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33rd Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, May 17, 2016 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Patti McLeod

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER — Hon. Patti McLeod, MLA, Watson Lake
DEPUTY SPEAKER — Darius Elias, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin

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| Jim Tredger | Mayo-Tatchun |
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, May 17, 2016 — 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 which has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 1182, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition, has been removed from the Order Paper as the motion is now outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Special Olympics Yukon

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise today on behalf of all members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to Special Olympics Yukon and the impressive accomplishments of its athletes.

This has already been a very busy year for Special Olympics Yukon. On April 9, Special Olympics Yukon held its annual festival auction dinner. At this year's event, Olympic figure skater, Jamie Salé, was joined by our own Darby McIntyre, who returned from the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles last summer with two medals. The dinner featured music, over 100 auction items up for bid, and a lot of fun and inspiration.

I would like to thank everybody involved for helping to make that annual event possible, especially the athletes who helped to host throughout the night and spoke at various points at that event. As well, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the MC, Sandi Coleman, of the CBC, and the tireless efforts of the executive director of Special Olympics, Serge Michaud. The amount of work that goes into preparing and hosting that event is tremendous, and Serge and his team deserve accolades for that work. That was an important event for celebrating our Special Olympics athletes and looking forward toward the future.

I am proud to note that our Special Olympics athletes have always performed exceptionally well while representing Yukon at competitions, whether on the territorial, national or international level. Earlier this year in March, five Special Olympics athletes — Tijana McCarthy, Mike Sumner, Darby McIntyre, Ernest Chua and Owen Munroe — travelled to Corner Brook, Newfoundland, to represent the Yukon at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games. With athletes competing in figure skating and cross-country skiing, Team Yukon won eight medals overall, beating the record set at the 2012 games in Alberta. As a result of these games,

Mike Sumner and Tijana McCarthy for figure skating, and Ernest Chua for cross-country skiing, all qualified to compete at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria next year in 2017. These three Yukon athletes will join over 3,000 athletes from 110 countries from around the world in Austria next year, and I know that we will all look forward to seeing them represent our territory.

Special Olympics Yukon is well-known for encouraging teamwork, mutual respect and fair play. The skills learned in participation at the Special Olympics — whether at an event, or at home, or at an international competition — help to connect people and communities, contributing to a healthy and vibrant Yukon. We in the Yukon government have always been proud to contribute to the continued success of Special Olympics Yukon.

Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Special Olympics' contribution to sport in the territory and wish all our Special Olympics athletes good luck in their athletic and personal endeavours.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, I should note that we have the honour of having some of our athletes with us today in the gallery. Of the three athletes who will attend the world games in Austria next year, we have two. Unfortunately, Tijana McCarthy was feeling a little under the weather today and was not able to join us, but I will just say a few words about Tijana before introducing the two who are here.

Tijana attends Porter Creek Secondary School and turned 19 years old just a few days ago. She was the youngest member of Team Yukon 2016 that competed in Corner Brook and took home gold in ladies figure skating. This was Tijana's first participation at national games. Thanks to her stellar performance, Tijana is one of three Yukoners selected to represent Canada at the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games to be held in Austria next March.

Now, Madam Speaker, with us today we have Ernest Chua and Mike Sumner. I will say a few words about each of them. Ernest Chua has been a Special Olympics athlete for over eight years, and this past winter joined Special Olympics Team Yukon 2016 to compete in cross-country skiing at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games. Ernest posted terrific performances, winning gold in the 500 metre and silver in the one kilometre, earning him a spot on Team Canada for next year's Special Olympics World Winter Games.

Mike Sumner, who is no stranger to the members of this Legislature, went to the 2016 Olympics in Corner Brook as well, in the hopes of defending his men's figure skating gold medal that he won in 2012 in the games in St. Albert, Alberta. He accomplished his goal by performing a beautiful skate. Mike was also selected to Team Canada and will compete at worlds in Austria next March. This will be Mike's second straight World Winter Games' participation, as he brought home silver for the 2013 World Winter Games held in South Korea.

Ernest is joined by his parents, Shirley and Choon. With us, as well we have Serge Michaud, the executive director of Special Olympics Yukon, whose passion and commitment to

the Special Olympics here in Yukon is as infectious as it is laudable. I would ask members to join me in welcoming our athletes, their families and the officials from the Special Olympics to the gallery today.

Applause

In recognition of International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I'm proud to rise today in recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, which is celebrated on May 17 of each year. The campaign was spearheaded in 2003 by Fondation Émergence, a Montreal-based organization. In the founding year, the focus was to raise awareness by organizing a national day against homophobia. Since then, the scope has grown to include transphobia and biphobia and to involve many countries that stand for the protection of LGBT rights.

The theme this year is "2016: Homophobia and Transphobia Affect All Ages." The focus is on LGBT seniors, who, while experiencing all the same issues as seniors everywhere, face additional challenges, including a lack of strong support networks, increased loneliness and depression, substance abuse issues and suicidal thoughts. According to Fondation Émergence, 39 percent of LGBT seniors have seriously considered taking their own lives; 31 percent experience symptoms of depression; 21 percent have not revealed their sexual orientation or gender identity to their general practitioner; and 53 percent experience isolation. While many of their heterosexual peers also experience most of these problems, LGBT seniors experience them at higher rates than their peers.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Let's continue to work together to ensure the rights of the LGBT community are upheld each and every day. Thank you.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Speaker, May 17 is the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Its aim is to coordinate international events that raise awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning LGBTQ human rights violations worldwide.

The day was originally known as the International Day Against Homophobia. May 17 was selected because on this date in 1990, homosexuality was removed from the World Health Organization's international classification of diseases. Homosexuality is no longer considered a disease internationally.

Homophobia is hatred of, fear of, or prejudice against homosexuals or homosexuality. People who hold this prejudice and hatred have killed homosexuals, and such violence continues to the present day. In 1965, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld a ruling that labelled a Northwest Territories' man, Everett Klippert, who admitted he was gay and had sex with other men, as a dangerous sexual offender and sentenced him to an indefinite prison sentence. In 1969, homosexuality was removed from the *Criminal Code of*

Canada; however, Everett Klippert wasn't released from prison until 1971. Homosexuality is slowly being decriminalized in other nations, but it remains a crime and a death sentence in many nations.

In 2009, transphobia — violence and discrimination against transgender people — was added to the name of the campaign. Biphobia is aversion toward bisexuality and bisexual people as a social group or as individuals. Biphobia is a source of discrimination against bisexual people and it too is commonly based on negative bisexual stereotypes or irrational fear.

Today in Ottawa, the federal Justice minister announced legislation that would guarantee full legal and human rights protection to transgender people across the country. To coincide with the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould has introduced Bill C-16 which would ensure that Canadians will be free to identify themselves and to express their gender as they wish, while being protected against discrimination and hate.

Madam Speaker, the Yukon *Human Rights Act* remains silent on protected grounds of gender identity and gender expression. Adding gender identity and gender expression as a prohibited ground of discrimination is a priority area for the amendment of Yukon's *Human Rights Act*. I acknowledge Yukoners who have led the campaign toward Yukon government policy changes to have a more inclusive society that now allows trans people to get a driver's licence with their gender identity. I trust that our tributes today signal all members' support for legislative reform in Yukon, such as Canada has announced today in the federal arena.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

Today we speak out against discrimination and celebrate our differences. The federal Liberals have introduced Bill C-16, legislation that will allow for human rights protection under the grounds of "gender identity and gender expression". The introduction of this type of legislation has been a difficult road — something that has been swept under the rug by many — and it is the first time that a sitting government has introduced this type of bill.

We support this type of legislation. It is a change that is long overdue, and I would like to thank the federal Liberal government for bringing it forward today.

Madam Speaker, our society is shifting the way it thinks, becoming more progressive and more accepting. This is the open-mindedness that we should all aspire to.

Today, as we celebrate to raise awareness around the world, rainbow balloons were being released from St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia. The City of Brisbane has lit up the Brisbane bridge in rainbow colours. The United Nations has put out a song, entitled *Why We Fight*. This is truly an international phenomenon and I want to keep that ball rolling.

On June 25 and 26, Queer Yukon will be putting on their annual pride parade, along with a number of events to celebrate the LGBTQ community. I encourage all of you listening and all of you here today to attend the events to show your support. If you would like to know more about this, there are a number of resources, including www.queeryukon.com and also www.dayagainsthomophobia.org.

Madam Speaker, for too long our society has singled out those who are different, bullied them and made inappropriate comments or gestures. Change is in the air, and I encourage everyone to get on the bandwagon with me and my legislative colleagues. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In recognition of World Hypertension Day

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in the House today on behalf of all members to recognize World Hypertension Day. Every year since 2005, May 17 has been dedicated to promoting awareness about hypertension and encouraging citizens of all countries to prevent and control this silent killer.

At home and worldwide, the campaign entitled “Know your numbers” encourages people to have their blood pressure checked. Here in Yukon during National Heart Month, free blood pressure clinics are provided by the chronic conditions support program. This past February, through those clinics, 619 people had their blood pressure checked here in Whitehorse and more than 135 people in communities. We were able to identify that 8.8 percent of the Whitehorse population screened have hypertension.

Hypertension affects 20 percent of Canadian adults. Of these, 42 percent do not know that they have it. According to the International Society of Hypertension, high dietary salt is one of the major global health risks. The society estimates that over three million die prematurely and over 300 million people are living with hypertension because of high dietary salt. We know that most Canadians take in twice as much sodium as they need. This extra sodium is a leading cause of high blood pressure and contributes to stroke, heart disease, kidney disease and other serious conditions. For these reasons, I encourage regular blood pressure checkups, as high blood pressure often has no warning signs and no symptoms. We cannot know your blood pressure unless you have it measured.

Here in Yukon, we are doing our part. The Department of Health and Social Services is promoting healthy blood pressure by reducing sodium intake through the “read — compare — go low” campaign. Yukon families are offered strategies to reduce their intake of sodium. It can be as simple as taking the time to read nutritional facts on labels to help choose products which are low in sodium.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that it is very important to know your blood pressure and to know your numbers.

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Elias: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2016-17 budget to invest \$400,000 for accessibility enhancement grants to provide homeowners and landlords with access to capital to improve accessibility of their homes for the benefit of occupants and enable seniors to age in place.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use the 2016-17 budget to invest \$917,000 for the aboriginal development and recruitment program to help aboriginal people to overcome barriers to employment and build their capacity to compete for Yukon government jobs.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to take immediate action to address the serious issue of homelessness in Watson Lake by working with community organizations and individuals in Watson Lake, including but not limited to: the Watson Lake soup kitchen society, the Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society, the Town of Watson Lake, the Watson Lake RCMP detachment and the Liard First Nation to establish a shelter for homeless people in Watson Lake.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Mine abandonment plans

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In 2003, the Government of Canada transferred responsibility for land and resource management to Yukon government. Under the devolution transfer agreement, an arrangement was made to deal with historic mining liabilities that had occurred under the federal watch, the most notable of these being: Faro, Mount Nansen, Clinton Creek and others. The agreement was that the federal government would provide the money to Yukon, and the Yukon government would oversee and carry out the remediation. Since 2003, this government has spent over \$320 million on the abandoned or type 2 sites; yet, as of last year, not one of the abandoned mines had even half of a closure plan completed.

Can the minister confirm that there are no completed closure plans for any of Yukon’s type 2 or abandoned mine sites?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Members will be aware that the Government of Canada remains accountable for environmental liabilities at the abandoned mine sites, known as the type 2 sites. These were permitted and this liability was incurred prior to devolution. Canada is developing funding approaches to meet their ongoing

accountability, recognizing that the current federal funding mechanism expires in 2020. The Government of Yukon is committed to protecting human health, safety and the environment at the four abandoned type 2 sites in the Yukon: Clinton Creek, Mount Nansen, Ketza and, of course, Faro. Each of these has varying degrees of challenges with them — the most challenging being the Faro complex.

That said, just to answer the member opposite's questions, there are no final remediation plans in place. Each one is at different levels of design and remediation.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Indeed, Yukon government has been spending federal money on these sites for nearly 13 years now and they have little to show for it. It is true that these projects are complex, but it is important to note that this government hasn't developed even one closure plan. Once the closure plan is in place, there will be even further money and work required.

Concerns have been expressed that without demonstrated progress, the Government of Canada will not continue to fund type 2 mine remediation forever. The current federal funding authority, as the minister says, expires in 2020 and presumably will be up for review before that.

Does this government anticipate that they will have completed closure plans for all of Yukon's type 2 abandoned mine sites before 2020?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our government certainly wants to ensure that the Government of Canada recognizes their role and remains accountable for environmental liabilities at these abandoned mine sites, called the type 2, as I mentioned. These were permitted prior to devolution — prior to us accepting responsibility for permitting these types of projects — so we expect the Government of Canada to remain accountable and have the liability for these sites.

Again, work is underway at a number of sites, the Faro complex being the most complex of them. Certainly, we were well on our way to having a remediation plan in place, when there were complications that occurred at the north fork of Rose Creek with elevated zinc levels. Attention had to be turned to that.

For those members of the House who have visited that site, they would recognize the size and complexity of that site. Yukon government officials are working very well with Canada. We're very proud and pleased with the work of the officials in Assessment and Abandoned Mines in accomplishing their mandate, and we expect them to continue to do that going forward — working not only with the Government of Canada, but the affected First Nations as well.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. When the current federal funding authority runs out in 2020, you can expect the Government of Canada will be asking some hard questions — questions like: "Why are there no closure plans in place for all these sites?" or "How were you unable to come up with up closure plans through 13 years and \$300 million spent?" By even the most conservative estimates, Yukon will likely have spent over a half billion dollars on type 2 abandoned mine sites by 2020, and if Yukon cannot offer

more than a shrug when the federal government asks them what they spent the money on, there could be repercussions.

How does the minister anticipate the federal government will react when the Yukon government tells them that they have spent over half-a-billion dollars of federal money over 17 years with nothing substantial to show for it?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think it's important for the members of the House to recognize that it wasn't in 2003 that the Government of Canada issued an appropriation and then said to go clean up these sites. We work with them on a continual basis on all of the abandoned type 2 sites. There are annual plans put in place that we work with the Government of Canada on. We're looking at a revised governance structure for the Faro mine complex as well. We work extensively and on a regular basis with the Government of Canada.

