. Promise made; promise failed to deliver.

There were also requests to fix the baggage handling equipment at the Whitehorse International Airport. That work was cut from the improvements that happened at the main terminal here in Whitehorse. It didn't get done, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to report this afternoon on the floor of this Legislative Assembly that work is being done. We're going to have new baggage handling equipment. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite as efficiently handled, because we had the whole thing up and running and they could have put it in there, but they cut it from the budget, and so now I have to step in and do it from scratch. So we are putting in that much needed baggage handling equipment. A new sky bridge for the new bridge to aircraft is also being built. It absolutely needed to be done. Those key investments in the Whitehorse International Airport were never followed through on. We are going to pick up those pieces, make good and actually improve things up at Whitehorse International Airport that should have been done long ago. We are actually going to make it better for our travelling public.

I'm more than happy to do that and to talk about that quite a bit this afternoon. The expansion to the Whitehorse International Airport that the members opposite executed almost landed in the courts because of a dispute with the First Nation because they didn't want to put through a YACA agreement, I think. So that's another change that we're seeing now: We're working with our First Nation partners, making sure that we loop them in and include them where they should be included in our developments. Again, I think that's an important change in the way government works in the territory, one that I'm very happy to be a part of.

Carcross is another one, Mr. Chair. In Carcross, for years, they've called for a fence for the Carcross aerodrome. Once again, we're working with multiple stakeholders, including the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Carcross Aerodrome Society and Transport Canada to find a solution for the

situation in Carcross to prevent people from wandering onto the runway when planes are coming in to land.

The member opposite brought up airports and how important they are. They really are. When I was offered the post of Minister of Highways and Public Works and spoke to the Premier about fixing airports, I started to do some research. I came across a website called “The war on aviation in Yukon”. This was back in December of 2016. The war on aviation in the Yukon —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: The minister appears to be repeating his comments from the debate on the *Public Airports Act* last year and seems to have forgotten that we are talking about the supplementary budget. It appears to be needless repetition and he has also lost his train of thought and gone off the road into the ditch.

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to the member opposite, that is pretty rich. We have been here for 19 hours on general debate. The Minister of Highways and Public Works is giving a thorough answer to hours of questions. This particular question was two-pronged. One was for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the other for the Department of Highways and Public Works. He is merely giving the member opposite exactly what he is looking for.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair's ruling

Chair: I would certainly characterize this as a dispute among members.

Carry on, please, Mr. Mostyn.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am more than happy to carry on, because there is a lot to say on this file. As I was saying, in December of 2016 when I took this job, I started researching the post and came across “The war on aviation in the Yukon”. On it, I would bet that there are 40 pages-plus of problems with our aviation system — a long litany of problems. I thought, “Holy smokes, this is an awful lot to fix, but it’s time that we rolled up our sleeves and started to address these things.” One of the first things I did, as the member opposite has alluded to, is the *Public Airports Act*. I’m more than happy to have delivered on that piece of legislation here in the House, because we didn’t have a piece of legislation that governed the management of the airport facilities for 25 years.

Successive governments failed to deliver on this promise. That failure to deliver on promises ended with this government. One-quarter of a century of inaction was ended by this government with the passage of the *Public Airports Act*.

I was very proud of the work of the department to bring that about. All of which is to say, Mr. Chair, that there is an awful lot of good work being done on the airport file.

Another one is airport leases. We are currently working on a plan to guide land management decisions on future growth at the Whitehorse airport. There is a plan for subdivision development that is expected to be ready later this fall and it will then be submitted to the City of Whitehorse for subdivision plan approval. New leases at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport are on hold because we need to establish legal authority to issue new ones. Why? Well, you don’t have to look too far back into the past to find out why that is the case, Mr. Chair. It is another situation that we inherited — one that we are going to fix. We will be in a position to enter into new leases in the spring of 2019. We will work with businesses and individuals on a case-by-case basis to support development projects at the airport in the absence of final survey and management plans.

I could go back to how we had to pass legislation and how important that was for the territory because we didn’t have the authority to actually manage the facilities that we own. That is a remarkable situation in a territory our size — one that has been fixed.

I could talk about Whitehorse airport runway conditions or the airport panel, but I think at the moment I have answered most of the member opposite’s questions. If he has any more questions about airports, I am more than happy to stand up again and contribute more to this scintillating debate on the budget this afternoon.

Mr. Cathers: First of all, the Minister of Highways and Public Works is playing fast and loose with the term “contribute” as it pertains to debate. Really, this was a rehash of what we heard from the minister in his attempt to cover up his failures on the *Public Airport Act* debacle. The minister’s rhetoric is so out of touch with reality, I feel like I should buy him a red hat that says, “make airports great again” on it. In fact, the minister did not actually answer a single one of the questions that I asked. Those, of course, pertain specifically to the ability of the medevac flight, currently operated by Alkan Air, to land the medevac plane in a situation requiring emergency response or community medevac in Yukon communities.

What I asked the Premier for was a list of which communities currently are able to be served by medevac flights at those airports or aerodromes, as well as which ones of those had day or night capabilities and which ones might only be accessible during daytime. Of course, the third important question which, by the way, the minister has completely trivialized with his soliloquy about airports, since it relates to the ability to provide emergency medical services to citizens in our communities when they need it, is: If there are community airports that aren’t able to have medevac flights land at them at this point in time, what steps, if any, is the government taking to upgrade those, and which ones are they?

We received a very disconnected, long-winded, repetitive speech from the minister, rehashing his rhetoric from the *Airports Act* debate, but for Yukoners who are listening and are wondering about emergency medical services in Yukon communities at a time when they need them, what they didn’t

get from the minister was an answer to the question: Where can the medevac flights go? If there are areas where they can't go, what, if anything, is the government doing to fix that?

It's unfortunate here. We have heard a lot of rhetoric from the government about their openness, their transparency and their planning, but when it comes down to a very simple and a very pertinent question that Yukoners are asking about emergency medical services, all we got was a lot of long-winded rhetoric from the minister. We didn't get an answer.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Was there a question there?

Mr. Cathers: Yes, and since the Premier seems to have missed it and the minister seems to have missed it, I'm going to ask it again: Which communities can currently be served by medevac through Alkan Air if there is an emergency medical services issue? Also, if there are airports where that service cannot currently be provided because of airport conditions, what steps, if any, is government taking to resolve those issues and which airports or aerodromes do they relate to?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to be on my feet again to address the issue of medevacs in the territory. I know how important they are to the territory and to servicing our far-flung communities. This is a very important service to our territorial citizens. There are no two ways about it.

Recently, this government awarded the territory's air ambulance service contract to Alkan Air again. It's a local Yukon company, as the members opposite and the people in this Legislative Assembly know full well. We did that through a value-driven procurement process. I'm very pleased to see that a local company won that competitive value-driven procurement at a cost of about \$25 million. It was a change to how that procurement was done.

It leads into a whole other discussion this afternoon that we could have about procurement and the changes and the improvements we're making on that front, because we know how important that is to the territory and how much people in the territory have demanded changes in the way we procure goods and services. Again, Highways and Public Works is doing a lot of excellent work on that front.

To the member opposite's question about medevacs and how important they are, a value-based tender considering both price and quality of the bid was used to ensure the successful bidder could provide the quality of service Yukoners deserve. The contract is for a four-year initial term from April 1, 2019, until March 31, 2023, with options for one two-year extension and one one-year extension to provide additional pricing over the life of the contract. It's for a longer time so that we get a better value for price. The contract includes a pre-operational term from June 25, 2018, to March 31, 2019, to allow the contractor to prepare for the provision of tendered air ambulance services. The Yukon government has been pleased with the medevac services offered by Alkan Air — and I have to thank Alkan Air for the service they provide this territory. It has been exemplary and I'm happy that they actually won this contract.

The member opposite is talking about services to our rural Yukon. I don't think he was listening, but I did speak earlier about our comprehensive, multi-year investment plan

that is there to make sure we meet Yukon's current and future aviation system needs. I'm not going to go all fast and loose. I know that's the old way of doing things. We're doing things in a new way. We're committing to doing things like paving the Dawson City Airport and then actually proceeding to do that — not promise and then not deliver.

We have a five-year capital plan now that is in place to show what we're going to do and then follow through on it. In the past, projects would be proposed and then would never be followed through on. They would fall by the wayside. It wouldn't go into capital budget, either. You wouldn't see what happened to that stuff. We're not doing things that way. We're planning; we're being consistent. We have a plan in place that allows us to be flexible. If a need in a community arises, we can add it to the plan and adapt to changing circumstances. That is really the core principle of planning. We're doing all these things and we are going to be planning to improve our airports over the coming years with the input of stakeholders — people who use the airports and communities these airports serve.

As for the current state of medevac access in the territory, I will check back with my department. I don't think it's changed at all since the members opposite were in these seats. I think it is probably very similar to what it was and it's only going to get better, because we're looking at following through on our commitments and improving. So there it is.

Mayo, if it is certified, will need an upgrade — perhaps new lights — and we will do that. If we do that, we will have more service in Mayo. These are the things that we are doing, Mr. Chair. We are more than happy to improve services, be it medevac services, procurement or paving runways. The whole point, though, is to make all of these things that I have talked about — the baggage handling, the paving of Dawson, working with Mayo to improve that because of the amount of traffic coming through. Those are all of the things that we are doing to improve airports overall. That will contribute to better access, better economic opportunities and better safety for those communities. That is really at the core of what I have been charged with doing. It is one of the things that we are working toward every day, and I am more than happy to do that work.

Mr. Cathers: It is really unfortunate here that this government seems to be focused on platitudes and being good at their talking points — very interested in photo opportunities — but when you ask for a simple answer to a question, we get a repetitive talking point about how the minister is going to make airports so much better. Again, the joke is that the Minister of Highways and Public Works needs a red hat that says, "Make airports great again", because it is very similar to the bombastic rhetoric we hear south of the border. What I am asking for is a very simple question on behalf of Yukoners.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Bombastic rhetoric, red hats — I think these are insults, and I would ask the member opposite

to retract them and refrain from using them in a method of questioning every department in the government at his leisure.

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: I think it is a dispute between members. I was simply comparing rhetorical styles of one person to another.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The word "rhetoric", depending on the context in which it has been used, has been ruled every way in this House, but I think it is getting very close to the line when you repeat it four or five times within a 15-minute period. I would ask that you refrain from using the word "rhetoric" if you possibly can.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, the questions that I am asking the minister are quite simple and they relate to emergency medical services. They don't relate to the minister's talking points about planning and changes in procurement model. I do have to remind the minister that, while he touts his change in the procurement model for the medevac contract, the end outcome was exactly the same as it has been for decades in terms of who received the contract. The model changed; the outcome didn't.

Which airports in the Yukon are medevac flights operated by Alkan Air's fixed-wing service currently able to fly into? Which community airports are they not able to fly into or only able to fly into during certain hours or conditions? Which airports is the government looking at upgrading to potentially allow medevac flights in the future?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have tried very hard this afternoon to provide relevant information to the members on the opposite side of the House who have been asking questions now for approaching 20 hours. I am sorry if the amount of information that I have attempted to provide the member opposite this afternoon wasn't done in a manner that he found compelling or interesting. I will strive to do better.

But as far as his question about medevac services, to the best of my knowledge — I will repeat myself this time. I don't believe those services have changed in any substantial way from the way that they were administered under the previous government. If they are lacking, I am hoping that the strategic plan and the strategic planning process that we are bringing in will identify those shortcomings that have existed for several years. We will address them as the budget and priorities allow.

Mr. Cathers: I hear the Premier commending his minister off-mic for a good answer, but we still didn't get the answer. We are probably not going to get an actual answer from the minister this afternoon, but I do have to point out — for any Yukoners living in rural Yukon who are concerned about emergency medical services — the fact that the minister doesn't even see fit to list which airports can be accessed by medevac plane and hasn't yet committed to getting back to the Official Opposition with a list of those is something that I don't think they will find acceptable behaviour by this Liberal government. I am going to repeat the questions one more time.

Which airports are medevac flights operated by Alkan Air currently able to fly into? Which community airports are they not able to fly into, or only able to fly into during certain hours? Which airports is the government currently looking at upgrades to in order to allow medevacs or to better accommodate medevacs in future? These are three simple questions.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister responded adequately for the question. The status quo has been maintained from when the Yukon Party was in to when we are in. If there are any updates, we will let the member opposite know, but he has been asking the same questions over and over again and he has been getting the same answer because that is the answer. If he doesn't like the answer that we are providing for him, I apologize, but that's it. No substantial changes have been made to the situation from when his government was in to where we are now. If there are, I will work with my Minister of Highways and Public Works to provide any extra information past the status quo that he fully knows existed during his time in government.

Mr. Cathers: We did at least get an answer from the Premier, sort of, in that clearly the government is not looking at any upgrades to community airports — at least not any that are on the radar screen of either the Premier or the minister. That is unfortunate, but at least it is close to an answer.

I am going to ask about another airport. It is one that is in the Premier's riding. We have heard reports from people in the Dawson area about a sort of grandiose, potential plan for runway realignment and changes in the area, but at the moment we are dealing with lack of detail and lack of clarity from the government on what their plans actually are.

So what I'm providing the Premier with the opportunity to do — or the Minister of Highways and Public Works — is to let us know what scope the government is actually looking at for upgrades to the Dawson City Airport, including paving the runway and potential changes to the area. We have heard reports that the upgrade plans may have a price tag as high as \$100 million, but what we're relying on right now is that the government just really hasn't told us the scope of this. Perhaps that's the number, or perhaps the number is something entirely different. What I'm asking, again on behalf of Yukoners who are interested in the government's capital plans, since this is not clearly described in the government's five-year capital plan, and for Yukoners who are concerned as taxpayers, is: What's the actual scope that government is looking at in terms of these upgrades?

I hear the Premier kibitzing off-mic, but the Premier should recognize that the government has not actually defined what its plans are for this runway area. Again, we're just looking for information. We're not trying to hang any particular number around the government's neck at this point in time. We may have heard reports from people who were incorrect in the information they presented to us. We're simply asking for clarity and transparency from the government about what they're planning with the Dawson City runway and surrounding area and what the estimated cost and time frame is of that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think we're hitting an all-time low here. We get up and say that the status quo has been maintained to date, and the member opposite interprets that and twists the words around to make that seem like we are not in the future going to do anything. That is just a — I just don't even know what that is.

Then to go ahead and quote numbers like \$100 million for a simple paving of a runway in Dawson City — it's just ludicrous that this member opposite, this previous minister, can get up in the Legislative Assembly and create these false narratives like that. I don't know what service he thinks he's paying to the general population but, my goodness — I would like to know where he got the amount of \$100 million for the paving of the runway in Dawson City. My goodness gracious — it's beyond.

Our plans, which we have been clear on — we're going to pave the runway. I guess that's why the member opposite might be a little bit in the misunderstanding category, because his government said the same thing and didn't do that. We actually got in, and when we did get in, we asked: What were the plans? How much engineering? What were the costs? What's the O&M? None of that work was done, yet that promise was made a year out from the election — over a year out from the election.

I can see why the member opposite doesn't know how much it costs to pave a runway because they simply couldn't get that done, but at the same time, this is misleading. To sit here and to say: "Some people are telling me..." and "I'm hearing from sources that it is going to cost \$100 million to pave the runway in Dawson" — it's an all-time low for the member opposite. It really, really is.

The minister has been clear. We are going to pave the runway. He can talk about the costs as those numbers come in, but I will tell you that paving the runway is not going to cost \$100 million — my goodness.

Mr. Cathers: It's really interesting what the Premier zeroed in on what I said, and the Premier failed to acknowledge that I specifically told him that we had heard from Yukoners that there were grandiose plans around other work around the airport area, and we simply asked the Premier for information.

Instead, the Premier got up and tossed personal remarks toward this side of the House rather than doing what I asked him, which is to tell us what the actual plan is for the runway. What is the actual plan for other work in the area of the Dawson City Airport, and what is the price tag on it? If the only work being done is, as the Premier seems to be indicating, paving the runway, what is the price tag on that? It is a simple question. If that is all of the work that the government is looking at, then just tell us that. There is no need for the Premier to get angry on this issue or to toss personal insults — just tell us the numbers. Again, when it comes to whether other upgrades are planned to other airports, we still don't have an answer on that.

I am going to touch briefly on another area since I know my colleague, the Member for Kluane, also wants to ask questions this afternoon on behalf of his constituents, and I

had agreed to cede the floor in the interest of allowing him to do that. In addition to providing the Premier and the minister the opportunity to actually provide an answer where they failed to before, I'm going to touch on a couple of other areas related to the impact of the still ongoing tariffs on steel and aluminum that have not been solved by the federal government signing on to the new NAFTA agreement — or USMCA. The question is: Are there currently increased costs of drugs or medical equipment related to that? If so, what are they? Is this having an impact or expected to have an impact on the cost of other medical equipment or items or equipment, such as fire trucks or ambulances?

We have heard from Yukon small businesses that these tariffs have had an impact on products, including boats. I heard from a Yukoner who owns a hair business that it has an impact on their ability to purchase hair spray, which completely surprised me, as it never would have occurred to me that it would be one of those items impacted by the steel and aluminum tariffs.

We have questions about whether these tariffs are having an impact or an expected impact on the cost of items such as trailers, fencing and as well — because we are not clear on the fine print as it pertains to the new USMCA and how that affects vehicles — whether there is any anticipated increase in the price of vehicles here in the territory as a result of the steel and aluminum tariffs — or whether, because of the fine print in the USMCA, those matters appear to be dealt with. If those matters are beyond what the Premier can provide an answer to this afternoon, we would be happy to receive it when he next rises or take it as a legislative return.

Hon. Mr. Silver: If the member opposite can give us some information that he is getting as far as who he is hearing from in the general public that it is going to cost \$100 million to pave the runway, I would endeavour to allow him to please connect us with these individuals so we can set them straight.

That would be \$20,000 per foot and that is incredible. As far as his specific questions about steel and aluminum tariffs — this is a good question. It is interesting to remark that a study that was released by Statistics Canada on August 16 of this year estimated that the portion of the price increases directly felt by consumers from the imposition of Canada's regulatory tariffs to be relatively small, resulting in only a 0.07-percent point annual increase in the Canadian consumer price index. That is to say as well that we are closely monitoring this. There are some surprising places — I will agree with the member opposite — where these tariffs are affecting consumers and retailers. Any of that information is greatly appreciated as we head down for conversations at First Ministers' meetings, so I appreciate that from the member opposite.

Also, the increases in costs of drugs and medical equipment — not as of yet, but we are keeping an eye on this and will update the Legislative Assembly as information comes in.

Mr. Istchenko: I do have just a couple of questions today. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics' latest demographic report shows that our population has changed over the past

few years. The total population went up 18 percent over that period. The number of Yukoners over the age of 60 went up more than three times as fast. Those aged over 85 went up 65 percent and Yukoners in the 65-to-75 age bracket more than doubled. Meanwhile, our youth number isn't growing. Things have changed in the demographics of seniors. We are starting to see a lot more seniors. I was speaking with someone this morning who mentioned it to me, and I heard it on the radio: "My parents moved here." Lots of people are moving here.

I have a question for the Premier and/or the minister. I have been asking the Premier and/or minister to go meet with the seniors in Haines Junction. I am just wondering whether there is a timeline — if the Premier or the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation has had that opportunity to get out there or plans on going out there. We have a full facility out there. They have been asking for that long into my time and before, asking for an extension of phase 2 of the seniors facility — if there are comments on that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to the aging population — recognizing that, by 2030, we are going to see 30 percent of our population exceeding the age of 55, which all of us in this House will likely exceed. The objective is to ensure that we provide collaborative care, including the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, I'm sure. We need to ensure that we provide supports and collaborative supports to all Yukoners, and we have committed to doing that. Aging in place is really an engagement strategy that we have to take with Yukoners, recognizing that we have this population that is getting older. We have committed to doing that.

We met in June of last year through a directive — the seniors action group. We have met with them and triggered the consultation, and we have now gone out to every community in the Yukon. To date, we have held engagement sessions in Destruction Bay, Burwash, Beaver Creek, Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Tagish, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and Keno.

The objective is to meet with individuals and groups with a vested interest in seniors programming, aging in place, the home first initiative and home care programs in their communities. The following locations have been booked: In the coming two weeks, we have Old Crow on October 22; Teslin on October 25; Haines Junction on October 26; Carmacks on October 29; Faro on October 30; and Ross River on October 31. The objective of that is to ensure that we have a comprehensive process and that we have input from all our seniors. At the end of the consultative process, we will then have a summit like the one that was held last June. At that point, we'll bring back to the seniors a report on what we heard, which will then give us some direction on a Yukon-wide approach.

Mr. Istchenko: I will remind the Premier and the minister that one of their platform commitments was to seniors housing in the community. Will the minister or the Premier be attending the meeting this Friday, October 26, at the Da Kų Cultural Centre for the community luncheon?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite. At the moment, I don't plan on being in Haines Junction for the

October 26 meeting. As a note, I was just in Haines Junction last week for the tiny home project. I met with the First Nations at that time and members of the community. I would be happy to arrange a future meeting in the community. It's always great to go back to Haines Junction and to meet with the community.

Mr. Istchenko: I'm disappointed in the answer from the minister. The correspondence I received from the seniors was that the minister would be there on October 26. I do understand the minister was there last week. I would hope — if the minister was there last week — that she would have met with the seniors who have been asking for this. It's unfortunate the minister won't be there on October 26.

I have another couple of questions. On May 23, I sent an e-mail addressing some of the issues related to Highways and Public Works. I'm going to try to get through one of the issues because it's very near and dear to me, being that it is coming up to Remembrance Day. I mentioned it to the minister. This is the second year in a row. The veterans signs lay in a ditch or in the highways yard all summer. They weren't put up. They weren't up during the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway when the tourists were driving through.

Employees who work at the highways camp there put them up last fall and the wind blew them over again. The local workers put in a request for the sign crew to put them up, and this year again, all summer long, they lay in the ditch. Grass grew over them and they weren't up all summer long. The highways guys again this fall have put them up and tried to use bigger signs. They need to be put on four-by-four posts. I want to thank the local highways crews for putting those signs up. I'm just disappointed in the minister, because I know that the major priority this year was to get the dope signs up at both borders, and you could find all the time in the world to get that done but you couldn't get the veterans signs up. I'll leave it at that.

With the ongoing and yearly right-of-way brushing and vegetation control in the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash, Destruction Bay and Haines Junction in the riding of Kluane, which actually runs south all the way down to the Member for Watson Lake's riding, can the Minister of Highways and Public Works or the Premier let Yukoners know: Are they engaged in any communication with any of the municipalities or any of the local advisory councils — in those communities that aren't a municipality — with giving them some sort of a budget so that they can keep brushing going when the previous government — we did a good job at getting brushing up and running in those communities, but it grows fast and it needs to be done again already.

The brushing budget, I believe, was cut in half the first year. It increased again this year, but we're behind on it again.

Can the minister answer that question please?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate it. I am more than happy to talk about brushing and vegetation control this afternoon.

The member opposite is correct. The first year in office — faced with the financial picture we were dealt — we did actually roll back the brush-clearing budget that year as part of

our efforts to wrangle the budget. The Yukon Financial Advisory Panel — we've spoken a little bit about that this afternoon — and the fact that the territory was spending \$1.50 for every \$1 collected — we had to take action, and we did that.

Brush-clearing is important to the territory. It is a small line item in a budget, but it has a very significant impact on our communities. I certainly got that message loud and clear and we restored and actually expanded the budget a little bit.

We're talking about tree removal and vegetation control within highway right-of-ways. This year, we tendered eight projects for a total value of about \$1.2 million. Clearing brush and trees from the right-of-way increases lines of sight, it facilitates safe passing and merging and enhances drivers' ability to see wildlife approaching or crossing highways and makes road signage more visible. I will attest to the effectiveness of that, because I have seen first-hand, on very narrow roads where that isn't the case, how difficult and how taxing it can be to drive. I understand that it is important. It is important for the local communities as well. I was up the north highway this week and saw that.

Brush-clearing is important. We have increased the budget this year and we're more than happy to do that. We have about 5,000 kilometres worth of road, and we want to make sure we get to the brush-clearing methodically.

We are going to plan out into the future and make sure that we are doing it in a methodical manner, applying the roughly \$1-million budget in a way that clears brush efficiently and well for our communities.

Mr. Istchenko: I do understand all that, but the question that I had asked the minister was if the minister had been in any negotiations — when it comes to the minister's budget — with any of the municipalities — or like the community of Destruction Bay with the Kluane Lake Athletic Association, which runs the community, or Burwash Landing or Beaver Creek — having a conversation about giving them a portion of that brushing budget so they can keep and do their communities every year.

It's about public safety — school kids going across the road. It's about wildlife. The Trans Canada Trail runs through Haines Junction and Beaver Creek and people are afraid to walk the trails when the trees grow up because we have bears. We had a grizzly bear and three cubs all summer long at Pine Lake walking that road. If the brushing was down, people would be able to see the sightlines and it would be a lot safer.

My question is simple: Has the minister or will the minister?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I know it's coming from a good place and I appreciate that. I have actually spoken about brush-clearing with the communities of Teslin, Watson Lake and even First Nations — Kluane First Nation is up there and had a long talk. He didn't mention First Nations, but I have spoken to the Kluane First Nation in Burwash about brush-clearing, so I have had those conversations. As a matter of fact, most communities I go to — Mayo — they talk about

brush-clearing. It's very important to those communities. I have had many conversations.

Mr. Istchenko: It doesn't sound like I am really going to get much of an answer if there has been a commitment from the minister funding-wise with Burwash, being Kluane First Nation, Champagne being Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, Haines Junction being Dakwakada, being Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — I go through the list. Those are the communities that people drive through and they need to be safe.

The bypass road that goes into Champagne is the old Alaska Highway and it is very narrow too, so if the minister has the opportunity to travel, he should probably travel through there and have a look at that too. They have been asking for that.

I think it's imperative for public safety and for the tourism industry to know they're coming into something — a very nice community. It is lucky that in the Premier's riding it's all gravel when you pull into the community. There are piles and piles and it's a theme and it's awesome and I love it — I love going there every year — but you can see. There is visibility and it's safe — but go into our communities along the north highway.

Another request that comes from a lot of the residents who live at Mendenhall and Takhini subdivision is a turning lane. I'm just wondering if the minister has put any thought into, for safety reasons again — there have been quite a few accidents on those lanes, and there is a lot of traffic and school buses go in and out of there. I'm just wondering if the minister has had a conversation with his department about turning lanes. That was one of the other questions I had sent to him earlier on May 23, and I'm awaiting a response, so I will ask it now.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Safety, of course, should be front and centre in all our minds. I will look into the errant letter the member opposite referenced from May and provide that response. I attempted to provide a fairly cohesive and heartfelt answer to the member opposite about brush-clearing.

It is important to communities. We have increased the budget to \$1.2 million. I am looking at doing a methodical brush-clearing strategy. We have roughly \$1 million and we know how much road we have. We know how much within a ballpark it is per kilometre to do roadwork, and I am going to look and see if we can do a plan so that communities know when their next brush-clearing is about to happen. We are going to start to bring some method to brush-clearing so we don't have 30- or 40-year-old trees growing in our rights-of-way and try to make sure that we keep on top of those things. That is what I have heard from a lot of people who have 30- or 40-year-old trees — and, of course, clearing those away is a lot more expensive than just going out and clearing away smaller shrubs. I appreciate that, and we are always looking to improve our highways and areas where they are needed. Turning lanes — where the data supports putting in turning lanes, we will do that, but money is tight and we are not going to do it willy-nilly or fast and loose.

Mr. Istchenko: I am not exactly sure what data the minister would need. It is brush on the road and it needs to be cut. Every community along the Alaska Highway and along the north Klondike or the Campbell Highway — those communities usually have a local contractor who could do that sort of work. It provides an opportunity for jobs for those local contractors looking to pick up some work and it provides — like I said, it's a safety issue.

I am going to change a little bit to the Destruction Bay Marina. I had asked a question of the minister in the House. There was a meeting the previous week, and they learned at the meeting that in November they would get the results of the study. The lake has been at the same level the last few years. Of course, there were some great articles and a great TV show last night on Kluane and the glaciers and climate change. I am reminded that the climate in Kluane has been changing for a long time. My community was under 300 feet of water 180 years ago, so glaciers melt, but it has changed the lake. It has sort of stabilized the lake level, which is ultra-low, and the marina needs dredging.

I have two questions. The results will be given to the community in November. Does the minister have plans, or are there plans in the works, as to what work will be done there? If not, will the minister allow the Kluane Lake Athletic Association — because the Minister of Highways and Public Works and that department hold the water licence — to put in an exemption on the water licence just like they did at Sheep Mountain so that this work can get done and let the local community do the work?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think it is important that we fall back on a statement that the Premier has been making and that many of us have been making over the last several months and years of getting out of the business of doing business. This government has stated that intention, and so I think it is in line with some of the sentiments that the member opposite is expressing here this afternoon in hiring local contractors to do work. The member opposite has referenced the meeting up in his riding recently on the marina.

The results he has referenced will be out in November and I am not really going to speak in advance of what those results show. I think that a meeting was held with the community and I think we owe it to the community to give them the results when they come back.

Mr. Istchenko: My follow-up question would be then, with the Premier's budget this year — being that it is a little difficult sometimes to find line items — I think we had that discussion here earlier today about how sometimes it takes a minister and an MLA some time to read through and find a point where we can find the line item — is there a line item or is there money that is set aside for just maintenance? It is maintenance, like plowing the roads, like brushing, like the Pine Lake campground boat launch when it needs a little bit of gravel — or the one at Fox Lake, just another boat launch that the government has. Is there money in the budget somewhere in a line item that I can't seem to find?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just a couple of comments — to answer the question outright, of course, there are line items for

these items. I also want to comment on what the member opposite spoke about as far as his community once being under water. We all know that glaciers move and sometimes they go through one valley and sometimes they go through another valley. This takes thousands of years to happen, Mr. Chair, and what we're seeing right now with one metre of glacial degradation per year is something different completely. With the Slims River no longer being fed from a glacier, this is something different altogether.

I hope the member opposite is not suggesting that this is just the natural ebb and flow of Mother Nature when we see these things happening in his community, because I would beg to differ. I would say these are the effects of man-made climate change. I believe from previous conversations I have had with the member opposite that he agrees and believes in the science. Again, I just want to clarify the difference between — you know, changes are always happening with glaciers, but the time frame is astounding in comparison. It's a really important piece to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess the Member for Watson Lake thinks that's funny. That's also interesting and very telling, I guess.

My other point is: I agree with the member opposite. As far as communities being able to and having the gear to do brushing and contracting that way, I agree. I had a really good conversation with Selkirk First Nation about exactly that. They did a fantastic job this year of doing a lot of garbage cleanup and a lot of brushing as well, which wasn't even in the budget. They just did it; they went ahead and did it just to say, hey look, we have the capability to do brushing as well.

I would love to talk more with the Member for Kluane about his experience when he was the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works and what other communities he knows of that have that capacity.

We have a budget — it is a finite budget. The minister responsible talked about it. It is about a million dollars a year. How can we be most effective with that budget? I would be really interested in hearing from the Member for Kluane about that because he does have vast experience in this field.

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Silver that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Silver that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation, Act 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 23, 2018:

34-2-158

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: hospital bed shortage — surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital (Frost)



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 104

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Wednesday, October 24, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms | Harris Cox |
| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 24, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to help me to welcome some folks who are in the gallery today for the Big Brothers Big Sisters tribute.

I am going to apologize in advance if I brutalize any of your names. We have Angela Krueger, who is the executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters. We have Elisabeth Lexow, Rebecca Johnson, Jamie McCarthy, Craig Van Lankveld and Nick Desson.

I would like everyone to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: This afternoon, we have several members of the territorial and municipal road crews with us. I would like you to help me welcome from Highways and Public Works: Dan Shevchenko; Kathleen Ayers; Kevin Moore; Gary MacDonald; Paul McConnell; Jaime Pitfield, our deputy minister; and Mickey Parkin.

I also have from the City of Whitehorse: Nick Talsma, Trent Egglestone, Gordon Smith, Al Hill, Kyle Martsinkiw, Damien Smith and Mack Smith.

Please join me in welcoming them to the House.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of 40th anniversary of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon

Hon. Mr. Silver: As noted, I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon. This year, they are celebrating their 40th anniversary in the territory and I'm honoured to congratulate them on this major milestone.

Since 1978, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon has been a force of good in the lives of young people in the Yukon, spanning four decades of valuable contributions of this organization to our territory, which cannot be overstated. The formative experiences we have as kids define who we

become, and I am proud that we have such a dedicated community of people investing in our territory's youth, helping to bring them forward into adulthood and build on their foundations. These volunteers truly embody the idea that a community is only as strong as its weakest, it's only as healthy as its sickest and it's only as rich as its poorest citizens.

Study after study has shown that mentoring children through relationships with non-parental role models can bring so many social benefits. Monitored youth tend to have better attitudes toward school and they are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to trade schools, colleges and universities and reach their dreams when they choose their career path. Young people with mentors are so much more likely to build strong and healthy relationships in all aspects of their lives.

Kids need positive role models. They need to know that someone cares, that someone is vested in their future and that they have someone at their side who is cheering them on. I don't need to quote studies to convince me of this. As a former teacher, I have witnessed this in my classroom. If somebody cares about them, about what they do and what happens to them, kids are so much more likely to succeed. If you give an inch of respect to a child you are going to get a mile back, that's for sure — and a mile back of gratitude and self-worth.

