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HANSARD

Monday, October 22, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

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

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

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, October 22, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of Visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues in the House today to help me welcome some individuals who are here for our tribute to the Opportunities North conference. I would like to welcome Mr. Peter Turner, president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Kells Boland, first vice-chair of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; and Mr. Philip Fitzgerald, treasurer of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce. We also have a visitor from the Northwest Territories, Mr. Liang Chen, director of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce — as well as some very successful and bright business leaders and entrepreneurs: Ms. Luann Baker-Johnson, whom we have had visit us before — it is good to see you again — from Lumel Studios; Mr. Sonny Gray, president of the Yukon Agricultural Association is with us here today; and Mr. Ben Asquith, CEO of Da Daghay. Please help me welcome them here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: I ask my colleagues to please help me welcome individuals who are here today for Foster Family Appreciation Week. I have Marilyn Lawrence, Ellen and Zoran Petrovic and their daughter, Magdalena. We have Sheila Brown, Brian Walker, Ann Smith, Sandi Haryett and her son Jayden, and we have Angela and Seamus Venasse and Terri McCallum. Welcome.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Opportunities North conference

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government, the Yukon Party and the Yukon New Democratic Party to pay tribute to the Opportunities North conference and the conference organizers and the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Edmonton chambers of commerce.

I would like to recognize some of the people involved in organizing the conference and the evening receptions: Mr. Peter Turner, president of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Kells Boland, first vice-chair of the Yukon

Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Philip Fitzgerald, treasurer of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce; Janet Riopel, president and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; Trevor Wever, president of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Liang Chen, director of the Northwest Territories Chambers of Commerce; Renee Comeau, director of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Peter Clarkson, regional director of the Government of the Northwest Territories; Mr. Mike Lalonde, president of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; and Deneen Everett, executive director of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, the Opportunities North conference brings together business, government and community leaders from across the globe to discuss issues affecting the economy. It rotates between Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Edmonton. Fascinating speakers with very different careers and backgrounds will share their experiences, successes and failures. They will inform and inspire a wide range of organizations, from microbusinesses to academic institutions. Even the most dramatic disruptions to society and the economy open up new opportunities and are worthy of exploration and discussion. This is exactly what Opportunities North delegates will explore this week.

Yukon is the perfect setting for this discussion. The territory has the highest percentage of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the country. Many talented Yukoners are bringing a fresh and dynamic approach to entrepreneurship. You can find a large number of them at YuKonstruct's newly opened NorthLight Innovation workspace here in Whitehorse, an incubator for start-ups and entrepreneurs. In fact, Mr. Jaret Slipp, executive director of YuKonstruct, will be participating in the conference, sharing his views on outside-the-box approaches to addressing disruption in business.

We have some exceptional Yukon business owners who will be presenting their experiences and ideas at Opportunities North, for instance. Individuals I welcome today are: Ms. Luann Baker-Johnson, owner of Lumel Studios, a glassblowing microbusiness that has become an integral part of the Whitehorse community for families, youth, the elderly, schools and businesses; Mr. Sonny Gray, CEO of North Star Agriculture — an agricultural-based company based in Whitehorse that aims to provide northerners with locally produced food year-round; and Mr. Ben Asquith, CEO of Da Daghay Development Corporation, which, in partnership, has a portfolio of over 80,000 square feet of commercial and residential properties throughout the city, and leases and develops land in partnership with its shareholders and various other strategic shareholders.

These are just a few of the many Yukon businesses on the agenda and this conference allows us to celebrate them and tell their stories, as well as learn from others around the globe.

The Government of Yukon is delighted to support Opportunities North. We are eager to discuss positive changes and to support projects that benefit Yukoners and the economy. I want to take a moment to thank the many businesses, government and community leaders who have

gathered from inside and outside of the territory to share their experiences.

Applause

In recognition of National Foster Family Appreciation Week

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise in the House today to acknowledge National Foster Family Appreciation Week, which takes place this week from October 21 to 27.