Again, these annual appropriations have to be approved by the Government of Canada, and it's working at a technical level at the officials level that this is done. Again, just to ensure that Yukoners understand the process, it wasn't just some large appropriation given in 2003 and we'll check back on you in 2020. We certainly work with the Government of Canada and the affected First Nations on a regular basis.

Question re: Hydraulic fracturing

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Yukon Party government has continuously said that they had a zero-tolerance policy to misinformation when it comes to fracking in the Yukon, but in reality they have rolled out a policy of no information.

Over a month ago, the Yukon NDP requested that EMR officials share the oil and gas action plan funded in this year's budget. Then, on two separate occasions, the minister was asked to table his oil and gas action plan. He ignored this request both times. It is clear that this government has no interest in sharing their plans for oil and gas development in Yukon.

Why has this government refused to share the oil and gas action plan with Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Our government believes that the path to Yukon's economic self-reliance includes safe and responsible natural resource development, and that includes developing our shale oil and gas resources. They are one part of that mix, as well as forestry, minerals and other natural resources. We certainly want to continue down that path.

Madam Speaker, the select committee on hydraulic fracturing had four recommendations with respect to public dialogue. Four of the 21 recommendations that were put forward, which the government has accepted and it is acting on all of them. There is currently an RFP out for increased public dialogue. We want to make sure that the public has the proper information when it comes to oil and gas development in the Yukon Territory and we want to make sure that they can make an informed decision free of the misinformation that the member opposite talks of. That's what we will continue to do. We'll continue to respond to the recommendations put

forward by the all-party committee, of which the Member for Mayo-Tatchun was one of the members.

Mr. Tredger: A plan sets targets and goals, establishes priorities, directs spending and ensures accountability. Vague references and ad hoc decision-making is not a plan.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to their fracking agenda, this Yukon Party government has consistently said one thing and done the other. The select committee recommended that the government should continue an informed public dialogue among Yukoners about the issue of fracking and the oil and gas industry more generally. This government's refusal to release its oil and gas action plan is entirely inconsistent with the principle of continuing an informed public dialogue.

Can the minister explain how his government's refusal to release its oil and gas action plan helps to satisfy their duty to inform Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is great that we found one of the recommendations that the member opposite, who was a member of the committee, put forward that he actually agrees with. It was my understanding, obviously, that there was consensus on these 21 recommendations, but comments by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun suggest that he did support them initially and then, later on, withdrew his support after the report was tabled.

Again, Madam Speaker, when it comes to the action plan, there are four components: the first is an engagement strategy and the goal is to lead a broad and balanced dialogue on YG's role in responsible oil and gas development; the second is with respect to First Nation government-to-government engagement; thirdly, there are technical projects that are underway, and the initial goal is to address the commitments that our government made to the select committee in responding to the report, including baseline data collection, research studies, economic benefit study and review of health impact studies; and the final piece is with respect to the regulatory regime, and the goal is to review the regulatory regime to ensure it is capable of safely regulating oil and gas activities in an economic, resource-conserving way.

Again, Madam Speaker, when it comes to responsible oil and gas development, we are in favour of moving forward. Obviously we have to work with the support of our First Nation partners, and we will continue to move down that path.

Mr. Tredger: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The minister has quoted from his so-called plan, but will he table it?

Madam Speaker, fracking is just not good for Yukon. Yukoners do not want it. Yukon First Nation governments do not want it. It has negative and social consequences. There is no evidence that it would provide an actual economic benefit to the Yukon. Yet this government continues to spend Yukoners' hard-earned money to attract an industry that they don't want.

What Yukoners did make clear during the fracking committee hearings was that they supported investment in renewable energy alternatives. Imagine where we would be if

this government had invested in renewables rather than in the promotion of fracking.

Madam Speaker, when will the Yukon Party government stop pushing their unwanted fracking agenda on Yukoners and focus on building a renewable energy industry in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Again, I'll refer the member opposite to page 19 of the select committee report on economic impacts. It states there: "The Committee did not receive comprehensive information and analysis on the positive and negative economic impacts of hydraulic fracturing." The recommendation was: "THAT the Government of Yukon conduct a thorough study of the potential economic impacts of developing a hydraulic fracturing industry."

Madam Speaker, we are undertaking that action but, again, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has a selective memory with respect to his time on the select committee. Clearly he already had an economic study done which was based on his own thoughts and feelings, rather than on science and having the economists do that actual work. We would prefer to have the economists do the actual work.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to renewable energy, I am very proud of the accomplishments of our government on biomass, on the geothermal favourability map that recently came out, and the work by the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation on next generation hydro. Of course, there is the IPP and the microgen. The list goes on and on. We have a very strong and proud track record when it comes to renewable energy and investing in energy efficiency in this territory.

Question re: Dog Act application to unincorporated communities

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think all of Yukon was taken aback last week when the chief coroner confirmed what had been rumoured for some time. Last year, a young Ross River man was killed by dogs. Yesterday, the government said three separate times that they were committed to reaching out and working together with the Ross River Dena Council. The minister also said that senior government staff attended a recent public meeting in Ross River.

Madam Speaker, has anyone from this government — and I mean an elected official — spoken with the Ross River Dena Council since this public meeting was held?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, we share Yukoners' shock and sympathy over the terrible tragedy. It's also important to remember that the coroner's investigation is still active and that we must allow and respect her to complete that work. However, I would like to share some of the things that the government has done in the past.

Yukoners should know that government staff have supported clinics in Ross River multiple times since 2010 — spayed and neutered dogs in the community. Staff also contracted dogcatchers to capture stray dogs in the community. We can improve the safety in Ross River by

working together with the First Nation and the community. The government has reached out to the chief, outlining a number of options that can be undertaken to address community safety. Letters have been sent from the deputy minister and from our chief veterinary officer. We're working with the community of Ross River.

Mr. Silver: Madam Speaker, this is a very disturbing incident and it's hard to imagine something happening in Canada, let alone in the Yukon — but I am quite surprised, honestly, that no one from this government has spoken to the chief, for example.

A 2010 report on the situation in Ross River provided direction on how to address ongoing dog problems. We talked about that yesterday. A pilot program was started later on and abandoned. The minister said yesterday that some of the issues identified in the report have been addressed; some have not; it has been updated again here from the minister. Obviously, a long-term solution is needed to solve the problem, Madam Speaker.

What steps is the government taking in the short term to address the current public safety concerns in the community of Ross River?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like I believe I said yesterday, the government has reached out to the chief, outlining a number of options that could be undertaken to address the community safety. It's important to remember that this is an ongoing coroner's investigation. It's still active and we must allow her to do the work, but our government immediately took action to address this issue. We directed staff, including the chief veterinary officer, to attend the community meeting and work with Ross River to develop next steps.

Mr. Silver: Madam Speaker, ongoing report aside, the minister can pick up the phone and call the chief. The Chief of the Ross River Dena Council has described the situation in the community as "dire". I appreciate the fact that the government intends to reach out, as the minister said, but there's a lack of urgency here. One of the issues that the Chief of the Ross River Dena Council spoke about this week is a lack of capacity to address the issue and a lack of authority as well.

It is my understanding that the Ross River Dena Council would need to pass a bylaw in order to even gain that authority. This is where we, as a territorial government, can help the Ross River Dena Council.

Is there something the government is working on with the Ross River Dena Council, and if so, how is the government prepared to assist in this regard or is it pursuing other arrangements?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can absolutely say that we're up front, right there working with Ross River on whatever they need. We have reached out to the chief. We have done a lot. This is a very sad incident, and we have tasked our staff to work with Ross River. We have sent letters and we are working with them, as we speak, to move forward and to ensure the safety of the Ross River people.

Question re: Health care delivery wait times

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Almost every week, we hear from a constituent reporting on unacceptably long wait times for health services in this territory. I have brought it to the House's attention of wait times of nine to 12 months for Alcohol and Drug Services counselling and a wait-list of up to eight months for individuals in need of a comprehensive mental health assessment. Individuals face wait-lists of up to four years for publicly funded physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Long wait-lists for health services in this territory are system-wide.

What is the government doing to address unacceptable, long wait times for essential health services throughout the territory?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I certainly appreciate the question from the member opposite. A number of professions within the territory and across the country see wait-lists for services. Yukon is not exempt from that area. We are very appreciative of the access that Yukoners do have to health care, and we will continue on down the path with those investments. The department continues to work with our partners — being the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other professional bodies — to address the services that we do have in the territory. I would argue that the services we do have here are some of the best in Canada, and this Yukon Party government is certainly very proud to make those investments.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We may have the best services, but we have the longest wait times. Yukoners are unable to get timely access to the health services they need. The Weight Wise program, which informs and supports participants with managing their weight and leading healthy lifestyles has a wait-list of four years. Preventive health programs, such as Weight Wise, help participants reduce chronic health risks associated with obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and hypertension. Early health interventions reduce future costs for the health system, yet patients are being asked to wait over four years to join this program.

What has this government done to reduce the long wait times for the territorial Weight Wise program and other health services?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, I thank the member opposite for the question. As I indicated in my first response, this government continues to work with our partners: First Nations, Yukon Medical Association, Yukon Registered Nurses Association and the Yukon Hospital Corporation on the recruitment and retention of professionals to the territory. We recognize that there are wait-lists in Yukon. We also recognize that there are wait-lists across the country.

We continue to have dialogue with those professionals in a fashion that we can address, but we recognize that wait-lists are part of a triage system and, as I understand it, most of those Yukoners who have the highest need are certainly

recognized and provided services earlier than those who may not be in dire need.

We will continue down the path with partnering and working on those partnerships with the Hospital Corporation and the professional bodies to address this issue, but we certainly recognize the good work that's being done in the territory.

Ms. Stick: Thank you, Madam Speaker. After 14 years of this government, Yukoners are facing unacceptable wait times for many necessary health services — longer than other jurisdictions. It might not be dire, but it's important to individuals' health.

Yukoners continue to be put on wait-lists for a family doctor and while they wait, families with children, seniors, persons with disabilities and many other Yukoners have to rely on the emergency room for their basic health needs. Our population is aging and yet seniors will join a wait-list of over 200 adults to be assessed by Hearing Services. This government is not meeting the needs of Yukoners — their health needs.

Madam Speaker, when will this government take action to reduce unacceptable wait times throughout our health care system?

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly if the member opposite is referring to a specific document or report that is indicating longer wait times in the Yukon than anywhere else in Canada, I would certainly be interested in seeing that.

As I indicated in my first response, we will continue with our partnerships with First Nations, with the Hospital Corporation, with the nurses association and other professional bodies to support the professions in the territory to address the wait times, but also recognize that right across Canada we see wait times similar to that of Yukon, if not longer wait times.

As I indicated, we will continue on with the partnerships. We'll continue on with the investments in our health care. Certainly our health care in the territory is second to none when we compare it to other jurisdictions in Canada — something that this Yukon Party government is very proud of.

Question re: Alaska Highway corridor functional plan

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Speaker, in April, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said that the current planned work on the Alaska Highway corridor would address some of the safety concerns along the Whitehorse stretch of the highway. The Minister of Highways and Public Works then stated — and I quote: "... there are some other safety opportunities that we need to take a look at."

Madam Speaker, the traffic counts, accident reports and statistics need to be updated to reflect the current safety needs of residents and neighbourhoods along the corridor and to take into account traffic pattern changes that result from work already done.

Madam Speaker, when will the Minister of Highways and Public Works release updated traffic counts and accident reports to the public?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will look into the member opposite's request with respect to the updated traffic counts and, if they are available, I will certainly release them prior to this House rising next week. I will bring them forward and provide them to members opposite. That said, we continue, obviously, to invest in the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. There is money in this budget for improvements between the Pioneer RV Park and approximately the turnoff to the Miles Canyon Road.

We'll also look internally at some of the intersections that are located within the Whitehorse corridor, particularly those that have high collision data. I know it has come up. Members of the government caucus as well as members opposite have raised safety concerns at some of the key intersections, so that internal work is underway now. We also have to take into account the results of the public consultation that took place last year.

So there are a number of fronts that we're working on with the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. We'll continue to do so and continue to provide members of this House and the public with updates on a timely basis.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Speaker, it was a month ago when I first asked the minister the question and he said the same thing — that he would look into whether he could release the accident reports and traffic counts. Many residents think that the Alaska Highway corridor twinning scheme is over-designed and goes far beyond Yukon's current population levels and needs. That's just one reason we need to see the more recent studies. There is value to planning for the future; however, we need to get this right and avoid errors and cost overruns.

Madam Speaker, will the Department of Highways and Public Works commit to continuing to engage businesses and residents before construction to ensure the planned expansion meets the needs of the community?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Absolutely — obviously public engagement is key when it comes to this project. It's an important project because I know when it first came up during debate in my time as Minister of Highways and Public Works last spring, one would have been led to believe that the bulldozers and the Management Board submissions were ready to go right away. That wasn't the case. There was broad public consultation. We have to take that consultation into account.

I know there are a number of businesses that have concerns. There are a number of residents and other stakeholders who have concerns along the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway. That is precisely why we're taking the time. We're going to get this right because it is a very long-term time horizon. There are population milestones that have to be met as well, so we're going to take the time to get it right and ensure that from a safety standpoint and an economic standpoint — this is a key corridor for moving not only our visitors, but also many of our goods and products

through the territory through this corridor — that we do take the time to do this properly.

Ms. Moorcroft: Madam Speaker, industrial and commercial property owners in Copperbelt South and all along the 40-plus kilometre corridor are concerned that the turning lanes and intersections design at the Carcross Cut-off and elsewhere will not accommodate large traffic and will in fact hurt their businesses. The Minister of Highways and Public Works has stated that further engagement with groups like the Alaska Highway Corridor Business Association is needed.

Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Highways and Public Works confirm whether the government has any plans for further consultation before the next territorial election?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, when it comes to the Whitehorse corridor of the Alaska Highway, there was a very substantial document put together by one of our engineering consultants. That was the draft functional plan. We consulted on that plan last spring. There were a number of concerns raised — not only by the industrial and commercial businesses that are located within the Whitehorse corridor, but many residents raised concerns as well. We're taking those concerns into account.

Obviously, there is money in this current budget for improvements in the northbound lane at Pioneer RV Park, between Pioneer RV Park and the Miles Canyon turnoff, so we're going to continue to do that work. Again, Madam Speaker, we will continue to do internal work as we move toward the next budget cycle, when it comes to safety improvements at some of the key intersections that were raised during the public consultation phase, as well as by members of both sides of the House.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Mr. Laxton: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Independent member to be called on Wednesday, May 18, 2016. It is Motion No. 1201, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

Ms. Stick: 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, May 18, 2016. It is Motion No. 1204, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

Mr. Silver: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, May 18, 2016. It is Motion No. 1089, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 201: *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 201, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Kent.