The young members of our community truly are the most valuable resource that we have. They are our future. They deserve our time and attention. Big Brothers Big Sisters mentors guide youth and invest in their development wholeheartedly. As adults, our role in preparing young people for the future is a very complex responsibility. The skills and the attitudes that they need cannot be packaged up in a box and delivered. What can be done, however, is the gradual but persistent facilitation of change that is ongoing and that only mentorship can provide. The mentors of Big Brothers Big Sisters provide stability, consistency and a safe judge-free environment. They challenge and advise their mentees, enriching and broadening their experience and connecting them with new opportunities.

In addition to congratulating them, I must also say thank you to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon for their tireless work fostering the positive growth of Yukon's young people. Once again, the importance of your work absolutely cannot be underestimated and it can't be stressed enough. It deserves our full recognition and our full gratitude. Thank you.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Big Brothers Big Sisters as they celebrate their 40th anniversary.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada's vision is this: "Every Child in Canada Who Needs a Mentor, Has a Mentor". This organization services more than 1,100 communities across Canada, and we are very proud of our Yukon chapter. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon provides an invaluable

service to young children, matching them with volunteers in healthy mentoring relationships.

There are many children and youth in our territory who do not have active role models in their lives. They do not have someone to rely on or to listen to them as they navigate struggles and barriers in childhood.

This mentoring program is a proven model and does so much for providing positive feedback for the youth who participate. It can be a life-changing relationship on both sides as they share experiences and build a relationship through shared interest. They explore those interests through outings, discussion, games and activities. Both Big Brothers and Big Sisters pairings require at least two regular, scheduled outings a month of a few hours each and a one-year commitment.

Besides one-on-one mentoring, there are group programs focusing on physical activity, healthy eating and communication skills. Go Girls! is a program for ages 12 to 14 to focus on physical activity, balanced eating and self-esteem. It helps give young women building blocks to have a positive self-image. Game On! — eat smart, play smart — is geared to boys and young men to inform them of healthy lifestyle choices and, again, to encourage a positive self-image. Mentors gain skills and experiences that they would never have acquired without the help of a little brother or a little sister.

This organization relies on volunteers to keep these important programs going and, of course, the fundraising that is always needed to move things forward. I know that because my beautiful daughter-in-law, Nicole Jacques, is a volunteer and has chosen this organization as her charity of choice.

Next month, on November 18, Curl for Kids Sake is happening at the Whitehorse Curling Club. Teams of four seek pledges; there's a silent auction, prizes and, of course, food. Get involved with this initiative and other events that they do throughout the year. Spread the word and, if you know someone who is looking for an opportunity to volunteer in a fun and fulfilling way, this could be it; or, if you have a child in your life who could benefit from having a big brother or a big sister, take a look at whether this program would be a good fit and register that child.

Thank you to the organization and to the volunteers for 40 years of service to children and youth in our communities in Yukon.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate 40 years of friendship, mentorship and fun. Big Brothers Big Sisters is about changing the course of young lives and helping young people reach their full potential, one relationship at a time. I know from personal experience that the benefit of mentorship doesn't flow in just one direction and that the life of every adult who has participated with Big Brothers Big Sisters has been enriched by the experience. It's also pretty fun, so if you have ever thought about it, I suggest you apply because even if you're not sure if you have skills to offer — I go to the ski hill and it's a pretty good time.

In the 40 years that Big Brothers Big Sisters has been in the territory, we know they have reached and affected the lives of many. We offer our thanks to the many community volunteers who mentor, fundraise and continue to support Yukon youth when they need it most. Congratulations to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Yukon on your 40th anniversary, and we look forward to many more.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon road maintenance crews

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is my pleasure this afternoon to rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the members of the territory's road maintenance crews.

No matter where they work, the territory's road crews rock — and they also gravel and sand. It is vital work in this territory where harsh winter conditions hit in mid-October, as they did last week. Our roads bring us home. They bring us help. They bring us together. That is only possible because our territorial and municipal road crews keep our highways and roads in the best shape possible.

It is difficult work, especially in the face of a changing climate. As my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, noted in a conversation just this morning, we don't see the consistent extreme cold temperatures we used to. Stable, cold conditions used to build a good snow base. Today, that's not a given. Temperature and precipitation are in flux, sometimes week to week or day to day, location to location. These days the environment is trickier. Roads are wet, icy, slushy or snowy and this forces changes in approach, material and equipment. In the face of climate change in the north, our road crews do a tremendous job dealing with unpredictable weather and changing seasonal patterns. It's not easy, yet our road crews keep our far-flung northern highway network clear and safe right around the clock all winter long.

While we have territory and municipal workers here this afternoon, I am going to talk for a moment about the work of the Yukon team I'm responsible for. Highways and Public Works employs about 200 people to maintain our roads to get us home from October through to March. That work takes about 140,000 hours a season. Many of these workers are third generation Highways and Public Works employees who grew up with their parents and grandparents working in the night and wee hours of the morning to keep Yukon highways safe to drive on in the dark winter months.

Just this weekend, I met one such worker who spoke eloquently about the professionalism and dedication of his peers, how challenging the job is and how much he liked it. He was proud of his job maintaining Yukon roads.

We have 21 grader stations that house 75 snowplows. We have 40 graders to ensure Yukoners get to their destinations and get safely home. My team at Highways and Public Works maintains roughly 4,800 kilometres of roads for a population concentrated in one urban centre and then stretched out between 13 rural communities. These vast, sparsely populated distances are part of the challenge. Maintaining these roads is the team's number one priority all winter long and we all know how long winter can be. They take it very seriously.

We recognize and thank these everyday heroes. They get the job done, often in the dark, early morning hours, long before the rest of us rise. I applaud their commitment to maintaining our northern road network during our coldest months of the year.

I also ask Yukon citizens to help our road crews do their job by yielding to their equipment and exercising caution on ice and snow-covered roads. Remember, the posted speed limits are for ideal conditions. If you face a snowstorm or fluctuating temperatures, slow down. Our road crews are often the first on the scene of an accident. This is not how you want to meet them and certainly not how they want to meet you. Take your time, slow down. It's not worth the risk of an accident.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP and the Yukon Party to thank all those hearty souls who work for highway and municipal road crews throughout Yukon.

We celebrate all those professionals who help maintain the more than 4,821 kilometres of Yukon roads for the driving public. When the temperatures soar and blackflies are the mortal enemy or when the thermometer plummets and no one wants to leave the comfort of home, you can always count on highway and municipal road crews to be out doing what they do best.

We thank those solid individuals who get up long before dawn and even work through the night to be sure that our roads are passable and safe in winter conditions for our morning commute to work. We thank the ferry operators who facilitate our safe crossing of both the Yukon River and Pelly River. We thank those good folks who work at any of Yukon's 21 grader stations or any of our weigh scales. We thank city and municipal crews for their ongoing work at keeping our communities rolling, from the obvious like plowing to the more obscure like draining puddles the size of lakes or making sure that sidewalks and paved walking trails are safe year-round.

Ultimately, there are many people responsible for keeping the Yukon ticking — most, we won't ever see — but who all certainly deserve our thanks.

So today, thank you very much.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reduce community reliance on diesel energy.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to provide a clear timeline showing when they will allow private retailers to sell cannabis and when the government will shut down their publicly funded cannabis store.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to attend the public meeting scheduled for November at Golden Horn Elementary School to address capacity issues and long-term capital planning.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon Liberal government to:

(1) immediately put a warning label on the 20 lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision that are currently for sale by lottery advising potential purchasers that the Minister of Education has not agreed to provide school bus services into the subdivision, despite the fact that the Minister of Community Services confirmed via legislative return: "The roads meet the necessary Transportation Association of Canada geometric design guideline requirements for safe access to the subdivision for school buses, emergency response vehicles and other users"; and

(2) explain why their supposed whole-of-government approach has failed to resolve the issue of school bus service to families in Grizzly Valley subdivision, which was raised with ministers early in their term in office by the MLA for the area.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult with trucking industry stakeholders to develop training program requirements for commercial and long-haul Yukon truck drivers.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: McKinsey & Company association with Government of Yukon

Mr. Hassard: As many Yukoners have heard, the regime in Saudi Arabia has been silencing their critics. There has been international coverage of a murder of a journalist and vocal critic of the Saudi regime. This weekend, *The New York Times* published a story with revelations suggesting the regime had been targeting and silencing critics with the help of the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company. According to *The New York Times*, this company put together a report identifying the sources of criticism of the regime.

After this report was produced, those sources were then targeted by the Saudi government.

Mr. Speaker, we ask this question because a senior partner of McKinsey & Company was in the Yukon the last couple of days and the Deputy Premier did a public event with him yesterday. Can the Premier confirm that it was, in fact, the Deputy Premier who asked this individual to speak and do these events?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, I would love to speak to this issue. First of all, I had the opportunity to participate in a discussion yesterday with Dominic Barton as well as Tosh Southwick, vice-president of Yukon College, and the Deputy Minister of Economic Development. I thought a great place to have the event was at Yukon College because the individual is also the chancellor of Waterloo University, just spoke at McGill University, and I think at UBC and Oxford, all in the last two months.

I'm going to get clarity today from both the Leader of the Official Opposition and maybe even from the Third Party. I saw there was some stuff on social media from the Leader of the Third Party. What do we say to Yukon businesses that Mr. Barton spoke with yesterday, whether they be the leaders of one local business that was asked to go to Oxford University and speak or maybe another local innovative company that he spoke with yesterday, where he said he would like to see their prototype, or even the other individuals who were agriculture?

If somebody needs to put something on the table today, I want to know: Have I done something wrong? Has my department done something wrong in having this individual come to the Yukon? I want to know: Should we tell all these companies that provided support yesterday that they should hear from the Yukon Party, and potentially the NDP, that this individual should not be somebody who speaks? I want to hear from both of these individuals please.

Mr. Hassard: It seems to be a rather sensitive topic for the Minister of Economic Development. All I did was ask if it was, in fact, he who invited this Mr. Barton to the Yukon.

As we have already highlighted, this weekend *The New York Times* published the story with revelations suggesting that the Saudi regime had been targeting and silencing its critics. *The New York Times* suggested they are doing this with the help of a report produced by McKinsey & Company.

We know the Deputy Premier participated in an event with a senior partner of this firm yesterday, and we have even heard that he got his staff to go for breakfast with Mr. Barton. Even before the Saudi Arabia story, the firm was linked to another corruption scandal in South Africa earlier this summer. Does the Premier feel it's appropriate for the Liberal government to associate with an organization linked to the repressive regime in Saudi Arabia or corruption scandals in South Africa?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would say to the Assembly today that if there is any sensitivity coming from me, it's really not so much with the questions, but when you walk in and you're being linked, as an individual in the Yukon and as a minister,

to these actions in Saudi Arabia — quite petty; very unprofessional; quite sad.

I think what we're really seeing from both sides of the floor today is the fact that — why aren't we talking about the economy? Why aren't we talking about the fact that this conference was heralded?

I know that there were some members from the opposition who were at the event last night where people from the business community said this was the best keynote speaker they have ever had.

We certainly don't condone what's happening abroad. The fact that this is becoming a geopolitical conversation because an individual came to speak at an academic institution or to Economic Development staff or even as the keynote speaker — I think it is a really big stretch. I think Yukoners know it's a big stretch. I think the business community thought there was some great value. I think the students who heard from this individual yesterday about academia and where things are happening in the world — and to draw from the history of 24 months ago, former managing director — no longer — and now the chair of Teck Resources, Canada's biggest mining company — is a real stretch. Especially to connect a company that has 30,000 employees.

Mr. Hassard: I don't think it makes any difference how big the company is.

Just to reiterate, we think this is a very serious and important story that *The New York Times* wrote this weekend, and it's important for Yukoners to understand how and why the Liberal government is associated with this firm. That is why we're asking this question.

Can the Premier tell us if any money was spent by the Government of Yukon to bring and host this individual here in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm glad the Leader of the Official Opposition brought that up. No money was spent.

I'm going to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Barton, who came up. There was no money spent. He came and wanted to see the Yukon. He had not been here since he had done roadwork — funny enough that we're doing a tribute today — in 1984 outside of Watson Lake. He wanted to see what was happening here. He was quite pleased with all the interesting things happening between our development corporations, the economy itself and innovation.

Once again, a big stretch — maybe the biggest stretch I've seen since I've had an opportunity to be in this Assembly with my friends across the way.

Anyway, I hope there are more questions, and we'll continue to answer these questions. I am sure there are more and better questions about the economy that we could be talking about.

Question re: Cannabis retail store

Mr. Istchenko: Today, CKRW reported that the cost of a pre-rolled joint from the new government-run cannabis retail store was \$16. The shipping for it was \$12.00. That's \$28.00 for one joint. According to Statistics Canada, the average price for a gram of weed is much lower — at around \$9.52.

We have told this Liberal government many times that, by insisting on a model that grows government, it would not be able to compete with the black market. Remember, that's what this whole thing is about — eliminating the black market — but instead, with such high prices they are encouraging people to stay with the black market.

Can the minister explain how a \$28 joint competes with the black market?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that the opposition party is opposed to cannabis. That is fine.

The first week of operations saw over \$160,000 in sales. Our priorities have been to displace the illicit market but also to focus on the health and safety of Yukoners, especially to ensure the care of our youth.

What I want to say is that the price range for a gram of cannabis at the new store ranged from \$8 up to just shy of \$20. What was interesting to us was to see that Yukoners chose to buy the more expensive premium, organic products. That was their choice.

Maybe the members opposite, through their investigation, bought the premium product. Well, no worries — there is a product that is closer to the street price across the country, but they are providing a range of products because we do want to displace the illicit market. I'm very thankful for the success of the first week of the cannabis store.

Mr. Istchenko: Shipping from the government-run retail store to the CKRW office downtown took five days and it was \$12. Imagine how long it will take to have it shipped to Beaver Creek, Dawson City or Mayo. The Liberals have shut out the communities from having retail stores, so they are required to ship if they want to purchase legal marijuana. By shutting out the private sector in the communities, the Liberals have actually insulated the black market in rural Yukon.

Who is going to switch away from the black market if you have to wait so long and pay so much in shipping? The goal of this was to eliminate the black market, but unfortunately, the Liberals were so focused on ideology that they ended up growing government and missing the goal.

Will the minister tell us how this big government approach to the sale of weed will eliminate the black market in the communities?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think I just did talk about how it's displacing the black market.

I thank the member for raising the question because I want to encourage all Yukoners to move away from the illicit trade and move to this legal store. We're very happy to be working with businesses to get them up and running, from Beaver Creek to Watson Lake — wherever they would like to go — as long as those communities want those stores in those communities.

By the way, another great thing — and the way in which we're helping our communities to make sure that they are safer — is that when they buy through this legal system, they know that they are not going to get a drug laced with something else, which is wreaking havoc on our people across the territory. This is a way to ensure that safety.

Canada Post is what we have for delivery. I heard of one delivery that took two days. I heard of one that took five days. I thank CKRW for doing that test — great. I will work with our partners to try to make sure that the delivery system is as fast as possible. We're working now to bring in regulations, as I have said in this Legislature, to introduce private retail and we're looking forward to it.

Mr. Istchenko: It's clear that the prices are too high to compete with the black market, and that's because the Liberals insisted on a model that grows government. To ensure they don't lose money, they need to have the prices high enough to pay for the government wages, all of the renovation costs and all the other overhead that comes with a government-run business. If they had listened to us and went with a private sector model, then we would be doing this at less cost to taxpayers and we actually wouldn't be competing with the black market.

Let's talk about the packaging. In the CKRW report, they highlighted how this one tiny \$28 joint was shipped in a much larger box. In fact, there was probably more air in the box than there was pot. Why is the government spending so much money on shipping materials, and will they rethink this wasteful strategy?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The packaging is as per regulations from the federal government.

In my first meeting with the president of the corporation, I talked about the concerns of packaging. I think those are good concerns. Let's get at them. I will have to work with the regulations that are set there by the federal government, and so would the private sector, by the way.

In the first day, we had \$60,000 which was removed from the black market. Thank you very much to those Yukoners who went to the store on that first day. We're very happy.

I have seen across the country concerns as we went to privatized retail and as retail opened up across the country — concerns about supply. One of the things that we chose to do was to push our own prices down to not worry about profit — which, by the way, is costing Yukoners nothing because it is being sold, so we'll get that profit back.

It's really about trying to displace the illicit trade. If the member wants to know, I can get him a price list — I would be happy to do so — starting at \$8 a gram.

Question re: Technology in school classrooms

Ms. White: Technology is more present than ever in Yukon classrooms. There is no doubt that this is needed. Technology provides opportunities for innovation and, after all, kids live in a world where technology impacts their daily lives. This is a major transition for our education system, and like any transition, it comes with challenges.

We have heard from teachers who have experienced problems with bandwidth that made it impossible for them or their students to participate in a class as planned. This has forced teachers to completely change their lesson plan on the fly, often leaving them to teach a class without the resources they need. Teachers need the right tools to provide the best education possible for our children.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister monitor how frequently these issues occur in Yukon classrooms? What is being done to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to do their jobs?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It's absolutely critical that teachers have the tools they need to deliver the best possible service to our students. The member opposite is quite correct that the redesigned — now Yukon — curriculum already introduced in elementary schools and now up to grades 9 and 10 will be focused much on the way students are now learning. It is important for our curriculum and our school facilities to be as modern as possible because students clearly learn in a way that perhaps those of us in this Legislative Assembly did not in early days.

The technology piece with respect to the new curriculum is an important part of that particular innovation. The particular problem mentioned has not come to my attention, but it is absolutely something that is dealt with on a daily basis in our schools by teachers and by their administration and hopefully, if there are issues being brought to the department's attention, through their superintendent or other ways. As I have said earlier when talking about education, it is an issue that must be monitored constantly for improvements for Yukon students.

Ms. White: Integrating technology in our classrooms can have a positive impact on education as long as teachers, parents and students are properly supported through these changes. We have heard concerns from parents that their kids have no math or science textbooks to take home because there weren't enough for the whole class, so everything is done online instead. Others have reported that very few textbooks exist in the whole class, making it nearly impossible to teach a class where there are a few issues with accessing online course material, and that's without even talking about homework.

Mr. Speaker, how are teachers supposed to properly support students in their learning with such limited resources?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. I will speak with the member opposite about particular cases, if they have been brought to her attention and not to mine. We are not interested — I would say about any member of this Legislative Assembly — in children not having the proper tools to be used in classrooms and to assist with their homework.

I can indicate, of course, that some of these changes and developments in the redesigned curriculum result in a student-centred approach with more emphasis on experiential learning. Definitely, we would be moving away from the reading, writing and arithmetic of the old days that necessarily had textbooks. There are lots of new online learning initiatives. There are also opportunities for teachers to have online and electronic resources for teaching those classes as well. As I have said, I will speak to the member opposite about any specific case she is aware of that has not been brought to my attention.

Ms. White: Speaking of tools, Mr. Speaker, technology is not equally accessible to everyone. I don't need to remind

the minister that Yukon's Internet access can be patchy at times, and some communities don't have the same speed or infrastructure as Whitehorse does. With one-third of the food bank's clients being children, it goes without saying that some Yukon families cannot afford a computer or a home Internet connection. Other parents may not have the computer skills needed to help their kids with homework that is done online. These kids have the same right to a quality education as every other kid. What measures are in place to ensure that all kids have access to the same quality of education regardless of their access to technology?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I think it is a good opportunity to talk a bit about technology and its interface with students, not just in the public school system, but the opportunities that we are seeing available now through YuKconstruct and the (co)space in our innovation hub. I think that everybody here strives to ensure that there is equal opportunity for our students right across the Yukon.

It was touched upon that there is patchy Internet services. First of all, Yukoners have waited a long time for the commitment to get redundancy. I think that is a key project that is underway right now — making sure that we have redundancy so that we don't have that patchy service that we have seen for such a long time. Secondly, I would also say that I think when it comes to coding programs and game design and seeing our elementary students now going into activities at the innovation hub — it is that really great cross-pollination.

I know that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is a huge supporter of the trades and making sure that our children have an opportunity for that real, tangible, hands-on experience. I think that this is also something where we are working in conjunction — the minister and I.

I also would say, just as we touched on the food bank and we talk about innovation, that I do want to thank Economic Development — our project where we now have our 11-month greenhouse. A portion of that food has been dedicated to the food bank. I also want to thank the people at Yukon Gardens for their innovation and help to the food bank.

Question re: School capacity

Mr. Kent: Last week, we asked some questions of the Minister of Education about overcrowding at Golden Horn Elementary School. The minister has had letters on her desk since last December asking her to take action to address overcrowding and so far, nothing has been done. We know the minister doesn't think this is a terrible problem to have, but the school council has asked the minister for two portables to be in place by next school year to avoid having to turn in-catchment families away from the school.

Last week, I asked the minister if she would commit to this request, but she was either unable or unwilling to answer that question, so I will ask again: Will the minister commit to two portable classrooms in time for the start of the 2019-20 school year at Golden Horn Elementary School as requested by that school council?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am happy to answer the question, but I think the preamble of the question might have given Yukoners the wrong impression — that letters just sit on my desk for 10 or 12 months and don't get answered. That is not, in fact, the case. I have been responding to Golden Horn Elementary School Council and all school councils in the incredibly important job that they do in our schools. I have also been working with the school council in attendance at meetings, not only by me, but by others, including recently the deputy minister. I was at Golden Horn School two days ago and worked with the administration — spoke with them and spoke with the teachers. We are continuing to work on this issue.

The answer sought is: Two portables — will they go to Golden Horn? We are taking a much broader view of this particular issue, working with my colleagues here in Cabinet and dealing with the school administration and the school community to come up with the best possible solution for them.

Mr. Kent: So the short answer is: No commitment to two portables for next year.

The minister's lack of action or any sense of urgency on this file is a concern to all the families who currently have their children wait-listed. The minister has had letters sitting on her desk since December 2017 asking her to take action, because the wait-list is growing — no action from the minister. These letters detail that children are being taught in storage closets and boiler rooms due to lack of space — again, no action from the minister.

The school council has asked that tenders for these portables be issued prior to December 31 so that the contractors have time to respond and families can make other arrangements if something goes wrong, which is a real possibility, given this government's track record so far.

We asked this question to the minister as well last week and again we received no answer, so I will ask again: Will the minister commit to tendering this project prior to December 31 as requested by the school council?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I think that it is interesting that I am criticized for giving the same answers, when I am just getting the same questions. I think that is fair; I should give the same answers to the same questions.

I was asked this last week. What I said was that I didn't think it was appropriate to make that commitment here because recently the school council has written to me for the purpose of collaborating on resolving these problems together. I think that I should go there and I should speak to them. I have done so earlier this week with respect to the administration of the school and with respect to the department. At no time whatsoever is it a topic that is not getting, not just my attention, but my deep concern.

Unfortunately the question is just inaccurate with respect to the way it is being presented here. I take issue with that. I am absolutely dealing with the issues at Golden Horn Elementary School, and I think that the school community and I should work together with the department to come up with solutions.

Mr. Kent: It is too bad that the minister didn't start working with the school council last December when they initially wrote to her.

The tender to have a portable classroom installed at Golden Horn for this current year closed in mid-May and had no bidders. For some reason, the minister doesn't seem to have asked for an analysis to see why there were no bids. In fact, until we brought it to the minister's attention in October, she was unaware that these structures could actually be built locally. We answered her question to us about local providers in a legislative return that showed two successful construction tenders for portables issued by the previous government. We have actually confirmed that one of those bidders identified could begin work immediately on portable classrooms for Golden Horn.

What steps did the minister take in May after the tender closed to address the situation? Has she reached out to any local companies about their capacity to build portable classrooms?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am puzzled by this line of questioning. I think the document that was tabled by the opposition earlier was about school portables that were built in 2011 and perhaps 2013 for, I think — if memory serves me — \$800,000 for one portable. The going price for portables is about between \$400,000 and \$450,000. I'm not aware of any local businesses because, in fact, they didn't bid on the tender that was issued in April of this year.

This is an issue that is extremely important as enrolment grows in elementary schools across Whitehorse. It is a topic that was not given any attention by the former government. It is a topic that is given attention by me, by the Department of Education, by the Department of Highways and Public Works, and we are attempting to solve this problem, perhaps even on a daily basis.

We're certainly working closely with the school community, which is what we should do to have their solutions brought forward and figure out how we can manage this problem going forward, not just for one school year.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. McLeod: Can the Minister of Health and Social Services confirm if the Yukon Hospital Corporation currently has a financial request before the Department of Health and Social Services?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to maybe bring a little clarity to the question around the relationship with the Hospital Corporation. The Hospital Corporation was here last week, and the questions that were asked of the Hospital Corporation were around efficiencies. I think they made it quite clear at the time that they are working collaboratively with the department to address the concerns they have with respect to budget. We have increased their budget by 2.5 per cent for this year and we will continue to work with the Hospital Corporation to provide the supports they require, of course, always with efficiencies of services in mind and looking at priority areas, recognizing that the capital side of the proposal that they submitted will take some time, and

those are things that we have agreed to work on with them collaboratively.

Ms. McLeod: I did not get an answer. Is the minister telling us that, in her opinion, the Yukon Hospital Corporation has all the resources they need and they are not requesting any more from the government?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the question about my having an opinion — that is not relevant. What happens when we go through a process is we develop a strong, successful partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as they've noted. The strategic direction is really built on some principles that have been defined with respect to collaborative care, not acute care. Historically, they focused on acute care, and we're now looking at how we provide services to the individual who enters the hospital and leaves the hospital.

The member opposite may find humour in that; I don't. I take it very seriously, as does the Yukon Hospital Corporation. We ensure that the individuals who enter the hospital are provided the best possible care that they can get, and that means that we look at a home first model, we work with our partners and we ensure that the individuals — as they enter the hospital — leave the hospital and go back to their own homes.

As noted, the members opposite find humour. I don't. I think this is a serious matter for Yukoners. We will continue to work with our partners and ensure that every patient who enters the hospital is given the exceptional care that they require, and that's what the Hospital Corporation committed to, and that's what this government will commit to as well.

Ms. McLeod: No answer to that question.

As we've previously talked about in this House, the wait-list for cataract surgeries has grown to over three years in length. Hundreds of Yukoners are finding themselves unable to get this very important surgery that affects their quality of life. Unfortunately, the Liberal government has provided no plan to address this wait-list.

In spite of the looming cuts to budgets in the amount of two percent — including in Health and Social Services, as they haven't been excluded from that request — how much money does the Yukon Hospital Corporation require to reduce the wait-list of cataract surgeries?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't know if it is just a matter of the Yukon Party having been out of government for so long that they forget how the budgetary schedule works, but decisions will be made at Management Board — well, this government makes decisions at Management Board — when it comes to budgeting for Yukoners' future and the spending of taxpayers' money — not on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NOTICE OF GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 340

Clerk: Motion No. 340, standing in the name of Mr. Adel.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Copperbelt North:

THAT this House supports the development of a climate change, energy and green economy strategy that sets out a coordinated approach to climate, energy and economic planning.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: I have a question regarding whether the motion is in order for debate due to a decision rendered by this House on March 21, 2018. I'm going to very briefly quote from the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, pages 582 and 583. The first quote is: "A decision once made cannot be questioned again but must stand as the judgement of the House."

Another quote is: "This is to prevent the time of the House being used in the discussion of motions of the same nature with the possibility of contradictory decisions being arrived at in the course of the same session."

The third is: "The House may reopen discussion on an earlier decision (i.e., a resolution or an order of the House) only if its intention is to revoke it; this requires notice of a motion to rescind the resolution or discharge the order, as the case may be."

On March 21 of this year, the Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a motion, reading:

THAT this House supports the development of a strategy that addresses climate change, energy and green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in the Yukon.

In our view, that motion and Motion No. 340, presented by the Member for Copperbelt North, are essentially the same motion, and the House has already rendered a decision on it. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to review and compare these motions and rule whether Motion No. 340 is in order to be debated or whether that matter has already been dealt with by this Assembly.

Speaker: The Hon. Premier, on the point of order.

I anticipate that some time will be required for me to confer with the Clerk, whatever the submissions are.

Hon. Mr. Silver: For one, I believe it is your role, Mr. Speaker, to determine which motions are in order and not in order. I also do believe that the members opposite have known about this motion for a while now, since calling it into play.

Again, this has to do with a green economy strategy that we're currently working on here in the Yukon, which wouldn't be any different from working on a new education strategy.

I'm not sure what exactly it is that the members opposite do not want to speak about, but we are willing to continue the debate today and we are looking forward to your ruling — again, knowing full well that the Yukon Party knew this was procedurally in order yesterday and supposedly this morning as well.

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

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to talk about one word within the motion, which — at least, as I developed a plan to try to speak to it today — is something new, and that is the “coordinated” approach. It's not that these things are disparate but that we're working on them in a coordinated fashion.

Speaker: So we have, perhaps, three options at this time: we can stand down; we can adjourn for five minutes so I can confer with Mr. Clerk; or, if we had unanimous consent, we could move on to the other motions and I could reach a decision with respect to this motion later in the day. I'm obviously not prepared to provide an opinion to the House right away because I do not have the motion that the Member for Lake Laberge has mentioned before me, so I'm not in a position to — as one would say — compare and contrast.

Is it the House's wish to stand down or adjourn for five minutes?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: The House stands adjourned for five minutes or perhaps a little longer.

Recess

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: The Chair has had an opportunity to confer with Mr. Clerk and is in the position to provide a ruling or an opinion with respect to the matter that has arisen with respect to the point of order this afternoon.

The Member for Lake Laberge raises a valid concern, though the Chair takes no position as to whether it applies in this case. The member is fully within his right to raise a concern about the orderliness of a bill or motion on the Order Paper. However, at this point, members have known about the motion identified for debate today for approximately 24 hours. If a member has a concern about the orderliness of a motion, the onus is on the member to bring their concern to the attention of the Chair or the Clerk as soon as is possible. This would assist the Chair in making a determination on the matter.

At this point, the Chair has put the motion to the House and it is now up to the House to decide what it wishes to do with it: adopt it, negative it or adjourn debate on the motion at some point.

That being said, as stated, the concern raised by the Member for Lake Laberge that the House is revisiting a decision already taken is, at least potentially, a valid one. The Chair will take the matter under advisement and may, if necessary, confer with House Leaders or other members in order to reach a more definitive statement on the matter.

We will now proceed with debate on Motion No. 340.

Mr. Adel: We are on the verge of beginning public engagement on climate change, energy and green economy, so today is an opportunity to talk about a plan to address these issues.

“Climate change, energy and the green economy” is a lengthy title, but it represents the large scope of what is facing us as we go forward. Climate change is affecting our lives locally and globally.

On Monday night of this week, the national CBC news ran a 10-minute report on how climate change is affecting Kluane country, the Slims River and water supply. It is a program that I would urge all Yukoners to watch. Chief Bob Dickson of the Kluane First Nation made it quite clear how the reduced water levels in Kluane Lake are affecting traditional food security for his people, how blowing sand is affecting highway travel and the safety of his people and how losing a metre of ice from glaciers a year will change the environment.

We are seeing the dramatic effects of climate change affecting our economy. Locally, buildings are shifting due to melting permafrost and highways need more repairs to deal with the shifting ground beneath them. I am seeing changes personally in the water levels at Tagish Lake and how they are affecting fishing and recreational opportunities. The introduction of deer along the highways that have moved in from down south are another obvious indicator of our changing climate.

Globally, Mr. Speaker, we just have to look south and to the eastern and western seaboard of the United States and how they have been pummeled with extreme weather that has resulted in billions of dollars of damage. This will affect our insurance rates. As a storm blows through the Gulf of Mexico and refineries and drilling platforms are damaged or shut down, it affects the price of our fuel.

Mr. Speaker, the picture I am trying to paint is that climate change impacts our lives in so many ways, so we need to develop an integrated strategy on our climate, on our energy use and on our economies. The previous government didn't see it that way. They focused on the energy and economy side of the equation only. The environment was an afterthought. The Auditor General of Canada weighed in on the previous government's climate change strategy, and it wasn't all that pretty. The Auditor General's report in 2017 said the following — and I quote: “Overall, we found that the Government of Yukon created a strategy, an action plan, and

two progress reports to respond to climate change. In developing these items, the government took good first steps toward providing leadership and direction for responding to climate change. However, the commitments in the government's action plan and progress reports were weak and not prioritized. In addition, deficiencies in the Climate Change Secretariat's reporting made it difficult to assess progress on the government's climate change actions."

"Weak and not prioritized" — this is how the Auditor General of Canada described the previous government's climate change plan.

It went on to say — and I quote: "These findings matter because the government's development of a strategy and action plan are key to establishing priorities, roles and responsibilities, and actions for its response to climate change. Furthermore, by reporting clearly and consistently on the progress it makes in meeting its climate change commitments, the government helps keep the public informed and strengthens its accountability."

Mr. Speaker, on the heels of that report being reported, our Minister of Environment released the following statement — and I quote: "The office of the Auditor General of Canada released its Report on Climate Change in Yukon today. The report audited the actions, commitments and initiatives undertaken by the Government of Yukon between July 2006 and July 2017.

"The report presented four overarching recommendations, outlining that there are improvements to be made in Yukon's approach to climate change. The government supports the recommendations, and work is underway to address them.

"Climate change is a priority for this government. Our efforts include the development of a new Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and green economy. As part of that, we are in the early stages of establishing partnerships with First Nations and municipalities so the strategy reflects the needs, concerns and ideas of all Yukoners.

"It is envisioned that, in collaboration with our partners, the commitments and targets in the new Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and green economy will be supported by clear milestones, completion dates and associated costs. We expect to seek public feedback into this strategy in 2018 so that it can be released in 2019 — however final dates will be decided with our partners."

We will undertake a climate risk assessment. "This information will support departments as they develop... risk reduction plans, including implementation and monitoring plans.

"Climate change affects all of us. It impacts our traditional ways of life, our wildlife and our environment. We are working to set the foundation for effective, targeted climate action as it is vital for Yukoners today and for future generations" to come.