Today I am paying tribute to the 64 Yukon families and the 38 extended family members throughout the Yukon who have chosen to open their hearts and their homes to children whose own families are temporarily unable to look after them. Healthy families are the heart of healthy and strong communities. We celebrate the foster families — the aunts, the uncles, the cousins, the grandmothers — who have stepped forward to open their homes and create a safe and nurturing environment.

Fostering is primarily about helping children to return to their own homes or to move to a new permanent home if necessary. The extended foster family program helps children to maintain contact with their own families and culture. They do not work alone but work as part of a bigger team, which includes the biological family, First Nations, Family and Children's Services staff and other community supports, and they try to provide a stable environment for children. During this very important week, we would like to say how much we've appreciated the great work and services that all these members of our community have contributed to the well-being of our children.

Being a mother myself and a former extended foster parent and extended family caregiver, I know that parenting is challenging and demanding at times, but it brings out the best in all of us and it is very gratifying. I know how hard it is — especially to raise teenagers — but it also makes it all worthwhile in the end when we see our children succeed, knowing that they had the love and the care given to them by such great members of our community.

Family plays a very important role. They are the keepers and transmitters of our culture and language and are what keeps our communities alive and vibrant. This is why opening our homes and the differences you are making are so very important to all of the children who come into our care. The integration of traditional knowledge, practices and cultural teachings and rooting a child in their history and culture are very significant in all the great work that you do.

I'm calling out to everyone who might be interested in becoming a foster parent or who is an extended family member and may be able to help to give Family and Children's Services a call to learn more about the program and hopefully lend some support to the children who are in temporary need.

Foster parents can come from many culturally diverse backgrounds — single, married, same-sex, homeowners or home renters. I believe that an inclusive foster care force is key to healthy family care systems and that all Yukon children deserve the best.

This Friday, Health and Social Services is hosting a special appreciation evening for all Yukon foster families. Again, I would like to thank you all in the gallery and those who are listening at home in Yukon for providing such an important job to Yukon society and to our children. I invite you all to come to the celebration on Friday night in appreciation of all of you for your contribution and for nurturing the next generation of Yukoners. Mahsi'.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the foster families across the Yukon.

It is an admirable thing for families and individuals to open their hearts and homes to children and youth in need. One of the most important things to help foster a child's future is stability, and the care that is provided by foster families is critical to this.

I have heard foster families being referred to as the backbone of our child protection services, and it's true in many ways. A good foster parent will not only provide care and essentials, they provide children and youth with love, guidance, advice and reassurance. Here's a quote from a foster parent: "It is so rewarding to be a foster parent. I get to be a part of someone's life and they get to be a part of mine. I wouldn't change a thing." I can imagine that taking on that role with someone who needs care, love, attention and stability would be a fulfilling and extraordinary journey.

I would like to encourage Yukoners to take a look at their own situations to see if there would be any possibility that they too can join the ranks of Yukon foster parents. Some individuals or families may be able to provide only emergency care and others may be equipped to welcome a child for various amounts of time. Fostering is not a one-size-fits-all program, but rather it can range from respite to long term.

Thank you to all those who have served our communities as foster parents, past and present. There is no greater satisfaction than making a difference in a child's life.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate Yukon foster families during National Foster Family Week. It is the concern and love for children that brings foster parents to this challenging yet rewarding job. They open their hearts and homes to provide safety and emotional support to children who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in crisis situations.

Fostering is a way to make sure that kids in our communities always have a safe and loving home to go to. There is no greater place to invest what we can than in the hearts and minds of children. No one says that being a foster parent will always be easy, but ask any of the special people who take on the task and they will all tell you that it's deeply rewarding and that they wouldn't change a thing.

We offer our profound thanks to all those individuals and families throughout Yukon who open up their homes and hearts to children and youth in need of a safe place to land,

because once you give kids that firm place to land, they can move the earth. Thank you.

Applause

In remembrance of Canadian National War Memorial and Parliament terrorist attack

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Legislative Assembly to pay tribute as we acknowledge the fourth anniversary of the violent and deadly terrorist attack at the Canadian National War Memorial and Parliament in Ottawa in 2014.