Hon. Mr. Kent: I move that Bill No. 201, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 201, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's indeed my pleasure to introduce Bill No. 201, *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, for this Legislative Assembly's consideration.

We are proposing the amendments to the *Placer Mining Act* and the *Quartz Mining Act* to establish categories of claims, provide for methods for valuing work done on those claims, and provide for retroactive application of these amendments. The intent of these amendments is to continue the double assessment credit program for claim holders and do so in a way that addresses the interest of First Nations with settled land claim agreements.

The double assessment credit was first implemented across all settlement and Crown land on February 1, 2015 and expired on January 31, 2016; therefore, proposed amendments also retroactively authorize double assessment credit for work done on mineral claims starting from February 1 of this year. The double assessment credit was implemented as a measure to encourage more exploration activity in Yukon during a period when investment dollars were difficult to obtain. This is something that emerged at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada meeting when I met with representatives of PDAC and we talked about whether or not to provide blanket relief from assessments or to look at some other measures. It was their feeling and we certainly concurred that providing double assessment would encourage work, whereas providing relief from assessment would encourage individuals to work on other claims that they may hold outside of our jurisdiction.

I've heard from some miners who did work that they would not have otherwise done so had they not been able to take advantage of the double credit in 2015. This includes one individual who informed me that they were able to leverage an additional \$1 million because of the double credit program being put into place from their various clients.

Given that the economic outlook for exploration had not improved substantially this year over last, we are proposing that the double assessment credit be renewed to encourage and support mineral exploration for another year. We heard from many people, organizations and governments on how we should proceed with these amendments, and we have taken these diverse views into consideration. The amendments

specify that the double assessment credit would not apply to claims that are wholly or partially located on settlement land, unless the First Nation that owns the settlement land agrees to its application. This will address concerns of some First Nations regarding the effect of the credit on claims located on their settlement land.

In order to allow exemption of claims on settlement land from the double assessment credit, amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act*, or QMA, and *Placer Mining Act*, or PMA, and the corresponding schedules of representation work are required. The schedules are used primarily to determine the value of work done on a mineral claim for the purposes of the renewal of that mineral claim.

What I bring forward today is a responsible way forward, a way to update our mining legislation to meet legal requirements and improve the mining regime overall. Our government certainly recognizes the importance of mining to the well-being of our economy. We will continue to work on creating a positive climate for mineral investment because we realize that the benefits of mining land directly in the hands of Yukoners and local businesses as well as to mining companies and their investors.

The Yukon government is working with self-governing First Nations in a way that respects the nature of settlement land and the differing approaches to resource development. Certainty and improved relationships are key to maintaining Yukon as a place where the mining industry can succeed and provide tangible opportunities for all of our residents. We meet regularly with First Nations to ensure that we are working together as resource managers and decision-makers. As governments, we all want to maximize benefits for our citizens in communities.

Our government is committed to supporting the exploration industry and providing the framework for sustainable mine development over the long term. We have several programs that encourage growth in Yukon's foundational industry. Thus far, more than 27,000 mineral occurrences have been discovered in Yukon, covering just over 10 percent of our land mass. To encourage more exploration and development, we are continuing our enhanced funding commitment of \$1.4 million for the Yukon mineral exploration program, which is the oldest continuing prospectors' assistance program in our country. This program provides mineral prospecting and exploration activities in Yukon by providing a portion of the risk capital needed to locate, explore and develop mineral projects to an advanced exploration stage. The Yukon mineral exploration program allows us to leverage more investment in mineral exploration during a period when raising funds is extremely challenging. Part of the program's function is to provide a portion of the capital required to locate, explore and develop mineral projects to an advanced stage.

This program has a proven track record of leveraging exploration dollars. Last season, the program supported 62 placer and hardrock exploration projects and leveraged an estimated \$4.2 million in additional industry investment. The 2015 projects resulted in numerous new discoveries that I

expect we will hear more about in the future, including new discoveries at the STU project, Australia Creek, Kate project, WELS Gold, Cheryl Creek and southeast Yukon nephrite project. Previous discoveries through the program include Mariposa, White Gold, Red Mountain, Blende projects and, of course, the one that has been news most recently, the Coffee Gold project.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that a small investment by the Yukon mineral exploration program played a very large role in leading to the over \$500-million investment by Goldcorp in the Coffee project. This is my opportunity to congratulate not only the team at Kaminak for all of their work in bringing the Coffee project forward to the point where it is at now, but also an opportunity for me to welcome Goldcorp to the Yukon — of course, pending the shareholders' ratification of the deal. I am very excited to have had the opportunity to meet with Goldcorp representatives at PDAC with the Premier as well as the Minister of Economic Development over the past number of years and to explain to them the Yukon advantage that we believe exists here — when it comes to myth-busting some of the infrastructure myths and other myths that occur for the Yukon.

We are excited by the opportunities that the Yukon has in the mining industry. We intend to use programs like the YMEP and double assessment when needed to make sure that the pipeline is in good shape, whether it is early prospecting projects through early stage exploration and advanced exploration and into development opportunities.

In addition to increasing exploration, our government believes that more growth will happen when industry is able to get on with its work and businesses are empowered for success. With that in mind, we have prioritized a number of initiatives, including improving our regulatory system. This work, combined with our undisputable geology, will enable Yukon to thrive when the markets rebound.

Madam Speaker, recently, we put together a specialized team that is working with First Nations, stakeholders, government agencies and industry. We have made a lot of good progress, including the signing of a government-to-government protocol with a number of self-governing First Nations to guide our engagement with them on mine licensing and mining activity. This collaborative approach is only one example of how we are responding to industry's recommendation that we work together with First Nations to enhance existing dialogue and to cultivate government-to-government relations.

In the territory, we have approximately 5,000 kilometres of government-maintained roads, one international airport, several community airports and aerodromes, and access to three deep-sea, year-round, ice-free ports for shipping. This year our government committed approximately \$55 million to upgrading our transportation infrastructure, including work on our highways, bridges, airports and key roadways.

Yukon government is also working to meet the current and future energy supply needs of projects. This work is being done through accessing liquefied natural gas, maintaining

reliable energy sources and exploring options to develop our oil and gas and hydroelectric potential.

Last week, I had the pleasure and the privilege to visit the Silvertip mine, which is located just south of the BC-Yukon border but is accessed off of the Alaska Highway near Rancheria. It was a pleasure to see all of the individuals working at the site, constructing the mine. I should note that there were many Yukon contractors and Yukon residents also working on the site. I believe they have between 25- and 30-percent Kaska employment, including Kaska Nations located in the Yukon. It is exciting. I think that they will be the first mine in the country to use liquefied natural gas to generate their power, so hats off to JDS Silver and the team that is working there. They are doing a very nice job of building a mine, and we look forward to the first shipment of some of their concentrate, which we anticipate happening later on this year.

Madam Speaker, we continue to work on meeting the skilled labour requirements of the mining sector. The Department of Education works closely with Yukon College, the federal government and industry partners to ensure that we are able to meet that future need. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining has training opportunities in communities throughout the territory, which help to provide qualified and capable local workers. I believe they are close to completing their trades training facility at the Whitehorse campus of the Yukon College, something that our government played an important role — and in partnership with the Government of Canada — in funding — and we look forward to that opening up later on this spring or perhaps early summer.

We're committed to continuing to work with other governments, First Nations, industry and the public to build on the enduring legacy of mining in our territory, a legacy that has shaped our territory and contributed largely to the prosperity that we enjoy today.

Companies that choose to operate in Yukon in the 21st century know they will be in a jurisdiction with political stability, modern infrastructure, first-class geoscience information and considerable untapped mineral potential.

Any changes to Yukon government's mining legislation need to be efficient and effective. These amendments before the Legislature are just the most recent of many improvements we have made to our mining legislation. We believe they are an excellent example of building upon a strong regulatory regime that supports business while meeting obligations to First Nations. The quartz and placer mining acts have been updated many times since their origin. I would like to provide members with some information on a few of the recent amendments our government has undertaken.

In 2005, amendments were made to the mining land use regulations to incorporate the environmental assessment reviews under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. We developed the mine reclamation closure policy and accompanying security regulations for hardrock mines in 2006. In 2010, there were amendments made to the *Quartz Mining Act* to modernize claim staking administration

and create new royalty regulations. The *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* are long-standing statutes that provide a well-understood framework for mineral exploration, development and production in our territory.

The *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the First Nation final agreements recognize and were designed around Yukon's public statutes, including the quartz and placer acts. This is apparent in the definitions of category A and category B lands, access provisions, royalty-sharing provisions and other aspects. Yukon's operating mines have benefit agreements with First Nations and are employing many First Nation people. Many Yukon mineral exploration projects also have benefit agreements with First Nations. The mining industry has been out in front of most industries in communicating and engaging with First Nations and affected communities.

Our government also works hard to ensure that the legislative framework — whether it's the mining acts, YESAA, the *Waters Act*, the *Fisheries Act*, the *Environment Act* or any other act affecting mining — is kept modern and effective. Unlike many jurisdictions in Canada and abroad, Yukon's economy continued to perform well and post well during the global economic downturn of 2008 and 2009, but, even so, our territory is not immune to the global market forces.

Following the unprecedented mineral exploration levels of 2011 and the record-high mineral prices that accompanied it, we saw a correction in some mineral prices, which have seen continued declines in commodities. As you know, these declines led to some temporary closures of Yukon mines as investors took measures to cut costs. Our government recognizes the challenges that junior mining companies face with respect to equity markets and understands that the growth of Yukon's mining industry is influenced by commodity prices, world capital markets and their fluctuations.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, it's important to note that we have seen several bright spots in the industry this past year. Mineral exploration is still widely occurring in our territory; companies are evaluating and consolidating their exploration properties that were staked during the most recent exploration boom. With Yukon's wealth of natural resources, we are positioned very well going forward to benefit from the continued growth in emerging markets. This growth should continue to fuel demand for many commodities, keeping interest in Yukon's mineral resources elevated. We all have resources specific to each of our regions to draw advantage from, whether it be the Tintina Trench running through BC, Yukon and into Alaska, oil and gas in Alberta, or diamonds in the Northwest Territories. We are all in a position resource-wise to position ourselves for the inevitable turnaround in the future.

This resilience gives me encouragement, but it does not mean that our work is done. Our government will continue to promote Yukon as an attractive jurisdiction for mining and other business investments. This means maintaining a competitive royalty and tax regime and ensuring that our core infrastructure — our roads, our bridges, our water, our sewer,

our airports and energy — is well-constructed and well-maintained.

The Government of Yukon works closely with the mining industry. Representative groups such as the Yukon Chamber of Mines, Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Yukon Mining Alliance and other private sector stakeholders have been key to the sector's growth and success. We will continue to support private sector efforts to attract investment capital and conduct trade missions in target markets, including the United States, Europe and Asia, as well as opportunities in the mining centres of our country — mainly Vancouver and Toronto.

Our rich cultural legacy, geography, natural resources, proximity to major economic centres, advanced telecommunications network and positive investment climate will continue to fuel activity in this important industry.

With Yukon's strong position in mind, I would like to reiterate the importance of maintaining an up-to-date regulatory regime. This is one piece in an important overall effort we are making to ensure that our cornerstone industry can survive, thrive and succeed here in our territory. We're confident that these changes can be implemented while still ensuring certainty, timeliness and clarity.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I commit this bill to the Legislative Assembly and I welcome remarks from any and all members of the Legislative Assembly with interest in this bill.

Mr. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the NDP Official Opposition to speak to Bill No. 201, entitled *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*.

To fully understand the bill at hand before us, it is important to understand the principles behind assigning value to work for placer and quartz claims. In 1906, the Yukon *Placer Mining Act* required claim holders to perform \$200 worth of assessment work per claim per year for placer mines. For quartz, it was \$100-worth of work per claim per year.

That was a significant investment at the time; however, that amount has not changed. The intention of requiring a dollar-value amount of work to be done on placer and quartz claims was to encourage investment and development of those claims while also discouraging claim holders from holding on to the land and speculating on it. One might call it a "use it or lose it" principle; however, like much of Yukon historic mining legislation, the fees have not been adjusted with inflation and the legislation is not able to influence the intended outcome like it used to.

I'm hoping that when we get to Committee of the Whole, the minister will be able to provide us with some information as to why he felt this was necessary — the number of claims in the Yukon, the average length of time those claims have been held, and the consolidation of claims into large blocks of land. What consideration has been done to that?

When we look at the history of double assessment, we have heard from several First Nations that they are quite upset with the manner in which this was implemented and are concerned that there may not be a real need for it. In 2015,

this government — without consultation, I might add — rolled out the double assessment credit program. That program allowed claim holders to file for twice the value of work done on their claim. In other words, they could do \$50 worth of work on a claim's mine, claim \$100 and fulfill their obligations. In actuality then, the dollar value — not accounting for inflation — is half what was expected in 1906.

As I said, when it was rolled out in 2015, it was done without meaningful consultation with affected First Nations. Again, when it was extended, it was not properly raised with First Nation governments. Several First Nation governments have informed me that the Yukon government has not followed appropriate protocols. In a letter to Yukon government, the Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation stated that the double assessment program had — and I quote: "... the effect of perpetuating mining interests throughout our traditional territory and extending Encumbering Rights on Settlement Land without requiring claimholders to perform any additional work."

The double assessment program, both in process and in effect, infringed on the rights of Yukon First Nation governments by violating the spirit and intent of the First Nation final agreements.

The bill that we have before us today, *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, appears to be an attempt to placate affected First Nations by amending retroactively both pieces of legislation so that it can exclude settlement land from the program.

If I could quote from a letter from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in of April 28 to the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources: "While TH is mildly relieved that Yukon now recognizes the problems with a blanket application of the DACP and is now proposing modifications to exclude Settlement Land, we still vigorously oppose the entire concept."

Retroactive application of statutes is rare and a very questionable legal practice. The lack of proper consultation has led to this situation. While these amendments do solve some of the problems presented by the double assessment program, they fail to address others. For example, the process by which this program was developed and the program itself go against the final agreements. Once again, I think that the Chief of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in says it best — and I quote: "The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that First Nations with Final Agreements gave up title to most of their traditional territories in exchange for, among other things, a right to 'participate in the management of public resources.' By providing cheap and near-permanent rights that trump any other interest in the land, Yukon's mining regime violates the intent of our Final Agreements. This problem is particularly acute with respect to placer claims because placer mining (or the possibility) is incompatible with other surface uses."