As the minister said, and as I referenced earlier, we are close to being ready to engage with the public on a strategy. Developing this strategy is listed in the spring 2018 Yukon performance plan. It also presents an opportunity to respond to the Auditor General of Canada's recent report on climate

action in the Yukon, to draw in relevant elements of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change* and to respond to platform commitments to replace the existing 2009 climate change and energy strategies and to set transparent emission targets.

The departments of Environment, Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources are collaborating on strategy development, which is being coordinated by the Climate Change Secretariat at the Department of Environment. An integrated and collaborative approach is being used to develop the climate change, energy and green economy strategy. The approach acknowledges that there are significant impacts from climate change in the Yukon. Climate, energy and economic planning needs to be coordinated, and many groups have a role to play in responding to climate change in the Yukon.

Yukon and transboundary First Nations, Inuvialuit and Yukon municipalities have been invited to partner with the Yukon government in the development of that strategy. This includes providing input and feedback on all aspects of a strategy and developing and including the initial planning, community engagement, draft strategy content and final strategy content. Although the Yukon government will approve the final strategy, indigenous and municipal partners will be encouraged and invited to endorse a final strategy to include their own goals and commitments.

In-person meetings were held with participating governments and organizations on February 9 and April 30, 2018, to discuss integrated strategy, public engagement and how we will work together. The Yukon government has continued to engage through telephone conversations and e-mail as well. Indigenous and municipal partners have contributed to developing a public engagement strategy, discussion document and survey and will be involved in organizing public engagement events in their communities and gathering input from their citizens.

There will be seven areas of interest for a new strategy based on issues and priorities identified by Yukon and transboundary First Nations, Inuvialuit and Yukon municipalities. The areas of interest will help to focus conversations and ideas during public engagement. An online survey will be available during the public engagement period to complement the community visits. The survey questions are being developed with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics with input from indigenous and municipal partners.

The Yukon government held meetings with business and industry stakeholders in advance of a public engagement period to ensure that they are aware of an integrated strategy and to discuss how best to incorporate their input. These stakeholders include: the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, Low Carbon Yukon Stakeholder Committee, Yukon Research Centre, Yukon Chamber of Mines, Yukon Energy Corporation and ATCO Electric Yukon.

The Yukon government will continue to work collaboratively with Yukon and transboundary First Nations, Inuvialuit and Yukon municipalities to develop a draft

strategy following this public engagement that reflects Yukon-wide priorities. After a period of public review on the draft strategy, our recommended strategy will be presented to the Yukon government for final review and approval.

Discussions on carbon pricing and the rebates for Yukoners will continue to take place in parallel to the development of the integrated strategy. While carbon pricing is an important element of climate change policy, the integrated strategy is about all of the other important actions to make communities more resilient, to reduce our emissions and to plan for Yukon's energy needs and economic future.

A strategy has implications for other areas of government as well, including Community Services and Highways and Public Works, because climate change affects community resilience, infrastructure, food security and many other aspects of life in the Yukon. The intent of a strategy is to enhance Yukon's capacity to thrive in and respond to a rapidly changing environment. It will combine planning for the effects of climate change with the planning for energy security, green economic development and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

High-level goals will communicate the desired results from developing and implementing the climate change energy and green economy strategy. Yukon is prepared to respond and adapt to the changes that are already affecting us and the projected changes that will continue to affect us. Yukon communities will need to have access to energy that is affordable and reliable while having low emissions of greenhouse gases and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

Yukon residents and businesses are able to participate in the opportunities associated with meeting these objectives and can thrive in a low-carbon future. Yukon contributes to global efforts to address climate change by achieving a meaningful reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Issues will identify and acknowledge challenges faced by Yukoners that a strategy will help to address. Relevant issues may include a high cost of living in Yukon communities and the impacts of climate change on Yukon communities.

A strategy will be organized to areas of interest with desired outcomes clearly articulated for each of the interests and specific actions identified to help achieve those desired outcomes. Actions that the Yukon government, indigenous, municipal governments and organizations will undertake will be listed in annexes to the strategy.

Possible areas of interest, desired outcomes and specific actions are as follows: electricity — desired outcomes include reduced community reliance on diesel, and examples of actions are support the development of community renewable energy initiatives and deliver programming that reduces energy use in communities; heating — desired outcomes include lessening energy consumption, increasing the availability of renewable energy solutions, and some of the actions are to deliver programming to facilitate retrofit of commercial and residential buildings and support the development of local biomass industry — these are just a few.

A plan for evaluating the success will be developed alongside a strategy. The goals and outcomes developed for

the strategy will be tied to measures of success with a plan for collecting the required data to evaluate whether we are making progress. Measures will be linked to goals and desired outcomes of a strategy and could include: greenhouse gas emissions, employment resulting from initiatives under the strategy, residential energy intensity per square metre, and proportion of heat energy generation from renewable sources.

Yukon intends to be part of a global shift to address climate change by building resilient communities and low-carbon economies. The Yukon government is working with Yukon and transboundary First Nations and Yukon municipalities to develop a territory-wide strategy to address climate change, energy and a clean economy. A 10-year strategy will replace the 2009 climate change action plan and the 2009 energy strategy for the Yukon.

While climate change action plans and energy strategies for Yukon help the territory make headway in dealing with energy and climate change issues, a lot has changed since these documents were first released. We are ready for an update, Mr. Speaker — an innovative approach to climate change, energy and green economy and a new strategy that will enhance Yukon's capacity to thrive well into the future.

The Government of Yukon will work collaboratively with Yukon and transboundary First Nations and Yukon municipalities to prepare a recommended strategy to be reviewed and approved by the Yukon government. A final strategy will be released late in 2019 that will include priorities and actions that will align with Yukon's climate change, energy and economic needs.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, it is all connected — climate change, energy and economy are all interconnected — our economy relies on energy; the kinds of energy we use affect climate change; and the impacts of climate change affect our energy supply and our economy. Economic decisions influence how much and what kind of energy we use, how resilient we are to the impacts of climate change and, by addressing all three — energy, climate change and clean economy — Yukon can effectively respond to the rapid changes happening in our territory.

The Yukon is experiencing significant changes in its climate. Over the past 50 years, temperatures have warmed by two degrees Celsius and rain and snowfall have increased by six percent. Some of the resulting impacts are: permafrost is thawing, damaging our buildings and roads; new plant and animal species are moving north, impacting our ecosystems and wildlife; glaciers are melting, changing river flow patterns; and higher risks of flooding and more frequent and severe forest fires.

To face these ongoing changes, Yukon can adapt to the impacts we are already experiencing and plan responses to the changes that are coming. Taking action on climate change and energy will help build a diverse green economy that creates economic growth with as little environmental impact as possible. Yukon businesses will see new opportunities in areas like renewable energy and energy efficiency. The knowledge economy will grow as we develop innovative solutions to local and global challenges.

All Yukon businesses will benefit from initiatives to use energy and other resources more effectively. This is an ambitious project and we are happy to see it moving forward. I hope all members of the House will be supporting this motion before us.

Mr. Kent: I am going to be very brief in my remarks here today. It is always interesting when we come around to government private members' day because it gives the private members on the Liberal side an opportunity to join in the blame game that the Premier and his ministers participate in on a daily basis here in the Legislature, blaming the previous government for almost everything. I take issue with some of the remarks made by the Member for Copperbelt North, but I am not going to focus on that here today. It is just disappointing that we are two years into this government's mandate, and I swear that when they wake up in the morning, if they stub their toe they find a way to blame the Yukon Party for that. Again, it is disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

As my colleague from Lake Laberge noted earlier today, the motion up for debate today is, in our view, essentially the same as Motion No. 253, tabled by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and passed by this House on March 21, 2018. As you know, the House has already debated and rendered a decision on essentially what we feel is the same motion. As the members of this House are aware, we passed Motion No. 253 unanimously on March 21, 2018. The final motion, after amendments, reads:

THAT this House supports the development of a strategy that addresses climate change, energy and green economy as an effective mechanism to support economic diversification and environmental stewardship; and

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support environmental stewardship by developing initiatives that increase the use of renewable energy sources in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the motion that we are debating today — it reads almost exactly the same and fulfills the exact same purpose as Motion No. 253. We already know where each party stands on this topic. We supported the previous motion; therefore, we will be supporting this motion. What we do not support is using time debating motions that the House has already made a decision on. The government could have written a new motion for the Member for Copperbelt North on a topic that we haven't already discussed.

We hear a lot from the Premier and the ministers complaining about having to answer questions in Committee of the Whole or Question Period or the amount of time spent in general debate on the supplementary budget because they see them as a waste of time. Then they go around and bring forward a motion that we have already spent time debating and, in fact, already voted on. Mr. Speaker, if the Premier was sincere in his word, back it up with action. Don't bring forward a motion that was already debated and passed in this House. The government can agree to just unanimously pass this motion right now so that we can move on to new

business, but I don't anticipate that will be happening as I am sure there is a lineup of speakers across the way who want to say essentially the same thing they said in the spring.

That said, Mr. Speaker, again, we will be supporting this motion, but we do feel there are better ways to use this time here this afternoon.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am rising today as the Minister of Environment to speak on the motion brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt North, which urges this House to support the development of a climate change, energy and green economy strategy that sets out a coordinated approach to climate, energy and economic planning.

The Yukon landscape is changing. Elders of our traditional territory have lived through winter temperatures that are changing and that our children and their children may never see.

Invasive species like the pine beetle are making their way north and destroying Yukon's coniferous forest. Wildlife is claiming habitat in places they haven't seen before. We are seeing declines, and the integration of local traditional knowledge and practices into what we do with science as we design models going forward is essential. Water systems are taking new paths as glaciers retreat. As permafrost melts on our highways, we're seeing cracking. The foundations of our buildings are shifting. There are things we certainly need to adapt to. Like the landscape we live in, Yukoners are also changing; however, determining our response to the impact of climate change requires us to understand the changes around us.

That is why we are monitoring and studying these changes by incorporating scientific, local and traditional knowledge. With this essential information, this government — and all Yukoners — can make thoughtful, evidence-based decisions about how to power our homes and businesses and how to support green economic growth.

It also requires governments of all levels to be leaders in shaping policy and adapting our responses to the emerging climate changes that we face. This is why our government is an active member in climate change action for our region, our nation and our global world.

We participate in the Arctic Council, an international forum that promotes cooperation, coordination and interaction among Arctic states and Arctic indigenous communities on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection.

We support Canada's commitment to the United Nations international climate change agreement. Nationally, Yukon's perspective was a part of shaping the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. Here at home, we have already started supporting Yukoners in reducing energy consumption and saving money. We worked with the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Village of Teslin to install a state-of-the-art biomass wood-chip boiler that produces significantly less emissions than traditional fossil fuels. We have cooperated and worked with the Kluane Community Development Corporation, and we are about to

break ground on a 300-kilowatt wind project located between Destruction Bay and Burwash on the traditional territory of the Kluane First Nation. In Old Crow, we have partnered with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government and Yukon Development Corporation to install a 942-kilowatt solar array that will save the community up to \$189,000 litres of diesel fuel a year.

We're also leading a new integrated strategy that sets a coordinated approach to climate change, energy and economic planning. The new strategy represents an opportunity to address the Auditor General of Canada's recommendations from the 2017 report on climate change action in Yukon — something that the previous government neglected to do. It will help Yukon address Yukon-relevant aspects of the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. We have already started the initial work through meetings and workshops with our First Nations and municipal partners, and will continue to do so as the strategy progresses.

It is also essential that we have brought public engagement for the development of this strategy. We will be inviting businesses, community leaders and individual citizens to submit comments online and to attend face-to-face community meetings. Working together will help ensure that the strategy works for Yukoners and reflects important issues across the territory. Integrating climate change energy solutions and green economy action into one strategy will help us stay coordinated and focused.

It will guide renewed actions on: developing adaptations for our highways, buildings and community infrastructure that is affected by thawing permafrost; increasing our understanding about food security in regard to climate change; reducing carbon usage; and expanding renewable energy and ensuring economic growth that accounts for future generations and ecosystems.

These efforts will help us to build resilient and sustainable communities while supporting environmentally responsible economic growth in the territory. This, in turn, will allow our future generations to be able to live and enjoy the Yukon as we have.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to begin just by addressing some of the concerns. First of all, I'm happy to get up. A couple of weeks ago — maybe three weeks ago now — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — I'll refer to them as the IPCC — released a report talking about the imperative of addressing the issue of climate change in order to try to keep the world to or below one and one-half degrees of warming. By the way, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon has already warmed more than that.

There is kind of an imperative. I never see it as a waste of time to talk about the issue of climate change and how we should best address that here in the territory. I appreciate Question Period. I certainly appreciate the work that the Yukon Party did on this issue over the years. I just really think it needs to go a lot further. So rather than criticizing them for me stubbing my toe, I thank them for the work they have done.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that there was a time when I was invited — I have been working on the issue of climate change for most of my adult life. I remember being invited to speak to a United Nations youth summit on climate change to talk about the issue. This is now 15 years or so ago, maybe 14 years ago. At that conference, I gave a presentation on the issues of climate change, especially with respect to the north and what we were facing here — that it was tangible and real. One of the youth stood up at the end of it — they were in a discussion session afterward — and said, “Oh my God, we have been talking about this for an hour; we have to get going on this issue and get some stuff done.”

This is a challenging issue for us here in the Yukon; it's a challenging issue for Canada; it's a challenging issue for the world. I don't think that this is a waste of time in any way.

I will talk about the things that are new — or that I appreciate as new — in this motion and that have been happening over the past year. While I see similarities in that all of us in this Legislature acknowledge that climate change is happening, that it is dominantly caused by the actions of people and that we need to do something about it, I think there are stark differences about how we would choose to address it.

I think it is incredibly important to begin with what I thought was important about this motion: to ensure that the work we do is coordinated. In the past, in 2009, the first climate change plan came forward as well as the energy strategy. Over the years, we have seen a couple of iterations on the climate change action plan. I think there was an update in 2012 and 2015. At that point, I was invited to offer some critique of those things. My most significant critique of it was that there's no real way to tell, through that strategy, that you're actually able to reduce emissions. In fact, my observation was that the claim that there had been some emissions reduction seemed to be solely due to the fact that the economy had been in decline.

You don't want a strategy for how you're going to reduce your emissions that is based on a declining economy. My goodness, no one here in this territory wants a declining economy, so we need to have a way to coordinate between the economy and the environment, in particular around climate change.

As I said earlier, this month the IPCC — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — came out with their report. The purpose of this group is to provide evidence for decision-makers and policy-makers. It's to pull together the best science that there is around the world to say here's the situation that you face and this is what you need to do. They don't say how to do it, because they don't want to be prescriptive to our legislatures around the world. What they want to say is these are the sorts of things, the tools, you have at your disposal if you want to achieve a reduction in emissions in order to prevent going beyond one and one-half degrees.

It does detail the risks that exist. This is not an insignificant problem. In fact, it is a very significant problem to shift your energy economy from fossil fuels to a low-carbon, and eventually a no-carbon, economy — that's no

easy feat, Mr. Speaker. In order to do it, we really do need to be very coordinated, but we also need to understand what the motivation is — why do it? — and the risks that they outline are significant for the whole planet. It will lead the world to an unsafe place at one and one-half degrees. The risks are dramatic to our communities and our ecosystems. I won't detail them here except to say that there is an imperative to act.

Those risks are not an abstract notion for the north. Here in the Yukon, we have just heard from the Minister of Environment outlining some of those risks. We know about the risk of flooding, about the thawing of permafrost and what it does to our infrastructure. We know from traditional knowledge the issues around food security and, especially, changes to our wildlife and its health. By far, my impression is that the biggest risk is wildfire. Each of our communities suffers from that risk. We really need to act to diminish that risk while, at the same time, make sure we're dealing with the root cause of the problem, which is reducing our emissions.

Sometimes I have heard people say, "The Yukon is a small jurisdiction. We don't have that many emissions here." But on a per capita basis, our emissions are comparable to most Canadians, which, by the way, are much higher than most countries on a per capita basis around the world. We are not the highest, but we are right up there. As a result, I believe that we — all of us — have a responsibility, and, in particular, I think one of the most significant responsibilities lies with us as a government. If we don't take action, those risks will become realities. The situation is the biggest experiment in the tragedy of the commons that I have known of — of humankind — to date. I wish it weren't so; I just believe it to be so.

Given that it is our responsibility to act, what is the opportunity that we face? How can we build on the work that began with the members opposite? I think that it is critical that we coordinate around how our economy works, how our energy systems work and how we integrate within our environment. If we don't do that, what happens is that we just start working at cross purposes. So we get a great initiative over here but it is not coordinated in a — I was going to say "in a one-government approach", but what I want to say is that we need to work together. We need to be smart with our investments in our economy so that they are working for our environment, not against it. If we don't do it, we can't sustain it.

One of the things that I noted for years, with the previous iterations of the climate change strategy, is that we didn't get at where emissions really were happening. Roughly two-thirds of our emissions are with transportation and roughly one-third with heat, and the solutions didn't line up. All the solutions were around the energy side, not around transportation or the heat side, and that is another reason that we need to coordinate this. We need to get the economy working with the issue of heading toward a low-carbon future.

We know that some of our best solutions, or the solutions that we know of as Yukoners, lie around heat, because we know how to build buildings that don't rely as much on heat.

Insulation is key. We have better building codes and we have incentives to lead us toward SuperGreen buildings, and that is great. We know we have to get at some of our older building stock. I am going to talk about this very building, our Legislature, in a moment, just to use it as a case in point. We have good ideas there. I know we have good solutions around agriculture, as agriculture is one of those ones that hits all the buttons. It deals with adaptation. It deals with food security. It deals with reducing our reliance on transportation. It is a great opportunity. It builds the economy.

One of the ones that I focus on within my work as the Minister of Community Services is how we invest in our infrastructure. There are some standard ways that it can happen — for example, retrofits. Again, I will talk about it in a moment, but it is much more than that. It is looking at the life cycle of the infrastructure and trying to understand how it will exist over its life cycle so we can value things better than just: What is the cost to build it? We need to understand the cost to maintain it over time. We need to understand how it will exist and how that infrastructure will end up in our landfills eventually if we don't think about it properly. If we don't build it according to a changing climate, we might build somewhere where the permafrost is thawing and then we see the challenges that we're facing. I don't think people anticipated it, but we can't ignore it anymore.

Finally, one of the things I want to say about the importance of coordination and the opportunity that we have is to make sure that we're measuring these things. I'm a strong believer in evidence and I want to see the numbers. I guess I'm a stereotypical engineer. I want to understand whether this is worth it or not.

Let me talk for a second about retrofits and why I believe retrofits are such a strong choice but why they are not the best choice out there, and I will get to it. Retrofits are good. You extend the life cycle of your buildings. They don't end up in your landfills as quickly. You get a savings because you reduce your energy needs, but the way you want to try to measure them is by actually doing that number crunching. I was surprised when I read the last update of the climate change action plan not to see that analysis done. I have been requesting it now as we work on projects — to see.

For example, I looked at this very building. I understand that the investment was \$700,000 or \$720,000. That was great because it gave us a savings of \$50,000 a year. The fuel bills went down \$50,000 a year. You only need to be running for 14 years and you get a payback. I think this building has a much longer life. If you give it a 25-year life, you can start to look at what the cost is at reducing those greenhouse gases. You just run the math and it's about \$200 a tonne to reduce the greenhouse gases. That's the type of analysis that I think we should be doing on all of our projects. We're going to be doing some mitigation efforts. What is it going to cost us to reduce those greenhouse gases? Let's compare that, one to the other. There can be all sorts of reasons why you get to the project anyway. Again, thank you to the members opposite for retrofitting this building. I think it was a great choice. I think we have to do much more of it.

Let me compare it now to a price on carbon. It's not our policy but one that I certainly believe in. We heard from the federal government. They said that a price on carbon by 2022 would be reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the territory, year over year — 32,000 tonnes — and that the cost to our GDP would be around \$7 million. However, what they didn't put in there — because it wasn't part of the analysis that they ran — was that the rebate would be all coming back to the Yukon — to Yukon individuals, businesses, First Nation governments and municipal governments. When that money comes back to those places, it comes back into the economy.

If you ran it straight, the way they run the number, then the price is \$200 a tonne, just like it was for this retrofit. In other words, a carbon tax is as efficient as is the retrofitting of this building. But when you start to consider that you bring that money back into the territory and you feed it back into your GDP — in fact, if you bring 100 percent in, you can reduce that GDP loss down to zero — that makes the range on the cost for a price on carbon anywhere from zero up to the \$200 a tonne. That makes it better than this retrofit and better than most retrofits.

What I think we should be doing, rather than the politicizing of this stuff, is — what is the evidence around what the best solutions are? The evidence says to me, as an engineer and a climate scientist, that carbon pricing is a smart choice.

There is another cost that I think is important to try to look at, and that is the cost of not addressing the situation. If you don't address the situation, where do you go? For example, if you leave yourself in harm's way, then those costs — like the Ross River School continuing to be on thawing permafrost — just keep going up.

The biggest cost, as I have said, in terms of risk, is wildfire. We had another year where we had more wildfires than we have had in the past, but it was not a year like British Columbia had — knock on wood, Mr. Speaker.

Those are the types of costs that we really must avoid, but there are other economic costs that I want to try to understand. For example, if we are really trying to shift our energy economy over the next dozen years, what about those sectors of the economy that don't have some incentive to move over to a low-carbon economy? They are going to get stranded with a dependency on fossil fuels. That is not healthy.

I was really glad when I saw, for example, that our municipalities would be paying a price on carbon and rebated a price on carbon because what that will do is it will give the price incentive for them to try to reduce their emissions. That will leave them better situated for the future to deal with the transition to a low-carbon economy. There are lots of ideas out there. A price on carbon is a market-wide solution. It is a non-regulatory solution. It is so strange to me to hear from the provinces across this country that are on the right side of the political spectrum say: "We are going to do it through regulations." Well, Mr. Speaker, regulations are like adding red tape to each of these sectors. It is not an efficient way to get at it.

Here is the difference — and what I would love to have in debate in this Legislature today, although the Official Opposition is declining to share their voice about this important issue — all right — that is fine — but from my perspective, there is a difference in how we approach these things.

Let me wrap up, Mr. Speaker. Just a week or several days before the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change came out with its report on the need to step up further on this issue, the Nobel Prize was awarded on economics, and it was awarded to Dr. William Nordhaus. That award went to him because of his work on transitioning an economy to a low-carbon economy, and he stated that the most efficient and effective remedy for the problems caused by greenhouse gas emissions is through carbon taxes. This makes carbon pricing not only evidence-based but now Nobel-Prize-winning. That is why I think it is a strong idea and why I am up. I appreciate the Premier when he talks about making sure that we are on the right side of history.

I will finish by talking about one other polluter-pay system. Carbon pricing is effectively a polluter-pay system. It just puts a price into the economy on this negative, this bad. It allows us to send a price signal throughout the economy, and that is through designated materials regulations.

We put a price up front on e-waste. That came in on October 1. It happens that I was doing a tour of the Southern Lakes dumps. I started that tour before that new policy had come into place and I finished it up after that policy had come into place, and I saw the difference it made. From the first landfill that I went to and the second one and the third one where I had gone before that policy came into place, I was picking up e-waste everywhere. It was spilling out everywhere. I was trying to help out at those landfills to try to consolidate it to keep it clean. Then I saw those landfills after that policy came into place, and it is transformational.

I think it is a strong tool to go for a polluter-pay system and a great example of how we can coordinate our economy and our environment at the same time.

Ms. White: I rise today to talk about Motion No. 340. It has already been mentioned that it's very similar to one that was debated on March 21 of this year. One of the things I highlighted in March of this year, which the Minister of Community Services just reiterated, was the importance of measurements. I don't disagree with the previous climate change action plan because it was really hard to measure, and that's what the Auditor General said. What I did highlight in the spring is that I was concerned, as we create a new strategy — let's say that the strategy is created in 2019. Then it takes time to implement that strategy and then it takes time to measure whether or not that strategy was successful.

My concern was: What happens between now and, let's say, 2020 or 2021? How do we measure the advancements of Yukon government, or the Yukon Territory as a whole, in our desire to combat climate change?

It's really interesting, when we look at this motion, that we talk about energy. We don't talk about green energy; we

just talk about energy. The Minister of Community Services also mentioned that — it's true — we use a lot of hydro in the territory, but things are changing. Today, for example, we are producing 37.68 megawatts of hydroelectricity, but we are using 8.21 megawatts of thermal generation. It is October 24 and it's not cold yet. We haven't reached the double digits in the minuses, and we are using thermal sources to create energy. That's a concern, because we used to be able to say — well, we didn't used to say it, just for clarification. The previous government used to always talk about how good we are at energy. I was always, like — well, hydro generation. We're pretty good at hydro generation. We used to say 99-percent renewable, but that's disingenuous. The Minister of Community Services again highlighted some of those concerns when we talk about transportation and home heating.

We have seen some phenomenal advances. When you look at the Teslin Tlingit Council and you look at the district biomass they're going to use with wood waste — phenomenal.

If you look at the Kluane First Nation in Burwash Landing — we're talking about the wind project, we can talk about how their government buildings have solar installations and we can talk about how they've experimented with district heating through biomass and through less high-tech systems than are being proposed in Teslin.

When we look at this motion, it talks about the development of a climate change, energy and green economy strategy, and I appreciate that. We highlighted the issues — and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has echoed that concern — when natural gas was in the independent power production policy and how that was removed, because if we're talking about greening our economy and greening our energy sector, we need to talk about doing that in a renewable fashion.

The one big concern I have with this motion, especially if we're going to take it out to public consultation — and we're going to talk about that — is why, when we talk about energy, we're not talking about green energy. Why aren't we talking about how we're going to move forward in greening that energy production? Just that alone in this motion, it makes me wonder, because, like I said, right now in Yukon, we're using thermal for energy — October 24. It's not cold yet.

We have lots of new construction that is turning over to baseboard heating. To be perfectly frank, baseboard heating — in terms of electricity consumption — isn't the most effective home heating. It is more effective because of the insulation values that we have, but it's not the most effective use of electricity.

In my desire that we have that gambit about our responsibility toward climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, I have an amendment to Motion No. 340.

Amendment proposed

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I move:

THAT Motion No. 340 be amended by adding the word “green” before “energy”.

Speaker: I have a question for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, which I am sure she anticipates. The word “energy” appears twice in Motion No. 340. Is it her intention that “green” be added in front of both of the mentions of “energy”?

Ms. White: Just by looking across at my colleague, the suggestion is that we put it in front of the second “energy” and not the first. I do apologize for missing the fact that the word “energy” appears twice in the original motion.

Speaker: Based on what I understand the Member for Takhini-Kopper King's intentions were with respect to the proposed amendment, the orderly construction of the proposed amendment would be:

THAT Motion No. 340 be amended by inserting the word “green” between the words “climate” and “energy”.

Is there debate on the proposed amendment?

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the collaboration with the government members. My effort in inserting the word “green” is just with the intention that, when we talk about energy, we need to be looking at alternative sources. We need to stop looking at the energy sources of the past. We need to be done with fossil fuels — with coal and the like — and we need to be looking toward a renewable future. There are lots of examples around the territory, whether we are talking about biomass, gasification, hydro, solar or any of those options. My intent of adding the word “green” is just that we try to make sure that our focus is on the future and not on the past.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just speak briefly. I appreciate the amendment and the principle that it is trying to raise. It has a little bit to do with the forward-looking nature, and I completely support this notion of the forward-looking nature being toward green energy. The thing that I want to say, though, is that, as we do this work, I fully anticipate that the whole notion of trying to coordinate it is that we take a good look at what is here now as well. Even though there is existing energy use around the territory — we have talked about it here in this House — we need to grapple with it in order to understand the challenge that we are trying to get to.

I support the amendment as it stands, but that won't stop the need to ensure that we assess where we are today with respect to energy and the demands that we have.

Ms. Hanson: I just want to thank my colleague for making this amendment. To the minister's comments across the way, the reason why it is so very important that we keep the focus on developing a green energy future for this Yukon is because of the past — the recent past and the current activities.

We all know that there are many people — and we have not seen this government, despite its claims to a coordinated approach around the serious impacts of climate change, drop

their emphasis on fossil fuels. We have not seen them say that it is not what they're going to focus on in terms of development for the future. We do know that there are, under the aegis of various development corporations including the Yukon Development Corporation, presentations that have been made by territory-wide bodies over the last couple of years that I have attended where there are long-term plans for the development of fossil fuel sources in this territory. There are proponents in this territory who will argue strenuously to this government that there should be development of local fossil fuel resources in the immediate and the long term. We saw at the presentation at the Opportunities North conference yesterday several proponents from one major transnational that is looking at establishing LNG transport systems in the Yukon to complement other ones that already exist here.

Either the emphasis of this government in a coordinated way is going to be on green energy or it's going to be on talking about moving toward a green future, at the same time continuing the practice of other governments across this country, which is to continue to subsidize fossil fuels, which, in fact, would be quite contrary to the recommendations set out very clearly in the government's own Financial Advisory Panel that we have spoken to numerous times. When the minister talks about carbon pricing, they make it very clear that the current forms of subsidizing that go on for the fossil fuel industry in the territory make no economic sense, so it's not an economic argument. They're saying, Mr. Speaker, that if you want to make an argument for it then you're going to have to look at making a subsidy — a direct cash transfer — to those industries. That will run counter to what I'm hearing from the minister opposite and his colleagues with respect to developing a green future to address climate change and to address greenhouse gas emissions, as he mentioned, from the transport sector in particular.

We understand that the government has already done its work on this and, as we heard from the minister and from the mover of the motion, this motion has been brought forward to tell us about it — that's great — but we want to ensure that there is an emphasis on green energy going forward.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors outside of the time provided for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would just like to welcome Mr. Roger Epp who is here with us here today from the University of Alberta, attending the Opportunities North conference. He works with the northern partnership and plays an integral role in the Opportunities North conference.

Ms. Hanson: I also acknowledge Dr. Epp. Before the minister opposite got to it, I got carried away with the response to the motion. I just want to say that Dr. Epp was really well-respected and admired when he was at Augustana University Campus in Camrose.

My daughter Sarah Mowat attended that campus and spoke very highly of Dr. Epp. It is good to see him here, and I understand that he was at Opportunities North as well.

Applause

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am eager to speak to it. I just want to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. When we get back to our original motion, there are certainly some tips that have come to mind in the role that were highlighted by the member concerning the 2008 energy strategy. We had some good questions, I believe, last spring, if not before that, that certainly caught me as we talked about certain fuel sources — things that we need to look at as we revisit our energy future.

Once again, I want to say and commit to the fact that when we look at our new sources of energy — mid-term and long-term — and I will touch on timelines there — I appreciate the comments from the Third Party in the sense that we need to be focused on a green energy future. We are committed to that and we will highlight some programs.

I think it was a little unfair for the Leader of the Third Party to touch on the fact that maybe it is mostly talking points. We will identify — it was my talking points — that we haven't fulfilled our work and that it has mostly been talk and not walk, but we will go through a series of things. Actually, some of the key achievements, I think, were highlighted by the member's associate when we talked about biomass in Teslin and some of those other projects that are being highlighted. We have been staying behind those groups, making sure that there is appropriate funding, helping attend conferences and making sure they have the right expertise in play.

I will just say that we do understand that, when you come into this job, there are some other members of the House who want to have the cleanest energy sources possible, but there is a reality and you can't just turn a switch to go from where we are today. You can put a plan in place. You can put the proper regulation in place. You can have tools such as independent power production. You can continue to look at a variety of different ways to, over time, get there, but this year — I'm talking this year or next year — we are going to move on adding new infrastructure in place. We will have our IPP in place in the fall or at the end of this calendar year, and we are going to be able to make sure that in areas such as Kluane or Old Crow we continue to divert large amounts of diesel and move toward a greener economy.

This winter, we will ensure that we have backup and it is thermal — not being used — but if we get to a point in an N-1 scenario, meaning something happens to our largest piece of infrastructure, such as the Aishihik dam, we have an obligation to have a backup in place and be able to turn that on so that we can keep Yukoners safe and warm.

Also, I think that there was a great point made — where we are in our calendar year or in our seasons and understanding how we make sure that we go to a greener

portfolio as we move through and still have a strong economy. That's always a challenge to wrangle with.

When we talk to our community, the comment was made that this works, but we're going out to have very broad conversations with our many individuals in the sense of First Nation governments and municipal governments. We've talked to some individuals to date and there has been feedback. When we go out, we'll talk about climate change and energy. That doesn't disparage the fact that we still have a commitment. I know that the Third Party will keep us on task and if we stray from that, they will let Yukoners know. I think Yukoners will be the judge of how we work together. Our teams at Yukon Energy, Yukon Development Corporation and Energy, Mines and Resources — I have to say — have been working extremely well together.

There was a comment made that there has been a lack of coordination. I think there has been great coordination. Speak to Kluane First Nation, speak to Teslin or others and ask if there has been good coordination between Energy, Mines and Resources, Dr. Michael Ross, through to Yukon College and others. What we continue to hear is that they're working well together.

If there's something that I have not been made aware of and the Leader of the Third Party would like to highlight something that I should look into — that there has been a lack of those energy minds paddling in the same direction — please let me know and I will look into it and ensure that we are coordinated. What I have heard and continue to do is commend all of those individuals as they are committed to this. Although our conversations publicly may say "energy" broadly — so we're getting feedback — that doesn't mean that there is any lack of commitment here.

I appreciate the amendment from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Amendment to Motion No. 340 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 340 as amended:

THAT this House supports the development of a climate change, green energy and green economy strategy that sets out a coordinated approach to climate, energy and economic planning.

I would first like to start by highlighting the definition of green economy: It is an economic system that achieves growth and development while ensuring the sustainable management of natural assets. A green economy focuses on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, increases the energy and resource intensity of economic activities and maximizes resiliency to climate change.