Just a few days before the Ottawa attack on October 22, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was also killed by an ISIL-inspired terrorist in Quebec. On the morning of October 22, 2014, 24-year-old Corporal Nathan Cirillo was on the ceremonial sentry duty when he was fatally shot by a gunman at his post by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial, the sacred monument dedicated to all those Canadians who gave their lives in conflicts past, present and future. As Corporal Cirillo stood on duty, his rifle, in accord with standard practice, was unloaded. Shortly before 10:00, the gunman attacked this brave young man and tragically he passed away. The shooter then entered the main Parliament building, where he fired some more shots before he was shot and killed by the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers and RCMP officers.

This terrible event is a reminder of the compassion and courage of Canadians. From civilians to first responders, many people came to Corporal Cirillo's side as he lay at the foot of the National War Memorial fighting for his life. Further, the police and security forces around Ottawa worked above and beyond as the entire city went into lockdown as they tried to understand what had just happened.

This event was also a reminder that Canada is not immune to terrorism. This senseless strategy shook Canadians across this country. The entire city was shut down for a day. Parents were prevented from picking their children up from school as those facilities went into security protocols. Families were prevented from returning to their homes as security forces swept the streets and sections of the city were cut off.

That is the purpose of these attacks: To scare us, to terrorize us and to shake us from our daily lives. We cannot let them do this.

On that note, I would just like to quote from the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in his national address to the nation at the time, who said — and I quote: “But, let there be no misunderstanding. We will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated. In fact, this will lead us to strengthen our resolve and re-double our efforts and those of our national security agencies to take all necessary steps to identify and counter threats and keep Canada safe here at home.”

The next day in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister went on to say — and I quote: “We are here, in our seats, in our chamber, in the very heart of our democracy and our work goes on.”

That is important. One of our country's greatest strengths, Mr. Speaker, is our democracy. Canadians and Yukoners alike

rely on it. It is strong; it is resolute and it must be unbreakable, so showing up in this Legislative Assembly every day matters. We must not let anyone stop us or prevent us from showing up and doing our important work. Despite our political affiliations, we are all Yukoners and we are all Canadians. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau vowed to not let the threats define Canadians. He said that they do not get to change us.

Just to close, I have one final quote. This is from the former Leader of Canada's Official Opposition Thomas Mulcair in response to his attack. He said — and I quote: “We will stand up, and we will stand together. We will preserve, we will persevere, we will prevail, because that is what Canadians have always done together. That is what we do best together.”

It has been four years since the terrorist attack. Two Canadian heroes were tragically killed in their service to our country and we will always remember them, but we have seen the words of our leaders ring true. We have not been intimidated. Our democracy has continued and Canadians persevere.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have for tabling a legislative return that relates to matters from discussions on a ministerial statement on cannabis legalization on October 16.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the development of a climate change, energy and green economic strategy that sets out a coordinated approach to climate, energy and economic planning.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to encourage recycling of cannabis packaging by establishing a recycling surcharge and refund system similar to beverage containers.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to hit the pause button on Bill No. 27, the *Coroners Act*, and conduct meaningful consultation on the text of the bill prior to

proceeding with further debate with people and groups including:

- (1) the Child and Youth Advocate;
- (2) Yukon Medical Association;
- (3) Yukon Registered Nurses Association;
- (4) Volunteer Ambulance Services Society;
- (5) Emergency Medical Services staff and volunteers;
- (6) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;
- (7) former Yukon chief coroners;
- (8) community coroners;
- (9) families who have had personal experience dealing with the Coroner's Service;
- (10) First Nation governments;
- (11) municipal governments; and
- (12) the general public.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal-provincial-territorial status of women meetings

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Last week, it was my honour to represent the Yukon as we hosted the 36th federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women. The last time Yukon hosted was in 2002. I was very pleased to be able to hold last week's meeting on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün and the Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

As we had done last year, we met with national indigenous leaders and representatives prior to the official Status of Women ministers meeting. Indigenous leaders told us about how their communities are leading change and the need for partnerships at all levels of government. They spoke about racism and the police, the sex trade and the need to keep our children safe at home. They told us about economic opportunities and grassroots projects being developed by indigenous people for indigenous people. We travelled to Carcross, where we met with Yukon First Nation women leaders who spoke about the impressive work taking place in their communities.