Madam Speaker, this government continues to fundamentally misunderstand the legal duty that they have under the First Nation final agreements. They continue to make ad hoc decisions and attempt to deflect the fallout with band-aid solutions like the bill we have before us today.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation sent another letter to Yukon government in protest of the devolution transfer agreement protocol, which was designed to bring Yukon's mining regime into compliance with the final and self-government agreements.

These concerns aren't limited to the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. I have heard from other First Nations and I expect that the minister will soon be hearing from them as well.

First Nation governments have consistently stated that, with successor resource legislation in place — land use planning — these conflicts could be avoided, yet this government continues to stall on these important changes. By not entering into successor legislation, by not completing land use planning as was intended in the devolution transfer agreement, the self-government agreements and the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, this Yukon Party government is creating uncertainty and divisiveness.

The government has an obligation to work with First Nations to develop new mining legislation according to the devolution transfer agreement that gave Yukon provincial-like responsibilities to manage and administer land resources. The NDP believes that successor legislation, coupled with land use planning, would go a long way toward eliminating land and resource conflicts between Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments. Instead we have ad hoc interventions, questionable consultation and interventions in complex acts that have unintended consequences.

This bill creates the potential for two categories of land. When we looked at the DTA, we boasted that we would have one category of land and there would be one system. In an ad hoc manner, this Yukon Party government is complicating it, creating two categories of land. It's creating one on settlement land and one off settlement land. It also creates a very real potential for conflict with Yukon First Nations. As we know, conflict breeds uncertainty, and uncertainty scares away investment. This bill is not good for our relationships with Yukon First Nation governments and it is not good for the mining industry.

Due to the nature in which this program was developed, rolled out and managed, it could end up having a directly opposite effect to what was intended. Unfortunately, the Yukon Party government seems to believe that any call to modernize our mining regimes as was intended by the UFA has a negative impact on Yukon's reputation as a place to invest in mineral exploration and will make it tougher for prospectors; but, in reality, a modernized mining regime will reduce the conflict that this government seems to trigger on a monthly basis.

The minister stated that some prospectors were able to leverage up to an additional \$1 million in exploration funding because of the doubled assessment credit. This needs to be clarified. We have yet to see any direct evidence of the benefits of the program.

In fact, I have heard placer miners raise concerns that, as more land is being mined and developed, it's becoming scarcer, and some large claim holders are sitting on those claims, thereby alienating the land from the potential for more

development. I haven't had the resources to do extensive consultation, but I have heard from many prospectors that land is getting scarcer and, like good businesses, they have mined the sweet spots. To tie up land or not allow new people into the industry could have a deleterious effect.

For 2016, the government has extended the program, yet has given us no evidence of its success in 2015. Once again, the extension was done without adequate consultation.

My question for the minister is: Given the low price of oil, the low Canadian dollar, and the high price of gold in relation to previous years, is this program still necessary to stimulate work on placer claims? The conditions of last year are no longer evident.

As I stated earlier, the contents of this bill are narrow. It serves only to partially solve one issue and not even the entirety of that issue. This government still ignores problems presented by the existence of claims in municipalities and the effect that overlapping claims will have on settlement land.

Yukoners and Yukon First Nation governments want to work with the government to develop a working relationship to be more proactive and create a better climate for responsible development of our shared resources. A modern mining resource development system that minimizes conflicts and provides certainty would create a sustainable business environment for mining in the Yukon. Completing land use planning, as was intended by the UFA and self-government agreements, would go a long way toward achieving that certainty. Instead, we are treated to a program like the double assessment program — a program that was hastily conceived and creates mistrust with our partners and uncertainty in the industry. This government is trying to paint this as a good thing for industry. That may be so, but we have not seen any evidence showing this. What we can be sure of is that this government has, once again, created conflict with our partner governments.

The legislation is a band-aid solution to conflict created due to lack of successor resource legislation and lack of effective land use plans. It is the result of this government's unilateral action, mismanagement and unwillingness to do what is required of them under our First Nation final agreements. This, as I said, will only lead to further uncertainty and animosity and could have a very detrimental effect on the mining industry in the Yukon. It is for that reason that the NDP will be opposing this act.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to rise today to speak on the placer and quartz mining acts. Bill No. 201, *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*, is a step in the right direction, albeit a small one. The current amendment is a quick fix for a much larger issue. These bills need to be updated so that they can reflect the current resource sector environment. As we all know, the bulk of these acts were written in the early 1900s and they have only had minor revisions since, most of which were administrative. As you know, Madam Speaker, placer and quartz mining are different entities and have evolved far

past what they were 100 years ago. It's time for our government to do so as well.

My understanding is that these amendments were made in reaction to an order-in-council granting double assessment credits, as mentioned, to work done on both placer and quartz claims as an incentive to the private sector during tough economic times. The order-in-council applied to all claims in Yukon and the decisions were made without consultation. This, of course, created some backlash, and the amendments we see in front of us today are to prevent further backlash by categorizing claims within the umbrella of the placer and quartz.

Madam Speaker, the categories mentioned in the amendment are undefined in the amendment and I will be asking for clarification about what these categories are and the terminology to be added in Committee of the Whole this afternoon. At this point, I can only assume that the categories of claims will be related to the classification of land that they exist on — for example, category A or B lands belonging to settled First Nations.

Despite that this amendment is a knee-jerk reaction, I do believe that it is a step in the right direction and I will be voting in favour of the amendment. I want to thank the chiefs who have allowed me access to their public servants in the departments who this would affect and also the members of the placer and quartz mining community who also helped with interpretation of these changes.

I look forward to discussing this further in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My comments will be brief this afternoon.

I don't think that one should reward knee-jerk reactions with support. I do believe that what we're seeing is a continuation of a very sad legacy over the last 10 years — 13 years since the devolution agreement has been in place and since the Yukon Party has been in government. It reminds me that at some point things do come back and that there are consequences of that kind of action or inaction. As Sir Walter Scott put it, "Oh, what a tangled web we weave..." I think that one of the challenges here is that we're trying to say that in fact this is progress, when it is in fact not progress.

The minister talked about the fact that we are talking about long-standing statutes — and that those were long-standing federal statutes, I will remind you, Madam Speaker. They're not territorial statutes. So what we've seen is this government making attempts to make incremental changes around the edges, but nothing around the substance. Making those incremental changes flies in the face of the commitments made by governments — First Nation governments, Yukon government and Canada — in the First Nation final agreements and the self-government agreements, and the latter agreement would have been the devolution transfer agreement.

That approach of incremental changes to substantive issues that affect the economy of this territory and that affect

the intergovernmental relationships will result — and has resulted — in cumulative errors, and the effect is long lasting.

The minister's description of the process that he described with respect to the fulfilling, as he described it, of the obligations around renewing, updating and modernizing mine licensing and other regulatory regimes — the collaborative approach he describes is in stark contrast to what is described by Yukon First Nations, our partners in government. It's really important that we not lose sight of the fact that we made commitments.

I do echo the minister opposite when he says that the mining industry has been out front when it comes to working with Yukon First Nations. One wonders why the Yukon government can't demonstrate the same maturity and understand that they are working on a government-to-government basis — that the common law, let alone the agreements that have been negotiated and to which we are parties, establishes a new relationship. When we set out to try to subvert those relationships, then we will have consequences. The Member for Mayo-Tatchun, I think, very clearly laid out some serious concerns that have been expressed by Yukon First Nations. By trying to do a legislative amendment now to somehow address the fact that, without consultation, this government changed instructions to the mining recorder with respect to the double assessed value in January 2015 — doing that without consultation is just one small example of a whole series of what I have referred to as those incremental changes that do have real serious consequences for all of us in this territory.

All of us in this Legislative Assembly want to see a successful, robust mineral extraction industry in this territory, but that means we have to act with maturity and actually do the work that is required to provide the framework for that to occur in this territory. It means doing the hard work and not trying to go around the processes.

When the devolution transfer agreement says — and the Yukon government and First Nations did agree — to use a process, a devolution transfer agreement protocol for the purposes of developing successor resource legislation, the question that I have had and the minister has yet to answer — and the impression I have from my conversations with First Nation leadership — is that the objective of the process that has been set out under the devolution transfer agreement protocol is not the development of successor resource legislation but, as I said, a series of incremental changes around the edges of it. It's just like when you start folding a piece of paper and cutting off little pieces of it here and little pieces of it there, pretty soon you end up with a fragmented piece that does not look or resemble at all what the parties had intended. I think that is what we are facing here now.

For the minister to suggest that making changes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act* in this manner will be positive in the outcome — it's very difficult to see that the continuation of this kind of process is going to achieve the objectives that the minister has established. I think that the consequence is more likely to see the parties to the devolution protocol agreement coming to the conclusion that the Yukon

Party has no serious intention of working in good faith with respect to the conclusion of the work and the work plan that was established to try to — and as First Nations have described repeatedly in their correspondence to the minister and to the Premier — they have talked about a vast number of breaches of that protocol, Madam Speaker. To suggest that First Nations will want to continue with a process that is anything but transparent makes them and me, unfortunately, come to the conclusion that the mineral development strategy — the process that was contemplated in section 6 of the devolution transfer agreement that's reflected in their protocol agreement — is really not much more than election politicking rather than the kind of transparent policy-making that we so need at this point.

It's an opportunity lost. I don't want to go on too long, Madam Speaker, because I just think we have not seen any evidence from the minister opposite. He hasn't responded to the questions from the Member for Mayo-Tatchun about the number of claims, the average length of time held, the cumulative value of the changes being made, nor has he addressed directly the concerns being raised by the First Nations with respect to not just this element of the devolution transfer agreement protocol, but the others.

I just remind the minister opposite that there's wisdom sometimes in the words of the Bard of the Yukon. One of the lines that came to me as I was reading through the correspondence related to this matter goes, "Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code". That "stern code" applies seriously here. When you make a promise, as we did, in a final agreement — when you make a promise as we did in the devolution transfer agreement — and then try to go around it, there are consequences. That stern code — who knows how it shall play out, but it shall play out.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Kent: It's my pleasure to speak to close debate at second reading here on Bill No. 201, *Act to Amend the Placer Mining Act and the Quartz Mining Act*. Again, I just wanted to reiterate why these acts are being amended. The amendments to the PMA and the QMA will establish categories of claims, provide for methods for valuing work done on claims, and provide for retroactive application of these amendments. The intent of these amendments is to continue the double credit assessment program for claim holders and to do so in a way that accommodates the interests of First Nations.

The double assessment credit means that claim holders can be credited with twice the value of work done on their mineral claims during a year. Again, Madam Speaker, this idea — and I apologize because I think that when I was initially on my feet, I said the idea was brought forward at a PDAC conference, and it was actually at the mines ministers meeting in 2014 in Sudbury, where I spoke to representatives from PDAC and talked about various incentives that other governments were doing. At the time, it was a request to me

from a number of the prospectors that, given the tough times and the difficulty they were having in optioning their properties and just the market conditions of the day, we looked to provide relief from assessments. I talked to the representatives of PDAC about that, and they suggested a different approach, which was an approach that was being undertaken by the NDP government in Manitoba, and that is the double assessment program. They felt that it was a better way to encourage work, so I thank the NDP government of the day from Manitoba for providing that idea and that initiative, which led to the double assessment here. It certainly is a way to encourage work. As I have said, I have heard from many in the industry that this is an important program.

I did reach out last fall and asked the Yukon Prospectors Association, the Chamber of Mines and the Klondike Placer Miners' Association if they felt that this program should be extended to another year. When I did hear back from all of those organizations, they felt that it was worthwhile. I have referenced the one individual company that said they were able to leverage an additional \$1 million in 2015 based on this double assessment credit. Again, it is working.

The Leader of the Official Opposition says that I have failed to answer questions raised by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, but this is really the first opportunity that I have had to respond in debate to the member. As we get into Committee of the Whole, we will have officials and we will be able to address some of the questions. The Member for Klondike, I think, suggested that we would be in Committee on this later on today, but we will not be. It is not scheduled for Committee today. When it does come back to Committee, we will be able to provide responses to the specific questions raised by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Madam Speaker, one thing that is abundantly clear to me is that the NDP does not understand what a successful mining industry needs in this territory any more today than they did in 2011, when we read their platform. It is quite something and it is quite unfortunate, I think, that they do not reach out and engage with the Chamber of Mines, the Yukon Prospectors Association or the Klondike Placer Miners' Association. If they did — when we get into Committee debate on this, I will ask the member for Mayo-Tatchun whom he spoke to. He certainly said he did not have the resources to conduct extensive consultation, but some phone calls, I would imagine, would have taken place between him and the Chamber of Mines, Yukon Prospectors Association or the Klondike Placer Miners' Association.

I would certainly be interested in hearing at least that he did reach out to those organizations when it came to this, because if it was the same response that I received from them back in the fall, they would have indicated that they did want us to proceed with these programs again for 2016 — again, it is designed to be a temporary measure. We certainly want to see these industries be able to be successful through tough times. I have referenced on occasion the last down-cycle in the industry that occurred in the last 1990s and early 2000s. We bottomed out at about \$7.5 million in exploration work — I think it was in 2001-02. Those were tough times. We had

individuals leaving the territory and I think a lot of that is owed to the fact that we didn't prepare well for that.

Given what we've seen right now in this recent downturn — we still see mines going through the permitting cycle. We see mines in the environmental assessment phase and in the evaluation phase. We see mines like Coffee Creek getting well over \$500 million — again, pending approval by the shareholders of those companies invested in Kaminak — and potentially being bought out by Goldcorp. I think that is a testament to the work of the government and many of the partners. This isn't something that we do in isolation, but we look at the Department of Economic Development and their support for the Yukon Mining Alliance and the marketing efforts and promotional efforts that have been done over the past number of years, making sure that this Yukon story is told. It needs to be consistently told and consistently reinforced with investors in good times and in bad.

When I was absent from the House last Thursday, it was the opportunity for me to visit the Silvertip Mine, as I mentioned earlier on. There was a CEO from another company that has interests in British Columbia and the Yukon on that tour as well and what he said to me is that nobody out-promotes the Yukon when the Premier is at investment conferences in Colorado and the previous Minister of Economic Development travelled to Europe with the Yukon Mining Alliance. I know I have spoken in Vancouver and Toronto and the Minister of Economic Development and I have met with several major investment houses and banking firms. I think that work is appreciated, not only by this individual CEO who I spoke to, but also by other executives who I've talked to since the Kaminak and Goldcorp deal was announced last week. While we can't take all of the credit, I think as a government, we have to take some of the credit, along with our partners.