One of the pillars from our Liberal government's campaign was a sustainable environment. Under this pillar, we

highlighted a number of commitments which fed into a green economy. We committed to updating the Yukon's climate change and action plan and energy strategy.

We committed to working with Yukon's mining industry to establish strong environmental stewardship. We also committed to diversifying our economy. To diversify Yukon's economy we will need more energy than we currently have.

Our government is committed to promoting and developing energy policies, initiatives and programs that source future needs from renewable technologies. Some of this work is underway.

Through consultation with businesses, the Yukon public and stakeholders, including First Nations, municipalities and organizations, we will take into consideration the issues at hand and the actions that are important in the development of this new strategy. We will build a plan that reflects the needs of Yukoners and build a path toward a sustainable, environmentally responsible and prosperous future for our territory.

Through the Yukon Development Corporation, our government launched the innovative renewable energy initiative. This fund is \$1.5 million annually and supports small-scale renewable energy projects. To date, we have supported — we just touched on some of the projects in Carcross, Kluane, Old Crow, Teslin, Whitehorse and Dawson City. The majority of these projects are in partnership with First Nations and communities.

As a result of this fund, we are reducing community reliance on diesel. The partnership with Vuntut Gwitchin in Old Crow will build a 940-kilowatt solar array and will reduce the consumption of diesel fuel by over 15 percent. This equates to about 189,000 litres of fuel being flown into Old Crow. Not only that, the timeline that the community has shared with us is that they would like to see this project up and running next summer. Also — and my colleague from Old Crow could correct me — this will be the first time since those installations, unless there has been a problem, where the actual diesel will be powered down and the community will be running on solar.

In addition, we're replacing current street light bulbs with high-efficiency LED bulbs, which may seem like a small undertaking, but this will actually save an additional 4,600 litres of diesel fuel having to be flown in and the cost of transportation. The resulting reduction in carbon footprint for Old Crow and the Yukon is significant when you further consider the fly-in fuel to the community.

Through the Yukon Development Corporation, our staff is planning community visits across the territory to engage with people on our innovative renewable energy initiative. There are many communities that have reached out to us and want to continue to do it, not just some of our larger communities, but also communities to our west like Klukshu or Aishihik where, at times of the year, this could be advantageous, and continuing up into areas outside of Beaver Creek and southeast Yukon — all really making sure that we can look at where we can have some real impact. During these

visits, it is our hope that more communities will work with our officials to identify opportunities that fit their needs.

The shift in location for the Yukon Development Corporation into northern innovation is also part of the work in building a green economy. There are many economic and employment growth opportunities for Yukon within the green economy. It is our hope that, by making this shift, the corporation will gain more public exposure and conversations will be had and natural relationships will be built between the Cold Climate Innovation centre and local innovators and businesses.

In support of Yukon's development of a cold climate change energy and green economy strategy, the Department of Economic Development is investigating the potential for local economic activities that supply green products and services that help Yukon lower carbon consumption and become more resource efficient.

We are looking to identify the economic contribution and potential of green sectors in Yukon's economy. Already, there is the Solvest team that continues to expand its workforce. One of the team moved back to the Yukon. It is very interesting when you think about it. One of the team individuals has a family history of being very successful in the mining sector and in the prospecting sector, but now this next generation family member is working with us on a number of projects, working with Yukoners on a number of projects and building a workforce. We are seeing that expansion and diversification of the economy really focused around this green economy.

Some of these other areas would include: green building materials and approaches; sustainable agriculture and forestry; waste management and recycling; sustainable tourism; sustainable resource extraction; green transportation; and the knowledge sector, including education and research. Through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, we partner with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Ross River Dena Council to drill deep monitoring wells in the Takhini Hot Springs and Ross River areas to measure ground temperatures and to determine the potential for geothermal resources. That is work that is ongoing. We will have to get that data back and see what those opportunities are.

If you look at the 2008 strategy, you will see that one of the commitments — I believe it was work that was done under the Member for Lake Laberge — talked about regulation and framework around geothermal. I think there is only one other jurisdiction so far in the country — I might be incorrect, but there are very few, if any, that have put that framework in place. Because you are dealing with water, of course, there are lots of sensitivities around it. We will wait and see what the data says, but it is kind of an outward-looking work that we will see. At this point, of course, IPP is where our team is really focused.

There has been a strong interest in biomass over the past two years. The Yukon government has helped the Teslin Tlingit Council to install 10 biomass boilers as a district heating system for 13 commercial buildings owned by the First Nation. There are now three full-time and 15 part-time

employees working to run this district heating system. Projects such as this have a large economic impact on small communities. It allows communities to be self-sustainable. The Yukon government has secured \$945,000 as well from the Indigenous Forestry Initiative through NRCan to support continued First Nation-led biomass projects. This year, we are supporting five biomass projects as well. To highlight a few: Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is looking at the feasibility of developing a district heating system in the Tr'ondëk subdivision; Kwanlin Dün First Nation is looking into the viability of installing a biomass heating system in the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre; and Liard First Nation is working on a strategic plan for the development of a biomass economy in Watson Lake. We have had dialogue, and I think that this is dialogue that will have to continue with the municipal government and the new mayor in Watson Lake.

I need to get some input from the Member for Watson Lake. Last year — certainly this summer — must have been a scary time, and so what are some of the mitigation strategies that have to be looked at or want to be looked at? I know that Liard First Nation has reached out to us a bit about how aggressively we should look at dealing with preparing for another significant fire season that could occur. Biomass fits into that — if you start to do significant mitigation. What would you do with that fuel source — with that fibre?

The funding agreement that we have signed with NRCan enables the Yukon government to continue to offer capacity development services to First Nations in the form of four pillars or studies per year and operationalizes six small biomass systems.

Another step we are taking is to create a climate well suited to support a green economy in updating the independent power production policy, as I spoke about last week and earlier today in a ministerial statement. We have removed liquefied natural gas as a qualifying energy source to ensure that our only renewable sources will be eligible for generating electricity.

We are moving toward implementation and we anticipate this will be completed by the end of the calendar year. Taking ownership of energy generation and creating local jobs are priorities for some Yukon communities, and we are absolutely going to facilitate this.

This is just some of the work that we're undertaking. Further work will be guided by the input received during the engagement process for the development of the new 10-year strategy.

We believe that climate change, energy and the economy are all interconnected. Our economy relies on energy. The kinds of energy we use affect climate change and the impacts of climate change affect our energy supply and our economy, and economic decisions influence how much and what kinds of energy we use and how resilient we are to the impacts of climate change.

By addressing all three together, Yukon can effectively respond to rapid changes taking place in our territory. Taking action on climate change and energy will help to build a diverse and green economy, which we're already seeing play

out, and that creates economic growth with as little environmental impact as possible.

Yukon businesses will see new opportunities in areas like renewable energy and energy efficiency. The knowledge economy will grow as we innovate solutions to local and global challenges. All Yukon businesses will benefit from initiatives that use energy and other resources. I believe that this is something that all Members of the Legislative Assembly can stand behind.

Once again, I want to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward the amendment. I believe it is time. To be fair, I think the 2008 document that was signed off by the Member for Lake Laberge does touch upon a number of items, some that haven't been completed but, to be fair, the timeline on some of those areas was to 2020.

Sincerely, I hope this adds a little bit of comfort to the Leader of the Third Party when we talk about some of the initiatives. In this role, I am trying to ensure that I always remember that there are a lot of different perspectives.

The Leader of the Third Party said before — and it was the first piece of advice I got — to remember that, when you are sitting in a room, there are lots of individuals in a room — more who probably disagreed with part of your perspective than those who agreed with it.

There has been some great input from bright minds in the Yukon concerning storage. Earlier this afternoon, I was happy to sign off on some of our key analysts from Yukon Development Corporation going to a premier energy storage conference in San Francisco. We have some brilliant individuals in the Yukon who have a lot of different areas of experience. We are respecting that. They want to come to the table and be part of the conversation and the solutions, so that is underway. It is sort of a loose group of very bright individuals who have come together and they continue to work. We are funding some platforms for them to talk about storage because storage is such an important part of having a consistent renewable energy source.

I am excited for our team at Yukon Development Corporation to get out and have broad discussions. I think we have a lot of things that have played out and I think that we have to share those stories. I hope that, over the next year, the Assembly — and especially the Leader of the Third Party — doesn't get frustrated with me. I think that some of the questions have really led to the fact — requesting information. Are you actually going out and doing stuff? What we have to do better is — and we know that, and the Member for Whitehorse Centre has highlighted that — we feel we haven't been able to tell our story as well as we should. We are going to do that over the next year. We are going to talk about all the things that our teams have been working on and how the IPP plays a role in that. We are going to be discussing how we talk about our retrofit. We are going to be able to come to the Assembly and give updates about our interaction in our new ecosystem when we capitalize through the Arctic energy fund. I look forward to those, and I look forward to unanimous support on this amended motion.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion as amended?

If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Adel: I'm encouraged today by the comments coming from across the floor, from all members of this House. I think it is good to see that type of cooperation — the amendments that have done nothing but strengthen this motion. I am also pleased that my colleague, the Minister of Community Services, our in-house expert on climate change and so on, added an awful lot to this as well, and to the other speakers, thank you.

I think it is important that we, as a government, act now while we are developing this coordinated approach. To the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and to her question about how long it is going to take, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources also indicated that this is going to be moving along quite quickly and that is important.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to close on a point. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee working with the Auditor General of Canada, we have to understand and make it clear on a point made by the Member for Copperbelt South. When the Auditor General does a performance audit, it not only highlights the weaknesses but the strengths. I would like to quote from the Auditor General. The Auditor General's report in 2017 said the following: "Overall, we found that the Government of Yukon created a strategy, an action plan, and two progress reports to respond to climate change. In developing these items, the government took good first steps toward providing leadership and direction for responding to climate change."

We hope to build on that good work. We hope to make it better. We're going to have measurables in there. We're going to show Yukoners that the government, moving forward, takes ideas where they come from regardless, and we improve on them, and that's what we're going to try to do.

One other thing that I would like to assure the Member for Copperbelt South of is that, when I do stub my toe, his name or his party affiliation is the last thing that comes to my mind.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the main motion as amended?

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Member: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Motion No. 340, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 319 — adjourned debate

Clerk: Motion No. 319, standing in the name of Mr. Gallina; adjourned debate, Mr. Cathers.

Speaker: Member for Lake Laberge, you have 14 minutes and 57 seconds.

Mr. Cathers: In rising to speak to this motion again here this afternoon and resuming debate from when it was previously brought forward, I would note that our caucus is generally supportive of the concept of government exploring the opportunity for the private sector taking the lead in developing areas for residential building lots. It is an area where there are some challenges too, but there is also potential for the Yukon government to be able to facilitate the same type of moves over time as has happened in a number of the provinces where it is the private sector, rather than government, which bears most of the cost and the risk of doing development. The benefit to the private sector is that it not only grows the private sector, but it allows them to, while taking the risks, also take the benefits from development.

I want to acknowledge the good work that is done by the Yukon government staff in the area of land development. I know this is an area with many complexities and challenges in dealing with moving projects forward, including — as it relates to the City of Whitehorse — dealing with the municipal government around their standards and requirements. For the many hours of work and many details that go into making a successful project, I would just like to thank them for their efforts over the many decades when the Yukon government has been the lead in the development of most land projects.

One thing that I think a lot of people are not aware of is that there has been significant private sector development, or individual development, of land within the Yukon. I'm in the situation as an MLA of having the uncommon structure where most of my riding — most of the houses and the properties, both agricultural and residential, which were developed within the boundaries of the Lake Laberge area — was developed by individuals rather than by government. There has been government development within the Hidden Valley and MacPherson area, as well as the development of Pilot

Mountain, which was a government project. There are agricultural lots off the Hot Springs Road that were government developed, but the majority of properties and the majority of homes were actually developed either through spot land application or subdivision over a period of years. In total, the population of the Lake Laberge area is some 1,500 adults.

So it is a large community predominantly developed through individual initiative and opportunity, but there certainly is a potential role to expand that and allow Yukon developers to move forward multiple lot developments and, again, take on more opportunities and more risk in that area than has happened in the past. A key factor and key question from the Yukon Party Official Opposition's perspective is that we want to see this as an opportunity for Yukon companies, Yukon businesses — both small and large — and not setting it up in a way where it is simply outsourcing an opportunity to non-Yukon-based companies.

We have also seen the situation with a number of Yukoners still remembering and having a bad taste in their mouth from what happened with Yukon Zinc, where a corporation, although registered in Canada, was ultimately owned by the Government of China and, while they did so in a legal manner, they did leave unpaid bills with many Yukoners who were not paid for their services when that company went into bankruptcy protection. One of the last things that I would want to see is for a foreign government, particularly one with a substandard human rights record, to have the opportunity through this initiative to be the developer. Whether they left Yukoners on the hook for unpaid bills or did not, it is not the type of opportunity that I think would be beneficial in the Yukon. We want to see this targeted to encouraging and providing the opportunity for Yukon companies, both large and small, to invest in this area and to take on a greater role in the development of multiple lot projects and not see this as something that is overtaken by Outside companies or foreign-owned entities. With that in mind, I will move what I hope would be a friendly amendment to Motion No. 319.

Amendment proposed

Mr. Cathers: I move:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by adding the words "to Yukon developers" after the words "selling land".

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Hutton): The amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by adding the words "to Yukon developers" after the words "selling land".

The amended motion would then read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land to Yukon developers to allow for the private development of residential building lots.

Mr. Cathers: In speaking to the amendment, I would just note and give as an example to members the point that I'm making about the importance of structuring this in a way

so that it doesn't simply become an opportunity for large Outside companies, or companies that are perhaps even owned and controlled by a foreign government, to develop Yukon land.

The situation that occurred — and I am going to briefly quote from a *Financial Post* article, which is available online, that was originally published on February 23, 2018. For members, the title of the article was: "The Chinese government now controls the biggest retirement home chain in B.C." In short, what the article refers to is that, due to some restructuring changes that a company by the name of Anbang Insurance — which is the largest owner of retirement homes in British Columbia, according to the *Financial Post* — is ultimately owned by the Chinese government and was taken over by it.

At the time, there were concerns expressed by a number of Members of Parliament regarding this structure, with one Member of Parliament, Mark Strahl, asking the question about whether seniors were going to be in a situation where, to quote him: "Are seniors about to find out that their landlord is actually the People's Republic of China?"

I note that this is not an identical area. I am simply flagging this as an area where we generally support the intent of this motion. The reason for moving this amendment is that we want to see the government structured in the right way so that this opportunity for the private sector is focused on providing opportunity for Yukon companies and Yukon citizens, not simply making opportunities available to others and certainly not entering a situation where Yukoners, in fact, provide the opportunity to Outside companies and are left holding the bag for bills that have not been paid to them and without compensation for their services, and, at the end of the day, although a company may have complied with the law, they use it in a way to avoid providing benefit to Yukon citizens in the process.

With that, I hope the government will accept this — what we intend to be a friendly amendment — and I note that my colleagues and I do support the general intent of this, just as long as it is done in the right manner: to provide opportunity to Yukoners.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will begin by saying thank you to the member opposite. If it is intended to be a friendly amendment, I really encourage that — any time in the past two weeks while this motion has been there before us — please, by all means, bring the friendly amendment over so we can have a conversation.

There are some concerns that we have with it. First of all, I think we had always imagined that we would use our existing procurement practices that I think have been well vetted. They work, for example, under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*. When the member spoke about China — if you are not the Yukon, you are China — well, no, there are lots of Canadian companies that might be interested in applying, and we have laws that we need to abide by. I support Yukon companies to come forward. They are certainly not prohibited under the original wording of the act.

The amendment is not required to provide that opportunity for them.

The thing that I want to talk about is that this is an investigation, and we are looking to use this opportunity to assess whether this is a solid approach. I said before, when I rose to speak to this motion two weeks ago, that the notion we have is that we must keep going with the current system to ensure that an adequate supply of lots is provided for the territory because without it, we know that, as a jurisdiction of our size, it would put undue pressure on housing prices. Therefore, this is an investigation, not a wholesale switchover. I have to check my recollection, but when we spoke to the other amendment that was brought forward to this motion, I was not in support.

There was a reference that the Member for Lake Laberge made talking about a chain of homes. This is not about homes. This is about lots and lot development. We're looking for the private sector to enter and to be involved. We will use all of the tools that we have at our disposal under our existing procurement systems in order to, when we work with the private sector, explore this notion and to investigate it.

If there is an ability to use one of the exemptions under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*, then I would be very excited to see that considered. However, my understanding from the Minister of Highways and Public Works is that there is already a process that has been developed under that agreement about how those exemptions should be assessed and determined. If this did turn out to be one of those opportunities, then I would look forward to that.

In conclusion, I don't support the amendment because we're concerned that it would contravene our existing trade agreements.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to touch upon a few items here and examples that were put forward to support the amendment by the Member for Lake Laberge. First of all, the concept of land development and private land development in the Yukon — correct. There have been examples of this previously done within the City of Whitehorse primarily, as the member touched upon, in the surrounding areas — country residential development.

This is something that, with my Economic Development hat and working with Energy, Mines and Resources and with Community Services — let's just say first that there are two drivers that we would have to look at. One is getting out of the business of doing business. We know that primarily the work is always completed on this land development by the Yukon private sector. We also know that we're in a position where we need to be putting out an appropriate number of lots and we need to do it in an efficient manner. I think that's the value — to ensure that Yukon companies have these opportunities.

In my interaction with the Yukon construction industry and businesses, there is interest to do this and that's where we want to see the work done.

We want to see companies. The hang-up becomes — and is primarily the reason why we have seen the Yukon government financially backstop and carry a large portion of

the financial burden from the beginning phase of a development until it actually goes to market. Within that period of time, you have a lot of money in the ground and also going into infrastructure before you can reap any of the revenue back. Then, of course, there's the actual margin in any profit.

The companies I have spoken to — whether they're engineering firms or they move dirt or they have gone into design work — when you talk to them, they know they're going to have to have a collaboration, which I think is great. The other thing we're going to have to do, if through investigation this looks like an opportunity, is find pieces of land that are not of large magnitude so that local companies can do this work. They can build their expertise in going right from raw land to street lights and are in a position — for many of them, it will be new. If the work is in Whitehorse, in Dawson City or in Watson Lake, they have to work with the municipality. The municipality inevitably controls what happens with the principles of design and zoning through the official community plan.

You want to be able to support people to do that. Some of the work that was done before was just a few lots. What we'll be doing is listening to the local business sector to understand what they feel the available capacity is and what financial threshold they think they could carry. That's really what we're looking at here.

The amendment — I'll go back to a few things. I believe the Yukon Zinc example — and I don't mean to be disrespectful. I don't know if it's applicable to this. We're not talking about a mining sector. If we were talking about having relationships concerning claims, the Member for Lake Laberge — and this idea of the Chinese investment in Yukon Zinc, I know there was a massive investment by the Chinese into Chance Oil and Gas, and I think the member was Energy, Mines and Resources minister probably worked very closely with previous oil and gas developers. I never heard that there were any issues from that investment into Nexen in play here, and I think there was a comfort at that point with negotiating and providing the oil and gas claim. It's new to hear that there's a concern.

I also agree with the Minister of Community Services. We're not talking about the acquisition of —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: For the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to be imagining conduct that, by the way, didn't occur on the part of another member — in this case, myself — with a company and suggesting negotiations were ongoing, et cetera, and then putting it on the record as fact would seem to be contrary to the Standing Orders to come up with a history that the member knows is a fictional and imaginary account. I would ask you to have him return to the main topic.

Deputy Speaker: Ms. McPhee, on the point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't see this as a point of order. What the member was speaking of is his surmising of a situation. He is clearly allowed to comment on his view of the situation and, as a result, I don't see the point of order at all that is being raised by the Member for Lake Laberge.

Deputy Speaker's ruling

Deputy Speaker: I will rule that there is no point of order on this. It is a dispute among members.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I really was not trying to make any inappropriate comment. I was just identifying the fact that there was a company in the Yukon after Yukon Zinc that was financed largely through Chinese money through their affiliation with Nexen. There were rights that were provided through the Yukon government's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources that were very similar to mining rights. Of course, that investment has now been sold off, and it no longer exists. That is so similar, and I was just mentioning the fact that there was no concern then.

As for purchasing an asset, it is a conversation that comes up quite a bit in Canada. We have seen large acquisition potential, whether it is potash or telecommunications, where the Canadian government has felt that based on national security issues it is something that we should take into consideration. It is also something that happens from time to time in the United States. I don't know if it was in the *Financial Post* that I read it or in *The Globe and Mail*, but I do remember the conversation — or just the sensitivity — toward such a large asset being purchased.

Let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the idea is to ensure that there is opportunity for the complete project in the Yukon to be completed by Yukon companies. As the Minister of Community Services said, when you have an amendment like this on the fly, there is the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*, and there are situations where Yukon companies may step into place and say that we might have an engineering company or we might have a company with a long history in the Yukon, but it has an office in Kelowna or Calgary. We may have a First Nation government that has partnered with someone, so what does a "Yukon developer" really mean? Instead of getting into the stickiness — because we don't have true clarity other than who can partner or if somebody is allowed to access some of the financing with a partner in place — I will say that I do respect the principle of the amendment, which is to ensure that Yukon companies get the opportunity.

I would say that, as the member said, there are these scenarios where there is a bad history. I think the real stinging history is things like — I am not here to judge it, I would say, but the sensitivity that probably the members opposite had to deal with around firms like PCL coming in and doing massive builds.

I think PCL has been a great community contributor and partner. We see them do a lot of good corporate social

responsibility, but I think, at least from the sidelines, we have been able to watch what happens when you take a huge development and local contractors or developers — we'll call them contractors — are not a part of that, whether a school or the long-term care facility. I think we have learned — at least on this side of the floor we learned — that it does not play well within the construction industry to see that happen. We would be striving within the legal parameters through trade agreements to ensure that this is really about building our capacity locally and economic impacts to Yukoners.

I will leave it at that on the amendment, but I appreciate the principles and some of the innate values behind it, but as it is written, it just lacks a bit of clarity and we didn't have a chance to discuss what was really driving it.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate the motion brought forward by the Member for Porter Creek Centre as well as the amendment that we're talking about now brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Lake Laberge. Obviously the signals from across the floor are that they won't be supporting this amendment, which was to add the words "to Yukon developers" after the words "selling land". I think that it's obviously disappointing for us that the government won't do that.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources highlighted a number of ways that this could be conducted so that Yukon companies would be able to compete on a level playing field. The Minister of Community Services mentioned the CFTA exemptions and that there is now a process in place from the Minister of Highways and Public Works so we look forward to exploring that with him later on in this Fall Sitting.

That said, by putting in "selling land to Yukon developers", I think it sends a signal that we want to structure these land parcels in such a way that allows these Yukon developers to be competitive on it. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources mentioned PCL and thought that would be a bone of contention with us, but obviously they — I was not able to attend the opening of the Whistle Bend Place, but saw social media pictures of the Premier cutting the ribbon and eating cake at that event so they're obviously very proud of the facility that PCL built here.

I just have to remind the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that the Carmacks rec centre went to a firm from I think southern Ontario and that was done under their watch — no chance at all for the government to blame the Yukon Party for that one. The francophone school — two of the three bidders who are under consideration are Outside firms so we will see where that ends up but again, the criticism that gets levelled from members opposite is certainly wearing thin and it's not playing out for them with the contracts and the projects that are being put forward by them.

What we felt with this was that it was an opportunity for us as a House to put forward a motion here today that said that we want to support local companies and that we want to support Yukon developers. Unfortunately, it sounds like the government will be voting against that amendment. Again, it's too bad. It is eerily similar to what we heard recently with the

architectural SOA and the direct award of a \$1-million contract to an NWT firm by the Minister of Highways and Public Works where, very similarly, the government seems to be making business decisions on behalf of Yukon companies. We're disappointed with that.

We saw an opportunity here to bring forward what we felt was a friendly amendment to send a signal that we want Yukon companies to develop this land, but unfortunately, it doesn't sound like the government will support that.

Ms. McLeod: I just want to touch on something that the Minister of Economic Development mentioned. He said that he likes to get out of the business of doing business. We can see that isn't necessarily the case. We saw them expand into government-run cannabis, so we do question their commitment to this. They have also grown government by about 500 FTEs. This government's commitment to expanding the private sector is questionable and it is disappointing that they wouldn't support today's amendment.

We're talking about supporting local developers. That should be the easiest thing in the world for them to agree to — supporting local developers. Unfortunately, it looks like this government is going to vote against supporting local developers, voting against growing the local economy and that is disappointing. It makes us wonder if maybe the Liberals have made some promises to developers out east already. To quote the Minister of Community Services: "Curiouser and curiouser".

I'll move on. I think it would be great to support local developers in Yukon and especially in the communities, but again, perhaps we should not be surprised that this government is not too interested in supporting local developers.

Let's not forget that, as my colleague has mentioned, they sole-sourced a \$1-million contract to a Northwest Territories company earlier this year. When they got caught, the Minister of Highways and Public Works threw his public servants under the bus.

I hope the Liberals see the light. I hope that they do see why it is important to support local developers and not just southern developers or eastern Canadian developers. There are a lot of great local innovative ideas right here. I'm sure that there are also First Nation development corporations who would have some ideas on how they would like to get involved as well.

With that, I hope that the Liberals decide to actually start supporting local developers.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think we have to get on the record that this government does, of course, support local. We have a growing track record of our support for local industry throughout the two-year mandate of this government. That should not be disparaged in any way.

We have started a number of procurement improvements. I have spoken about them throughout this session, about how we are actually supporting and putting in measures to make sure that local contractors benefit from procurement in the

territory. We have a five-year capital plan that has never existed before and actually allows local contractors to plan for future jobs that they see coming down the pike. We have taken action on all 11 Procurement Advisory Panel recommendations to improve procurement. We have standard clauses in our value-driven procurements that give points for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge.

Since June 21, 2017, we have tendered 157 value-driven procurements with these mandatory clauses. This is a change from the previous government. We saw that the members opposite brought up a standing-offer agreement that hit the news quite awhile ago. We actually took action on that standing-offer agreement and it bears striking similarity to the F.H. Collins school project where nothing was done, no change in tack from a former government. This government did listen. We did change tack and we did actually move forward and got some praise from local industry for the fact that we did listen on this procurement. These are all changes in approach that Yukoners are seeing and are growing accustomed to.

There are all sorts of things that we could talk about, about supporting local. We actually tendered a medevac contract. In the past, that didn't happen, but this time, we had an open, competitive bid and a local contractor — Alkan Air — won that contract. We were very happy to see that because we believe in our local industry. We believe in their ability to compete for and win local contracts. The Member for Copperbelt South mentioned the recent French school contract. It has closed. We do have three bids on that contract and one of them is local and we will see what happens with that. I was very happy to see a local bid on that contract and I am sure that, once that resolves, we will get a good result somewhere.

We support our local industry. We support improvements that keep the money that this government spends within the local economy. Despite the assertions of the members opposite, Yukoners are beginning to appreciate and understand that.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the proposed amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Disagree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Disagree.

Mr. Gallina: Disagree.

Mr. Adel: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Disagree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Disagree.

Mr. Hutton: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are five yea, 12 nay.

Speaker: The nays have it. I declare the amendment negated.

Amendment to Motion No. 319 negated

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to speak to Motion No. 319 — that this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land and to allow for private development of residential building lots.

Earlier this month, the Yukon Bureau of Statistics released building permit statistics, and we're seeing close to a 25-percent increase in residential building permits issued this year over last year, and from January through to August.

Mr. Speaker, concerning our previous debate, I want to thank the Third Party. I want to thank the Leader of the Third Party, as well as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I know that for them, as well as for us — our commitment in investigating this type of work is to ensure that Yukon companies, which they and we support, have the opportunities to do this sort of work. I appreciate their thorough review to understand that, when something is put on the floor, you have a responsibility to understand the implications to trade agreements that you are supporting or are signatory to, as well as to ensure that you have a chance to hear from Yukon business.

The Member for Copperbelt South said that we're making decisions. No, we are absolutely not making decisions for business. We're giving businesses the opportunity to talk about what model will work for them. The Member for Watson Lake made some interesting accusations. I can say to this House that any conversations that I have had concerning these opportunities are with Yukon companies — Yukon companies that are appreciating having that conversation for the first time and having the creativity.

It is always discouraging when you see — in this particular case — the Member for Watson Lake coming to the table and dismissing and alluding to particular things that are not accurate. My question is: Why, during the time of responsibility by the opposition — if they support this — was there never the creativity to bring it forward and make sure that Yukon companies had a chance to do that work?

I am going to continue.

The increase equates to a value of about \$8.4 million. As my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, mentioned, we campaigned on working with communities to

create available and developed land banks to keep lot prices affordable. The Premier also tasked the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and me to work together to increase affordable housing options across the territory. Through the ministerial working group on housing, we are working to come up with solutions to the current demands that we are faced with when it comes to available housing.

We are exploring opportunities to increase the availability of public land in all communities to ensure a sustainable supply for residential land. One such option that we are exploring is to look at private industry to develop residential building lots. Our government is committed to finding private sector solutions to the problems we face in our territory and in our government. In other words, we are looking to get out of the business of doing business, which I have touched upon. This makes sense. It works to ensure that our economy grows, continues to diversify and is less reliant on government spending.

Land development has traditionally been executed, of course, by the Yukon government. In other jurisdictions across Canada, this is not the case. Our economy is growing and it is critical that we pursue all options available to us in getting land out for development and to support this growth. This means working with all partners through a collaborative process — First Nations, municipalities, residents and private industry.

Our conversations, whether they are with Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce — the meeting I hosted this spring where all Yukon development corporations were invited to meet with the Minister of Economic Development for us to talk about what their priorities are and where their interests lie. The conversations that we are having with the subgroup — as the agenda gets formed — of the Yukon Forum — of chiefs focusing on economic development. These are constant conversations. Besides development corporations, Yukon companies that are continuing to grow, whether they are the ones that are building hotels that we are seeing right now — with Narrow Gauge's work or with many other companies that are doing fantastic work. They have executed this work for the Yukon government — with many of the construction companies focusing on the dirt moving, but also the engineering firms that have all been a part of this. I think that there are companies that contribute a lot, and they may have a footprint somewhere else. Yukoners and Yukon companies that we are talking to — discussions this morning with the Yukon Contractors Association. Again, we hear how we have done such a poor job. That is not what the business community is saying and that is not what the contractors association is saying.

There was one incident that the opposition touched upon and we had a discussion with the community about that. I think about previous situations and a case where the minister and I spoke with — and we listened and heard from — the business community and the chambers. They quickly gathered to speak with us. We listened, and there was a decision made from that.

I will tell you that the one thing in that meeting — the first initial meeting on this standing offer. The key element that is being left out of this conversation in the Assembly today is that, other than this, you are doing a very good job on behalf of Yukon businesses; we are seeing improvement; we are seeing things that we have not seen before; we are seeing the contractors and the business sector coming in and meeting with deputy ministers to talk about our capital planning and finance. We hear all the time about the lack of interaction — and, as their capital plan gets tarnished, forgetting that part of the capital plan was built by Yukoners and Yukon companies. Once again — the politics of the Assembly.

This means that, in this potential work — is working with all partners through a collaborative process. From my time in city council, I understand what it takes to move these projects ahead. I understand the importance of supporting, and the need to support, the municipalities in their official community planning process. This lays the groundwork for development within municipalities. We need to work with our First Nations in land planning. This includes both regional and local area planning. I shared this today at our early-morning conference talk — talked about our Yukon companies — another reason — sitting at Opportunities North today and seeing this collaboration between Northwest Territories companies working with Yukon companies, companies from Edmonton — and a long-standing history of this conference.

Do I want to give an address this morning? Then we get to a place down the road where a company from the Northwest Territories wants to partner with a Yukon company and, because of that — and this motion as it was originally potentially amended — we're doing something wrong. I think we want to see that level of collaboration.

We need to work with First Nations in land planning, of course, but this is both regional and local area planning. Local area planning ensures orderly development and eliminates future land use conflicts. We are currently working to complete the plans for Marsh Lake, Tagish and Fox Lake. In May, we established a committee to assist with developing possible new zoning regulations specific to the Shallow Bay area, something that had been requested, I believe, of the Yukon Party back in 2014 by several residents of the area.

We anticipate that the collaborative planning process for Fish Lake and the Alaska Highway west will begin later this year, and we will continue to prioritize planning throughout the territory, as required. We have also reached out to affected First Nations concerning Fish Lake. They are concerned about a lot of different land uses that are happening there — reaching out to let them know that we'll be moving forward on some of that local area planning.

I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of developers, land owners and contractors from the Yukon who have heard the industry and are ready to move raw land through the development process, as is done in other jurisdictions.

Our government is investigating options and looking at potential land parcels that could be rolled out. We have seen success in Dawson City — at least one of the last private

developments — and I think we have seen it here in Whitehorse and hopefully there are other communities that are open to that.

We will do this in a fashion to build local capacity and set developers up for success to promote growth in this sector. Along with this, officials with the Yukon government are working with First Nations in the planning process in their communities. Together we are working to identify and develop land for future development.

Through this process, we are working to identify the chapter 22 opportunities that exist with the development of First Nation lands in a way that their citizens see appropriate. There are several First Nation development corporations working with governments to identify land parcels for development. Chu Níkwän Development Corporation and Champagne and Aishihik Community Corporation both have land development projects being supported through the Department of Economic Development. Our government will continue to work with others on such developments.