The official Status of Women ministers meeting touched on many issues of importance to women in the north, including gender-based violence and meaningful engagement with our indigenous partners both locally and nationally. One of the highlights of the meeting was adopting a common set of gender equality indicators that will allow us to clearly measure and track where Canada is doing well and where we have outstanding gaps with respect to gender equality. We also collectively agreed to create a dedicated access to funding task team focused on identifying ways to increase access to funding for organizations working for gender equality and making information on various existing funding programs more accessible.

I have heard from local organizations about the need to improve access to funding. Our government has taken the initiative to leverage resources at different levels of

government to support the critical work of equality-seeking organizations. I was proud last week when, together with Canada, we announced over \$1.6 million in joint funding for three Yukon indigenous women's organizations: the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council and the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. We also identified further opportunities to support other equality-seeking organizations in Yukon to access new federal funding programs.

Another focus of the meeting was women's economic empowerment. We discussed research related to the gender pay gap across the country so we can consistently track women's economic well-being and pay equity. I will co-chair this task team with Canada. As a result of our discussions, Yukon will be taking part in several other task teams in the coming year, including one on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. As well, one of the joint decisions was to create a team to explore mechanisms and initiatives on human trafficking. Yukon will share the excellent work of the Yukon Status of Women Council and their research on the northern sex trade.

Some of the most interesting discussions took place around sharing best practices, which provided an opportunity to hear about innovative programs and initiatives across the country. I was proud to share the information on community safety planning in First Nation communities throughout the Yukon. We believe that the key to making lasting change is by supporting community-driven initiatives that have buy-in and participation from the grassroots level.

While ministers and senior officials are in touch throughout the year, these face-to-face meetings are invaluable. They allow us focused time to discuss issues in-depth and to arrive at decisions together. The work we do together makes a real difference in the lives of women throughout the country, and we're proud of that.

Ms. McLeod: I would like to thank the minister for updating us on the federal-provincial-territorial meetings on the status of women last week.

I did have some questions about what was discussed at the meeting that the minister did not really mention in her remarks. The communiqué that the minister signed off on from the meeting says that she has agreed to address human trafficking as an immediate issue and a priority area of concern. I'm surprised to not see that overtly addressed in the minister's statement.

As you know, the issue of human trafficking and the sex trade has come up in Yukon previously. A CBC story from January of this year, entitled "Sex trade 'alive and well' in Yukon, researcher says after 3-year project" shed some light on this very important issue. Here is a quote from that story: "It's becoming more common and widespread for women to sell sex to cover basic necessities like food, shelter and transportation in Yukon..." It was really quite a disturbing to hear, and I encourage the minister to read it if she hasn't a chance to do so yet. The story quotes the project researcher as saying: "Most of the time, they don't see any of the profits, they don't have any control over their lives'..."

‘They’re just used and then tossed aside when they’re used up, when they’re no longer young and pretty, or when they’re too strung out’... ‘They’re just tossed out like some thing, rather than a person.’” For those who are listening today and who have not read this story, that quote is referring to the women who are working in the sex trade in Yukon.

I and many Yukoners were shocked to hear these things about our community. That these things could go on right underneath our noses is very upsetting. No one should have to live in these conditions, Mr. Speaker. It is completely unacceptable.

If the minister, in her response, could update us as to what her government is doing to combat human trafficking and the sex trade here in the territory, I would appreciate that. Has there been more funding and resources provided to address these issues? Has the minister done any analysis to see if the \$80,000 cut that her government made to the Yukon women’s equality fund has had any negative impact on the resources that are provided or available to women in these terrible situations?

Thank you, once again, to the minister for her statement, and I look forward to her answers to these questions.

Ms. White: We thank the minister for her reflection on the broad range of subjects discussed at last week’s 36th federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women. One of the ongoing challenges facing women since the federal status of women’s council was created almost 50 years ago is that, despite repeated statements of best intentions at various federal, provincial and territorial meetings over the years, change has been slow to happen on the ground.