As the Chamber of Mines initiative and public education — Our Yukon — In It Together — we are certainly all in it together when it comes to promoting and developing these projects, no matter what stage they're at.

As important to that development end of the project pipeline that those projects that are permitted and ready to go are — and those ready to go through the assessment and permitting process, such as Coffee, are — we also need the pipeline full at the other end, which is the early stage prospecting.

That is why we have invested the enhanced amount in the mineral exploration program and that is why we decided to come up with a double assessment credit again. It's something that we want to recognize. It wasn't my idea — it was an NDP government in Manitoba that came up with the idea, but I certainly thank them and thank the executive from the PDAC for coming forward with this suggestion. As I mentioned, there was suggestion that we provide relief from assessment, but under this double assessment credit program, a claim holder must conduct some work on their claim. Relief from assessment means that a claim holder does not need to do any work on that claim to keep it in good standing. This was the choice that I took to the industry last year, and they felt that a

double credit would be the better way to perform. Again, I look forward to Committee of the Whole when the Member for Mayo-Tatchun can tell me exactly what industry representatives he spoke to, especially the executives of those three main mining organizations here in the territory.

I just have to comment on the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and his taking a piece in isolation from 1906 and saying that it hasn't kept up with inflation. There have been a number of other measures that have come in since 1906 that lead to ensuring that the government gets taxes and resources from the development. Income tax is an important measure that has been introduced as well as the GST, as an example. When the members opposite take such a narrow look at industry and what their contributions are and what their requirements are, it does a disservice to that industry and doesn't take into account the broader picture when it comes to what the resource industry needs to be successful.

I am certainly disappointed, but not surprised, that the NDP has not learned any lessons over the past four and a half years — almost five years — when it comes to what the mining industry needs to be successful in this jurisdiction. I am certain that we can expect some more interesting aspects to their upcoming platform, or manifesto, whichever they prefer to call it, when it comes to the mining industry — whether it's increased royalties like the scheme they tried to introduce for Yukoners last time and then the creation of some sort of a fund, perhaps a slush fund of some sort, from the increase in royalties, or whether it's the elimination of free-entry, which is something that our party stands solidly behind as the way for the mining industry to be successful. It will be an interesting read, I'm sure, and it certainly will be an interesting read for those who are in the mining industry or who earn their living from the mining industry to read what plan the Yukon NDP has for them.

I also learned with interest here today that the Leader of the Third Party — the Leader of the Liberal Party — will forge ahead with rewriting the quartz and placer mining acts as he suggested. That will be interesting, I'm sure, for those members of the industry to hear exactly what his plan is. As I mentioned, some of the Liberal campaign commitments are starting to emerge and I am excited to hear more about what these plans are and share them with members of the industry on what the Liberal Party believes they need to be successful.

We certainly know that keeping royalties at a reasonable rate, maintaining free-entry staking, investing in infrastructure, investing in promotion, investing in the Yukon Geological Survey, investing in prospectors, and ensuring there are opportunities for our junior mining sector to be successful with opportunities for them to see investment from larger companies or larger firms are what we want to promote and enhance because we recognize the importance of this industry to our citizens here.

With that, I will conclude my remarks. I look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole on this bill in the remaining time that we have. Unfortunately, there are only three days after today for government business when we have the two private members' days factored in, but I am again

hopeful that we can get through the budget business of our departments and move into concluding Committee of the Whole on third reading on this legislation as well. That certainly is something that we'll look forward to moving on with.

With that, I will conclude my remarks and commit this bill to the House. I'm disappointed, of course, that the New Democrats again will not support responsible resource development in this territory, but unfortunately, I'm not surprised.

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. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Disagree.

Ms. Stick: Disagree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Disagree.

Ms. White: Disagree.

Mr. Tredger: Disagree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Laxton: Agree.

Clerk: Madam Speaker, the results are 11 yeas, five nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 201 agreed to

Bill No. 95: *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 95, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Graham.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move that Bill No. 95, entitled *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 95, entitled *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Thank you once again, Madam Speaker. I will keep my remarks relatively short because I think during second reading and during Committee of the Whole discussions — I would hope anyway — that most of the questions were answered that members had here. We believe that we've made changes to the *Students Financial Assistance Act* that were to the benefit to all Yukon students

graduating from high school or at least having lived in the Yukon for a substantial amount of time. I will just take a couple of minutes just to run through the issues that we found during our initial review of the *Students Financial Assistance Act* and how they were addressed.

The first issue that we had was that of residency, and that has always been an issue that has been in the forefront at the Department of Education. Residency, under the old act, could mean that students who had never lived in the Yukon but were dependents of parents who lived here were actually eligible for this grant. Students who lived in the territory for a couple of years and then moved with their parents Outside were eligible for up to five years of funding under the act. We believed that this was not appropriate and we took steps to make the residency requirements much clearer and also much more beneficial to parents and students who have a long-term connection to the territory.

We will allow students whose parents reside in the territory, but who have not completed the last two years in the territory, under certain circumstances, to be eligible for the Yukon grant, because we believe that some young students travel outside of the territory to complete high school for very good reasons, and they should not be eliminated from student financial assistance if their reasons were valid.

We also dealt with an issue with a few Yukon First Nations. Some Yukon First Nation students were ineligible for the grant simply because they were still receiving grants from the federal government. Under the current act, students who receive financial assistance from the federal government were automatically unable to receive assistance from the territorial government as well; however, students from self-governing First Nations that had drawn down the authority or the responsibility for post-secondary education funding from the federal government were in fact eligible to receive the student grant. So we have corrected that to enable all Yukon First Nation students to take advantage of the Yukon grant, even if their First Nation has not drawn down responsibility.

One of the other issues was that of high school requirements. Under the new act, eligibility will be based on a student completing two years of high school in the Yukon or being, as I said before, normally resident during the high school years and able to achieve entry into post-secondary education. So, that will clear up many of the difficulties some long-time Yukoners have faced in receiving the grant.

The final issue was one that was fairly important to me and that was that Yukon College students did not receive a travel grant and many Yukon College students felt that they were being unfairly discriminated against because of the fact that they chose to remain in Yukon to complete their education at the college. Consequently, Madam Speaker, students at Yukon College will receive an increase of some \$800 per year in the Yukon grant in coming years. I know it will assist them greatly because many of these students have families of their own — they are older students — and I know they will really appreciate this increase. But we have taken pains to ensure that students studying outside the territory will not see a reduction in the overall amount that they receive.

There were a few other changes to the act. We're moving from an annual quarter or semester amount to a weekly amount and the reason for that, Madam Speaker, was because of the huge number of different ways of calculating semesters or quarters done by universities across the country. What we've also done is extended the amount of time that a student would be eligible. Where they were eligible under the old act for four or five years of funding, which could have meant they were eligible up to 150 weeks, they will now be eligible for 170 weeks.

We also have increased the amount of funding that will be available to students who require upgrading at Yukon College. Those students normally would take advantage of the student training allowance, and the time that they took the student training allowance would be deducted from their grant. Under the new act, students may take up to two years of training or education at the college under the student training allowance and still get five full years, or 170 weeks, of Yukon grant funding.

In addition, we have changed the role of the Student Financial Assistance Committee. We have expanded it to include reviewing matters related to completion of two years high school and what is considered high school equivalency. We are also requesting that the members of the committee provide the Minister of Education with advice from time to time at the minister's request. We think that many of these people have a great deal of experience in the education system in the territory and they have a great deal to contribute to the minister.

I think that encapsulates the changes to the new *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016*. As I said, we feel that it is a very progressive act that makes changes for the benefit of students in the territory, and we look forward to the bill passing in third reading.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for his introduction. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Education and the Department of Justice for the work that they did on this bill. I appreciate their input and found their briefings informative, and I thank them for their appearance in the Legislature to answer the questions.

The Yukon NDP Official Opposition supports this bill since it helps Yukon students get a university or college education. We are proud to be helping Yukon youth excel in universities across Canada and around the world. We strongly believe that high quality public education should remain at the core of Yukon's strong public programming.

A Yukon NDP government tabled the *Education Act* that provided new governance and introduced school boards. The *Yukon College Act* was also NDP legislation that created an autonomous, citizen-led board of governance, built the Ayamdigut Campus, five new college campuses, the Yukon College trust fund and the Northern Research Institute. The NDP established École Émilie Tremblay, Yukon's first French language school, and we are proud to continue our tradition of supporting the removal of financial barriers to education wherever possible.

We believe that the core of the *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016* should reflect the core belief that Yukoners deserve access to university and college education. We also support the elimination of the condition that a student needs to maintain a 65-percent grade point average to continue to receive funding. The standardization of that average according to each university makes a lot of sense. Our next challenge is to do more to encourage these students to return to Yukon when they complete their studies. Our next agreement on internal trade will be an important opportunity to ensure that we can turn the page on our three-year economic downturn and promote the creation of high-quality Yukon jobs for our university- and college-educated young people.

With that, I would like to thank the Department of Education for their hard work in preparing this legislation and the minister for bringing it forward, and I look forward to supporting it with my vote.

Mr. Silver: I am happy to rise to speak to the new, *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016*. I will be very brief. I am delighted to see this government continuing to support Yukon students attending post-secondary education. I agree that there was some room for increased clarity and redefining eligibility requirements in the act and I am happy to see them in front of us here today.

These changes will make the Yukon grant more accessible to Yukon students while restricting the access for non-Yukon students. Now First Nation students who belong to Kluane First Nation, Liard First Nation, White River First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Ross River Dena Council will have the opportunity to receive funding amounts equal to all other Yukon First Nations. This is a step forward, Madam Speaker.

The more accessible we make grants and funding to our students and residents to pursue further education will only come back to us tenfold. An educated and aware public contributes greatly to the community sharing knowledge and expertise. Many of these people become role models to the younger generations, only compounding the positive effects of advanced education.

Madam Speaker, the likelihood of a student returning to Yukon after post-secondary education to work has a great effect on our economy. The Yukon grant, along with the Yukon training allowance and government scholarships, are wise investments. I will be supporting the new *Student Financial Assistance Act, 2016*.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Graham: I will just sum up very quickly. I thank the two members opposite for their kind words and I look forward to this bill passing.

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. Pasloski: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Graham: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Laxton: Agree.

Clerk: Madam Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 95 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 95 has passed this House.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam 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. Elias): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 23: First Appropriation Act, 2016-17 — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

Hon. Mr. Dixon, you have 15 minutes remaining.

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I don't have much more to add, other than just indicating that again I am joined by our deputy minister, Paul Moore, and our acting director of finance, Sarah Lewis. I look forward to questions from members opposite about the budget.

Mr. Silver: I thought the minister was going to take his 20 minutes there.

I would like to thank the officials from the department for their time here today. There are not a lot of questions left after the Official Opposition went through with their critic, so I am going to stay on some specific topics.

I am going to start with the outdoor soccer complex. I see that there is \$1 in the long-term capital plan for next year. I'm just wondering why that number is there as a placeholder.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I wasn't aware that there was \$1 in the future budget, but efforts for this project were essentially discontinued when the City of Whitehorse decided not to proceed. Since then, we have been doing some internal work about how to move forward, including looking at some possible sites within Whitehorse on other government land but, other than that, I don't have much more to report on this.

I know that YOSCA, the Yukon Outdoor Sports Complex Association, was interested in seeing this project advance. We were keeping it on the table to maintain the ability to continue discussions with them. I know that they would like to see things more quickly, but as I have indicated, since there isn't a willingness for the City of Whitehorse to proceed with the project currently, we are considering some other options on Yukon government sites that wouldn't require rezoning, but we haven't done a significant amount of work on that front, and we haven't arrived at any conclusions that we are prepared to share at this point.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate that answer from the minister. We were just wondering why the \$1 value, so I appreciate the answer.

I am going to move on to the recreation centre in Dawson. I know that the minister spoke to the Mayor of Dawson at Association of Yukon Communities this weekend about the recreation centre. We want to know, and are hoping that the minister can outline, the current financial commitments to this facility. There is \$1 million in the budget, which is part of a five-year agreement that is expiring. I also understand that there has been, I think, a signed agreement for \$2.7 million to be spent with the City of Dawson. Can the minister confirm whether or not that actually has been signed?

From my understanding, the City of Dawson is ready, willing and able to spend the complete money for plan B-2, which comes to just over \$2 million, yet we only have

\$1 million in the budget currently in front of us. I do know that in previous years, that is the most amount of money that the city had spent, so if the department's thinking is to go with the status quo of how much has been spent in the past — fair. However, I have spoken to the mayor and he has confirmed that the city wants to spend the completion of that money this summer. If the minister can give us an update as to what would happen if the \$1 million that is budgeted in this budget gets spent in this year — where do we go from there?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As members know, there was a long-standing commitment made by the previous Yukon government to a \$4-million amount of money available for the Dawson recreation centre. To date, approximately \$1.7 million has been spent, so about \$2.3 million or \$2.4 million, depending on the detail, is left.

We created this budget before the work plan for this year was developed and based our initial budgeting numbers on a number that we felt would be sufficient to cover off what we standardly do in a year with regard to work on the Dawson recreation centre. That is the number that we see in the budget currently. It is just over \$1 million. However, I understand that since the budget has been tabled, the committee that develops the work plan for the year has reached an agreement and reached a plan that could be for more than this amount. If that is the case, then we would have to come back and determine how to meet our original commitment. As I have indicated to the mayor and to the town of Dawson, our commitment to the original envelope stands. If we are able to spend that money this year, then we are willing to.

I will be travelling to Dawson this weekend for the gold show and meeting with the mayor and council once I am there to discuss this issue. I think it is possible that we may want to consider some options with regard to the Dawson recreation centre in light of the discussion we had last weekend at AYC in Watson Lake with regard to the availability of some capacity within the New Building Canada fund and the willingness that we have expressed to spend money on recreational infrastructure.

To conclude, the original commitment still stands, but we created this budget before the work plan had been officially signed off and completed. We based that original \$1-million-plus number on what was traditionally spent or what we thought would be spent this year and, if indeed the work plan contemplates more than that, we'll find a way to do that.