I also would like to clarify that, when I spoke about PCL, I was not criticizing the opposition. What I stated was that PCL, in their work, have had good corporate social responsibility. They have donated to and supported a lot of great causes in our community. In my little bit of interaction with them, they have been highly respectful and very professional. I think that the work that was completed at the Whistle Bend facility is top-notch — to me through a walk-through. That's not what I'm saying. What I stated was that the government — and I think they would be able to, being honest with themselves, would say there was criticism about that procurement. That's what I was stating, meaning that if you undertake — if you let land inside of Yukon, whether it be in one of our rural communities or in Whitehorse, and that land goes out in a manner where we're not seeing opportunities for Yukoners or partnerships with Yukon companies, whatever government does that will hear from Yukoners. The people we all represent will be the judge on that. I don't think the Member for Copperbelt South understood the comment and was confused in his response.

It is one where we can work with First Nations to foster reconciliation and advance a modern Yukon. At the same time, it will help to address the housing pressures we're experiencing as a result of the strength of our economy. We will remain open to all options as we investigate ways that we can promote private development of our residential lots, including the sale of land. I believe that all members of this House can support this objective and I thank my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek Centre, for bringing this forward.

I see the role as the Minister for Economic Development, which is the other part of this, to always be representing our Yukon companies and Yukon contractors, in a sense providing opportunities for them first and not for the jurisdictions. There is a rule of law and a structure that I have to be respectful of and so I have to take that into consideration.

Through our procurement process — our partnership with the City of Whitehorse — one of the first things that we had a chance to work on — I think we are all happy here in the Assembly to see a very large spend by the City of Whitehorse on their new build and seeing a local company build that. It is a very, very expensive build and that is great to see Ketz Construction working on that. It was great to hear Ketz say that the partnership between the City of Whitehorse and the Department of Economic Development, Yukon government, here with my colleagues, extending our program to the municipality, which was a tool in the tool box that we could use. Maybe the members opposite could speak to it. I don't know if that was ever done. They did build one structure in a different way — and to know that a Yukon company was building that magnitude and to hear the CEO of that company come to us and say it was because of the partnership.

A lot of points have been made, but a little bit of a challenge in accuracy. The Yukon Contractors Association and Yukon construction companies, just two nights ago attending a function — the biggest concern right now is a tremendous amount of work for Yukon companies. Other jurisdictions — seeing some of their economies heating up — how do we continue to have enough of a labour force? How do government, our deputy ministers and our senior people continue to listen to industry to understand how we support Yukon companies to be innovative and develop private land? That is really what today was about and it's too bad that we're going down a bunch of other roads.

Thank you to the Third Party for their support. Sorry — I know that they get frustrated sometimes when I walk down history lane, but it's hard when you get this list of items that, when you are on this record, you have to — I believe — correct.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope we can continue on with our afternoon.

Ms. Hanson: Notwithstanding the interesting debate this afternoon and previously, unfortunately the NDP will not be able to support this motion. Don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker: we are not opposed to the idea that the government would or should investigate the option for selling land to allow for private development. The Member for Porter Creek Centre, who brought this motion forward, will be aware that I have questioned the current practice largely because the current housing affordability crisis facing Yukon was triggered by the previous government's decision in 2006 to not move forward with residential land development in Whitehorse and throughout the territory. The consequences of that have been severe. Over the last number of years, the last 10 or 12 years, I have engaged in conversations with Yukoners throughout the territory, but I have never assumed that was the ultimate or the only solution, nor had I assumed that I had the right to say that was going to be the outcome.

Given the fact that the government has indicated that it's a done deal, I'm not sure why we're even debating this right now. We have suggested in the past that, if we're going to do

this, it has to be a public conversation about options to the status quo.

I just want to point out that we did agree on the points that were raised this afternoon with respect to the notion that simply calling something a Yukon corporation in the minister's office — it will be very clear that, under the Yukon corporations act, anybody can register. You don't have to be a Yukon corporation.

Our objective would be to ensure that we're encouraging partnerships with local businesses, and if there are others from elsewhere — if we're talking about scale — that can partner, that's great, but those are options. The amendment that was put forward today was really finessing the point.

Two weeks ago, my colleague tabled an amendment suggesting that a select committee study this issue. We believed it was a reasonable proposal that would have allowed all parties in the Legislative Assembly — along with expert witnesses — to share their perspective and determine what makes the most sense for Yukon and to ensure a steady supply of lots throughout the Yukon to address the anticipated growth and need throughout the Yukon, not just in Whitehorse.

I keep stressing that, because when I look around the territory and I see and I hear the notion that we're still talking about the focus in Mayo of rural residential and agricultural land when you have a massive mine being developed there with, we hope, a mine life that is going to go more than 10 years — why aren't we talking about residential development there? It is like we are grasping at trying to understand where the government is coming from in this.

After my colleague, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, tabled that amendment, in the time we were waiting for the vote on the proposed amendment, the member opposite indicated that the department had already done the research and that Cabinet was about to receive this work.

The Premier has also repeatedly announced that this government was going to proceed with land sales for private development. So why are we here in this debate? Why are we debating this motion if the government has already made up its mind on the direction to be taken?

We can't support a motion that says "we will investigate" or that urges the government to investigate when we know that the government has already investigated the matter and determined the course of action it plans to take. By way of comparison, Mr. Speaker, as you know, a year ago we in this Legislative Assembly unanimously supported a motion by my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King to explore the possibility of developing a home warranty program to better protect homeowners.

We learned last week that, in the year that has passed, all the minister has done is send a few letters to contractors, real-estate agents and lawyers to ask for their opinion, yet we haven't even voted on this motion and this government has made it clear that this is a done deal. This is a clear double standard. When it is a government idea, the work gets done even before a motion is debated; when it is an opposition idea, all the minister can do in a year is send a few letters. Quite

frankly — and I've said this before — I think that approach shows a disrespect for the Legislative Assembly.

Given that this is clearly a done deal, we think that the government should at least make a public, clear case for the decision they have taken. For example, the government has provided no guarantee that this will not drive up the price of lots that are privately developed. We know and we have talked about the fact that private land has been developed in Whitehorse by private developers. We know that in some cases it was a success — a great success — and we know that in other cases it didn't go so well. We have seen some of those cases in the courts and in the papers over the last few years.

So before this goes ahead, the government should tell Yukoners what safeguards will be in place to make sure those less-than-ideal scenarios don't happen to public land that is sold and developed by the private sector and what recourse there will be if a private developer doesn't fulfill their obligations. The government hasn't provided this information, yet they are moving forward with this, even if they pretend — and we really feel that, Mr. Speaker — that this motion is simply to be investigating the matter.

Mr. Speaker, even if we're not opposed in principle — and we are not opposed in principle — to the private development of land, we cannot support the process this government is using. We believe it's disingenuous to pretend they are investigating it when they have already said they're forging ahead. If they want to forge ahead, they should be open about it and make the case for it — that's the least that Yukoners deserve.

Mr. Istchenko: I wasn't going to actually speak on this motion today. We discussed it this morning, and I thought that the members opposite — the government — had just forgotten about the Yukon content. I thought the amendment that my fellow colleague from Lake Laberge put forward to just make sure that it's about Yukon developers was great. I figure now I had better get up and say something, because it is about Yukon developers.

I just wanted to touch on something the Minister of Highways and Public Works said earlier today too. He claims his government supports local developers — he claimed that — but he just voted against local developers a couple of minutes ago. We know he likes to speak a lot of words — actually, the whole government likes to speak a lot of words — and I think Yukoners wish they would do more than just talk. It's a lot of thunder but not any lightning with this government, so it's too bad.

He also mentioned the five-year capital concept. As we already discussed, it was out of date the day it was created. It doesn't have a major project like the Ross River School in it. The minister doesn't even know why the Holy Family School is on it. So if he doesn't know, I don't know how that helps local contractors, but I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

This government has literally just voted against local developers. That's very disappointing, but as they move forward with this main motion — and I hope we get to vote on it today — I hope that they start to think local. I hope they

start to think about Yukon companies and not just companies and firms from down south or out east. As we mentioned, the Minister of Highways and Public Works sole-sourced \$1 million to an NWT firm; then he got caught and he blamed his officials. He didn't show responsibility and he didn't accept that. Hey, he's just a minister, but he is in charge. That's too bad, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, I would just like to state that, like we said earlier, we support this motion. We would rather it specify that we prioritize local developers, and we know the Liberals didn't think mentioning support for local developers was important, but I guess that's too bad. It's too bad for them; they'll have to explain it on the doorstep in 2021.

Mr. Kent: I think that in spite of the fact that the Liberals voted against our amendment to have this geared toward Yukon developers, as my colleague from Kluane mentioned, we still will be supporting this motion as it is because we think that this is an important opportunity to get additional lots out there.

As we have seen, with recent mining activity we have seen some growth, and housing demand in the Yukon over the past while has been very robust. There is a demand for lots — not only lots in the Whistle Bend area — but also a demand for other opportunities where there could be lot development, whether country residential, rural residential or commercial lots or other types of opportunities. It's not just in the Whitehorse area — I should be clear about that. Rural colleagues who represent rural ridings in our caucus speak often about the need for land development in their communities and what's happening in their communities as far as getting residential, commercial and industrial properties on the market.

I think what we have seen as well is growth in the Whitehorse periphery. We see the pressures and we have talked about them quite a bit in recent weeks, in Question Period, in particular. I see the pressures in my riding and the pressures that those are having on the school as well. That school just a few years ago — I talk to people when I'm there in the mornings or after school picking up my son. Those kids who are now in grades 3 and 4 — a few years ago, there was one kindergarten class and then it went to one kindergarten class and a kindergarten and grade 1 split, and then last year was the first year where there were two full kindergarten classes. Now this year, we see two full kindergarten classes and it started out with eight families on the wait-list. It was down to five the last I heard. As we move into next year, there is even more pressure and the number of primary kids certainly is much higher, so the kindergarten to grade 3 population at Golden Horn is much higher than the grade 4 to 7 as those students leave. As we continue to see rising numbers coming in due to housing pressures in my riding, it is going to be a real challenge for that school — so finding other country residential areas.

I think a lot of that obviously is driven by the Whitehorse Copper and Mount Sima development and then the fact that many of those rural residential lots are now being subdivided.

We see young families moving out there, some just in the Golden Horn area or down the Carcross Road. It is a real pressure, so if we can find opportunities for that type of lifestyle in other areas around Whitehorse or in the Whitehorse periphery, that again may take some pressure off the school that is there.

Again, that said, we do support the motion that the Member for Porter Creek Centre put on the floor. I think it was first introduced a couple of weeks ago. We would like to see perhaps some different aspects considered as well. As I mentioned, it is not only residential pressures that we are seeing, but there are commercial lot and industrial lot pressures that we are witnessing, not only here in Whitehorse, but our colleagues on both sides of the House, I am sure, will have stories in their own communities of some of the land pressures. We see the community of Mayo, for instance, where there has been tremendous mining activity recently. There is a need for the government to look at, not only lot development improvements there, but the airport, for instance, with Air North, Yukon's airline, now doing scheduled service in there. The last time I was at that terminal was when we flew in for the sod turning at the Eagle Gold mine. My colleague from Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the NDP, I believe was on that flight too. That terminal building at the Mayo airport is woefully in need of serious repair or replacement.

Again, that is part of managing an increase in mining activity in that area, and we have to look at additional residential development. We certainly want to make sure that the people who are working in those mines and who want to live in Mayo have an opportunity to live in that community. It is a tremendous community. They have excellent recreational infrastructure and other infrastructure that exists there, but we need to make sure that they have the land to support development. If this motion leads to the opportunity to get land into, not just the hands of the private sector, but to get land developed so that people can build a home in the Mayo area, I would argue — I don't think I have to argue that it certainly is the most robust mining jurisdiction — apologies to the Premier.

I would say that with all of the activity north of Keno, the exploration activity that we see at ATAC — I think Newmont is active in that area; we have Victoria Gold which is going to be doing their first pour next year and all of those people who are going to be moving in to work at that mine; Alexco is making exciting discoveries it seems all of the time, especially with respect to the Bermingham deposit. We are hopeful that those individuals who are working in those mines — we want the ones who do have to be hired from outside of the territory — and I think it is realistic to say that there will be some staff who have to come from outside the Yukon — we want them to have the opportunity to make the Yukon their home and a huge aspect of that is the housing aspect. Those who choose to live in Mayo, we want them to have that opportunity. Those who choose to live in Whitehorse or one of our other communities, we want them to have that opportunity. If this motion for land development allows us to do that, then that is a good thing.

But again, I don't want us to forget about — and this motion focuses solely on residential — but I don't want us to forget about industrial and commercial land as well which will be needed to support that.

With that, I will take my seat, and perhaps there are others who want to talk.

Ms. McLeod: Of course, the idea of land development is very important to me and particularly to southeast Yukon. In the interest of, I think, improving the motion a little bit, to speak a little more to what my colleague was referring to and to address some issues for southeast Yukon, I would like to move an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Ms. McLeod: I move:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by adding the words “and commercial lots” after the words “building lots”.

Speaker: I have had the opportunity to review the proposed amendment to Motion No. 319 with Mr. Clerk and I can advise that the amendment is procedurally in order.

It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

THAT Motion No. 319 be amended by adding the words “and commercial lots” after the words “building lots”. The proposed new motion would then read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land to allow for the private development of residential building lots and commercial lots.

Ms. McLeod: I heard some very interesting discussion today regarding land development and how various people think that it should proceed. I think, at the end of the day, we all want to see land development take place in the Yukon.

It does bring to mind some particular issues that happened for Watson Lake. Aside from the residential lot development that we're extremely short of, we also have one commercial lot that is available.

There is some potential for commercial development at the airport that is proving particularly difficult to move along. With that, I hope the members support broadening this discussion to include commercial lots because, for all of Yukon, I think we need to consider both.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the member opposite for this amendment. It certainly hits a few key points. I have had the opportunity to listen in a number of communities where there is an interest in increased commercial lots because of more economic activity that is happening. I do appreciate the interest that the Member for Watson Lake touched on — in the community that she represents where there could be an interest in both residential and commercial lots, besides just the building lots — and also, as was stated earlier by the Official Opposition, that we should also take into consideration working with development corporations and Yukon companies. It just brings to mind that, in areas such as Watson Lake, I would think that the member

opposite — always a champion for Yukon companies. But when you have development corporations that work in conjunction — maybe from Lower Post and working with the Liard First Nation — corporations that just happen to buy their supplies in Watson Lake and they use Home Hardware in Watson Lake and really support that community, but are just across the BC border and may work in partnership on some of this stuff. Of course, that original amendment would drive those companies out of the opportunity. Those borders have to be respected, but I think those communities all come together. Those are the types of things that you need to think through, and I don't think they were thought through earlier on. I appreciate the Member for Watson Lake bringing these ideas to mind.

Because of economic activity, we have seen areas such as Haines Junction, where I know there has been some discussion. There are some commercial lots available — Chu Níkwän doing very good work. Some of those early stage rollouts and there is interest in looking at some of their lands just off of Mountain View Drive. I believe they are getting into the storage lease business right now, and they have also done a lot in the Kulan industrial area. We are seeing that come online and so we are seeing some of those situations occur already.

Taking into consideration — usually it is a diverse mix that you would put together. You put residential together, but depending on lot size, you may want to add in storage so that people living in the neighbourhood have a place, as long as it doesn't contravene the OCP and the zoning.

There are particular areas that I think we're sort of all watching from afar to see what happens — around the tank farm. There has been a lot of extraction off of aggregate, but we do see that there continues to be progress there and, once again, at least one individual has reached out. I have urged, through the work that they have been doing, some of the players there to — when they're ready to come and tell Yukoners that they may have an opportunity to bring lots to market. I think that there are two or three different options. Whistle Bend and a couple of others would be advantageous for everybody, and people are looking for different designs. Some people find that the tighter densification and smaller lots with none of the commercial lots nearby — we're looking at what is going to happen with commercial in Whistle Bend and what's the uniformity. Is there a potential for uniformity? Is it all going to be staged? Are we going to have to see huge population growth before people make that financial commitment to develop those lots? Is it a chicken and an egg? How does that work?

When we look at commercial lots — as we see in the mining sector, and I know the Member for Copperbelt South touched on a few different areas — whether it be Mayo — we have some news coming very quickly in that area and there is some stuff that I think is going to provide people with some options for residential — and also on the agriculture side. In areas such as Carcross, when we have discussions there, there tend to be more and different activities than there were

previously, and those activities in some cases do need to have commercial lots.

I think the commercial lots are probably one of the first, as we see from the private development standpoint and through Yukon Development Corporation, and one of the most advantageous routes to get people comfortable with private land development, but also private land development specific to settlement land and the LTO work — that being the Land Titles Office — that has been done. Really, what you are doing is providing access, through the lease, to an activity. In some cases, it could be storage, and in other cases, it would be more infrastructure built on the particular lot. When you need those more spacious areas — when we look at the footprint or at least through Whitehorse, and I think the same thing in Dawson and likely in Watson Lake — I will say that, just to share with you, even this week — and I could be off and it might be next week — our team at Energy, Mines and Resources is having discussions — I don't think they have concluded yet — in Watson Lake with Liard First Nation concerning some commercial area where they would like to see a renewable energy project worked on. We are hoping that some of that stuff can happen, and then we would have to take a look to make sure that the plan in place for the Town of Watson Lake is consistent. We are trying to be supportive of those green energy sources and looking at that in the commercial sense. There has been a little bit of news on another commercial lot — not private development — where there have been some energy projects, and that is out in the Sima area.

Most construction companies that I have heard of that have come to us and talked about looking at commercial lot development seemed to be in a situation where that capital cost for them is pretty significant. I think the Member for Watson Lake is certainly on to something. This is probably going to take a little bit more debate, because I think the lease would be more advantageous. It wouldn't strain cash flow to the same extent for some individuals who need that land and maybe a longer-term lease would give them the access to it but, at the same time, wouldn't strain them as they're trying to put dollars and investment into equipment, human resources and other planning strategies that they would need to undertake.

In my conversations that will continue to happen, I think I'll bring this forward — this is good information — and try to test the waters with the Contractors Association — maybe they can talk to some of their members who would be interested in commercial lots — bringing it to the chambers if I have a chance, just seeing what the ideals are. Then also to the First Nation development corporations that are in an ownership position — where they own Castle Rock or other companies such as that — I know that there have been strains from time to time on lots and, in some cases, I know that Yukon Energy Corporation has even needed to go out and find other space.

I think the other thing that is important to do is to take into consideration that, if you're looking at private development of commercial space, maybe it's something that

we should leave to our First Nation governments, because right now, we're under such strain — it was touched upon by both opposition parties — when it comes to figuring out all the different options.

Is it right to take those large segments of land and put them into private development? We're probably not seeing the same return on investment as you would if you were looking at residential land. I think that is something that we can talk to Yukoners about. I know the member of the Third Party touched on it. I think it is important to state that it was stated that you are going to go and do that. We want to investigate — that is part of our duty. We try to do that through our departments, Economic Development and others. If you do find a potential piece of land, you take that advisement, as the Member for Watson Lake touched upon, and you try to ensure that you meet the zoning guidelines. It is sort of a basket of different types of land — you have both residential and you have commercial. Maybe leave it open in the conversation, assuring, going back, that we have Yukon companies and Yukoners developing this land and that this land has the right business model to make it work for them and see what the interest is and see if we're eliminating people or if there are different models that we are not aware of. That is part of putting something out there, that you will have a chance to see it and take it into consideration, but we will also have to go back and talk to the officials I work with and just make sure that I am clear when it comes to our trade agreements. I know that there is some activity happening in different jurisdictions that are adjacent to us. We will be reviewing those activities and also looking at past practices.

Speaker: Order, please. The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 319, and amendment, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 105

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 25, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

CABINET MINISTERS

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

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
| Don Hutton | Mayo-Tatchun |

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Liz Hanson | Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre |
| Kate White | Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King |

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| Hansard Administrator | Deana Lemke |

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, October 25, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is a huge honour to introduce some people who are in the Legislative Assembly today. I am going to do a three-pronged approach here, if that is okay with the members.

I am going to first start with former Commissioner and World War II veteran Mr. Doug Bell, who is sitting in the VIP section here with Mr. Red Grossinger.

If you haven't heard stories of the Yukon, you should talk to Mr. Bell. Of course, with him is Red Grossinger. We also have others members of the legion and other veterans in the audience today. We have Joe Mewett, Terry Grabowski and Morris Cratty as well, and legion member Sylvia Kitching. I would like to welcome them to the gallery as well.

Last but not least on my tributes list — certainly there will be other people recognized today for the *SS Princess Sophia* tribute, but I just want to take special time here to welcome Cathy Burkhard from Dawson, who is a relative of the Bell family members who passed away on the *SS Princess Sophia*, and sending her regrets is her sister — so if we could say thank you to Cathy for being here today.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: I would like members to join me in welcoming two constituents of Porter Creek Centre to the gallery here today — husband and wife Michael Gates and Kathy Gates.

Kathy is past president of the Yukon Historical and Museums Association and past executive director of the Dawson City Museum. Michael Gates is famed Yukon author and celebrated Yukon historian. Welcome to the Assembly today.

Applause

Mr. Hutton: I would like to ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming some very special guests here today: From the Yukon Transportation Museum, we have Janna Swales; from the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, David Leverton and Brittany Vis; from the Yukon Arts Centre, Mary Bradshaw; from the Yukon Order of Pioneers, we have Gordon Steele, Gordon Ryder, Ken Mason and Peter Murtagh; from the Yukon masonic lodge, we have Tom Mickey, Joe Trerice and Ralph Zaccarelli; and last, but certainly not least, we have a

constituent of mine from Mayo, a great granddaughter of Robert Hager, who went down on the *SS Princess Sophia*, Nancy Hager — and the curator from the Dawson museum, Mr. Alex Somerville. Thank you all for being here.

Applause

Ms. White: One person who has already been introduced — but I think we could do a little bit more — is Sylvia Kitching. She was the registrar at vital statistics for a generation — for a really long time. I got to know Sylvia when I became a wedding commissioner, and the best thing about Sylvia is that she loves stories. She would listen to stories about how people met, and she was there to support people when they were getting death certificates and birth certificates.

Sylvia retired from the government I think in 2012 —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Ms. White: Okay, so a couple of years ago, but she is fantastic. Thank you for being here in your capacity with the legion, and thank you for the work that you did for the Yukon government.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In recognition of the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign

Hon. Mr. Silver: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign.

Each year following the last Friday in October, we start to see the red poppy blooming on coats and jackets everywhere in Canada. Since 1921, this modest flower which dared to flourish in the midst of the chaos and destruction of World War I has become an enduring symbol of remembrance. It is a silent but powerful reminder of the great sacrifice that so many have made so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we have today.

To the veterans in the visiting gallery today, thank you very much for your service to Canada and to Yukon.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign for which thousands of volunteer members across Canada will distribute poppies. Tomorrow at noon at Veterans Square at the city hall, please join me and my colleagues here for the first poppy ceremony — that's why we're not wearing our poppies today. We will be getting that ceremony done tomorrow at noon, and I hope to see you all there.

The poppies are given free of charge, but donations are greatly appreciated. Wearing the poppy shows that we remember what the brave men and women of past generations did for home and country. It is a timeless demonstration of our appreciation for everything that Canadian servicemen and servicewomen have done, and continue to do, in the guise of sacrifice.

The poppy campaign itself is a demonstration of the appreciation to veterans — 100 percent of the funds raised by the poppy campaign are used to support veterans and their

families here in the Yukon, which includes members of the Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP as well.

Poppy funds may be used by the legion for the purchasing of goods and equipment that will directly benefit Yukon's veterans. The funds may be used to support organizations that are accessed by Yukon's veterans or go directly to support veterans and their families in times of crisis or to bridge gaps until other benefits become available.

Sometimes the legion receives requests for specific medical equipment needs for Yukon veterans. For example, the legion has donated money to the hospital for purchasing operating room equipment, chemo pumps and various other equipment. In other cases, requests for poppy funds are received from places like Copper Ridge Place, Macaulay Lodge and the Thomson Centre, all of which house our veterans.

Donations have been made to the Honour House located in New Westminster, British Columbia, which serves both as a refuge and a home away from home for service members from Yukon who are receiving care or medical treatments when they are in the Vancouver area. These funds raised through the poppy campaign are used in so many different ways to support our Yukon veterans.

Another way to help the legion is to become a member. I and other members are proud members of legions in this Legislative Assembly. I am a member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1 in Dawson City. I am especially proud of my legion and my community this year. Sergeant Mitchell and Jeremy Lancaster of the Rangers are working with Diane Baumgartner of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1 to participate in a commemorative expedition up the Dempster to Mount Boyle for a Remembrance Day ceremony.

I hope that this year everyone will join me in wearing a poppy and donating to this very worthy cause, especially as this year marks the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, which is the day in which fighting ended in World War 1. Lest we forget.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: millions of Canadians wear a poppy as a visual pledge to never forget those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. Today, I rise in the House on behalf of the Yukon Party to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion's first poppy campaign. I would encourage everyone in the Yukon to show their recognition by proudly wearing this symbol of remembrance and taking a moment to reflect.

A little bit of history on the poppy — each November — we are going to see it soon — poppies bloom on the lapels and collars of millions of Canadians and many Yukoners. The significance of the poppy can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars in the 19th century, over 110 years before being adopted in Canada. Records from that time indicate how thickly poppies grew over the graves of soldiers in the area of Flanders, France. Fields that had been barren before battle exploded with the blood-red flowers after the fighting ended.

The person who first introduced the poppy to Canada and the Commonwealth was Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae of

Guelph, Ontario. He was a Canadian medical officer during the First World War. John McCrae penned the poem *In Flanders Fields* on a scrap of paper in May 1915 on the day following the death of a fellow soldier. Little did he know then that those 13 lines would become enshrined in the hearts and minds of all who would wear the poppy in remembrance.

During a visit to the United States in 1920, a French woman named Madame Guérin learned of the custom. Madame Guérin decided to make and sell poppies to raise money for children in war-torn areas of France. The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion's predecessor, then officially adopted the poppy as its flower of remembrance on July 5, 1921. Today, the poppy is worn each year during a remembrance period to honour fallen Canadians. The legion also encourages the wearing of the poppy for the funeral of a veteran and for any commemorative event honouring fallen veterans. It's not inappropriate to wear a poppy during other times to commemorate fallen veterans, and it is an individual's choice to do so, as long as they wear it appropriately.

I want to say thank you to the millions of Canadians who wear the legion's lapel poppy each November. The little red flower has never died and the memories of those who fell in battle remain strong. Today, we pay tribute to all the veterans, the Royal Canadian Legion — especially the local legion here — and in our communities — we don't have legions in all our communities, and I know there is one in the Premier's riding, but there are a lot of volunteers in the communities. Some are associated with the legion and some are not, but they go forward, they get those poppies out there, and they organize activities in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Day and they're there on Remembrance Day.

So as a proud member of the legion, I understand the work that is done at this time of the year. I can tell you that it is sure appreciated. So please wear a poppy. It's your duty to make sure that the actions of those who dedicated their lives and died for our safety, freedom and independence are never forgotten. Lest we forget.

Applause

Ms. White: It's a great honour to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to acknowledge tomorrow as the first day of the legion's annual poppy campaign. We can easily make the mistake of thinking that conflict doesn't affect us because it only happens in faraway places. We forget that right now in Canada, armed conflict is affecting our friends and neighbours. Families have been separated as men and women have been sent off to distant places. Today, right now, Canadians continue to live with the very real consequences of war.

I used to think that everyone understood the importance of the poppy. I used to think that people generally understood that the red flower worn close to the heart was a symbol of remembrance and that they understood that the poppy was a visual pledge to never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice for what we have today.

Some days, Mr. Speaker, I am less confident that the symbolism of the poppy is still remembered, so here are a few things to remember. First, poppies are not for sale — you don't need money to get a poppy — you just need to have the will to wear one. Donations are graciously accepted but not required. Secondly, poppies not only acknowledge the sacrifice of those who lost their lives, but they acknowledge the sacrifice of those who answered the call of duty and walk among us today.

Finally, you can disagree with war — you don't have to like it or support it or even want to talk about it. I totally get that. Ask a soldier and they will tell you that they don't like or support war either. The poppy isn't a symbol that supports war. It doesn't symbolize the politicians who make the decisions to engage in armed conflict. The poppy symbolizes the men and women who have borne the cost of those decisions. It lets the families of soldiers know that you care about the sacrifices that they all have to make.

Years ago, the first time I worked at a poppy table for the Legion Branch 254 with my friend Max, I was surprised by the amount of people who wouldn't make eye contact and by the amount of people who, when asked, said, "No, I don't want a poppy." Even after we explained that they didn't need money for the first half hour, only a few people stopped at our table. I asked Max, "Has society really forgotten the symbolism behind the red flower?" Then, Mr. Speaker, a young man came to the table. He reached into his pocket and he pulled out his wallet. He smiled at us and said that he used to be a cadet, so he knew the importance of the poppy and he put \$20 in the box. It was amazing. It was like an invisible barrier had come down.

Max and I continued to explain to people that they didn't need to pay for a poppy and that they just needed to want to wear one and that if they felt like it later on, they could leave money behind at the next poppy table they saw. We pinned poppies on the lapels of a great many people last year, but it saddens me to say that twice as many people passed us without even looking up. That young man changed everything for me. He gave me the hope that the sacrifices made by Canada's veterans — military and RCMP, both past and present — will not be forgotten.

Poppies take such a small amount of real estate over your heart, but they represent so much more. They honour the veterans of the past, they show respect to those serving in the present and they foster the hope for the future. Lest we forget.

Applause

In remembrance of the *SS Princess Sophia*

Mr. Hutton: It is truly an honour and a privilege for me to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia*. On this day in 1918, the *SS Princess Sophia* of the CP Steamship Company sank after running aground on Vanderbilt Reef in the Lynn Canal, taking the lives of all passengers and crew members aboard. Although we will never be certain of the actual numbers, best estimates are that 350 souls lost their lives that day.

The vessel departed Skagway on October 23, three hours behind schedule, at 10:00 p.m. bound for Juneau, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Prince Rupert, Alert Bay and Vancouver — its final sailing of the northern panhandle route for the season. Four hours into the voyage, amidst blizzard conditions and a particularly hazardous and narrow section of the Lynn Canal, the *SS Princess Sophia* was drawn off course, striking the infamous Vanderbilt Reef head-on. Marooned on the treacherous reef, the captain wired for help. Other ships soon arrived, but rescue efforts were immediately thwarted. The other ships could not risk getting too close to the reef and the *SS Princess Sophia* could not launch its lifeboats for fear they would be dashed on the rocks. The captain and would-be rescuers held out hope that the weather would calm, but over the next 40 hours, it only worsened, with tides and gale-force winds combining, washing the *SS Princess Sophia* further atop the reef, twisting and tearing her hull in the process.

This must have been the longest 40 hours ever endured by people. Hopes were raised, and then dashed as each opportunity to lower the boats presented itself and then vanished due to the extreme weather.

Sometime in the early hours of October 25, the *SS Princess Sophia* was swept off the reef, sea water rushing into its torn hull, and she quickly sank, taking with her all on board. When seas and winds finally subsided and the rescue flotilla could once again approach the reef, all that was visible of the once proud *SS Princess Sophia* was her mast.

Before this tragic event, the *SS Princess Sophia* was a crucial lifeline, moving people and supplies throughout remote BC and Alaskan communities along the Inside Passage. Though landlocked Yukon communities were not ports of call for the *SS Princess Sophia*, they nonetheless relied on her as a main cargo and travel route. With her sinking, Yukon lost a core of its mining and transportation community.

Some of the names that I would like to mention include: a prospector, William Scouse; a miner, Robert Hager; esteemed mountaineer, Walter Harper; all seven members of the O'Brien family, pioneers in the Klondike transportation field; and more than 100 employees of the White Pass & Yukon Route. These men were captains, first mates and deckhands on all the steamers and paddlewheelers that provided for our communities throughout the territory. It was a terrible blow to White Pass the next year as they tried to find experienced captains, first mates and deckhands to run their vessels.

I want to talk a bit about Robert Hager. Why Robert Hager was leaving the Yukon is not known, but he was an interesting example of a way of life chosen by a handful of Yukon pioneers. He was born in 1873 and went north during the rush, working as a miner and fur trader. In 1905 and 1906, he served as a special constable for the mounted police at McQuesten post. About this time, he took the fairly unusual step of formally marrying a First Nation woman, a resident of Mayo named Liza Jimmy. During the war, he worked for some time as a carpenter in the Mayo district. I would like to give credit to Ken Coates and Bill Morrison for their excellent book, *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia — Taking the North*

Down with Her, and also to the Mayo Historical Society's *Gold & Galena*, and Lynette Bleiler and Linda MacDonald for the information, for preserving this history for all of Yukon.

George Black, former Commissioner, former Yukon Council member, Yukon's MP for 15, who had become acquainted with Robert Hager in 1902 or 1903, testified on his behalf during the hearings that were held following the *SS Princess Sophia* disaster. He described Hager as a man of good habits and who saved his money and invested most of it in mining. In the summer of 1900, Robert Hager was panning and earning \$6 to \$9 a day by panning bars on the Stewart River.

Black also testified that Robert Hager was approximately 45 years of age at the time of his death, and that his son Edwin would have been about 8 years old in 1918. After his father's death, Edwin Hager was raised by his grandmother, Jenny Jimmy.

It was the worst maritime disaster in the Pacific Northwest, with devastating and lasting effects on the region. However, the World War I armistice, coming as it did so shortly after the loss of the *SS Princess Sophia*, global events resulted in it being largely forgotten.

For many years, it has been called the "unknown Titanic" of the west coast, but events and exhibits leading up to this 100th anniversary aim to change that. Two permanent exhibits went on display at the Dawson City Museum and the Yukon Transportation Museum in 2017, with a third travelling exhibit touring the territory leading up to this year's commemoration. Through the special capital assistance projects fund, we have proudly contributed to the development of these exhibits, and it is estimated they have already been seen by more than 40,000 visitors.