We appreciate the minister’s commitment as stated in her release to address and do yet further research on the gender pay gap. We hope that this will include a review of the decades of research and outcome of successful legal cases that somehow have still not resulted in closing that pay gap. We look forward to the day when the minister can confirm that gender-based analysis is one of the primary lenses applied to the development of all Yukon government policies, along with measurable outcomes associated with that analytical framework — then perhaps the minister will be in a better position to explain how various funding announcements and government programs actually affect the on-the-ground outcomes in terms of the lived experience of both women and girls throughout the territory.

Similarly, while we are pleased to see the recognition of the importance of the work led by Charlotte Hrenchuk from the Yukon Status of Women Council about the realities of human trafficking and the sex trade in northern Canada, we look forward to hearing about the measures being taken by the Yukon and federal governments to address the findings of both the Yukon and other major research initiatives across the country on this important subject matter.

The Yukon setting for this federal-provincial-territorial meeting provided an opportunity to focus on the unique challenges and solutions that Yukon women’s groups, both

indigenous and non-indigenous, have and are developing in response to the very real, systemic issues such as poverty, inadequate housing, substance abuse and violence.

We look forward to the ongoing reports from the minister on the measures used by this government to demonstrate how the commitments made last week at this national conference will be implemented in Yukon and, importantly, how these same commitments materially affect the lives of women and girls in the Yukon now and into the future.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I thank my colleagues from across the way for their thoughts, for sure. I know that we in this House share the goal of advancing gender equality and improving the lives of women and girls in Yukon and across Canada. I think that we are absolutely more effective when we work together in partnership with grassroots organizations and across all governments. I think that was very, very evident in our meetings that we had last week. I’ll address some of the direct questions that my colleagues have raised specifically around human trafficking.

This was a huge topic of discussion during our deliberations last week and was of keen interest to all of us across the country — very timely, given the work around the northern sex trade report — and, yes, I will confirm to the member opposite that I am very aware of the issue, I have studied it, I have read the reports, I have watched the documentaries and I have taken the time to understand the issue — absolutely.

This is why we have agreed to work with the task team with the Status of Women Council over the next year to really put action behind this issue across Canada. It is a huge issue and one that is directly related to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country. So we are well aware, and I thank the member opposite for emphasizing that, and I hope that we all take the time to really, truly understand the issues that our communities are facing.

In terms of the women’s funding, we created a new fund — IWEF, or Indigenous Women’s Equality fund — last year. We are attempting to create more equality among women’s groups. There are huge opportunities for funding, and we will work with our partners and NGOs to leverage funding going forward for all of our equality-seeking groups in Yukon.

The gender-based analysis — there are specific working groups that will be working on this. We made huge strides in our discussions. In the communiqué we talked about the adoption of the common set of gender equality indicators and the collaborative portal approach for sharing gender-based analysis. We have been doing work around this since 2015 with the launch of our website. The approach with Canada now really lines up and will be a huge advancement for Yukon.

As I mentioned, this was the first time that Yukon hosted the meeting since 2002. Yukon was in the queue in 2015 and I’m not sure why the government chose not to proceed with that. We were so honoured to host all of our colleagues from across the country. It gave us a chance to really highlight the great work that is being done here in our territory and the local

organizations that are providing critical advocacy, support and leadership that breaks down barriers and empowers Yukon women and girls.

This FPT meeting — we hosted the entire conference in traditional ceremony, and I wanted to highlight that just as we wrap up the discussion. It set a different tone. I really thank my colleagues for the discussion.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before proceeding to Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding a remark made and two points of order raised during Question Period on Thursday, October 18, 2018.

During last Thursday's Question Period, in his response to a question from the Member for Lake Laberge regarding health care funding, the Premier said: "I will not use the term 'fearmongering' because that would be out of order..." There are three issues to be addressed with regard to the Premier's statement.

First, a review of Hansard reveals that the term "fearmongering" has a history of some use in this Assembly. Its use has, at times, led members to raise points of order. In those cases where the Chair has ruled the use of the word out of order, it is usually the case that the word has been directed by one member toward another member regarding a specific statement by that member. Such rulings not only address the issue of unparliamentary language but also advise members against personalizing debate.