Mr. Silver: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the minister maybe elaborate on where that money might come from? For all intents and purposes, that money will be spent this summer. The city went forth in good faith knowing that there was a looming time limit of an election coming up. From conversations I've had for a long time with the city and council, the intention was to spend that money this summer.

If we do find a shortfall, we would like to know what the options are that the ministry is going to move toward because we can all but assume that money will be — the city wants to spend that money this summer. I will let him respond to that and if he wants to kind of comment on what pockets of money

might be available this summer — where they're going to find that money. Also, that's not the finished building. As we all know, this is a certain pot of money that was originally allocated for health and safety and was then switched over. There are still health and safety concerns. There are no stairs or elevators to the second floor of the building, which is now empty and heated. Would the minister comment on any other numbers that he would have for the completed health and safety of the complete building? Again, it would still not be a completely finished building, but it will at least have accessibility to the upstairs.

We do know that there was supposed to be a report coming in April. I'm not sure if I saw that report — I'm not sure if that report has been tabled or not — which is the extent of the money that it would cost to finish the safety aspects of the completed building, including the stair access to upstairs.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I indicated before, we budgeted the amount we budgeted because that was our initial conception of what we might be able to spend this year. I should note that, over the past eight years, we have only spent \$1.7 million of that envelope, so traditionally we don't spend that much on an annual basis with regard to that committed envelope of funding.

We thought the just slightly more than \$1-million amount was a reasonable amount to budget when we put forward our budget a few months ago. Since then, I understand that a work plan has been developed. If the money needed exceeds the amount we have budgeted, there are a number of ways we can fill in the gap. It could be from within our own department or it could require going back to Management Board to request additional money. We'll wait and see if that's necessary.

With regard to the work plan beyond this year, I don't know what the cost is of the Dawson rec centre beyond this year or what the future costs will be to get it to where Dawson wants it. I'm not sure what those costs are. If there's a report about that, I haven't seen it yet, but if the member has access to it, I would love to see it.

Mr. Silver: No, I don't have a copy of that report, but what I was told at a community meeting with YTG and the City of Dawson a few months ago, before the Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, was that the report would be finalized on a health and safety aspect, which would include making sure that the upstairs is safely accessible, which would also include a staircase and an elevator system as well. At that point, in the discussion with the officials from YTG, a number of \$1 million was given for just accessibility to the upstairs alone.

Does the minister have any preliminary numbers or estimates as to the final amount of money it would take to make that complete building safe for access to the upstairs area?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I don't.

Mr. Silver: It is worth noting at this point that a commitment for a brand new rec centre was given by this government five years ago. We are now at \$1 million instead of \$2.7 million for just the completion of ice mats and functionality of the rec centre rink's bottom floor. The

minister does not have any numbers for the health and safety of the complete building as it stands, let alone the finished design of the upstairs. I guess we will just leave it at that.

I am going to move on to the waste-water treatment facility. We did have a lot of conversations so far about this: We have talked about the annual O&M and the skyrocketing prices there; we have talked about possibilities of litigation. I think one question that we did not get answered was that, in a report by Stantec, I believe, there were two options to fix the rec centre, both of which cost over \$5 million — anywhere from, I believe, \$5 million to \$10 million or \$12 million. Has this government decided on which one of those two fixes they will be proceeding with?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I am not familiar with the report the member is talking about. He said that it is about the rec centre — I assume he meant the waste-water treatment plant though. With regard to the plant in general, I have nothing new to report, other than the fact that we continue to try to bring the costs of operating the plant down. Whether there are some previous engineering reports that have some suggestions about that, I'm sure that we are looking at those. I know we are trying a number of different things to make the plant work the way it is supposed to work. The engineers in our department are working closely with the company to do that.

With regard to the specifics about what we are doing exactly, I do not have the detailed technical information here. They have tried a number of different things — some different polymers and some different technologies — but I am not capable of articulating those in such a clear way that would be useful. I would have to defer on that one and simply indicate that we are doing our best to bring the operating costs down.

Mr. Silver: I'm sorry for not being clear — waste-water treatment facility, not an O&M fix, per se. But the Stantec report had two options to fix the plant that doesn't work, and both of those fixes are in the multi-million-dollar area.

I will move on to the next question, but if the minister has any updates on whether or not the government has looked into one or both of those options — if it has decided on which way to go as far as to fix this plant that will not work as it exists — then that would be most helpful if there is any more information on that.

I will move on to the Carmacks arena. This is just a clarification question. What is the status of the Carmacks rink? I was told that there was an agreement as far as a money commitment to this rink. If there is, can the minister expand upon that today?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To answer the member's question about the status of the rink in Carmacks, a little while ago an engineering report was done on the building. It was determined that it wasn't safe to occupy, so unfortunately it had to be closed. Since then, the community — the Village of Carmacks — has worked with our department to come up with some options for moving forward, including replacing the rink or making improvements to it. I believe they have come up with three options that have been presented at two public meetings in Carmacks over the past number of weeks.

My understanding is that there was to be another public meeting — either this week or next week — for a final look at those options.

They have been doing their best to consider the operation and maintenance costs of a potential new building or structure, and that is top-of-mind for them. I don't know the range of costs for what the options they are looking at are, but we've indicated that, once they've chosen a design or once they've chosen an option, we could work with them to find options for funding it. We haven't made a specific dollar commitment. What we have indicated, though, is that we will continue to work with the Village of Carmacks on that project and look forward to them deciding what route they want to go forward with to replace their hockey rink.

I believe that they are also considering the curling rink in that conversation as well, and potential changes or improvements or linkages that could be made between the hockey rink and the curling rink as one entire project.

Mr. Silver: I appreciate the update from the minister. One last question on that is: Have any timelines been discussed, or is it too early to discuss construction, planning or design? Has the minister been in any negotiations as far as those details?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: There haven't been any negotiations per se, but we've indicated that as soon as Carmacks is ready, we'll engage with them to discuss how to move forward. They aren't ready yet. They have said that they want to complete their public consultation process first and arrive at a decision that is supported by the community and the village council and mayor. Once they have done that, we'll engage with them and decide how to move forward. I know that, of the three options, there are different considerations that need to be taken when deciding how to move forward. Depending on which option they select, that will determine what the timeline will be.

Mr. Silver: I have just a couple of questions left. I want to move on to the new recycling measures. What is the additional cost to Yukoners from the fee increases announced last week by the government? This is about the fees for the recycling of tire sizes, the electronics, et cetera. Is there any net revenue to the government from these changes?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I should note that all of the costs — the surcharges and costs associated with the new regulatory changes — are available online. Members can review them there. I won't list them all because I don't think that is productive today but, as we have indicated a few times, the changes are to simplify the beverage container regulation to reduce what used to be a large number of categories — I think five or six — down to two categories. Those are 750 millilitres above and below. For beverage containers that are smaller than 750 millilitres, there is one category, and there is a second category for 750 millilitres or bigger.

On the designated material regulation, there is the addition of two new categories of tires so that there are three in total now. Those are for tires that are 17 inches and smaller, 18 to 22 inches, and a category for tires that are greater than 22 inches. Those costs per tire are available online. The small

category is \$7, the medium category is \$15, and the large category is \$50. There is a range of electronic and electric products that, again, I won't list today, but the types of products and the associated fees are available online on the Community Services website so members can review them there.

With regard to the costs of implementing the program and the additional revenue that comes into the system, in the case of the beverage container regulation, the addition of new products — such as milk jugs or dairy products — to the regulation will mean that there is an additional revenue stream. When you buy, in this case, a jug of milk, if it's below the 750-millilitre size and it's in that smaller category, you will pay a surcharge of 10 cents, and when you go to return that product at the end of its life, you will receive a refund of 5 cents. Of that 5 cents that goes into the recycling fund, it is distributed throughout the processors and handlers of recycling in the Yukon. I believe that it breaks down to 2.5 cents going to the handlers, 2.25 cents to the processors and a quarter of a penny goes into the recycling fund, which will then be used for the recycling fund initiatives like paying for depots in the communities, transporting recyclable goods from the communities to Whitehorse, and also educational programs like the recycling club.

The overall breakdown of how the fund works doesn't change, but there is a new product so that means there should be some new revenue as a result of that. It's no net increase to Yukon government; it's simply more money into the system, which will improve the lot of processors, handlers and, hopefully, the recycling fund as a whole.

With regard to the designated materials, what it means is that the money collected when those products are purchased will go — to be informal — into a pot, and that pot of money will be used for the disposal of those products at the end of their life. For the next couple of years, we are going to be inundated with a number of tires that have come into our system that haven't paid a surcharge up-front because they are existing tires that are out there being used or the ones on our trucks and cars right now. There will be a financial cost to Yukon government over the next couple of years as we transition to the new system. That's something that we acknowledge, and others who are aware of this acknowledge it as well. It's one of the reasons why we want to limit the number of products we add all at once, because it is a challenge to transition to a new system and to pay for that transition.

Over the next couple of years, we will be hit with some additional costs so there will be net loss in that sense but, over time as the products and the funds stabilize and we reach equilibrium, theoretically — and we hope to determine this over time — the amount of money collected from the surcharges will ultimately be able to pay for the amount that it costs to dispose of those products. That's ultimately the theory behind the system, but we acknowledge that, over the course of the transition period, there will be challenges to government to pay for that. Ultimately that's how it will work.

I should also note that these regulations are under the Department of Environment. While they are responsible for the actual regulations, the actual implementation of that program, the setting up of new collection points, et cetera, for these new products — including e-waste and the expanded tires — will be the responsibility of the Department of Community Services. That's our part in this puzzle.

Mr. Silver: I have just one last question on 911. I'm wondering what areas will be covered by the upcoming expansion of the service. What areas will be excluded? Also, can the minister can give us an update — I don't know if it's from his department on civic addressing — if he has anything for civic addressing as well, but most importantly the expansion areas.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: On the 911 expansion, there have been some significant milestones that are worth reporting on, and I will outline them now. I did so at AYC as well, so I know the Member for Klondike will be familiar with this, but for other members or for those listening I would be happy to do that now.

A significant milestone that has occurred is the move of the PSAP, the public safety answering point, from the RCMP headquarters down on 4th Avenue to the new emergency response centre up on the Two Mile Hill. The area where the PSAP is now was purpose-built for that and it's fully operational at this point. There were some costs associated with that for the RCMP to hire some new operators at the new site, but the new operators were necessary because of the transition to a territory-wide 911. The new site is up and running. The PSAP has been moved to that new site and it's functioning now.

The second milestone was the approval that we received last week from the CRTC. When I say "we", I mean, more specifically, Northwestel. Northwestel led the application to the CRTC with support of Yukon government — Justice, Community Services — and the RCMP to allow for that expansion of 911 throughout the territory. That approval was granted by the CRTC last week. The physical move has occurred. The regulatory component — vis-à-vis the CRTC — has been successful. Now we are at the stage where we're testing the system and getting it ready for a launch by our self-imposed deadline of July 28. By that day, we are hopeful, barring unforeseen circumstances, that 911 will go live throughout the entire Yukon.

With regard to that expansion, it is limited to areas that have phone coverage, so you need access to a phone in order to call 911. Anywhere with a phone or with a cellphone or with phone service is able to call 911. I think that was it.

Ms. Moorcroft: I have a constituency question for the minister.

Just last week, the minister asserted that there were emergency coordination plans in each community. He referred people to the Yukon government Community Services website. I am aware that there is a community emergency committee in Mount Lorne. I looked at the Community Services website and at the emergency planning information, and it basically says to "be prepared". It advises the public to

put together an emergency kit of supplies for 72 hours, with water, food, medication, a flashlight and things like that. It has links to what should be in a basic kit. It has links to federal government and agencies like the Red Cross.

The question that constituents have asked me is: What is the evacuation plan for the Golden Horn area? I would like the minister to tell us what plan is in effect, what it is, where we can find details about it, and what answer I can give to that constituent. I ask the minister to also address the question of: If someone living in the Golden Horn area does not have a vehicle, what is the evacuation plan for emergencies in that case? They are also people who have health concerns, so I am wondering if the minister can give a little bit of information for me and for my constituents.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: To provide a response about my comments from last week — each municipality is required to have a plan and we work with them to do that, and we work with each First Nation to develop a plan unique to their First Nation. They are at a variety of stages, depending on the respective First Nation — some are more advanced and have plans in place and some are underway. With regard to unincorporated communities, like the one she is asking about, we will work with them to develop what is needed.

Now, with regard to the question about evacuation plans, my understanding, from discussions with officials, is that evacuation plans — in the sense that we are talking about here — have largely gone by the wayside. We have systems in place to ensure that individuals understand what they have to do in the event of an emergency, and obviously there is some personal responsibility there as well.

Let me explain that a little bit. The point of that is — because there is such a wide variety of emergencies or issues that could happen, it is difficult to plan for every single possibility. To be somewhat crass — and I would say that, if it is a forest fire and it is east of town, then we are evacuating west or in another direction. If it is the other way, then we evacuate the other way. That is the evacuation plan.

Now, for individuals who do not have vehicles, our first responders would be able to provide support, depending on the event. If it is a forest fire, an earthquake or a flood, these are all different conditions and different situations that will have different outcomes. In the event someone does not have a vehicle and is worried about being able to evacuate or not having friends or family who can help them, I would encourage them to let their local first responders know — whether it is the fire department or the EMS bay — because those would be the points of first contact for us in the event of an emergency.

If there's a fire in the Mount Lorne area, we will discuss with Wildland Fire, with the local fire department and, if necessary, the EMS, in order to move people as necessary. It's helpful — if an individual doesn't have a vehicle or doesn't have the means by which he or she would be able to evacuate themselves from a dangerous area, they should let their local first responders know, so that they are aware should an event happen, and our folks could contact the fire department and say that there is somebody out there who needs help and will

need to be assisted in evacuating. Those are the types of measures that individuals should take if they are unsure or if they don't have means by which to help themselves.

So, Mr. Chair, in general, if the community wants to develop a more comprehensive plan, we can work with them on that. Typically those kinds of plans are community-led, but we can support and provide resources where necessary or where possible. Again, I don't want to overstate this, but I think it is important to acknowledge that there is a certain degree of personal responsibility to be ready and to be prepared in the event of a tragedy or a disaster. That preparedness can come in many forms, but having a plan, knowing what your options are and knowing what you would do in the event of an emergency — even just thinking about it in advance — is of value. Then, obviously, as I've indicated before, it's important that individuals and families develop the kits necessary to be prepared in the event that they do have to leave their homes rapidly or in short order so that they can have some necessary items with them, should that occur.