Beginning today until November 23, the Yukon Arts Centre gallery is hosting the Maritime Museum of British Columbia's excellent *SS Princess Sophia* exhibit. I would encourage all members of this House and all Yukoners to visit this exhibit to recognize and honour these lost souls, who were true pioneers of the Yukon.

This exhibit has already toured British Columbia and Alaska, with plans to bring it to Ottawa, Washington and Oregon in the near future. The Royal Canadian Mint recognized the historic significance of this nautical tragedy, releasing a special silver commemorative coin. Our sister city of Juneau, itself heavily affected by the sinking, has mounted an impressive array of commemorative events, including lectures, graveside memorials, tours of Vanderbilt Reef and even an opera.

I would like to say thank you to all the historians — especially you, Mr. Gates — curators, organizations and community partners who have preserved the memory of this tragic and defining event, which has had such drastic and long-lasting impacts on our region. I would also like to give a special thanks to the authors Ken Coates, Bill Morrison and David Leverton from the Maritime Museum of British Columbia for putting a human face to this tragedy. It's not just a list of numbers; it's not just a number — 353. These were all people. I'm so proud today to see descendants of people who

went down on the *SS Princess Sophia* here in the audience with us. Thank you so much for being here today.

I'll conclude by reading a poem entitled *At Rest*, written by James Parkin Harris and taken from the excellent book written by Ken Coates and Bill Morrison:

She was loaded to the gunwales
 On her journey south was bound,
 She was just the boat for Klondikers,
 A Princess of renown.
 They waited long in Skagway,
 Until she hove in sight.
 And the joy of those old timers
 Made Skagway ring that night.
 They left the dear old Klondike —
 Their hearts all filled with glee,
 With the thoughts of friends and loved ones
 And old homes they longed to see.
 Some were going to old mothers
 Some to sweethearts, some to wives;
 Some were going out for country
 And the freedom of our lives.
 Some weathered many stormy gales —
 Brave captains were there, too,
 Who always landed safe in port,
 And again it still is true.
 Some had bags of gold in plenty;
 Some with nothing but their fare;
 But you could not tell the difference,
 Once you breathed the Yukon air.
 They'd suffered cold and hunger —
 Reverses were not new —
 And if you ever needed help,
 Their gold sacks emptied, too.
 There were fathers, there were mothers
 With their children on that boat,
 And the love of those old timers
 Was the same as when Christ spoke.
 But, ah, the good Sophia
 Through darkness lost her way.
 And now she's at the bottom
 Of Lynn Canal this day.
 A host of friends have left us,
 But they have gone to join the blessed —
 Praise God that all these noble souls
 Have won eternal rest.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* — a century since this tragedy. We also pay tribute to all Yukon and Alaskan families who lost loved ones in this ocean tragedy. Some refer to the *SS Princess Sophia* as the "Titanic of the west", not to be compared in size or grandeur, but rather because the two ships suffered an eerily similar fate. Both ships took their maiden voyage in 1912. We know the *RMS Titanic* did not

finish its voyage and we know much about this so-called “unsinkable ship” through documentaries, books and movies.

The *SS Princess Sophia* was called a “pocket liner” because it offered many amenities as an ocean liner. She went on to become one of the fleet of coastal passenger steamships serving the northwest coast between Vancouver Island and Alaska. On October 22, 1918, the day before the ship departed Skagway, Alaska, a sourdough dance was held in the evening and it was a festive occasion. There were rumours that World War I was drawing to an end, but the call for service was still there and the sense of victory was all around. The men who were making their way south to join the troops were celebrities, but the voyage started poorly. The Skagway departure was delayed, and they quickly ran into strong winds. The ship was quickly enveloped by fog and snow and visibility was limited. It was not long before Captain Leonard Locke lost his bearings and at 2:00 a.m., the *SS Princess Sophia* hit Vanderbilt Reef head-on.

This large, submerged reef is in the centre of Lynn Canal with a length of about seven miles. It was the decision of Captain Locke and the crew that they would be safe until conditions cleared, and although there were rescue boats nearby, he felt it would be too dangerous to take passengers from his ship to other vessels. He would wait and, communication being what it was 100 years ago, this decision was to prove fatal. Imagine — and I know that I can’t — the passengers, who had those 40 hours waiting and hoping for the winds to die, and hope for rescue, and hope, and then despair.

On October 25, 1918, the *SS Princess Sophia* sank, taking all down with her. We know that many Yukoners were aboard that vessel, and ties to the capital, Dawson City, were many.

As we mentioned today, there was the Burkhard family and I didn’t know about the Hager family. We also have Ralph Zaccarelli’s grandfather, who had just sold his store in Dawson and he perished as well on the *SS Princess Sophia*.

Of course, questions abounded. Should the captain have reduced his speed? Should the captain have at least attempted to remove passengers as the winds did die down a bit? But after court battles it was decided that CPR — Canadian Pacific — and Captain Locke were not responsible and had done everything possible to save the lives of those on board. No log book was recovered and no survivors to tell the story. All that remained was the mast above the water and what they could recover from the depths that could piece together a story.

Tragedies such as the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* tend to be forgotten as the years pass and generations pass, but we are so fortunate to have to so many individuals, companies and organizations that prioritize and preserve the history of our territory. This week, Yukoners are being treated to the remarkable history of the *SS Princess Sophia* and as I listened to David Leverton on the radio this morning, it was a wonderful recap of the story. Tonight, there is the opening of the exhibit and the reception at the Yukon Arts Centre at 5:30 p.m. and, as was mentioned, this exhibit will run to November 23. Please make time to visit. It serves us to remind

everyone of our ties to this ocean disaster and to the many who perished.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I’m pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to join the tribute today to the activities commemorating the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* — activities that will culminate today at 5:30 p.m. at the Yukon Arts Centre with the marking of the exact hour at which all on board the *SS Princess Sophia* perished.

Pulling together the fragments of this important part of the history of the Pacific Northwest and its special impact and importance to Yukon history takes vision and commitment. Several years ago, David Leverton, who has already been introduced and has joined us in the gallery today, told me that he was working on putting together a major exhibit on the *SS Princess Sophia*. As a former long-time Yukoner, David understood the importance of bringing back to Yukon an event that many today may not be familiar with, but which is nonetheless an event that has deeply affected many in Yukon and beyond.

When I first came to Yukon many years ago, the story of the *SS Sophia* was part of the mystery of the Yukon. There were folk songs about it. There were people throughout the communities in Yukon whose families were directly affected and yet it was never a high-profile part of our history. Today we extend a special thank you to Mr. Leverton and to the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the many partners along the Pacific Northwest in British Columbia, Alaska and Yukon who have contributed to this anniversary exhibition and the process of engaging with communities all along the route of the *SS Princess Sophia* along the coast of BC and Alaska.

Much has already been said today about the events leading up to the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia*. We will never really know exactly what transpired between 10:10 p.m. October 23, 1918 when she left Skagway and the moment approximately 40 hours later when all aboard perished.

We will never really know how many people actually perished, even though we know the boat had a maximum capacity of 500 passengers and 75 crew members. The initial death toll was around 343 people, but many believe that it is likely there were undocumented work-aways and stowaways on board — an unfortunate fact that is in itself another tragedy.

Putting a name to all who died may never be possible. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has already noted, Yukon historian Ken Coates and Bill Morrison, authors of *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia — Taking the North Down with Her*, have tackled the important task of bringing the stories of the people on board to light — at least those stories that were known. Personally, I wonder what stories went down with the 13 Chinese migrant workers listed on the passenger list.

Maritime tragedies have a long history of inspiring music and art and tonight, Mr. Speaker, when we gather at the Yukon Arts Centre for the opening of the *SS Princess Sophia* exhibit, we look forward to hearing local educators and

musicians Chic Callas and Daniel Halen perform Dan's song about the *SS Princess Sophia*. Along that same vein, if you happen to be in Vancouver on November 9 or 10, you can catch The Little Chamber Music Series that Could performing a piece called *Sounding the Sophia*. Inspired by this historic event, they will musically explore the vibrancy of the people aboard the ship, the power of the natural world and the implications of loss.

The human spirit seeks always to rise from tragedy to hope and beauty. Today, we thank those who do so in the name of the *SS Princess Sophia* and all who were touched by her sinking.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports removing natural gas as a qualifying energy source under the Government of Yukon's independent power production policy.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to work with the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Canyon Creek, Champagne, Mendenhall and Takhini to improve the standard of highway vegetation control as requested by those communities to address safety concerns and improve visibility.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the option of selling land to Yukon developers to allow for the private development of commercial and residential building lots.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Miners Lien Act* to better protect Yukon mining suppliers and contractors and ensure that they get paid.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: School capacity

Mr. Hassard: Last week, the Minister of Education said — and I quote: “Accuracy is important to me.” Yet she claims she had only become aware of overcrowding, causing children to be home-schooled, on October 11. That was quickly disproven as media informed her office on October 10. Further, the minister had been sitting on letters dating back to December of last year, detailing serious issues of overcrowding. Now we know the minister doesn't think this is a terrible problem, but she needs to show some urgency, and pointing to a 10-year capital plan that is already a year overdue is cold comfort for the families struggling today.

Can the minister please tell us how much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity in our schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't like to start the day like this, but certainly there are a number of inaccuracies in the preamble to that question. What I will concentrate on for Yukoners is the fact that an enrolment pressure in our Whitehorse schools, particularly our elementary schools, is a fact. It is something that the department is paying extremely close attention to. We are working with school communities in order to address those issues.

The concept of enrolment increasing is not, in fact, a new problem. We know every year, when projections are being made, how many students are potentially coming to our Yukon schools because we base that number on birth rates here in the territory. Of course, what we can't necessarily account for are families who are moving to this jurisdiction to benefit from the economy and to benefit from our way of life here, which, of course, is something that we all cherish.

Working with school communities is critical — the enrolment pressures, the enrolments in individual schools, working with the school communities and working with the administration is something that the Department of Education is doing on a daily basis.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly did not hear an answer to the question, so we will try again. The question, I think, is very simple and to the point. How much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity? Is that number zero? Is it \$1 million? What is it? Maybe the minister doesn't know or maybe she just doesn't want to tell us, because as we do know, she doesn't think that overcrowding in our schools is a terrible problem to have.

Once again — simple question: How much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity in our schools?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, I find this really disturbing. Yukoners deserve better. The member opposite is quoting half of what I said, which is that it is not a terrible problem to have because our economy is booming and our population is growing, and more and more individuals are moving to the Yukon and having their families for the purposes of settling here and making our communities better. If he wants to start with that, I am happy to meet him halfway with respect to that, but if he is going to quote me, I would really appreciate the full quote or an accurate quote.

With respect to enrolment pressures in the Whitehorse schools, it is a top priority for the Department of Education. It is something we work on every year.

Enrolment pressures are recognized and, frankly, have been available to the government for a number of years, because we are aware at least five years ahead with the birth rate, individuals and children coming up through the system, exactly — well, we don't know where those pressures will be necessarily, where individual families will settle, the demographics of neighbourhoods and the changing ways in which that happens here in the territory, but it is a top priority. We are working with the school communities that have ultimate pressures and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Hassard: I think that Yukoners deserve an answer. We know the Liberals have decreased the budget for capital investments in our schools by 50 percent, if you compare this year to last. Meanwhile, the Premier is giving himself a raise. There are schools in Yukon that are in need of investment this year, Mr. Speaker. The minister has had letters dating back to December sitting on her desk detailing these issues, but she has taken no action. It's time to start talking about things and start doing things.

What concrete action will the minister take this year to address overcrowding in our schools — not 10 years from now, but this year?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Unfortunately, just because the member opposite is not listening to the answer to the question doesn't mean I'm not answering it. There is a long list of actions that are taking place on a daily basis. There are concepts of dealing with school councils, working with school administrations to reorganize their space, to do renovations, where possible, to have them supported by the department about enrolment. We are working with the Yukon Teachers' Association when necessary to have an extra student to be put in a class here and there, but we are taking a look long term and widely across the city to determine how we can adjust and deal with and provide the educational services that Yukon families deserve — and that students deserve in Yukon schools and, in particular, in Whitehorse, which is where we're feeling the enrolment pressures. It is something we take extremely seriously and I would very much appreciate if the member opposite could stop saying that, one, we're not working on it and, two, not taking it seriously, because that's just not accurate.

Question re: Coroners Act review

Mr. Cathers: The Minister of Justice failed to properly consult on the *Coroners Act*. The high-level so-called engagement did not allow people who would be affected by the legislation to see key details of the new act. The Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, the Yukon Medical Association, Volunteer Ambulance Services Society Yukon, Yukon Child and Youth Advocate and others should have had the opportunity to see the details of the legislation before it was tabled. The RCMP were consulted, but Justice officials told us they were not allowed

to see the text of the bill, even sections that directly affect the authority of an RCMP member following a fatality.

Will the minister please rethink her government-knows-best approach, press the pause button and immediately go and consult these Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm very pleased to speak about Bill No. 27, the *Coroners Act*, which is before this House as we speak and look forward to future debate of that in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, it will not surprise you that the *Coroners Act* is outdated. It is based on an ordinance from 1958. It was amended briefly in minor ways in the last 60 years. The Department of Justice conducted a thorough review of the existing act and its regulations and has drafted an updated version, which is before this House as Bill No. 27.

A public engagement survey was made available to Yukoners in July and August 2018. There were targeted engagement letters to the Yukon First Nation governments, to the RCMP and to community coroners. We worked closely with the coroner. We spoke with the former coroner. There was a *Coroners Act* committee that met weekly for months and months and, despite only receiving some comments last week from the Child and Youth Advocate, we are very keen to work with her on the suggestions that came forward. The RCMP wrote comments with respect to the *Coroners Act* that were extremely helpful and taken into account in the drafting of this bill.

Mr. Cathers: I know this is reminiscent of the Minister of Highways and Public Works' failure on the *Public Airports Act* debacle. If the Minister of Justice is focused on the needs of Yukoners, she should be humble enough to recognize that she made an error by not properly consulting and take immediate steps to fix it.

There are four weeks left in the Fall Sitting. The government can go out today with an expedited consultation on the text of the new *Coroners Act* and speak to all of these groups and partners before proceeding. If there are changes necessary, we can make them and pass the bill before the end of this Sitting. We're offering a constructive solution here.

Will the government please go out and consult these Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Coroner's Service needs support of a modernized piece of legislation. An updated law will also ensure that the correct professional resources oversee each stage of the coroner's case and the independence and impartiality of the Coroner's Service is protected. That is what Bill No. 27 is designed to do.

Some of the suggested comments that we received — over 220 responses from Yukoners during our public engagement — were obviously taken into account with respect to going forward with the drafting of Bill No. 27. Some are already in Bill No. 27. Others can be addressed in regulation, which is a process yet to come, or perhaps through amendments to other pieces of legislation.

The *Coroners Act* is a tool that will provide our Yukon chief coroner and our community coroners with the authority

and the tools they need to carry out their important investigations on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: The Liberals ran on the slogan of “Be Heard”, but now that they’re elected we’re seeing a pattern of ministers dropping the ball on consultations or failing to consult entirely. Then when it’s pointed out how they made a mistake, instead of taking action to fix it, they ignore the voices of Yukoners who were left out and plow forward. If this Liberal government really cares about consultation and ensuring the voices of health care professionals, first responders and families are heard they can go out today and consult on the *Coroners Act*. We can still easily pass an amended version of it before the end of this Sitting.

Why won’t the minister agree to consult? What is the worst thing that can happen by agreeing to consult the Yukon Medical Association, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, Volunteer Ambulance Services Society Yukon and the hospital?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I suppose I forgot to object earlier in the answer to the last question about the personalizing of debate and I do find the language being used insulting.

I do think it’s an opportunity now to remind the members of this House and Yukoners that the Coroner’s Service provides a quasi-judicial investigation independent from government, law-enforcement, agencies and health authorities. That is not to say that we are not very keen to know what those organizations have to say about the effect of the *Coroners Act*. We have consulted publicly and broadly, asked for interventions, received interventions and comments and great suggestions that have been incorporated into this piece of legislation.

The independence of the Coroner’s Service is important to recall. There is a process through which we will be adopting and consulting for the purposes of engaging the public about the regulations that will come forward, many of which will be detailed and will provide the additional tools that the Coroner’s Service needs to serve Yukoners.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre inmates’ mental health

Ms. Hanson: The Yukon Review Board is an independent panel established under the *Criminal Code* to deal with individuals who are found to be unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible due to a mental disorder. When an individual is unfit or not criminally responsible, it is up to the review board to look at the history and psychiatric assessment information of the individual and make a disposition.

The disposition or ruling can be a discharge or direction for the individual to be held in a designated hospital or other restrictions in order to keep the individual and the public safe. Sometimes it is necessary to send individuals under the Yukon Review Board Outside to receive appropriate treatment and supervision that is not available in the Yukon.

How many individuals are currently under a Yukon Review Board disposition and how many of those individuals are currently placed outside of Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I take no issue with any of the description of the Yukon Review Board process or authority noted by the Leader of the Third Party. I do not have at my fingertips the number of individuals who are under the review board process or who are being treated through that process outside of the territory. I will endeavour to get those numbers for her.

Ms. Hanson: We appreciate that commitment from the minister.

When an individual is sent Outside to receive treatment, hopefully to improve their situation, one would expect that the review board would be following their progress. We know that the board must review the status of individuals under a disposition at least once a year to determine if they are still unfit to stand trial. Though the individual may be under the care of a facility or treatment centre, the public understanding is that the Yukon Review Board is ultimately responsible for the person, including their well-being. It is now known that an individual under a Yukon Review Board order at a facility outside of the Yukon died while incarcerated in a provincial remand centre.

Our question, Mr. Speaker, is: Where does the responsibility of the review board begin and end when directing an individual to treatment outside of the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, I don’t disagree with anything in the preamble to the question by the Leader of the Third Party. I do think that her question raises facts and, in particular, queries about a specific legal jurisdiction. That is a question that will require research in order to provide her with that information.

Again, I will endeavour to contact her outside of the Legislature in order to provide that, but it would not be advisable for me today to speculate about that. It is certainly a question that we are working on at the department with respect to another matter that is dealing with the jurisdiction of the review board.

Ms. Hanson: We do look forward to that additional information from the minister because, Mr. Speaker, a young man under the care and direction of the Yukon Review Board died in an Outside remand centre — that is the fact. In the past, he had also received services from Health and Social Services. The fact of the matter is that he is not the only person who has been sent away from family, community and Yukon to receive a level of care and supervision not offered here. We know that there are services Outside that provide better supports than here, but when do we as a community say “Enough”? Currently, the government is paying nearly \$2 million to Outside agencies and service providers. One agency alone receives over \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is a more general question: When will this government look seriously at the complex needs of Yukoners and start planning services for them here rather than sending them away from family and community?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. It is getting close to speaking in the Legislative Assembly about a specific case, and I want to be careful not to do that.

I certainly want to take the opportunity to note that, with some of the individuals who are subject to the review board, there are — as the member opposite noted — simply not the services available to treat their specific issues here in the territory. The review board — and not to speak for them, but certainly my experience in appearing before them is that they always try to take the opportunity to connect individuals to family and supports and to keep them in the territory if at all possible, but in some cases, that simply isn't possible. We have a great relationship with the forensic hospitals or the treatment centres in other jurisdictions that help Yukoners on our behalf.

Question re: Home warranty programs

Ms. White: The front page of Monday's *Whitehorse Star* reports that a condo corporation is suing a condo builder for construction deficiencies. This is what happens when there are no home warranty programs to protect homeowners. Their only recourse is the courts. I asked the minister a couple of weeks ago what work has been done on this file since the Assembly unanimously adopted my motion a year ago calling on the government to look into bringing in a home warranty program. At the time, his answer certainly didn't make it sound like a home warranty program is a priority for this government.

Now that this issue is on the front page of the paper and in front of the courts, will the minister acknowledge that the current system doesn't offer sufficient protection for homeowners?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question. What I will say is that, based on that motion that we debated here on the floor of the Legislature, the department is going through a work plan this year to investigate the home warranty program as per that motion.

I followed up with them recently to ask how that was progressing. I am sorry that I don't have a response here today, but I know that work is ongoing. I will say that we are committed to programs that ensure that homes are properly and safely constructed. We recognize the significant investment that Yukoners have in their homes and will explore ideas that could give homebuyers more peace of mind about the quality of their new home or renovation.

In the Yukon, we do not have a mandatory new home warranty program; however, a robust building inspection process exists for new buildings and renovations. The City of Whitehorse and Community Services help to ensure that these standards are met by performing building inspections in their respective areas of responsibility, and we encourage prospective homebuyers to work with their contractor or home builder to ensure that a warranty is in place prior to purchase.

Ms. White: It is interesting because building inspections were highlighted with concern for this very issue. Last week, the minister tabled a legislative return saying that the department conducted a cross-jurisdictional analysis. The problem is that I have another legislative return that the same minister tabled in June 2017 — more than a year ago — that speaks of how other jurisdictions, like British Columbia and

Manitoba, address this issue. So it seems like the cross-jurisdictional check was already done even before my motion was adopted.

The only new step that the minister is taking, according to last week's legislative return, is that a letter was sent out to the contractors association, the real estate association and real estate law firms.

Hopefully, sending letters is not a year's worth of work for the minister, but aside from that, why has he not also engaged homeowners to this day, a year after the motion was adopted?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I hope I can make it clear that it is not me who is physically doing this work — that it is the department, and I actually think they are doing a fair job. When I asked them to come back to let me know where they were in the process, it appeared to me that they were being diligent in their work. I have great faith in the department and in the work that they are doing, and I look forward to getting the report back.

Mr. Speaker, it is always a matter of process that we do a cross-jurisdictional scan whenever we start looking at policies and regulations to try to compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. You want to draw from the best that is out there. We may disagree here in this Legislature about what is best — that is totally fine — but I don't think it's right to suggest that the department isn't doing its work.

I am happy to return to the department again and get a further update for the member opposite. My understanding is that the work is ongoing over this fiscal year, and I look forward to the results of that work. I think that the point I want to emphasize is that we will continue to explore this issue and are committed to programs that ensure that homes are properly and safely constructed.

Ms. White: It is interesting, because this isn't about the work of the department; this is about the minister's priorities. I am convinced that if the minister said, "This is a priority and we need to move on it", the professionals at the department would get the job done. With all due respect, the minister's words, as nice as they sound, don't match his track record on the issue. A full year after this motion was adopted, all the minister has done is send a few letters and he hasn't even reached out to homeowners. How are we to believe that in all this time he will actually get the job done? If a unanimous motion by this Assembly wasn't enough to make this a priority for the minister, what will it take? Yukon homeowners deserve better protection, and a home warranty program has been proven to work in other jurisdictions. The least Yukoners deserve is a clear timeline from the minister to make up his mind.

When will the minister be done with his so-called "exploration" and be ready to make an actual decision on a home warranty program for Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: This is just fascinating timing. This morning, I happened to have a conversation with the Leader of the Third Party about this very thing and I did give her a timeline — that timeline was in it. I think I alluded to it in my earlier responses.

After we had the motion here in the Legislature, I turned to the department, I asked them about a timeline to do this, and they said to me that they would do it over this fiscal year — that is the 2018-19 fiscal year. When I turned back to the department and checked on them recently, they said that the work was underway and going well, and I anticipate a response by the end of this fiscal year. There's my commitment.

The direction that I gave, by the way, was to make sure that this happened because it was a motion that we had here and agreed upon in this Legislature. That's the reasonable thing to do. What I'm not doing is calling up homeowners myself, but if there are homeowners who have concerns, I remain totally open to receiving that information. I will certainly pass it on to the department that is doing this work.

Question re: McKinsey & Company association with Government of Yukon

Mr. Hassard: We know that the Deputy Premier invited and hosted a senior partner from McKinsey & Company to Yukon. This company was referenced in a story in *The New York Times* where it was stated that they produced a report identifying critics of the Saudi Arabia regime. Those critics were later arrested.

This company and a senior partner were tied to another scandal in South Africa. According to *The New York Times* report from June, they signed a \$700-million illegal contract with the South African government. To quote from the story: "I take responsibility," McKinsey's managing director, Dominic Barton, said in a recent interview." This is from June.

Does the Premier believe that it's appropriate for the Government of Yukon to associate with this firm?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to recap — I had the opportunity to participate in a discussion with Dominic Barton, to whom the Leader of the Official Opposition is referring, as well as Tosh Southwick and the deputy minister of Economic Development earlier this week.

I've also had the opportunity to do the opening address and introduce him for the Opportunities North conference and then had an opportunity to speak to local media in our scrum yesterday. I certainly don't condone some of the activities that have taken place in the Middle East. There have been a number of occasions when I have worked with the college to invite individuals to speak to hear their perspective.

It's interesting — today is poppy day. I had an opportunity to bring Roméo Dallaire there and speak. We've had First Nation leaders come and speak. I think it always helps to have that — especially in an academic setting — to hear different people's perspectives.

I did a quick scan just over the last week — the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, senior members from different political parties across the country, University of Waterloo — different individuals and organizations who continue to stand by and at least listen to these perspectives.

I'll wait for questions 2 and 3, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hassard: We heard this morning on the radio the Deputy Premier brush off reports of the Saudi government using the McKinsey report to arrest critics of the government as — quote: "... just one news story".

I don't know how many news stories it takes for the Deputy Premier to start to get concerned, but a quick Google news search this morning turned up 59,000 results when you searched this company in Saudi Arabia. To dismiss these reports, I think, is rather disappointing.

The New York Times reported this dictatorship as silencing their critics with the help of a document from the firm whose senior partner the Deputy Premier held a public event with. Given that the Deputy Premier now knows of these revelations, and given that there were revelations of a corruption scandal in South Africa that this company was involved in, would he invite them here to do a public event with him again?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition. What's a bit of a challenge is that I will leave it to my constituents and the Yukon business community, which I have worked with for many years, and the many NGOs to stand behind the record of what my decision-making is and if I take the proper values behind my decision-making and the individuals I associate with. Once again, I do not belittle activities that are happening.

The article that was presented by *The New York Times* — I'm guessing last Sunday — spoke of an activity the company took part in that took place in 2015. Once again, I don't think that data should be misused. I don't believe that companies should undertake this activity — if that's all accurate — but I also think this is a bit of the opposition trying a bit of a smear campaign. I understand that and Yukoners understand that.

Would I attend another talk by Dominic Barton if I was at the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference or Waterloo University? I probably would — and others; I think the discourse is good. But I'll wait for the third question and a little more smear, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hassard: Yesterday evening on CBC *Northbeat*, we saw footage of the Deputy Premier running interference against the local journalists to prevent them from being able to ask questions of Mr. Barton. Does the Premier believe that this is appropriate, for members of the Liberal Cabinet to interfere with journalists who are trying to do their job?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite is talking about local journalists who wanted to have a discussion with me. I believe the protocol that CBC stands by is if somebody is asked for an interview and they accept that opportunity, then there can be an interview. That situation was a little interesting. There was a bit of dialogue between the reporter and back to the cameraperson to run a camera, although there had not been consent for an interview. At that same time, I know that Dominic Barton had said he would do an interview but just didn't feel it was appropriate to speak to this specific topic, being that he was not a managing partner anymore.

Once again, I'm always open to speak to this topic — more questions next week. I really believe that I didn't

undertake anything that was inappropriate. I would hope that the Leader of the Official Opposition, if there is something I have done that is inappropriate, would please let me know and we can continue to talk about that in the Legislative Assembly.

I do want to thank the Yukon chamber for a great Opportunities North conference and the standing-room-only event that happened at the college. I once again look forward to continuing to work with our chambers.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Deputy Chair (Mr. Adel): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 207: *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Mr. Istchenko: Before I get into some questions today, I do want to thank the Deputy Minister of Finance for coming today. I welcome her to the Legislative Assembly and thank her for her time.

My first question is to the Premier. Can he tell us what date the government is going to close the government-run cannabis retail store?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will definitely give him time to get in line before we do so he sees the beautiful facility. I

haven't been in yet, other than well before it was open, but I will get in there and take a look.

We're going to go back and forth between the Yukon Party thinking that we should have immediately started this whole thing out with a private sector investment as opposed to us taking on that obligation now that the federal government has legalized cannabis in Canada, but I am going to continue to disagree with the member opposite. We talked just yesterday about price point. We know that when California legalized, the illicit market price went down almost 80 percent overnight.

If the member opposite knows of a business that could present a business case to a government where the price — where they would have to come into — had to be negotiated by the federal government, as far as excise tax, and where the distribution had to be controlled, just like liquor, through the territorial government, and then be able to provide a product that is registered through the federal government, where they don't really know the competition — which is the illicit market — they don't really know where that price point is going to end, I would love to know who they have up their sleeve to do that.

This is a responsibility that we don't take lightly. This is a regional responsibility that this territorial government believes we need to do first and foremost because of, not only just the legislative reasons and the regulatory reasons, but I also think it would be very hard for a private sector investment to be able to, from day one, get into this market and be competitive.

For this reason and this reason only, we don't expect a profit on this. All of the reports that have come out have said that within the first year there are no profits to be made here. I am not sure exactly what kind of business case the Yukon Party is looking for as far as getting somebody into a retail market where there are no profits, necessarily, with all of the excise tax and with all of the distribution considerations.

Again, we have been talking with private sector interests here in the Yukon. We are excited that there are going to be some options. There is some further legislation that has to happen on the edibles market as well, which is another product that may or may not be part of this picture. We believe that it is our responsibility to take on the brunt and make sure that we are ready for legalization. Anytime I have an opportunity to give a shout-out to the Liquor Corporation — to the board — and to the whole-of-government approach, when it comes to all of the different departments that have fed into the working groups that come along with this herculean task — it is a lot of work. Time will tell, but we don't anticipate being in this business for long, but we will be in this business for long enough to not set up the private sector for failure.

Mr. Istchenko: I gather that you are not going to be in the business forever, but there is no real date. I don't know if the Premier can have a little bit more of a timeline, but it would correlate to my other question: What date will the private sector be allowed to open cannabis stores in Yukon communities? When this government closes their cannabis store, will the private sector then be able to open their stores?

Will it be before? Will it be after? The Premier alluded to it earlier that if we know of someone — of course, we know of someone, because we have told them to get in contact with the government and the Premier has heard from people who want to open private stores. My question again is: When is the store going to close, and will the private sector be able to open before or after it closes — and some timelines, if at all possible?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am not going to speculate as to when that time happens. We definitely took a look at the regulations and the legislation from a hybrid perspective and understood that we would start and the private sector would get into this business. We continued to develop the regulations to support the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act* so that the territory was prepared when cannabis became legal on October 17. Our priorities for cannabis legislation are more than just the capital sales. The private sector coming into a market where, by all accounts and from very conservative think tanks saying that there are not going to be a lot of profits here in this industry because of the set-up costs, but also the educational campaigns and social considerations — our mental health hubs — we believe that we have to be there and present as this becomes a legal market. I think that is the conscientious thing for a government to do.

I think what the members opposite are trying to get at is that they think that we are going to be in this business right up through our term and into the next term, but we do not think so. We really are waiting for us to — one of the biggest waits was to see that the sky doesn't fall. I think there are always conversations about legalization that make you wonder if people think that marijuana has now become available because it is legalized.

That is simply not true. The issues of marijuana are known. Canada, as a country, has a high proportion of users compared to anywhere else in the world. Yukon has huge rates as well. There are huge health concerns and educational campaigns that we want to be involved in with the legalization.

To set the minds of the members opposite at ease, we never anticipated being in this business for long, but we do believe that, in this particular case, we have to be there at the beginning for legislative, health and business reasons. I think we have done a good job of getting ready. Again, when you take a look at the store — everything there, the way that they hired staff, the way that we had temporary assets in that building — all things lead to the fact that we are waiting to be able to hive this off to the private sector to make sure that we have another business consideration here in the Yukon for the private sector to enjoy.

Mr. Istchenko: I really didn't get a timeline, but the Minister of Community Services speculated in this Legislative Assembly that it would be in the spring. Does the Premier agree with him?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The good news about the Minister of Community Services is that he will be available in Committee of the Whole to stand up and answer a plethora of questions from the members opposite. I would ask them if they have any

specific questions for him that they wait until then. But again, if the minister is confident in a certain timeline, then I am confident in my minister.

Mr. Istchenko: Regarding the large shipment costs for cannabis from online government-run retail stores — we brought this up in Question Period — it was mentioned by CKRW that the cost was \$12. So some questions: Is the Premier able to tell us that this is the same cost for every community or just Whitehorse? Will the government-run store charge more for shipping to the communities if it isn't? Can the Premier also tell us if the \$12 the cannabis store is charging for shipping goes 100 percent to Canada Post? Is Canada Post charging the government-run cannabis corporation \$12 for shipping on something as small as a joint?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We keep hearing this number of \$12 or \$13. We heard \$18 from the members opposite before. That is not the lowest price per gram, as the members opposite know. When we are talking about shipping costs, we can get that information to the member opposite.

I want to talk about the negotiations that we did on a federal basis to make sure that we had the lowest possible cost before legalization. There was a huge conversation going back and forth about the excise tax and how much of that was going to be shared from the federal government and the territorial government, and the feds started out wanting most of it. Then, when it got to the Finance ministers meetings, it got down to 50-50. All of the regions did an excellent job of identifying the cost pressures, — whether it is education, health and social services or working with the RCMP — and how those costs are related to the territorial and provincial governments compared to the federal government.

In that conversation, we were very happy to get a 25/75 split, so that 75 cents per \$1 of an excise tax comes back to the Yukon. That was a big effort, but again it was based upon evidence from all jurisdictions and it was a good conversation to have.

Now, in that conversation as well, you have to remember that we just have the GST, whereas other jurisdictions have higher prices as well — higher prices from a harmonized sales tax — so we do have a benefit as a government comparatively to offer the product for a lower price than other jurisdictions. The conversation was about \$10 a gram and we significantly reduced that price. I'm very happy to have that low cost.