On other occasions, the Chair has intervened without a point of order being raised to advise a member not to use the term. At yet other times, the use of the word has elicited no comment from the Chair or from the floor.

Briefly — for the record — to the best of my recollection and after a quick review of Hansard with the able assistance of Mr. Clerk, I do not believe I have provided an opinion or ruling on the term "fearmongering" in the 34th Legislature, but my memory is by no means flawless.

So it is not the case that there is a single, standard response to the use of the word. As the Chair said to the House in a statement of April 10 of this year, "The role of the Chair is not to police a specific list of words or phrases; the role of the Chair is to maintain order during the proceedings."

As the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* says on page 619: "In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary the following day. The codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical as it is the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used.

Expressions that are considered unparliamentary when applied to the individual Member have not always been considered so when applied 'in a generic sense' or to a party."

The second issue to be addressed is the manner in which the Premier used the word "fearmongering". In the statement on April 10, the Chair reminded the House of the well-established parliamentary principle that members "cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly." It is not orderly for a member to use what they perceive to be an unparliamentary expression in the midst of a sentence where the member is claiming to not use it. The Chair would advise the Premier and other members to refrain from doing so in the future.

Finally, in saying that he would not use the term "fearmongering" because that would be out of order, the Premier prejudged how the Chair would rule. The Chair will therefore take this opportunity to remind members that, while they may raise points of order, it is up to the Chair to make the rulings.

The Member for Lake Laberge also raised two points of order during last Thursday's Question Period. Both had to do with statements made by the Premier. In both cases the Member for Lake Laberge asserted that the context in which the Premier used the words "misleading" and "inaccuracies" amounted to a violation of Standing Order 19(h).

Standing Order 19(h) says, "A member shall be called to order by the Speaker if that member... charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood."

The Chair ruled at the time that the words uttered by the Premier did not contravene Standing Order 19(h). However, the Chair also committed to review the record. Upon further review, the Chair is still of the opinion that the Premier's words did not violate Standing Order 19(h). However, in ruling on the first point of order, the Chair also said that the Premier's comments were close to contravening said Standing Order. The Chair would advise members that it is their responsibility to ensure their statements and their intent are clear when they initially address a matter, rather than offering a clarification during discussion on the point of order.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention to this statement.

We will now proceed with Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Cathers: Last week, we asked the Premier about the leaked memo from the deputy minister of Finance that shows that Cabinet directed each department to find cuts of up to two percent in their O&M budget, and we asked what that means for the hospital.

We were asking a straightforward and important question, but, at the time, the Premier dodged the question and seemed to lose his temper. The Premier has had the weekend to think about it, so we're going to ask again.

Cabinet instructed each department to find cuts of up to two percent. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What I will not rule out is this government making decisions based on evidence and planning. What I will not rule out is us projecting O&M and capital expenses over a five-year schedule as opposed to one year at a time. We will make sure that we have all major budget items to the mains. We will leave supplementary budgets for unseen expenses, and we will continue to find efficiencies to make sure that uncontrolled, unsubstantiated and unsupported growth in departments gets curbed so that we can make sure that we find efficiencies as opposed to growing the expenses of this government without growing the revenues to counter that growth.

Mr. Cathers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has very carefully avoided answering that question directly. It certainly sounds like he's considering cuts to the hospital. This is an important issue. Last week, the House found out that the wait time for cataract surgery is now roughly three years long. We're hoping to get a straight and clear answer from the Premier on this issue.

The CBC revealed a leaked document showing that the Liberal Cabinet has directed all departments to find cuts of up to two percent. We're giving an opportunity to answer a very clear, straightforward question. Again, will the Premier rule out any cuts to the hospital budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The way in which the leaked document is being analyzed by the member opposite is quite interesting, and I'll let Yukoners read that document to see exactly what it says. If the members opposite believe the only thing that we can do — the only thing that we can do — to reduce the growing rate of a department is to make cuts, well, maybe Yukoners are happy they're in opposition, because there are more things that we can do than cut programs and services if we're going to, again, decrease the growth of these departments.