So those are some general comments. I think that's what the member was looking for about this. If there is any more, I'm happy to respond.

Ms. Moorcroft: I accept that there is personal responsibility. I suggest to the minister though that the Yukon government also has a responsibility to share the information. Someone who is living in a residential neighbourhood in the City of Whitehorse — whether it's Wolf Creek or Riverdale or Porter Creek — where would they look for the information on where they should evacuate to if there were an emergency? The minister also said that it was the responsibility of each municipality and each First Nation to develop an emergency plan. Which municipalities and which First Nations have completed a plan and where can a person find them? Finally, does the Yukon government take responsibility for emergency planning for unincorporated communities, like the Golden Horn area, where there is no hamlet council or local advisory committee in place?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that all the municipalities have a plan in place, so for those people she was asking about in Wolf Creek or Porter Creek, those people would fall under the City of Whitehorse and they could look to the City of Whitehorse emergency plan for that information. For Mount Lorne — I've been informed that Mount Lorne does, in fact, have a plan in place, so if the constituent she is referencing is in Mount Lorne, we can provide them with a plan if they want.

Now, for the list of communities, I believe that every municipality has a plan in place. I'm not sure of the status of all the First Nations with regard to the status of their emergency plans.

We have an individual who works in the Emergency Measures Office whose specific job is to liaise with First Nations on emergency measures. I don't know, off the top of my head, which ones have plans in place, which are underway and what their status is currently. That's something that, if the member wants more detail, perhaps she could write a letter to me and we could get back more formally.

Ms. Moorcroft: I'll repeat the last question, which I didn't hear an answer from the minister on. Does the Yukon government have responsibility for unincorporated communities without a local advisory committee or hamlet council to develop an emergency plan?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: In a general sense, yes, Yukon government does have a responsibility there. Now, we exercise our responsibility in different ways, depending on the communities. Obviously some communities are more developed than others, in terms of their population and their development.

For instance, if a very small community like Rock Creek is facing flooding issues, we're able to deal with them directly as individuals and provide assistance that way. For larger communities — I think the member referenced Golden Horn — for Golden Horn, there is no LAC in place, so they would probably liaise more directly with Whitehorse but, in the event that they wanted to get together and have a community plan, we could work with them on that. They are covered by a fire service and emergency services — emergency medical services as well — so between those various bodies, a plan could be developed.

We would contact them in the event of an emergency through various means to communicate how they should respond to a situation, depending on what it is. It's going to be different if it's an earthquake than if it's a forest fire. If individuals want to develop a plan for their community, we can help them with that. We've done that in some communities and we have resources available to help.

Ms. Moorcroft: I would like to ask the minister if he will make a commitment to provide me with a written response to the questions I've asked about community emergency plans, without writing him a letter. I think I've been fairly clear as to the information that I'm looking for — which communities and First Nations have emergency plans and where can residents of those areas find them? Further, could he elaborate on his response to the questions about the Golden Horn area and an emergency coordination plan for that community, which doesn't have a local advisory committee?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I endeavour to answer all the members' questions they bring forward. With regard to the one about the list of First Nations, I can certainly do that. With Golden Horn, I'm not sure exactly what the question is.

In the event of an emergency, I don't believe there is a Golden Horn-specific plan, but I would encourage folks to contact their fire department or their community volunteers who respond in that type of situation to get information about what they need to do. If the member wants that in writing, I can look into that as well.

Mr. Tredger: I do have a number of questions on some other stuff, but the emergency measures, as everyone is well aware — there is heightened sensitivity to what do we do in case of an emergency. I think it's an opportunity for the government to take advantage of that while people are paying attention. If I look back to the incidents around 9/11 when we had to evacuate schools, there was a lot of confusion. In the

aftermath of that, schools, communities and everybody updated their plans and their format. I remember in the schools we got enough blankets for all of the kids and water for 72 hours — things like that — and updated the plans. As things get put aside, I suspect many of the plans are out of date and maybe the water is getting stale — that was a joke, Mr. Minister.

If I can refer to the health impact assessment done by Dr. Hanley in Keno in September 2012, one of the recommendations agreed to by the government was that it is essential for Alexco and other regional mining operators to establish and maintain updated emergency disaster response plans that are coordinated with local emergency responders. I assume that Community Services would be involved in that response plan, given the recent incidents. I did have a call from a Keno resident wondering whether that had been completed. How is it being completed with the local residents and Alexco? How is Community Services coordinating it? Keno is an unincorporated community and we will talk a bit more about it, but I am just wondering about the emergency response plan.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: If that particular company is required by either WCB or the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to have an emergency plan in place for their employees, it may be a condition of their licences with those organizations. I am certainly not aware if they have some sort of relationship with the Mayo Fire Department or the community of Mayo — I am not privy to that. That is the kind of question that I would have to look into and I don't have that information here today.

Mr. Tredger: An important aspect of emergency response plans is that they are unexpected and there needs to be coordination among the various communities, municipalities and governments. I tried, but for the life of me, I couldn't find any coordinated plans, any plans for various communities.

As the minister has stated, various communities are at various stages of developing them but there is no central area. I know that when I was in the school, we had a place where we evacuated to. That place was identified and we were made aware of it. But if, say, the residents of Pelly Crossing have to evacuate, does Community Services have a coordination plan so that they could go on a website and know that, if they have to evacuate, they go to the arena in Carmacks? There's no arena in Carmacks, so let's go to Mayo. There's an arena there.

Does Community Services maintain that coordination? Who coordinates it between the various communities? Who ensures that the communities have the support to maintain and update their plans? Has the minister, in light of recent events, increased his efforts to ensure that it's there?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: When it comes to an individual community's details, I don't know where the people in Pelly Crossing will go off the top of my head. That's something I don't have with me today. But as I indicated before, we do have an individual who works in the Emergency Measures

Organization office who coordinates the development of plans with each First Nation.

In this particular case, the Selkirk First Nation may have a plan in place already. I'm not sure of the status of that plan. It could be completed, it could be underway or it could be in its early stages. I'm really not sure.

But the member's question is: Do we help with coordinating that? The answer is yes, we do. We have the Emergency Measures Organization that does that work. As I said, there is an individual who works with First Nations to develop their plans and we disseminate that information as best as we can to residents.

I don't have the details on what a specific community does in a specific situation. It depends on the community and it depends on the situation but, yes, we do our best to encourage communities to develop these plans and we'll help them with resources and other supports as needed.

Mr. Tredger: So I understand that Community Services will offer support.

One of the things I always found helpful was to be able to cite examples of places where plans do exist so that the wheel doesn't have to be reinvented. Can the minister provide us with a list of communities that have updated plans completed and make them available to other communities so that they can move along that route too? As I said, I believe that all of us in the Yukon see a need to be more proactive.

I guess what the people who are phoning me are looking for — where do they turn? Is there a website or is there something that they can get a hold of that is Yukon-centred so they can say, okay, if I am in this area, this happens? If I happen to be journeying from Whitehorse to Dawson, is there a website I can visit that would tell me what to do if there's a major highway accident in Pelly Crossing? Is there a website that would alert me if — and I am not suggesting it is going to happen — a dam fails in Whitehorse or in Mayo? What do we do around that?

To my mind, what people are looking for, now that they have been alerted to it and see what happens, is: Is there any coordination? Is there any place people can turn to? Has the minister given thought to establishing such a situation so that, rather than just saying it is just the community's responsibility but we don't know where they are, and we will help them if they need it — a lot of people do not know where to turn for that help yet. I know there has been a certain amount of work done with EMS, and I have taken part in mock situations and that has been helpful, but I still get a sense that people are looking for more.

Can the minister provide us with anything? We are talking about unincorporated communities; we are talking about First Nation communities; we are talking about the City of Whitehorse. There is a huge variation on the amount of resources available. There is a certain amount of individual responsibility and there is a certain amount of community responsibility, but I believe there is also a coordination responsibility for the Government of Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I do not know where to begin. He has asked a number of questions that I have already answered. I

have already explained that I do not have a list of community plans here today, and I committed to getting back to his colleague about the list of the First Nations and the plans that are either in place or underway for them.

In the event of an emergency — to use his example, if a dam bursts in Mayo, we would communicate with Yukoners in a wide variety of ways. If there was a forest fire, we would communicate with Yukoners in a wide variety of ways. Yes, we would use our Emergency Measures Organization website; yes, we would use Twitter and radio ads, and it would be all over the news media if a dam bursts in Mayo. We would be communicating with individuals what to do in that situation — likewise with just about any emergency that we can think of.

Now, as for a central resource, the Emergency Measures Organization provides that service to a certain degree, but it is going to be different for every event. I mean, if a dam bursts — to use his example — then I imagine Yukon Energy would probably be the first ones to know, and they would communicate with a wide range of stakeholders, organizations or agencies to communicate what needs to be done. We would have to deal with that as it comes.

I think what Yukoners need to understand is that there are a lot of well-trained, intelligent people who know what they are doing and who are able to communicate to us, should something happen. I have confidence in those people; I have confidence in their abilities to communicate with us. We cannot have a written plan for every possible outcome, but we will endeavour to have plans on a community-by-community basis. Beyond that, I'm not sure what I can say other than that I will take his comments under advisement.

Mr. Tredger: I will not go there. I just think this is an opportunity for Community Services to coordinate efforts and to take advantage of people's heightened awareness.

I don't want to single out any community or any organization or anyone else. I know people are working hard at it. Just having experienced 9/11 — and knowing the chaos that ensues — it's one thing to say that we'll communicate in a variety of ways but, often in an emergency situation, you have minutes — not hours, not days, but minutes — to come up with solutions, and the more prepared we can be, the better.

I will leave those questions there. I will go to a couple of others. This summer, a number of ministers from the Yukon Party visited Selkirk First Nation in Pelly Crossing. I believe the Minister of Justice was there, as well as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. They were taken to the fire station and shown the fire truck. They are very concerned that the fire truck is not in working order. The minister and the member said they would take that concern back to Community Services and that they would get a response.

The fire truck in Pelly was bought from the government for \$1 a number of years ago, as I recall. They are concerned about it. They haven't received a response yet. I'm assuming the minister is working on it, but could the minister assure me that he will respond to them or respond to me in the House?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My information is different from the member opposite's about the history of that particular fire

truck. My understanding is that it was part of a federal program that provided fire trucks to a few communities a number of years ago and that Pelly was one that received a fire truck from INAC — so there's some discrepancy there to begin with.

My understanding is that, since it was the federal government that provided that fire truck directly to that First Nation and has since provided O&M money to upkeep that truck — whether or not, or to what schedule, that fire truck has been kept up by the First Nation, I don't know.

However, what we can offer — and I can provide this in a letter to the First Nation if it's needed — we have a contract for the repair of our own fire trucks that First Nations can piggyback on, and we can look to accessing the funding that they have available to them through INAC for repairs to their fire truck, and perhaps we can find some synergy there to work together and see the repairs done to the fire truck that is owned by the Selkirk First Nation.

Mr. Tredger: The First Nation would appreciate some follow-up on that. They did have discussions with the minister and the member from Old Crow and were awaiting an answer from the minister. They also raised the issue of the sewage lagoon that is just on the outskirts of town. There is some concern. I'm asking the minister for an update on the status of that. Who is liable and what are the plans for the future of that sewage lagoon?

There is some concern that it is starting to leak into the water table and it may be a contamination issue. Again, it was brought up this summer.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding with the sewage lagoon in Pelly is that it was done through a previous federal infrastructure funding — I believe it was MRIF — and that the lagoon is currently working well. I think the interest was to engage in discussion about what to do in the future, should changes be needed there. Of course, we're happy to have those discussions and look for future considerations with regard to what to do when eventually the sewage lagoon stops working so well. My understanding is that the First Nation owns it, pays for the operation and maintenance of it and that it is operational currently. If the First Nation wishes to have a discussion about what to do in years to come, we would be happy to have that discussion.

Mr. Tredger: I believe they raised it this summer and they have also raised it in the past, but I will follow up on that and get the information to the minister, as well as their concerns.

Also, this summer on the tour, the issue of the arena was raised. It is leaking and there are concerns about the beams beginning to rot. Certainly there is a mould issue and that's also affecting the skating rink to the point where they're not sure whether they can maintain it. I know that the member from Old Crow did have extensive discussions and stressed the importance of recreational facilities in Pelly and I thank him for that. I'm just looking for a response from the minister as to what discussions they've had with the Selkirk First Nation in terms of the skating rink and the curling rink, and

are there monies identified in this year's budget to do the necessary repairs so that it won't fall apart?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: That's something I will have to look into. I don't have any details about that today. I know there is nothing in the budget that I'm aware of for making improvements to those recreational facilities, but we're in the process of reviewing recreational facilities across the territory and we'll be looking to access federal dollars to do that in the future. However, I guess I should note that there is some funding available for rec facilities, dealt with on an application basis. There is \$100,000. It is a small amount and it is typically done for some of our pools and other things, but in the event that such a small amount would be enough to make those improvements, they could apply under that — but there is obviously more work to do. I don't have any details about that particular project today though.

Chair: Order, please. 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 Vote 51, Community Services, in Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*.

The Member for Mayo-Tatchun has the floor.

Mr. Tredger: I was just talking about recreational facilities. I know swimming pools play an important part in many of our communities in the summer. They are a wonderful resource that keeps kids active, but I have noticed and heard from communities that they are missing more and more of the summer with repairs that need to be done. Our swimming pool system, while it is a great system — it's a real treat to be able to have swimming pools in some of our smaller communities.

Does the minister have an assessment of the condition of the swimming pools in each community? Is there a repair schedule or an upgrade schedule that would let people know? I know Carmacks is currently having some trouble with some of the piping that will need to be replaced. I know that the pump in Pelly needed to be replaced another year and they missed two weeks of time. I've heard similar stories from other communities.

It is a short season. It is an important part. Has the minister a repair schedule and a current assessment of the conditions of the buildings?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: We have begun an assessment of recreational infrastructure in Yukon, including pools. What I committed to AYC this weekend is that we would establish a committee to develop very much what the member is talking about. As a result of the introduction of some new federal infrastructure funding — particularly and most specifically the clean water and waste-water fund in the new phase of the

federal infrastructure — a number of projects that we previously had designed for the New Building Canada fund will have to be moved over to this new fund.