Now, whether it's a private consideration or a public conversation, the shipping charges are going to be the shipping charges. We are focusing in on making sure that our price point as a government is as low as possible because I'm assuming that the reasoning for this question is based upon competing with that illicit market and making sure that we have the best ability to do that. I am as concerned as the member opposite — now that it's legalized, it will be interesting to see what the illicit market does for their price point. As I have mentioned before, we have seen other jurisdictions where that illicit market went crashing down comparatively. That is a really important part of the conversation. Equally as important — I would even say more important — is the fact that through the distribution and the

regulation of a controlled substance, of a controlled drug, the harms of extra chemicals let alone, dare I say, other drugs being in a product is being taken care of when you have a product that has been distributed and regulated through the federal government and into the territorial and provincial government.

There is lots going on, but members opposite can be assured that, when we are looking at the price per gram, we're doing our utmost to be competitive while at the same time having an education campaign, an enforcement campaign and a legislative agenda that works. We are prepared for the next installment as we look at the federal government and what they're going to do with more products in this field like, for example, the edibles market.

Mr. Istchenko: I was asking about the \$12 in shipping and basically the question was: Is that going to be the same when it goes to the communities or is it going to be more expensive to ship to the communities?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That would be a flat rate of \$12 everywhere and again, a private sector is still going to have to figure out shipping as well. That would be a consideration regardless of whether it's a government or a private sector interest.

Under being open and transparent, if the members opposite would like to take a tour of the cannabis facility tomorrow morning, then we would love to host them and give them a tour of the facility. If there are any other questions that they have specifically for the amazing manager and her staff, this would be welcome from this side of the House.

Mr. Istchenko: Yesterday in Question Period, the Minister of Community Services stated that the federal government is requiring single joints to be shipped in oversized boxes much larger than the actual items.

Just to confirm — the federal government insists that a single joint has to be shipped in a six-inch by four-inch by four-inch box. Could the Premier or minister provide a legislative return indicating where the federal law states that a joint has to be shipped in that size of a box?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would respectfully ask the member opposite that if he has any questions for the federal government to ask them those questions. We are concerned about packaging, that's for sure. We're concerned about the extra amounts of plastics that are being used in the shipping of these materials and we will be hoping that this conversation will be continuing with the Liquor Board, the Liquor Corporation, the minister responsible and the working group — and also me. I will hopefully have a chance to be able to speak directly to Finance ministers meetings and to the Council of the Federation when it comes to packaging. It is a big issue. This is a lot of plastic that we're seeing in these packages, but if the member opposite has specific questions about sizes of packaging from the federal government, then he should ask that government.

Mr. Istchenko: I had just explained the size of the shipping box and I was looking to see where, or how, the store knew that it had to be shipped in that size. There should be some information out there that the department has. If the

minister doesn't have it at his hands today, if he could find it that would be wonderful.

Can the Premier also update us on how many supply agreements, contracts and purchase agreements the government has for cannabis supply?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As we work on the finalization of the regulations to support the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*, there are lots of questions, for sure. Currently, the answer to the member opposite's question is that we have eight, but I do want to go on a little bit here about our priorities.

Our priorities for cannabis complement those of the federal government — that's an important piece to remember as well: Providing for the legal, controlled access to cannabis, and again, to displace that illicit and criminal activity and also to prioritize public health, public safety and harm reduction, with a focus on protecting our youth from the negative health effects of smoking and ingesting marijuana.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation, as the designated distributor corporation, is responsible for the distribution and retail sale of cannabis in Yukon. We've heard questions from the opposition before about how we lavishly spent \$3 million on this product. Again, it needs to be said, well yes, anybody would have to buy the product, and then there are going to be profits from that product as well. I just need to state that, because we've heard the Yukon Party say a few different times about how this is a lot of money, but yet, we see and hear stories right across Canada of people running out of supply right away.

At Opportunities North we heard from distributors down south — some of the concerns that they have is that there will be a glut in the market over the first six months. After that, things will stabilize and they'll actually be flush with product right across Canada, according to these conversations that I've heard from Alberta companies who are working with the governments there.

It's interesting; we do have eight companies that we're working with right now. Distribution — that responsibility lies with the government — same with alcohol — so these are things that we need to make sure the members opposite understand as we make the debate public. It's an important piece.

Another piece of information again from packaging: packaging requirements are set federally, so we are writing to the federal government about our concerns about packaging; so we do share the concerns of the Yukon Party as far as packaging from the federal government goes. Again, if there are specific questions he has about why the federal government does certain things, again we would ask him to send that conversation over to the federal government.

We are working hard to be ready and to accept applications for private sector retail licences. It would be great if we could get that going as soon as possible in 2019 and see all the legislation and regulation work that has been done. It is a big task and I do believe that having the Liquor Corporation operating the temporary cannabis retail store in Whitehorse makes a lot of sense, as well as the e-commerce site to ensure that Yukoners have access to purchase non-medical cannabis.

The store and the e-commerce sites are both up and running. We have heard some stories right across Canada that it might not have been such a smooth transition. I'm so extremely proud of the government and the workers and the team who got us to the finish line in time.

There were a couple of little snags when it came to online for the first hour, but just a real group effort. I really believe the public servants deserve huge recognition for a milestone accomplishment in the Yukon. It's one of those things: you don't know what it looks like until it happens. The sky didn't fall, and now we're very busy to make sure that we educate people about the harms when it comes to youth engaging with cannabis, but also getting away from that illicit market. We're hearing so many horrible stories Canada-wide when it comes to drugs in our communities. Any step we can take to separate the illicit market from a controlled substance is something that, on this side of the House, we will support.

Mr. Istchenko: I will remind the Premier that distribution only lies with the government because the Liberals decided to go that way. Pharmacies are able to do it without the government's help — just imagine the profits to the private sector instead of government coffers.

I had asked about the purchase agreements the government has and he answered that. What is the total value of the purchase agreements, and how much product do those agreements represent — amount to — a number?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think we are just going to continue to agree to disagree on how a regional government should be — and has responsibilities to be — here and now when it comes to the legalization of what was once an illicit substance.

The member opposite can talk about pharmacies, but you could also talk about liquor and the regulations on tobacco and the monitoring that needs to be there, in our opinion. I believe that we are doing the right thing. If the narrative is that they think that we are never going to get out of this business, I guess we don't have a crystal ball, but I am sure Yukoners will see that we mean business when we say that we want to get out of that business.

When it comes to sales, there was an initial order-in-council and there was an initial order, I guess, for \$3 million. Sales to date — these are fluid numbers. We have to make sure of two things — one is that we put enough money up front to make sure that we had enough product, because all of the stories, all of the reports and all of the analysis that was happening up until legalization was that, Canada-wide, there was not going to be enough supply. We made sure that we had enough agreements with enough companies and wholesalers to have product. Sales up until yesterday at the store and at the online store are around \$218,000, with 4,500 store customers and 3,100 site visits. Again, if this was hived off to the private sector, we probably wouldn't get these numbers.

There is a lot of statistical relevance when it comes to the legalization that is really important for the government to be involved with, let alone putting out something that, by all accounts, there isn't going to be a profit on and to saddle the private sector with being responsible for the selling of a

product that, by all accounts, doesn't seem to have a big profit in the first year. We think that we have made a good decision, and we are looking forward to working with the private sector once we get past the first few days and months and figure out how we can make sure that transition is smooth and we don't saddle a company with something that may fail from the private sector perspective.

Also, you have to look at the difference between — the member opposite talks about pharmaceuticals, but we are talking about intoxicants here. We are talking about legal cannabis being an intoxicant, and so you have to compare oranges to oranges on this one. I am not sure particularly — we have seen different votes from the Yukon Party as far as moving forward on particulars about this, but I am interested if the members opposite are in favour of legalization of cannabis. We know that they want the private sector involved, but we haven't really heard from them necessarily on how they feel on the actual legalization, which is an interesting conversation that is happening right across Canada.

Mr. Istchenko: In the Premier's comments — did the Premier just suggest earlier that the Government of Yukon orders and distributes tobacco? I think he said that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We work with the companies that provide that. We do have an obligation to make sure that the taxes being paid on that drug — on tobacco — are accounted for, and that is how we are involved in that market: making sure that the taxes are paid. As the member opposite knows, we have increased those costs to try to get ourselves realigned with other neighbouring jurisdictions, but that is where our participation is involved with tobacco.

Mr. Istchenko: Last week, there were some reports that the government-run store only received about 40 percent of its supply. Can the Premier or the minister update us on that — provide some clarity around that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: That is correct — 40 percent of a bigger amount that we are ready for and we have that commitment for. Again, that is planning — just to make sure that we don't run out — that is the hope. Again, on the first day I believe we ran out of some specific strains, but we did have lots of alternatives. Again, 40 percent up front with a commitment for more — just to make sure the supply chain continues throughout that time frame where, in the first six months, there are lots of studies and analysis that say it will be hard to secure additional sources. I think it was very savvy of the Yukon Liquor Corporation to pick the percentages for warehouse supply but also for a commitment with these companies and wholesalers to make sure that we have a continuing supply as we turn to the first few months of legalization.

Mr. Istchenko: The Premier mentioned regulations, so a couple of questions: Will there be public consultation on the regulations? When will they be completed? When will those regulations come into force?

Hon. Mr. Silver: To set the stage, first and foremost, there have been lots of conversations with the private sector as we move from the initial date of legalization and get through the bumps of that and supply. There will be more to come, as

far as dialogue. This is one of those things where the department and all of the ministers who are working on this are really champing at this bit to make sure that we get more information out. These things will happen in time.

We have been doing an awful lot of engagement in the Yukon in the last two years. I am very proud of the amount of consultation that we have been doing and we will continue down that path — more to come on those specifics. We know that some groups and stakeholders in the past have felt that they have not been adequately engaged on important issues. That is why we changed the approach of how we engage in the Yukon on important issues. We want to get better at this and I believe in the last two years we have been getting better at this. We have committed to continuous improvements and learning from our mistakes. We are very proud of the efforts that have been taken over the past year with things like developing a tourism strategy, for example, or talking Yukon parks or with the cannabis legalization. It has been a huge effort for public engagement and working with stakeholders, working with the private sector.

In the past year alone, we have hosted over 38 engagements on engageyukon.ca, and we are asking Yukoners to rate those experiences to make sure that every time another month passes — another season passes — that we get better and better at that engagement and continue to meet our commitments with continuous improvement in the aspect of consultation. There is more to come specifically on cannabis and how we're going to get out of that business. Thanks to the whole-of-government approach from the Minister of Community Services, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Economic Development, this has been a comprehensive file. I'm extremely proud of the departments.

Mr. Istchenko: So will there be public consultation on the regulations moving forward? When will those regulations be completed? When will those regulations come into force?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm at a place right now where I'm confident in the information that has come out of the corporation. We have had public dialogue and engagement on the cannabis legislation — very comprehensive for the legislative piece. We're going to continue consultation moving forward. The minister has spoken about spring 2019 — again, we will continue and we will update the members opposite as these consultations and conversations continue. I have nothing more to add today other than what the minister has communicated through his department and press releases and here in the Legislature, but when more information becomes more available, I will let the members opposite know.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that.

I just want to go back to one thing. I want to clarify — the \$12 for shipping that the cannabis corporation is charging — does 100 percent of that go to Canada Post? Does the minister know that answer?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm assuming that the member opposite is asking if we as a government are keeping any of

the revenues from the postage costs. I'm looking at a verbal yes — and the answer is no, we're not.

Mr. Istchenko: How many employees are currently working at the cannabis corporation in retail, warehousing, distribution, ordering, et cetera? What are the plans for those employees once the government shuts down the government-run retail store?

Hon. Mr. Silver: When we looked at staffing — both the retail store and the warehousing of the product — we were making these considerations fully knowing that we were not going to be in this business in the long term. For example, the manager signed a contract — not a full-time commitment. By the way, that person is amazing — a great and very enthusiastic person to meet — and really wants to help to get rid of the stigma of this as being an illicit market — and coming into the legal trade.

When it comes to department employees, or FTEs, what we tried to do most was to borrow from other departments — borrow from the Yukon Liquor Corporation — so that we weren't hiring full-time new employees for something that we know that we are getting out of the business of. I think the department did a fantastic job of doing that.

Those are very specific numbers. We did invite the members opposite to a tour tomorrow. We can have those numbers available for the member opposite by tomorrow's tour if there is anybody from the Yukon Party going on that tour.

Mr. Istchenko: I guess that would extend my question because the Premier brought it up. Across all of the government — dating back to the drafting legislation, consultation, enforcement training and everything — how many FTEs were dedicated to this, and what was the total cost to the government? If I can maybe get that in a legislative return? I know I won't be there at the tour tomorrow. The Premier had offered to get those FTE numbers, but I know there were a lot of FTEs from different departments that started working on this — like I said — back at the drafting of the legislation, the consultation, the enforcement, the training and a lot of the other stuff that went with it. If I could get that in a formal legislative return, that would be good.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Other than the FTE numbers that we're going to be giving the member opposite, there is no additional cost. I remember in the Legislative Assembly over a five-year period asking the Yukon Party how much money they spent on litigation for the Peel. When they gave us those numbers, they didn't calculate all of the Finance department and Justice department public servants working on these files, so it is the same thing.

When you take a look at just the regular business of moving forward on legislation, the regular business of working with the departments — this is the job of the public servants and that is their job as we move forward in whatever direction. Whether it is the legalization of cannabis or hauling back the legislative changes made by the Yukon Party with the ATIPP act or moving forward on the *Societies Act*, these are the things that take a whole-of-government approach. This is the job of the legislators — in Justice — and the

departmental officials. Again, there are no extra costs other than the FTEs, and we will get those numbers for the member opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that and look forward to seeing those numbers. One thing just popped back into my head about the shipping. The Premier is saying that Canada Post charges basically the same — shipping in Whitehorse or shipping to Old Crow — and also that the corporation is not keeping any revenues from the shipping costs.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Real shipping is \$14 to \$15 per package to communities, and it is \$10 to \$11 in Whitehorse. What we did was set a flat rate, so that flat rate is \$12 so as to not create a barrier between rural and urban. I guess that understanding might be where the member is getting his questions from. When you take that average of the cost to extend — it is more expensive the farther you go from Whitehorse. Again, we have taken that as an aggregate. We have taken that and said we will do a \$12 flat rate. We are not collecting money — and I have been very clear on that — when it comes to the postal services to ship marijuana. What we have done — to make sure there is not a divide between rural and urban communities — is we have set a flat rate. Even though Whitehorse shipping would cost us less — \$10 to \$11 — shipping to those communities would average out at about \$14 to \$15 per package to those communities. I hope I have answered the member opposite's question.

Mr. Istchenko: Just for clarification then — if the shipping costs a lot more to ship to the communities, will the government be paying those shipping costs but only charging the proponent the \$12 or what the Premier just said in this House?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Yes, the member opposite is correct. Actually, if you take a look at what we're doing here to try to average out the cost to Yukoners, we may actually be subsidizing a bit. There is not going to be more spent by Yukoners than what we are actually paying on this. We have done it in a conscientious way to make sure that we average it out to make it fair and, in the end, we may actually be subsidizing a bit of the cost to mail out the product.

Mr. Istchenko: Another question would be: When will the information and details on the new condo corporation regulations for condo boards regarding cannabis be ready? Will there be training or information sessions for condo corporations regarding obligations, responsibilities and the rights around cannabis?

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is under the responsibility of Community Services, so I would ask the member opposite — as Community Services does have an expense in the supplementary budget and will be appearing here in Committee of the Whole — to address all questions that are related to Community Services at that particular time.

Mr. Istchenko: This month, British Columbia revised its mandatory course on the responsible service of alcohol for bars and restaurants to include a section on identifying patrons impaired by alcohol and cannabis. Has the Yukon done the same, or is it planning on doing that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you to British Columbia for such an endeavour. We will be doing something similar, and that is on the way.

Mr. Istchenko: Can I get the Premier to repeat his answer for me please?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The answer was yes.

Mr. Istchenko: Is this work being done internally or will it be contracted?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It will be internal. We're taking the BARS approach — the Be A Responsible Server approach — to liquor and we're trying to apply that to the cannabis industry. That work will be done internally but, again, we will be partnering with stakeholders as we move forward.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the Premier for that. Can the Premier let us know the status of the collaborative framework he promised the mining industry to address timelines and reassessment?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Can I get the member opposite to just ask the question again and I will answer?

Mr. Istchenko: I was just wondering about the status of the collaborative framework that the Premier had promised the mining industry to address timelines and reassessment.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The work continues on the collaborative framework. We're just working on finalizing our details for a tripartite meeting that will take place during geoscience — where we will see corporate leadership, government and First Nation leaders come to the table. We have discussed the agenda for that collaborative framework in our last two MOU chief subcommittee meetings — one in Dawson City the day after the last Yukon Forum and one about three weeks before that. The work continues — shared priorities — and continues to focus on how to reduce duplication, streamline regulation and, at the same time, address some of the long-standing concerns by First Nation governments.

Deputy Chair: Order. We seem to have a little trouble hearing. If we can check that mic or perhaps, Mr. Pillai, when you answer again, you can just move over one mic.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The other day in Question Period, two days before cannabis became legal, we raised a number of questions regarding obligations and responsibilities of employers once cannabis became legal. Those questions came to us straight from employers who felt that they were left in a state of not having any information. At the time, the Minister of Community Services said, "Don't worry; everyone has the information they need."

As I said, those questions came straight to us from a number of employers who had not received the information, even after trying to. Despite the minister's claim, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board issued an information document for employers 14 hours after cannabis became legal, which was a little odd considering the government had a long time to prepare and let everyone know what was going on. Could the Premier let us know why they waited until after the legalization to send this information to the employers?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Not being responsible for Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, but again, when departments act, we assume they are acting as soon as they possibly can. If the member opposite is assuming some kind of coincidence there, it might just be that — a coincidence as far as timelines — but I am assuming that the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is not going to wait on information; they are going to give it out as soon as they are ready to do so.

Mr. Istchenko: I just found it interesting that the minister said, "Don't worry; everyone has the information they need." Then 14 hours after cannabis became legal, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board issued an information document.

According to the government website, one of the key themes this government heard during the initial engagement on the *Liquor Act* review — and if the Premier can actually give us an update on the status of the *Liquor Act* review — was that the government should review the rules around minimum and maximum liquor prices. Can we get a status on the *Liquor Act* review? Can the Premier let us know what sort of policy changes the government is considering in this area?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Work is ongoing, and I don't have any update for the member opposite right now but, as updates become available, I will let him know.

Mr. Istchenko: Will the Premier then be able to update us on the status of the warning labels on liquor and beer in the territory?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, I don't have any updates to share about liquor labels right now.

Mr. Istchenko: We know there were some stories over the last years about the disputes with major alcohol manufacturers around the warning labels. Can the Premier, or maybe the minister, update us on the status of those disputes?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I do not have any updates for the member opposite.

Mr. Istchenko: Does the minister have an update on that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We do not have an update for the member opposite right now. I do have, interestingly enough, a legislative return submitted by the Minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board from October 16 to the Member for Lake Laberge, following up on the implementation of legalization of recreational cannabis as far as information being put out there to the general public when it comes to legalization of recreational cannabis — questions like the responsibility and liability for employers with respect to the potential impairment, also what help will the government provide to help employers determine impairment with regard to legal cannabis, also a question on the case of workplace incidents investigation and what tools will be used to determine whether cannabis impairment was a factor — all submitted before legalization.

Mr. Istchenko: According to the "what we heard" document, there was support for changes to retail channels and rules as they apply to retailers, such as stand-alone beer and wine stores, sales in grocery stores or remote sales. Can

the Premier or the minister comment: Is the government considering any of these options?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Suffice it to say that there is consultation ongoing as we go through the regulations. A lot of different opinions have been given as we've gone out and talked with business and stakeholders, and those consultations are ongoing.

Mr. Istchenko: One more thing, before I turn it over to my colleague, about warning labels: Are they still being applied today?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The study has been completed.

Mr. Istchenko: Are there still warning labels being applied then? Are the warning labels being applied in every community?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We're back to the original labeling now that the process has been done.

Mr. Hassard: I will stick with the marijuana questions for a few minutes, if we can, since that seems to be the line that we have been following.

The Premier talked about, in terms of shipping, that if there was a deficit, the government would cover it. What happens if there is a surplus in — I guess we will call it — the shipping account, for lack of a better term?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is highly unlikely but we would readjust. We're not trying to make money on shipping.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly wasn't insinuating anything. I just was curious what would happen if that was the case.

I have another question regarding the training part of when all the training was taking place when marijuana was becoming legalized or about to be legalized. On the public contract registry, there is a contract for Appendo Learning Systems for \$22,000 for the development of Be A Responsible Server. Did that have anything — you can't hear me? I can't talk any louder, so we have a problem. It says the mic is on. The blue light is on. The button is not pushed.

The tender for Appendo Learning Systems for Be A Responsible Server — the direct award contract for the fiscal year of 2017-18 — the start date on it was January 18, 2018, the end date, April 30, 2018 — \$22,000 — did that have anything to do with the legalization of marijuana? Was that training for that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: There were a lot of initiatives that were ongoing at that time to make sure that we were ready for the sale of cannabis. I don't know specifically. We will have to get back to the member opposite, as far as if that particular contract was specifically for cannabis legislation. I can get back to the member opposite for that.

Mr. Hassard: If the Premier could get us that information, we would certainly appreciate it.

I have a couple of questions regarding housing. First, I was wondering if we could get updates or if there is anything new for the housing action plan. I know that we heard the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation mention it a few times in the Legislature here, so I am just curious if she could, or if the Premier could, point to anything new or anything that has been added to the housing action plan.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Our strategic initiatives and partnerships to increase affordable housing in Yukon are guided — as members opposite know — by the housing action plan for Yukon. The pillars of the plan do support housing options for Yukoners at all stages in their lives. We are extremely excited that the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation is taking a second term on a national level as the chair of housing initiatives. Again, anytime that we have the opportunity on a federal basis to explain the differences of Yukon to other jurisdictions and also to have a voice at the table that has decades of experience when it comes to self-governing First Nations and those considerations on a national level, it is very important and it is always great for Yukon. In the last year, we have increased the housing options available to Yukoners by extending the municipal matching rental construction grant and launching the developer-build loan program and also initiating the housing initiative fund, which will provide funding for new housing projects for Yukon.

Seniors are a priority for this government and we are committed to working with the public, stakeholders and partners to more clearly define what aging in place means to each community under the category of housing. We are also providing housing for vulnerable Yukoners by building a 16-unit Housing First build, supporting Blood Ties construction and also the Steve Cardiff tiny home community. We are also continuing to make land available to support the construction of new housing for Yukoners.

This includes land development work in Whistle Bend and in Yukon communities. That is actually one of the supplementary items. We do have an increase because of the added pressures and need for land. That is one of the line items that are in the budget — it is nice to finally get to one. We are committed to maximizing those opportunities available through that national housing strategy by working with our partners to implement priorities, as outlined in the housing action plan for Yukoners, and also through the Safe at Home plan and the forthcoming indigenous housing strategy as well — much more to come on that.

I believe that we have nearly completed the review on social housing, which will initiate a new approach over the coming years, and we have initiated a new approach to staff housing. We will continue to work throughout our recommended options this fall to make sure that we support the Government of Yukon staff in Yukon communities and promote economic growth in those communities as well.

Mr. Hassard: I was wondering if the Premier could maybe just give us a few details on this new approach to staff housing in communities.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I wish I could, but we are not there yet. When information comes in, we will make it available. It is really important that we are continuing to work with staff housing and to make sure that is available to Yukoners.

In the 2018-19 budget, just to continue on with the members opposite's questions when it comes to investments, the 2018-19 budget highlighted close to \$40 million in investment in housing and new building lots, including:

\$6 million for affordable housing; allocating \$2.4 million for the northern housing fund; \$3.6 million for the housing initiative fund; \$15 million to develop new lots in Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse, and of course, we know that there are added pressures there as the supplementary budget has shown; \$1.8 million to plan and develop rural lots; \$8.9 million to improve existing housing; and I think \$2.7 million was allocated for Housing First residences for vulnerable people.

Regarding staff housing, we will let the public servants do their work. We are waiting for the evidence to come in — taking a look at the analysis and making sure that we are providing services in each community based upon community need, and that is the most important piece. I know that the member opposite has been to the Association of Yukon Communities conversations and knows that, as we talk about housing, the concerns in Faro are different from the concerns in Dawson City or in his community of Teslin. They are working to make sure that we are finding efficiencies in all departments. Again, we are initiating an analysis there as well, and if we have any more information, we will gladly make it available to the members opposite.

Mr. Hassard: This analysis that the Premier is speaking of — is this some kind of community consultation that is taking place? Who is doing the analysis? Who are they talking to? Who are they getting the information from for this analysis?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I gave the member opposite the information. Internally, we are taking a look at housing and there is more to come on that.

Mr. Hassard: At the start of that, the Premier said that they have launched a new approach into staff housing in the community. Is it actually launched to do something or what exactly are you getting at? What has been launched? I asked what is new and you said you have launched this new thing and you are doing this analysis. I guess I am asking: What exactly does it entail?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What we have launched is for housing, to take a look at how we can most efficiently work with all communities to provide housing in those communities — launched.

Mr. Hassard: In regard to community housing advisory boards, have there been any changes made in terms of the roles and responsibilities of community advisory housing boards?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is the same process — no changes.

Deputy Chair: Introduction of visitors outside of the regular time.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Kent: I just wanted to draw the House's attention to the gallery. Two people sitting up there are very important to me: my wife Amanda, who joined us during this Sitting and previous Sittings, and also my son Eli Kent, who is no stranger to this House, but I think this is his first time during this current session of the Legislative Assembly. He visited us

before in 2015. I would just ask all members to welcome Amanda and especially Eli to the House here today.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: My understanding was that there have been some changes made to the — I'm such a computer genius — the programming in the computer system for the Yukon Housing Corporation for the housing managers in the communities so that there is no longer the involvement of the board in choosing who is moving into houses. That's obviously something that has changed and that's one of the things that I was curious about. I believe that would be considered a change in roles or responsibilities of the local advisory board. I guess maybe the Premier could confirm if that is that the case. Do the local advisory boards no longer go through the applications to determine who is eligible or who receives housing in the communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm happy to say that the Yukon Housing Corporation — as it expands its role in Yukon communities, we look at the housing navigators as a means in which to provide necessary supports to clients who are accessing units in the communities. We have a rating system that determines clients — how they fit into the criteria of accessing houses in terms of more imminent need versus those who are on the wait-list. The computer system does that rating system for us. I think the staff can't really manipulate it. The objective is to neutralize and provide supports where necessary, but we do have housing navigators and we have the tenant relations officers who provide direct support to clients in our communities. That's exactly how we provide service delivery.

Mr. Hassard: I thank the minister for that. I'm not sure — I know my head's kind of stuffed up. Maybe my ears are plugged too, but my question was: Does the local advisory board still determine who receives housing or is it completely on the computer through the point system as determined by the computer?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the question around whether or not the community advisory board makes decisions and take on the role of allocating units, I think we are, in terms of looking at essential needs of individual clients — that is not determined by an advisory board.

We have an advanced process that we're looking at to ensure that for every client who comes into Yukon Housing Corporation — whether a client of Health and Social Services or Yukon Housing Corporation — we ensure we provide the supports they require and that the department provides support through a navigator and through the tenant relations officers.

We are modernizing, so we are looking at the role, as we move with the advisory committees in our communities and their efficiencies. Of course, there are opportunities for the community advisory boards to perhaps grow as well and look at some input from them on efficiencies.

Mr. Hassard: If I had a question for the minister, it would be: How does she see the advisory boards in the communities growing? What could possibly cause them to grow if their roles and responsibilities are actually decreasing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Interesting question. The communities are changing. As the communities evolve, we see added pressures in the communities and we see an aging population, so when we speak about housing and housing access in our communities, we really need to modernize and look at providing services that are essential and meet individuals' needs in the communities. As we expand the scope of services through the Yukon Housing Corporation and through the budgetary process and the service delivery process, it's really incumbent on us to look at modernizing and providing efficiencies, especially when we're looking at rural Yukon communities.

We speak a lot about the programs that we have and the link between health and housing around the Housing First initiative. We're looking at every door being the right door, looking at opportunities to be safe in your own home and looking at initiatives to ensure that the funding and the resources that are available in Whitehorse are also extended to the communities. When we speak about modernization, that's exactly what we need to look at, because 10 years ago is not where we are today. We have a growing population, we have an aging population and we have a booming economy, meaning that we need to start looking at efficiencies in our communities.

Mr. Hassard: Not quite sure what any of that really meant, but I'll try one more time.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Hassard: Okay, thanks. I'll continue.

The question I asked was: If the advisory boards' roles and responsibilities are decreasing, what does the minister see as growing in terms of the advisory boards in the communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't recall saying that the role was decreasing. I talked about modernizing. I talked about added pressures in the communities and looking at meeting the demand where the demand is needed, ensuring that we work with the Yukon Housing Corporation Board and that we look at efficiencies in our communities, because every community is different, as we know.

We have some unincorporated communities that have no services whatsoever, and we try to align the services and supports for each one of those communities.

As we look at the community advisory board, we look at opportunities in some of these communities that perhaps don't have efficient services. Modernization could mean a lot of things. It means implementation of resources that we receive and ensuring that it gets out to rural Yukon communities in an efficient way — that every individual who requires support is given the support and the advice that we receive from the advisory board or from the Yukon Housing Corporation board of directors or from community partners all feeds into an overall modernization and efficiency of services.

Mr. Hassard: I am going to try this one more time — maybe I will focus in. Okay, I will use Teslin as an example. The Teslin Housing Advisory Board is now no longer responsible for determining who receives a house. The minister just told us here a few minutes ago that their role is

growing in other ways. So again, maybe if I am more specific: For Teslin and Watson Lake, how are the roles growing and expanding for those community advisory boards?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think the question was answered a couple of times. As far as when communities are modernizing and when technologies are modernizing, new pressures do come, and so we will be relying on these boards and communities throughout all the communities to also modernize and to change responsibilities, and that work will be ongoing. The member is looking for something specific. This work is ongoing and so the answers will be ongoing as well. I think the minister responsible has answered the question a couple of times. It might not be enough information for the member opposite, but again, I think he can understand that, as we modernize and as we move forward as societies, we have new obligations and that work is ongoing.

Mr. Hassard: I understand modernizing and moving on, but clearly the answer from the minister made absolutely no sense, but anyway — let's try something else.

I had written a letter to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation on June 26, 2017, specifically asking about one unit because, as everyone here in the Legislature knows, housing has been a big issue in Faro in terms of selling. The town has sold several units and Yukon Housing Corporation has been sitting on three units in Faro that are out of service and obviously not going back into service. I had written a letter to this minister, as I said, on June 26 asking about one of those units in particular — and the unit number is 862100. I received a response back from the minister in August 2017 saying that these units were in poor condition and, due to the scope of major repairs, these units will not be brought back into service, as they have been deemed beyond economical repair, that Yukon Housing Corporation's intent is to remove these units permanently from their stock.

It is 14 or 15 months later, and I am wondering if the minister could provide us with any update on where the Housing Corporation is in terms of moving those three units out of their stock?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The information that the member is asking for specifically as to whether one unit is out of stock or not — I will certainly follow up with the department. With regard to addressing housing needs and looking through a budgetary process, the department is looking at each community's needs and aligning that according to the budget process.

Mr. Hassard: I think that selling these units off would help with the budgetary process. I would appreciate it if it is possible for the minister, through a legislative return, to provide me with an update on some timelines on when these units are going to be sold. I have been talking to a couple of individuals over the last couple of years who were hoping to purchase these units. I have asked them to wait patiently because it was coming, because I have a letter saying that it is going to happen. Could we receive that information from the minister — hopefully with some timelines on when those units will be removed from the housing stock?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will provide the member opposite with the information, but I will not endeavour to put forward a legislative return. I can get that information and note that we are not — as I understand it — proposing to sell the units as the member opposite noted — perhaps I heard wrong. As we go through the exercise of the reviews and needs of the communities, we will take into consideration all of our communities and, in particular, where we are with units that we take out of the system. As the member opposite knows, a lot of units that we have in Yukon Housing Corporation stock are well over 30 years old and not a lot of resources have been put into that housing stock. Modernization is really something that we want to consider when we look at bringing the buildings up to the national building standards and ensuring that they meet building code requirements. That assessment is being done right now on all of the housing stock across Yukon — all units that are under the management of Yukon Housing Corporation.

Mr. Hassard: With respect to these units, the assessment has been done. The letter says that the assessment has been done. The units have been deemed beyond economical repair for our purpose. The intent is to remove these units permanently from Yukon Housing Corporation stock — I said this earlier. Yukon Housing Corporation will dispose of these units accordingly. I guess I am curious now: Is the minister saying that they don't plan on getting rid of these units, Mr. Deputy Chair?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I informed the member I would provide the information. I would be happy to do that directly to the member. I'm not making any suggestions. I'm saying that we're taking it under budgetary advisement and we're working with the Yukon Housing Corporation on assessing all of our housing stock across the Yukon.

Mr. Hassard: In July of this year, a contract was awarded to a BC company to undertake a review of Yukon Housing Corporation's loan program to provide the corporation with recommendations on possible program closures, revisions or realignment. The RFP document stated that a first draft of this review would be completed in September of 2018, with a final completed by the end of October. We haven't seen any drafts yet of this report, so we're curious if the minister has because we are, as you know, nearing the end of October.

Would it be possible for the minister to provide us with an update on the status of this review? Has she seen the report? When does she expect it to be released to the public?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The work is still under review by the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors.