The members opposite make it seem like we're cutting budgets. No, what we're doing is we are reducing the increasing costs of those departments. It's pretty easy for Yukoners who run businesses to realize that you don't have to cut programs and services to reduce the growing rate of spending in departments. You can look for efficiencies. We forecasted certain deficits, and the reality is that those forecasts are reducing because of these efficiencies.

So again, I want to thank all of the departments for their whole-of-government approach when it comes to looking at efficiencies. We talk about them all the time. We make certain references to certain efficiencies. The Yukon Party just will not listen to it and they believe that all we can do is make cuts.

Mr. Cathers: Again, the Premier is running into the problem that, once again, his talking points are contradicted by the facts — in this case, a memo that is available online for all Yukoners to see from his own Department of Finance.

The pressures on our health care system are growing. This is an important issue. Again, we're asking for a straight, clear answer from the Premier. The Liberals instructed all departments to find cuts of up to two percent. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the hospital budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would offer that the member opposite's speaking points counter reality. The reality is that this government believes that the departments can look internally and find efficiencies to make sure that programs and services don't get cut. The Yukon Party is the only one talking about cuts. They are talking about it over and over again. We talk about growing efficiencies when it comes to visual identity; they say that we're growing government. It is just simply incorrect. When we get these efficiencies, we are showing them again — visual identity is a great example of us finding an efficiency that will reduce the cost of every department, yet that is being countered by a narrative that is hard to follow actually.

We will continue to find efficiencies. We will continue to reduce the growth of the departments, we will do it by finding efficiencies, and the Yukon Party will try to convince Yukoners that they think only cuts are going to make the cut.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. McLeod: We are asking the Premier a question that is very important to Yukoners. He is accountable to this Legislative Assembly, and we would hope that he would just, for once, give a straightforward answer.

The Liberals told all departments to find up to two-percent cuts. Any Yukoner can find the proof of this in the leaked letter from the Deputy Minister of Finance.

Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we are getting close to contravening the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly — asking the exact same question over and over. Just because the members opposite do not like the answer to the question does not mean that I am not giving an answer to the question.

The Yukon Party believes that the only thing we can do to do better than them is to cut programs and services. That is just simply not true. We can look at efficiencies. We can make sure that every single department reduces the amount of growth. It is called "increasing at a decreasing rate". I will explain it to the members opposite. But again, I don't think they are listening to the answers anyway, so it would be an exercise that would not gain any traction.

We will continue to answer the question. We are focusing in on efficiencies. The Yukon Party wants us to make cuts. We are going to focus in on efficiencies and try to make sure that we can sustain the programs and services that Yukoners have come to enjoy in the north.

Ms. McLeod: Yukoners expect the Premier to show up in this House and answer questions that matter to them. The wait-list for cataract surgery has grown to three years long. The Liberal government told all departments to find up to two percent in cuts. Such a cut would have a negative impact on these wait-lists. This is not a trick question, so could the Premier please put politics aside and just answer it?

Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, we keep on answering the question. We are going to continue to look for efficiencies.

We have to make sure that our government stops growing at this rate because the revenue that we gather — the own-source revenue that we gather — is not enough to sustain the situation that we are left with from the Yukon Party. So we are going to commit to this to Yukoners: We will manage our finances differently from the previous government, a government that was on a spending spree.

Yukoners are not interested in this irresponsible approach to running the territory. We will continue to look for efficiencies.

Again, answering the question, to reduce spending you have to look at efficiencies first — the human hours that went into processes, the duplication of services, the overtime required for a government that previously used politically motivated decisions as opposed to evidence-based decision-making. I'm going to stand behind this approach, and I believe that Yukoners support this approach and support this work.

Ms. McLeod: The lack of accountability that the Premier is showing is disappointing. Yukoners expect him to answer questions about the decisions he and his government are making. He's the Finance minister. His deputy minister wrote all departments and told them to find up to two-percent cuts in their O&M budgets. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will start with the fact that members opposite — the Yukon Party — are simply incorrect as to what the content of that letter actually says to begin with. Let's ask the Yukon Party to put politics aside because they're even misquoting the leaked document; however, we will talk about what we are doing here. Improving capital planning is one of the main reasons that this government was able to table a fiscal plan that includes only a small deficit this year, much smaller than forecasted in the 2017 budget.