There will be some capacity available within the New Building Canada fund over the next 10 years. While we previously had a three-tiered criteria structure that we used to assess infrastructure requests from communities, I indicated this weekend that, given the additional capacity within that New Building Canada fund, we would be able to consider — and I suggested that we entertain — adding recreation to that list.

In order to develop a plan for the development of new, or repairs to existing, recreational infrastructure throughout the communities I recommended that we do that but that we come up with a plan by working with AYC. I hope to establish that committee very soon, take the assessment that we have underway — hopefully it will be completed very soon as well — and then work with the AYC to determine a schedule for upgrades, improvements and, possibly, construction of new recreational infrastructure throughout the communities.

Having said that, I should temper that with some bits of reality, and that is the fact that we will still have to prioritize those projects that need to be done because of regulatory issues first and foremost. Those will still be the priority, but that's something that we'll have to talk about with that committee, with that group of AYC, and we'll look forward to developing that plan of attack and that plan for recreational infrastructure that we'll establish with the AYC.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the minister for that statement. It's something that certainly the NDP has been advocating for. I know a number of communities are doing — and I think it is important that we develop an overall assessment and then put in some strategic planning around the upkeep and repair of our recreational facilities.

We have wonderful facilities. As the minister said, we're very fortunate to have them. Not many places in the world have the facilities we do, so it's important that we look after them and that we maintain them.

We've seen that recreational facilities have benefits in so many ways — educational, health and in building communities — so I thank the minister for his commitment to that and working with AYC to establish a committee that would look at that.

It's not really a question, but I would encourage the minister to look at solar heating for our pools. It's what we might call a “marriage made in heaven”. Our solar in the summer is huge; the efficiencies are there. I know Mayo has put some on their swimming pool and it has been very effective in cutting down on their carbon footprint. As we're looking at our new facilities and doing that assessment, I would encourage the minister to be looking at ways that we can use renewable energies in the buildings. In arenas, as spring comes, the ventilation isn't great and frost forms on the ceilings and drips down on to the ice surfaces for hockey and curling — so looking at solar or different ways to ventilate. My colleague from Takhini-Kopper King reminded me that Beaver Creek also has solar panels on their swimming pool.

I will leave that in the minister's good hands. I know we're all looking at ways to lessen our carbon footprint.

I just had a couple of questions about an update on Keno. In 2012, Dr. Hanley did a health impact assessment. In response to that, the Yukon government put in a multi-departmental steering committee that would look at incidents in Keno and bring them forward. My question for the minister is: Who is the lead on that? Which departments are involved? What has been accomplished? What remains to be done in meeting the health impact assessment and the priorities and how is that being communicated to the residents of Keno?

If I can quote from Dr. Hanley's statement: “This HIA identifies gaps in knowledge and provides the Yukon Government with recommendations to address resident concerns and reduce the potential for future adverse health impacts to occur.” Can the minister give me an update on that? Also, a number of the residents were asking me who the lead was so they could contact them when they had concerns.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'm not sure who the lead of that particular community is. I know it's not Community Services though. With regard to the question of who someone can contact if they have questions about their drinking water, they can contact the Department of Community Services, community operations branch. In particular, I would recommend speaking to Dwayne Muckosky.

My understanding is, as a result of some of that work done previously, we committed to doing some increased monitoring of the drinking water there.

Obviously, with what has happened with the well, we are not doing the testing of the water that is being delivered from Mayo, so I do not know the status is of the testing of the well in Keno since it has been put out of use. That is something that I will have to check on.

Mr. Tredger: Could the minister update me as to the status of that committee?

When I raised the issue of the health impact assessment in the past, the then-minister responsible said that various departments were meeting on a regular basis. If they are, are minutes from those meetings available? If they are not, why not and what has the Government of Yukon decided to do to replace that promise?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The Department of Community Services is not the lead for that, and I do not know the status of that particular committee. That is something that we will have to look into.

Mr. Tredger: Would the minister commit to getting a response to me on that, once he has looked into it, and to the residents of Keno?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, I will look into that.

Mr. Tredger: There have been a number of incidents around the water supply, as the minister has referred to it. It is referred to in the health impact study in 2012. I know that issues were being raised as wells gradually went out of service for many, many years.

Right now, the concern of Keno residents is trying to get the information. I know that the minister and the department have been looking at a date for a community meeting.

Can the minister tell me when that community meeting will take place? Will he agree to advertise it so that all residents of Keno may have the opportunity to attend?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: My understanding is that meeting will occur on June 1, and yes, I will look at ways to advertise it.

Mr. Tredger: One of the problems for the residents of Keno is that they are an unincorporated area. They do not have any form of governance. This was identified by Dr. Hanley, and he said that although a number of stressors can be mitigated or minimized through collaboration among industry, the Yukon government and Keno residents, the lack of a governance structure or organized representation within the community poses significant challenges in terms of developing a strategy that responds to a unified community vision. Does the minister have any plans to work with the residents of Keno to establish a governance structure?

I know it is a frustration for government officials. When they go to the community, there is no real spokesman and it makes it difficult because there is not a governance structure. This has been identified several times, in various studies, and again in the health impact study of 2012.

Does the minister have any plans to establish a governance structure within Keno? Has he had discussions with the Keno community club as to how they may, in the interim, take over and be the representative?

Have discussions gone beyond that to establish a more formal governance structure?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: No, I don't have any plans on creating a new governance structure in Keno; however, we have assigned a community advisor to Keno, so the departmental activities and liaison point with government can be established through the community advisor.

Mr. Tredger: Can the minister tell us who the community advisor is and the contact number and an e-mail, so that the residents of Keno know that and can contact them? The problem, of course, is that without a governance structure, many people are in and out of Keno and it's very difficult for someone to contact them all, but if they had a person who at least they could contact, it may be a first step.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The community advisor is Damien Burns. I don't have his phone number here, but you can look it up on the computer.

Mr. Tredger: The minister is saying that the residents of Keno can look it up. Where? Is there a webpage that they can access? Is there someplace that they can access if the community advisor is the person there to contact? Will the minister send me the contact information so that I can get it to the residents or will he undertake to do that?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, the Government of Yukon has a website. If the member is not aware of that website, there is this fantastic machine online called Google and you can type the person's name in —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, at this point in time, I don't think this is adding to the debate. It was an honest question and it was on behalf of the constituents. That response was definitely insulting and totally not required here in this Chamber.

Chair: The Government House Leader, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Chair, I don't think it was the minister's intention to be insulting, but I believe this is, from my perspective, a dispute between members.

Chair's ruling

Chair: We're late in the day here and I can tell that the political temperature is starting to rise. I would encourage all members to temper their use of adjectives that are going to increase that temperature.

This is a dispute among members. Mr. Dixon, you have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Yes, the Department of Community Services has a website and the contact information for employees and staff of the department is available online, and whoever is interested can access that contact information by accessing the publicly available websites.

With regard to the specific individual's phone number, I don't have it here and that's why I simply referenced the fact that individuals can look it up online. It's not a difficult thing to look it up online, but if they have trouble with that, they can contact me as well. My number is 667-8628.

Mr. Tredger: The residents of Keno look forward to that meeting. I thank the minister and the officials for their answers today. I have no further questions.

Ms. White: I was really excited to be able to talk about libraries today — and community libraries. I've said on more than one occasion that I really love words and that means I really love books. There are some incredibly exciting things happening in Yukon libraries. I just really would like to congratulate the people within that department for their efforts, their good work and the way that they keep on creatively packaging reading, as sometimes it could be a really exciting unknown.

They had a fantastic program where it was Blind Date With a Book and there was a little brief description on top of a brown — the cover was covered in brown paper, so you got to pick out a book based on its short description as opposed to either its cover or what was actually written about the book. The work that is being done at Yukon libraries is really fantastic. I know that for something that seemed probably that it had run its course, which would be a book and book-lending, the library branch has done really fantastic things to make sure that they're still viable. With the electronic books and the DVD lending and all those things — that has been a really fantastic thing.

I do have one concern about the Whitehorse Public Library and that's about the washroom facilities. As we know, today is May 17. We acknowledge transphobia, homophobia and biphobia.

The library has made an effort to have a gender-neutral bathroom. Down the stairs there is a sign, and it clearly marked that there is a gender-neutral bathroom available up the stairs. The problem is that if you go to the bathroom that has been indicated — it has the man sign, the woman sign and the wheelchair sign, and then underneath it has a printed sign that says: "Children and caregivers only, please. Public washrooms are available on the main floor." One thing we know about the trans population is that they often face discrimination on all levels. It was fantastic to know that the effort had been made to be inclusive and to give them a safe place to use the facilities, but I think there was an inadvertent error in posting the "Children and caregivers only, please" sign. Can the minister just assure me that this can be fixed and that the library can be the inclusive, fantastic destination that it is?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thank the member for bringing this forward. That is the first that I have heard of it, and I am happy to look into that and try to determine whether or not we can find a solution for that particular building.

Ms. White: I also put this out for the department's consideration. Because libraries now in communities aren't just a hub for books — they are hubs for information of all kinds — because we have access to the computers and the media sources and all that — it might be something to consider that, if we have a single-use bathroom with the change facilities for children, we could look at making those gender-neutral across the territory and that would be a fantastic way to embrace change in a positive fashion. I will just put that on the record.

I had questions about the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* the last time we were up, and I promise to do a better job this time without the distraction that was coming near me. Just because the legislation only became enacted in January of this year — and I am sure that, just like the department itself, we are starting to see where some things work better than other things — one of the concerns that I have is that I was approached by someone who took their concerns about a pest issue. In this case it was an insect infestation. Right now, it falls under the minimal rental standards, and it talks about how the landlord must provide the residential property free of rodent, vermin and insect infestations and must take appropriate measures to exterminate infestations should they occur. In this particular example, the tenant went through the process and went through the dispute resolution process, and the concern that I have is — and I've read the decision — that the compliance timeline says that landlords will have one full year, from January 1, 2016 to the date when the regulations come into force, to comply with the minimum rental standards. In this situation, someone was living with an insect infestation, and they were told that the landlord had a year to deal with it — from January 1. Is there a way to ensure that if people are

living in unsafe conditions, as set out by the rental standards, with something like pests — so we are not talking about the structure; we are talking about, in this case, an infestation — is there a way that those issues could be dealt with prior to January 1, 2017?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member is correct. The minimum rental standards do come into effect on January 1 next year. With regard to her specific question, I don't know the answer to that and I would have to look into that.

Ms. White: So again I will just put on the record that I understand that the legislation gives landlords a one-year limit to make sure they meet the minimum rental standards, but, in some situations if we're talking about health and well-being in more of an emergency situation, I would suggest that it would be great if the deadline was not so far out.

We've talked in different departments about social assistance clients in long-stay hotels. When a client is in a hotel for longer than six months — which we've agreed to — they become a tenant under the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. One of the concerns I have, having spoken to some of those tenants, is that they don't understand their rights — at this point in time — because I forgot to ask the last time I spoke to them if they had rental agreements. But what does the Residential Tenancies Office do to ensure that those tenants understand their rights and that those rights are being respected?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: The member acknowledged previously that the RTO is relatively new and in its first year of being in place. We're in May now and it has been a few months since it has come into service. Since then, the RTO and the director of the RTO and staff within the office have had a number of public meetings. They have put out a number of information pamphlets and made information available to the greatest degree that I think they can.

Making information available and making sure everyone understands what their rights are and what their obligations are as either a landlord or a tenant are important, and that's what we'll continue to do.

In terms of the individual the member is talking about not understanding their rights, I would encourage them to contact the RTO and ask for information about what their rights, obligations and responsibilities are as either a landlord or a tenant. We'll continue to provide that information as best we can. We'll continue to put out information and make information available to the public, and if there are specific instances where the member or others feel we're not getting the right or enough information out, I would be happy to look at making changes or improvements, as needed.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer, especially the last part. One thing I would put on his radar and his department's radar is that we do have long-stay hotels that have yearly clients who are in a far more permanent fashion than seasonally, and if there was a way to reach out to both the landlords, in that case, and the tenants to explain both their responsibilities, as the landlord needs to have a tenancy agreement and the tenant is able to have that protection.

The reason I flag this right now is that, when we have the description of the minimal rental standards in the back of the landlord and tenant handbook, on pages 10 and 11, there is a clause, and it highlights that a landlord is unable to — there we go, 12, occupants and guests. Clause 1 says a landlord must not stop the tenant from having guests under reasonable circumstances in the rental unit and, most importantly, clause 2 says the landlord must not impose restrictions on guests and must not require or accept any extra charge for daytime visits or overnight accommodation of guests.

I am going to flag right now that I know this is an ongoing problem in one of the long-stay hotels. I will just put this out for the Residential Tenancies Office. Maybe when they have some — probably very much in short demand — down time, they can look at expanding their scope of practice — because I know that they are busy right now.

Before I sit down, there is actually one thing that I would really like to say right now about the Residential Tenancies Office. I was incredibly surprised when the mobile home consultation survey went out in a paper document, with a self-addressed, prepaid envelope, and the fact that the Department of Community Services reached out so far and in such an inclusive way, so if people did not have access to a computer, they could fill the paper copy out — and then there was the online survey. It was really incredible and I appreciate how really inclusive that was. When I was out in one of the parks, someone said, “Oh, I know all about this; I just got it in the mail”, I was like, “You got it in the mail?” They came and they showed me the envelope and they showed me the paper survey and we talked a bit about it. That person, for the first time since they had lived in that park — and it had been 20-plus years — they felt that the government was listening and asking for what they thought.

So I want to thank the minister for that leadership. I want to thank the department for following through in such an inclusive way and making sure that, instead of just paying lip service to a consultation, this is great.

I am hoping that there have been lots of responses, so maybe what I will ask right now is if the department can tell me how many responses they have gotten so far.

Hon. Mr. Dixon: Normally, I probably wouldn't be able to do that, but I happened to have a meeting with a park owner this morning and our director of policy and the director for the RTO were in my office this morning. I believe the number is 45.

Ms. White: That's a little bit disappointing for me, because it means that it looks like I have six parks to visit again, so I will hopefully increase that number by June 6.

I did want to really acknowledge that it wasn't just lip service to a consultation. I want to thank the minister for that leadership. I want to thank his department for following through with that.

At this point in time, I have no further questions.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services?

If not, we'll go to line-by-line debate.

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 51, Department of Community Services, cleared or carried, as required. Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$87,632,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$51,696,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$139,328,000 agreed to

Department of Community Services agreed to

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Mr. Chair, seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: 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. Elias: Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 23, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2016-17*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Mr. Cathers: Madam 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. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.