Mr. Hassard: Does that mean that the draft has gone to the Housing Board for review?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As I stated, the board of directors is reviewing all of the information that they have before them. The note that the member opposite makes is with respect to how things happen within the Housing Corporation. The board takes the information and works in collaboration with the president of the corporation and, once that work is completed, the recommendations and the review will come

back to me as the minister responsible, and I will be happy then to share that out once it has gone through its due process.

Mr. Hassard: Just to clarify, the Housing Corporation board has a copy of this draft review and they are currently reviewing it before they bring it to your attention? Is that my understanding of what you are saying?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I believe I answered the question. I said that the Housing Corporation board is looking at the information they have before them. I'm not making any suggestions or responses to the member opposite with regard to whether a draft exists or not. I'm saying that the board is taking under advisement and under review the process that is in question.

Mr. Hassard: I don't think that the minister understands. I'm asking a question about an RFP that the Yukon Housing Corporation put out. The draft was supposed to be ready for review in September, so I'm asking: Is that draft being reviewed now? For the minister to say that the Housing Corporation board is looking at information — is the information from that draft review? That's the question that we're trying to determine.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let me take a different stab at this. I believe I am trying the best I can to simplify the information.

The RFP has gone out. We have worked with the contractor, and the preliminary findings are with the board of directors as we speak. Once that process concludes, we would be happy to provide information and summaries.

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Mr. Hassard: Continuing on with some housing questions, many existing Yukon Housing Corporation loans — including home ownership programs, such as owner build, first mortgage and down payment assistance program, home repair programs, home repair loans, emergency repair grant, rental development and repair programs — are very important and very well-subscribed to throughout the entire Yukon. I'm curious if the Premier could tell us what is being considered with regard to these programs — if any of them are on the chopping block, I guess we'll say, or if there are any plans for realignment of any of them.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Yukon Housing Corporation loans and grants are intended to provide support for the development of quality, affordable housing stock that meets the needs of Yukoners. Because each community is unique, we look at the programs and services that have been designed historically and we look at flexibilities and responsiveness to community needs. So our loan programs help Yukoners and homeowners

and landowners to buy, fix and repair their homes. Our grant programs help to increase affordable rental stock within our communities.

We put some resources into some alternative programming to support and enhance the loan and grant programs throughout Yukon by providing capital grants to developers, contractors, individual homeowners and community organizations. The grant programs help to diversify Yukon's housing market in Yukon communities and to collaborate with Yukon municipalities, First Nations and private developers — so really trying to look at expanded scope — providing support through various loan programs to meet Yukoners' needs and support them in getting resources that they need if they're not available through conventional financing.

We know that in some of our communities — unincorporated communities or communities that don't have facility land available or are governed through a self-governing process — people are not able to get conventional financing. We need to look at some flexibility.

As we look at the affordable housing stock and when we speak about meeting the needs of Yukoners, we need to consider all Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: I agree. As I've said, these are very important and very well-subscribed-to programs, and they certainly have their place here in the Yukon.

My question was: Are any of these programs planned on being cut or changed, or are there any major realignments to any of those particular loan programs?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would direct the member opposite's attention to the main budget on page 20, section 4.

The capital vote, when it comes to Yukon Housing Corporation, for 2016-17 actuals was roughly \$31.7 million. The amounts to be appropriated for this year, the 2018-19 year — whether it be in repairs and upgrades, home ownership, community partner and lending, social housing, staff housing — if I went to the total capital appropriation, the actuals were \$14 million — sorry — for 2016-17 and \$30.8 million, as estimated. There is nothing new to update other than the capital dollars that were put in the mains.

Mr. Hassard: We know that the minister announced more money for the rent supplement program, so does the minister have any idea how many families or how many units that will transpire into?

Hon. Ms. Frost: At the moment, I don't have that at my fingertips.

What we do with the rent supplement program is we look at those individuals and families in our communities who are hard-to-house individuals, and we try to provide supports that they need. We know that we have growing pressure from rural Yukon communities, so the intent is to provide supports to those individuals as we look at addressing the demand being offered. It would really depend on the uptake.

Currently, our program helps 100 clients, but that fluctuates. That is something that we will continue to work with, and we will provide supports to all of our clients and utilize the tenant relations officers and, of course, the housing

navigators and address the pressures and the concerns that come to our attention.

Mr. Hassard: In addition to the review that we were talking about earlier, the contract for the Yukon Housing Corporation loan program survey was issued in July. I'm curious if the minister would be able to update us on whether or not that survey has been conducted, and who is included or invited to participate in the survey?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have any updates for the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: Sorry, that was too quick and I did not catch what the minister said.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have anything further to update.

Mr. Hassard: There was a contract issued in July, so I am curious: Has a survey been conducted?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have anything further to update, but when we do get the information, I would be happy to share it.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly would hope that the minister would know, if she put out a contract, what would have happened with it. I guess we will wait for something further on that one.

On April 9, 2018, the federal-provincial-territorial ministers endorsed a new housing partnership framework. In the communiqué from those meetings that the minister signed off on, there is reference to the national housing strategy. To quote from that communiqué: "... the National Housing Strategy (NHS), is an ambitious 10-year, \$40-billion plan that will remove 530,000 families from housing need and reduce chronic homelessness by 50%."

I'm curious if the minister can tell us how much of that \$40 billion over 10 years is allocated to the Yukon and if the minister has any idea how many of those 530,000 families who will be removed from housing need are Yukon families.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to speak about the National Housing Strategy. As the chair of the FPT committee for the second year in a row, I think we have really pushed hard to look at the unique circumstances of the north, which we have not considered historically, as well as the unique circumstances defining — as language in the federal framework didn't cover the obligations to the indigenous communities — the catch-up, keep-up historical costs. I am really happy to say that we were able to push that language through the national framework, so we welcomed the announcement last November and negotiated specifics of our agreement. The National Housing Strategy sets out a target for the next 10 years to increase housing stocks by 15 percent.

The question was asked specifically around direct numbers; it is very difficult to put a number on that, but what I can say is that we have advanced initiatives in Yukon Housing Corporation — the housing partnership build and the housing initiative fund — that saw spending of \$3.2 million which equated into \$26 million. I gave a list to the Member for Porter Creek North in this legislative Sitting a couple of weeks ago. That information has been noted numerous times.

We are taking a leadership role and working with our federal and provincial partners on a strategy that was founded on a rights-based approach to housing, consistent with housing as a human right. We believe that increased housing, affordability, quality and accessibility of housing will promote quality of life and well-being for all Yukoners, including all rural Yukon communities. We are co-developing our strategies and collaborating with our stakeholders in Yukon to look at new initiatives.

Mr. Hassard: Maybe to clarify: would the minister be able to let this Assembly know how much of that \$40 billion over 10 years is allocated to the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can't say that as the bilateral agreement is still under negotiation with the federal government, but we do have resources under the northern housing initiative — \$24 million over the next 10 years. We have some other funding that we have looked at — co-investment resources that we have worked on with our communities for implementing a housing strategy across the Yukon.

Mr. Hassard: Okay, let's try this one. Would the minister be able to tell this Assembly how many housing units Yukon Housing Corporation is building in this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I do believe that I provided information previously to the members opposite on how many units are being built in the Yukon. We have a partnership initiative through the housing initiative program and through the partnership build program. We have a total — as I stated previously and am going to state again — and I can go through the list, but I prefer not to, given that I have done that three times already. I will just summarize and acknowledge that there are pressures in the Yukon. We are working to meet the demand of affordable housing throughout the Yukon with our partners, with the private sector and other governments and non-government organizations, including the indigenous partnerships.

We will continue to work with Canada as we evolve on our bilateral discussions and improve delivery of affordable housing programs for Yukoners.

Currently through our affordable housing over the last two years we have provided 74 affordable housing units in Yukon and we will continue to expand that. In 2018-19, we have committed to housing supports of 133 households. We have some conversions of six units and we have some new initiatives of 214 units.

Mr. Hassard: I think I just have one final question in regard to housing. I'm just curious if the minister could update this House on when the next housing FPT meetings are taking place and where they're taking place.

Hon. Ms. Frost: We're currently working with the provincial and territorial colleagues on defining a date that will work for everyone.

Mr. Hassard: I guess the other part of that question was: Does the minister know where those meetings will be held, in which part of the country?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can't answer that until I collaborate with my colleagues. Of course, my preference is to have that

meeting here in the Yukon and always bring the colleagues to the Yukon and promote what Yukon has to offer and share a little bit of our culture and tourism with our colleagues.

Mr. Hassard: I couldn't agree with the minister more. Thank you for that.

I have a few questions regarding Highways and Public Works, as they won't be appearing as well. We know that there was a \$226,000 contract awarded in 2016 to demolish the old McDonald Lodge which was then cancelled. We're curious if any money was paid out under the original contract.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe the question this afternoon is centred on old McDonald Lodge. That building is well past its functional life — was well past its functional life — and was slated for demolition last summer. In response to concerns raised by Dawson about the potential for an empty lot, the demolition was delayed. Through consultations with Dawson, it was decided the building would be demolished and we have agreed with the City of Dawson on the landscaping feature. That site may be repurposed in the future, and that's all I have to say on McDonald Lodge this afternoon.

Mr. Hassard: I hope the minister has a little more to say than that. The question was if the minister could tell us if there was any money paid out under the original contract.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'll endeavour to get back to the member opposite with that information.

Mr. Hassard: Would the minister be able to tell the House why he decided to cancel that contract?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I gave that answer about three minutes ago. In response to concerns raised by the City of Dawson about the potential for an empty lot, the demolition was delayed.

Mr. Hassard: So could the minister tell us when they decided that it couldn't happen and why it took the length of time that it did to come to that conclusion?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe that it was last summer. The demolition was delayed and we met with the city. Once the city was comfortable with us proceeding, we proceeded with that.

Mr. Hassard: Would the minister be able to tell us how much money, either through fees or penalties, the government has had to pay as a result of the original cancellation?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It would have been a lot less if the community had been consulted before that initial decision was made. We had to do our due diligence. We did that and took action. That's how it goes. It is always better, of course, to map these things out ahead of time and that's the way we are proceeding.

Mr. Hassard: I'm just curious — does the minister intend to answer the question or just insult the previous government?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm just a bit perplexed. I've actually answered two of the questions this afternoon. This is four questions to answer two questions that I've already answered, but I'll do it again.

I have said that I would endeavour to get the information for the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: Can the minister tell us what the total cost to government will be for demolition of the old McDonald Lodge, including everything associated with the old contract and the new contract?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'll endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: Not that I don't have complete faith in the minister to do that, but would the minister be so kind as to commit to doing returning that information through a legislative return?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister responsible has answered the question. When we're in general debate, we don't have line-by-line item numbers from the main estimates in front of us. He is going to endeavour to get back to the member opposite; he will endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Hassard: I certainly hope that the Premier's definition of "endeavour" is the same as mine and we hope to see that information sooner rather than later.

Yesterday the Minister for Community Services announced here in the House that the Minister of Highways and Public Works now had the criteria for the CFTA exemptions. I'm hoping that the minister would be able to provide us with an update on that or some information or maybe tell us what the criteria are.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I believe the member opposite is asking about the 10 \$1-million exceptions under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* that we employed last year and we're going to employ this year — the first jurisdiction in the country to do that. We did that by creating — because I didn't want to go off just handing out contracts under an exception. I wanted to have criteria under which we acted, and so those criteria were developed last year. I did talk in the Legislative Assembly about our criteria and about how I wanted criteria, and we actually put those in place. We were the first jurisdiction in the country to do that.

I'm very proud of the work of the department on the procurement file. This was another success for the great staff of Highways and Public Works on this very important file. We were, as I said, the first jurisdiction in Canada to use the 10 \$1-million regional economic development trade exceptions. That was last year.

To help us select the best project, we made adjustments to the project selection criteria with input from the procurement business committee. We will be doing them again this year and we will be keeping more money in the economy this year by using those exceptions, and by the way, we're attempting to use, whenever possible, a competitive process so that we get the best price for the public under those exceptions.

Mr. Hassard: I don't think I actually heard the minister say that the criteria are in place. If they are, will we be seeing it?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I do believe I answered that question earlier. I did say that we had criteria in place. I have spoken on the record about how we went about issuing these 10 \$1-million exceptions. I believe there have been many statements made on this whole process in the House.

We have criteria in place and I have nothing new to add on this file. As new information becomes available, I will endeavour to get it to the member opposite, but at this time, there is nothing new to report.

Mr. Hassard: I would think that the criteria would be something new to report. Since the minister has confirmed that he does, in fact, have the criteria in place, would the minister share the criteria with the Legislature?

Hon. Mr. Silver: There is a theme emerging here where the members opposite, during general debate, are asking for more information than is timely to give. If we could maybe stick to questions on the budget or questions about procedures — but if the member answers the question and says that there is nothing new to give at this time, then I would appreciate it if the members opposite would understand that there is nothing new to give at this time. We are not going to be giving information on the fly in general debate that hasn't already been out through department websites or through communiqués.

I am seeing a theme here: Are there any updates? Are there any updates?

The members opposite know very well that updates come through press releases and through websites and not necessarily updates on the floor of the Legislative Assembly for what is supposed to be a general debate — general debate that is going on 20 hours now. If the minister says that he has nothing more to report at this time, then he has nothing more to report at this time.

Mr. Hassard: Highways and Public Works will not be up for debate, as we all know, so this is our opportunity as opposition to ask questions about departments such as Highways and Public Works. I am sorry that the Premier feels that he has had to sit here too long and listen — that it has been too many hours — but this is our avenue to ask these questions. We are paid by Yukoners just like he is and just like the minister is, so I don't know where else the Premier thinks that we are going to ask these questions. It is our job to ask these questions. We are going to continue to ask those questions. It doesn't matter if it takes two more hours or 20 more hours — those questions that need to be asked will be asked.

If the Premier thinks that Yukoners should just sit idly by and wait for press releases to come out — and that they are the only way that Yukoners are entitled to receive information from this Legislature — then I think the Premier needs to seriously look at his understanding of how the Legislative Assembly works here in the Yukon.

I will continue to ask my questions, and I will continue to hope that the Premier and the ministers will be able to answer those questions.

In March of this year, there was an RFP in regard to the Yukon Foster Parents Association, and section 33 talked about First Nation participation. It says that the contractor shall comply with the First Nation participation plan. I am curious if the minister or the Premier would be able to provide us with some information on what the First Nation participation plan is.

Hon. Mr. Silver: That would be a question about foster care and will come up in debate. It is a question for Committee of the Whole for that particular department. I would ask the member opposite, if there is another specific question about a policy or direction outside the department that will be appearing here as a witness — I do take offence with the member opposite. I am not saying that we don't want to answer questions — not at all. What I am saying is that we are not going to be giving updates here in the Legislative Assembly. We will be giving updates as they come in and we will give them immediately as they come in — absolutely.

We have absolutely proven that we will answer the questions from the Yukon public here in the Legislative Assembly. Again, it is coming on 20 hours of general debate here. The spring of 2017, we responded to 50 legislative returns. In the fall of 2017, we responded to 52 legislative returns. In spring of 2018, we responded to 35 legislative returns. So far this year we have had 14 as well, which is 151 legislative returns. In the five years of the Yukon Party, there was one legislative return.

We have said before — the members opposite are saying we don't know the answers to the questions. No, that is not it. We are giving more information than ever before. We are happy to have all the ministers available to answer questions in the Legislative Assembly. I am merely stating, for the member opposite, is that, as a policy, we are not going to be giving updates in the Legislative Assembly. If there are specific questions — and the one that he just asked is a very specific question — we are happy to answer it in Committee of the Whole when the minister appears. We will sit here for the members opposite as long as it takes and answer these questions. But in the spirit of working together and getting answers, maybe ask questions that you can get answers to.

When you are asking for an update on a particular file, when the minister spends three questions — whether it is the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation or the Minister of Community Services or the Minister of Highways and Public Works — and we answer the question three different times and we don't have any other updates, I would suggest that there are no more updates.

Mr. Hassard: I think the Premier maybe needs to be reminded that he is paid by Yukon taxpayers and he is here to answer questions for those taxpayers. For him to say that they are doing a better job because they have provided more legislative returns than the previous government — I think that is certainly quite a stretch.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Hassard: The Premier did say that because he said there have been 150 as opposed to one. That means that you have done more.

I certainly know from my experience in this Legislature — others who maybe have not been here as long know that the reason for that is because the opposition is not receiving answers to their questions on the floor of the Assembly. I will move on.

In a legislative return — one of those many legislative returns that we are certainly happy to get, since we don't get

answers to the questions — the minister told us that there are 11 Government of Yukon staff currently on secondment to First Nation governments.

Can the minister or the Premier confirm for us how long they have been on secondment?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would just like the member opposite to clarify. He said that he got some information from a minister. Is he directing his question to the Public Service minister or to me when he's talking about the 11 secondments?

Mr. Hassard: Yes, if memory serves me correctly, it was the Public Service Commissioner.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just to remind the member opposite, the Public Service Commission will be appearing in Committee of the Whole during debate here in the Legislative Assembly on the supplementary, so I would ask him to reserve his questions for the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission at that time.

Mr. Hassard: Very true. I apologize for that. I will reserve the rest of those questions until then.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Highways and Public Works told us that the government was going to spend nearly \$1 million on the aerodrome in Old Crow. Would the minister be able to provide us with an update on this project? I know they don't like to provide updates and don't like to tell us how things are going, but is the full scope of the project going forward this year, and how much is being spent on that project this year?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm very sorry, I didn't hear which aerodrome that the member opposite was speaking about, but I think it was Old Crow — if he could verify.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: It is Old Crow. I'll endeavour to get an update to the member opposite about that.

Mr. Hassard: I appreciate the update that we will receive.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Highways and Public Works also told us that the government was going to spend nearly \$750,000 — or in that range — on the Mayo aerodrome. Would the minister be able to provide us with an update on this project? Is the full scope of the project moving forward this year, and how much has been spent this year on that project?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think we had spoken about this in the House recently. I don't know whether it was a question in Question Period — the members opposite, of course, have the ability to ask questions during Question Period on matters that their constituents and Yukoners want to know more about. That's another avenue.

As far as the Mayo aerodrome goes, I have spoken to it before. We are committed to operating safe airports and aerodromes. I think that goes without saying. In anticipation of increased resource activity in the Mayo region — as the members opposite know, the economy in the territory is doing very well these days — the aviation branch has worked with two local carriers and Transport Canada to obtain a one-year

aerodrome authorization that allows the two carriers to provide temporary scheduled air service into Mayo.

Recently the Premier and I travelled to Mayo, and I could actually see how busy the Mayo Airport is these days, so we're using this year to assess the present and future needs of the aerodrome to inform future investments at the site. We will be moving forward with a multi-year strategic investment plan for the Yukon aviation system over the next year. We will be meeting with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation — what they should look like. That's the update I'm sure the member opposite was looking for.

Mr. Hassard: I guess it was part of the update I was hoping for, so we'll take that and be happy.

The minister told us the government was spending \$550,000 on the Carmacks aerodrome, so the same question, I guess, is if the minister can provide us with some update on where they're at with this project and how much is being spent this year as well.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: What I can say and what I will say this afternoon is that we are at the beginning stages of planning the future of all things Yukon aviation. It's quite an exciting time, I think, for the people who support and work in the Yukon aviation community. As the member opposite knows, we finally passed the Yukon *Public Airports Act* so we can actually manage the facilities. That was a tremendous benefit to the industry and to our airport users. Now we're working toward a comprehensive multi-year investment plan that will make sure we're meeting Yukon's current and future aviation system needs.

Over the next year, Highways and Public Works will engage with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation system should be made. Stakeholder feedback will help inform an investment plan and combine safety, efficiency, stakeholder needs and operational requirements for Yukon aviation. That again is the update that the member opposite, I think, is looking for. I don't know what else I can tell him.

Mr. Hassard: Let's try a few questions in regard to fleet vehicles.

The annual report for this year states that the third-party rentals are projected to go down. Can the minister clarify what third-party rental is? Is that referring to when the agency rents vehicles from Driving Force or some other rental agency?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As the member opposite knows, at the moment I don't have my officials here so I will endeavour to get back to the member opposite. The reason I don't have my officials here is that we don't have a supplementary budget because frankly we're trying to be a little bit more diligent when it comes to our budgeting, making sure that we spend what we say we spend and not spend what we are not going to spend.

This afternoon I don't have my officials here, but I will endeavour to get the answer to the question for the member opposite on fleet vehicles and third-party rentals.

Mr. Hassard: Maybe when the minister is finding out that information, he could find out for us a little bit about what is leading to the reduction of those third-party rentals. The fleet vehicle report states that the agency plans on purchasing 51 to 97 vehicles this year. Maybe he could find out how many of those vehicles have been purchased so far.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I absolutely appreciate the interest from the member opposite in fleet vehicles and I will be more than happy, as I said before, to endeavour to get him an answer on those fleet vehicle questions.

Mr. Hassard: Maybe it would be easier if the minister could provide us with a list of answers on things he does know. It might quicken things up a little bit.

If you go to the government website, Mr. Deputy Chair, it only lists three reports for the Fleet Vehicle Agency: 2015-16 annual report, 2016-17 annual report and then the 2018-19 business plan, but there is no report for 2017-18. Would the minister have any idea why that is? Does he know if and when we would be able to receive a copy of that report?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Had we had a supplementary budget and had I had my officials here, I am sure we would be a little bit more responsive to the member's specific needs because we would actually be talking about money and spending that we were putting forward, but in this case, it is sort of a budgeting improvisation that we are doing. I will continue to endeavour to listen to the questions that the member opposite has from his constituents on third-party rentals of the Fleet Vehicle Agency, and I will endeavour to get him an answer to those questions.

As for the 2017-18 annual report of fleet vehicles, I will consult with my officials and find out exactly why that is not posted.

Mr. Hassard: I guess the last question I would have when the minister is finding out that information is if he could confirm what percentage of the fleet vehicle purchases are purchased locally — if that is possible.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would be happy to endeavour to get the member opposite that information.

Mr. Hassard: I have a few questions on the tourism file, if that would be acceptable. I am wondering if the Minister of Tourism and Culture could confirm if Cabinet had a chance to review the draft tourism strategy before it was released publicly on September 19?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Last week when we had questions from my critic from the Yukon Party, we discussed specifically the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* and where it is currently. I have not received the most recent draft from the steering committee yet. When we do, we will take it through our due process and make an informed decision on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: The question actually if Cabinet had a chance to review the draft tourism strategy before it was released publicly on September 19.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I know that folks in the Legislative Assembly know that the member opposite was in Cabinet previously and would know that there is such a thing as

Cabinet confidence and that I would not be discussing the matters that are discussed within Cabinet.

Mr. Hassard: In the last few days, the Minister of Tourism and Culture said that since the draft tourism strategy was released on September 19, other meetings have happened since then with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee. We're curious, Mr. Deputy Chair, if the minister could confirm: With whom did those meetings take place, how many of them there actually were and were any of them with the government?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Yes, the last round of consultation was completed on October 3. The committee has met, I believe, twice since then. I have not received the latest draft of the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. I am anticipating that it will be soon.

Mr. Hassard: My colleague from Porter Creek North highlighted the issue of training and retention of staff in the tourism sector, and the minister said that the government is working to help industry to address this issue. Would the minister be able to elaborate a little bit on what type of work she is doing to support this industry to recruit and retain employees?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: When my critic asked the question last week, I said that this is a major focus of the draft tourism strategy and that the committee had identified this as an immediate action area, that there would be an action plan developed specifically for this area of concern and that it has absolutely been a concern for operators for a good many years.

The member opposite said that these issues have been around for decades. I said at that time that this is exactly why we need a new Yukon tourism development strategy. We're going to work with our government and all of the partners to address this very specific issue. That has been the essence of this new draft tourism development strategy — to work in partnership with all the partners around the table.

Mr. Hassard: In regard to the federal *Copyright Act*, the minister agreed to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review. I'm wondering if the minister could tell us if the government has provided any input into the statutory review and, if so, what that input was?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: As I discussed last week, this was a topic at a recent federal-provincial-territorial heritage and culture ministers meeting, and this was identified as a top priority for many of the ministers across the country.

When you think about it from the perspective of copyright within Canada — from book editors, writers, those who work in that particular area within the cultural industry — it is of great importance for all ministers across the country and it will continue to be something that we monitor and work on with our colleagues from across the country.

Right now, the House of Commons is conducting the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It is at a high level within the country and will remain something that we monitor. If specific information is

required of us, we will endeavour to bring our concerns forward from Yukon.

Mr. Hassard: I'm curious now then: Are there specific clauses in the act that the minister feels need to be changed or updated? What parts of the act does the minister feel are not working or are maybe working against the Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I didn't specifically say any of that. I said that we are continuing to work with our colleagues from across the country. This is of importance to all those who work in the creative industry, and we will continue to monitor that. We will ensure that, if any specific information is required of us from Yukon, we will provide that.

Mr. Hassard: Maybe I better step back for a minute and ask a couple of questions that I felt had been asked but maybe they haven't. What specific concerns does the Government of Yukon have in regard to the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is again an area that we discussed at a recent federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting on culture and heritage. There is currently the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We will continue to work with our partners across the country and, if there are any concerns that we feel we need to bring forward from either the ministerial level or the officials level, we will do that on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Hassard: I would take it from that response that the Yukon government has no specific concerns with the act and has not provided input so far?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite can presume all he wants. The minister answered his question.

Mr. Hassard: Then, very simply — has the government given any input into the review?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I am not going to say thank you for the question because I think we have answered it three times — maybe four.

I am going to continue to say that we are working with our partners across Canada. This is a high-level issue in Canada, particularly for those who are working in the creative industry. There is currently the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology and there is collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We are going to continue working with our partners and we will provide information on behalf of Yukoners, as needed and when needed.

Mr. Hassard: Just because you stand up and say words, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have answered a question. I mean, it was a pretty straightforward yes-or-no question. Has the Yukon provided input into the review: Yes or no? To stand here and talk about how important it is and who is involved and all of the different organizations and groups — yes, we know that and we understand that. I just simply asked: Has the Yukon provided any input into the review?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is answering her question to the best of our ability with the information that we have. We are not going to speculate. We

are not going to talk about things — we are going to answer the questions based on the information that we have and the information that we are willing to share at this time. If that is not good enough for the members opposite, at least we are not spending the 20 minutes of our response like the previous government did when the opposition was not happy with an answer. We are giving the information. The minister has given the information that she has available. The member opposite is looking for more specifics. We do not have more specifics at this time to discuss or debate. I would ask him to move on to the next question.

Mr. Hassard: I will remind the Premier that when I was sitting on that side of the floor answering questions, never once in my entire time did I use anywhere near the 20 minutes to answer a question, and I think he is well aware of that.

I think that the most interesting thing that the Premier said out of that, though, is that the questions are being answered with what they are willing to share. I think that is a little bit disrespectful to the Legislature. I think it is disrespectful to the taxpayers of the Yukon. I think that if they have the information, they are pretty much obligated to share the information. For him to say that they are only going to share with us what they want to share is a pretty tough one to swallow.

I guess we are not going to get any answers on that, so we will move along.

Earlier this session, the Premier said that the Yukon was very keen to lend its support to the federal Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. I'm curious if the Premier is able to elaborate a little bit on what sort of input and support Yukon has provided so far on this file.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite will hopefully appreciate the fact that I am not going to take a quote from him without looking at the context of it, as we have been seeing lots of quotes taken out of context in the Legislative Assembly this session.

The Department of Health and Social Services is going to appear because they do have a budgetary item here in the supplementary budget. The minister responsible will, at that time, be happy to respond to those questions.

Maybe the member opposite, when he got up, didn't spend his 20 minutes, but to say that he answered all of the questions — well, I think we will disagree with that. I will agree to disagree that he answered all of the questions that were asked of him from both opposition parties. I remember seeing an awful lot of frustrated days for the Official Opposition at that time and also for me in the Third Party when it came to answering or not answering questions. I will also give a little bit here as well. I know that, in opposition, some questions are designed that way.

Moving on — we are going to continue to do our best to provide the information that we are ready to provide to Yukoners. We have been more than open and transparent in that pursuit, especially when you take a look at ATIPP. We are trying to roll back some of the changes that the members opposite inflicted on that particular legislation to make us more open and more accountable.

Again, I think there were a lot of times where the members opposite — the Yukon Party — would spend an awful lot of time going on at length and not answering the questions. The minister is providing information. It may not be the information that the member opposite is looking for specifically — I will admit that. But again, working with stakeholders, working with others and working with other governments, we will give information as we can get it out there. With respect to the First Nation governments and the municipalities that we are working with — and the stakeholders and the federal government — we will give that information out as it becomes available. I am sorry if the members opposite think that we are not sharing enough information, but I believe we are doing a fantastic job here with the whole-of-government approach to answer as many questions as we possibly can in the time provided.

Again, we are going above and beyond with legislative returns. We are working on casework and making sure that the casework that we get out is done in a timely fashion. It doesn't always happen that way, and I do apologize for that. There have been some times — and we have seen some questions from the Member for Kluane who has spoken about some legislative returns that haven't been responded to in a timely fashion. That is absolutely not acceptable, and we are working on that.

But again, these are the things that we are trying to do to be as accountable and as open as possible to the Yukon public whose taxpayer money we are debating here at the Legislative Assembly.

I will apologize to the Leader of the Official Opposition if he is looking for some specific answers that, at this time, we are not able to provide for him. We will continue to endeavour to answer as many questions as we possibly can, knowing full well that the very specific questions that are being asked in general debate today, two days ago and over the last 20-or-so hours — sometimes we don't have that information at our fingertips. It is better when the ministers are presenting with the officials from the department for very technical and specific details. Sometimes we have seen the members opposite — and I have done it in opposition as well — saying that they just want a simple yes or no, and sometimes it is not as simple as that.

So we will continue to safeguard the confidence of the Cabinet decisions and, at the same time, being as transparent as possible when it's time to get information out to the general public.

Mr. Hassard: The question that I just asked the Premier, that we got this long history lesson on, was about the federal advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare. My understanding is that this is a premiers working group that came out of COF — I believe it's called the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance.

I don't think that this is a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services, so maybe if the Premier can elaborate — as I asked — a little bit on what sort of input the Yukon has provided so far into this working group.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We are always interested in the panel's report and recommendations, including the federal government's contributions to any of the national pharmacare programming. There hasn't been, in the past Council of the Federation — the last time we met in Saint John, New Brunswick, in the communiqué for that, there were no specific additions to the communiqué, again being very careful with the conversations that happen at COF at that table and then the communiqués coming out. I don't recall any specific updates on the communiqué at that time. I will re-check to see if there are any updates on those communiqués, but I do not recall that being one of the topics that was provided an update at that time.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure the Premier totally understood, so I'll just re-ask the question just to clarify. I had said that, earlier this session, the Premier said that the Yukon was very keen to lend its support to the federal Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. I am curious if he is able to elaborate a bit on what sort of input and support Yukon has provided, not for an update on what was happening with the council.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, nothing new to advise right now. Maybe after the next First Ministers' meeting there will be more, but the conversation, when it comes to national pharmacare, would be under the Health and Social Services guise. There could be some updates from the department, but as far as specific updates from the First Ministers' meeting on this particular issue, there may be some more updates on that after the First Ministers' meeting coming up here before the end of the year, but I don't have anything to elaborate on with the member opposite right now.

Mr. Hassard: I wasn't asking for an update; I was asking what sort of input or support the Yukon has provided so far.

Kind of along those same lines, we've asked questions about whether or not the Government of Yukon has done, or will do, an assessment of how the USMCA will impact the cost of pharmaceuticals in the territory. Would it be possible to find out from the Premier if the government is, in fact, doing this assessment?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I didn't hear most of the question on pharmacare. I believe we're still on the USMCA, the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*, in that context.

We have been asked before as well about this question and basically — I think the question we were asked before was based upon any analysis done at the provincial level and the territorial level, and this goes into the working group on potential costs and implications when it comes to the patents and these types of things.

I can say that the cost of drugs does fluctuate based on market conditions, currency exchange rates and supply-demand conditions, extensions of patents specifically, if you want to talk about that, patent protection — these are conversations that have been addressed through the USMCA deal.

The extension of that protection patent, it does mean that it will take longer for generic drugs to enter the market. As

such, the cost of some drugs will remain higher for approximately two additional years as compared to the current protection regime in Canada, so, for example, 10 years instead of the current eight years. I don't know if I'm answering the question specifically and I do apologize. I didn't hear the entire question, so if there is anything else in that, I'm sure the member opposite will continue.

Mr. Hassard: I am going to have to ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works a couple more questions and maybe one of them will be: Can he get someone in here to turn the volume up on these mics? Because it seems to be a bit challenging to hear. Maybe we need to holler at one another more or something. Mr. Deputy Chair doesn't agree.

Another question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works is: Would the minister be able to inform the House what work is contemplated for the Holy Family School, as referenced in the five-year capital concept?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm more than happy this afternoon to talk about the five-year capital plan we have brought into being — the first for the territory — which is a promise we made and a promise we delivered. The five-year capital plan and that process was introduced to make the government's construction and infrastructure projects more transparent for Yukoners and for those in the private industry. If the member opposite is using it, I'm elated. I really appreciate that.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Chair, the five-year capital plan informs Yukon government's priorities and will help Yukon businesses prepare for upcoming projects. This is a new thing for the territory — having a five-year capital plan. I can understand the member opposite's unfamiliarity with that process, but what we have done by putting projects into a five-year capital plan is signal our intention to move forward with that project. As the budget year comes into being, we will start the procurement process and everything else to do that. The contractors will then bid and go forward on that basis. It signals our intent to the contracting community and then, as the budget year progresses and we get closer to the year where we are delivering on those projects, we get more information

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

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Mostyn that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, seeing the time, 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.

Have a good weekend.

The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.