In recent years, the source of recoveries has predominantly been federal infrastructure funding programs. Through our strategic use of external funding, our government is intending to return this government to surplus in the 2020-21 fiscal year. That's what Yukoners expect of us. Yukoners agree and support the work we are doing and we intend to deliver on that promise.

Question re: Mine closure security

Ms. Hanson: Two weeks ago, in a rather unusual move, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced the sale of Wolverine mine in this Legislative Assembly. This is a mine that went under after only three years in operation, leaving many Yukon businesses receiving cents on the dollar for work done for Wolverine mine. This same mine was fined for violating the *Quartz Mining Act* less than a year ago and this same mine still owes the Yukon government \$25 million as a security deposit for environmental remediation. The jobs this mine created were short-term. They are now long gone and there is no guarantee that Yukoners won't be on the hook for the mess left behind.

What lessons has this government learned from the short-lived operations at Wolverine mine, and does the minister

have a plan to ensure Yukoners actually benefit from this mine's operation if the sale goes through?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for a very good question.

Just a bit of background — in July 2018, the Government of Yukon informed Yukon Zinc Corp. that if it did not undertake the water treatment and water management measures required to reduce the risks on the Wolverine mine site, the Government of Yukon would take on these urgent works, financed by the company's security funds. Yukon Zinc Corp. has not taken these actions, so the Government of Yukon commenced risk-reduction urgent works on this site on October 3 and these actions include constructing a water treatment system to treat water from the underground mine portal and make repairs.

First of all, as we talk about the future of security in the Yukon, I want to thank the Government of British Columbia and the deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources there. They have invited our mines team to the table. We are now working free of charge; there is no cost to us. They have invited us to the table as the BC government looks at how they will identify security and reduce risk for governments on major mine projects. I am happy to continue to answer questions as we go through the other two supplementaries.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, keeping to the Wolverine mine, we understand the Wolverine mine has posted \$10.5 million of its owed security deposit, and as the Minister said, the Yukon government is already planning to use \$6.5 million of it to increase the water treatment capacity at the site. Mr. Speaker, this mine is fully flooded, with the tailings pond filled above what is permitted in its water licence.

Wolverine mine is in temporary closure under the *Quartz Mining Act* and in permanent closure under its water licence. The former operator still owes \$25 million to Yukoners for its security deposit. At what point will the potential new owner of this mine be expected to pay the \$25-million security deposit Wolverine mine owes Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, first I will touch on the fact that the member opposite from Kluane touched on this and now it's the Leader of the Third Party. To the first question, we had individuals with the Yukon's incorporation, as well as individuals who walked into the government the day that I was asked by the Member for Copperbelt South some questions on Wolverine, and essentially said, "We are the new owners of the Yukon Zinc project." So later that day, I was asked a question and I said yes, there seemed to be new owners.

Well, what we have heard from Yukon Zinc since then is that they are still working through the end of the deal. So with the new owners, on conclusion of that ownership deal, what we will see is our technical team at Energy, Mines and Resources — which is fantastic — leading a discussion with the company to move to receive the funds that we are still missing. This is a long story. The chronological order starts in about 2012 and certainly I was early on the job. It was

December 30, 2016, when I saw the first numbers come back on this project.

We will strive to get the money back, and the key in the Yukon is to make sure that these situations do not happen anymore. We will continue to work with the BC government and continue to look at our own systems to make sure that we have the proper security in place.

Ms. Hanson: The members on this side are very familiar with this history — that is why we are asking the questions. The minister's lack of clarity is cold comfort to Yukoners. We are not talking about a model corporate citizen here. We are talking about a mine operator who left Yukon businesses out millions of dollars and left an environmental mess, while shortchanging the government on its security deposit.

Yukoners are right to ask for guarantees before a new owner can take over. Unlike Faro or Mount Nansen, the federal government will not be footing the bill for this mess. The Yukon government is now responsible for these decisions. Little has changed in how this government oversees the mining industry since the previous Wolverine mine fiasco. As the mine is about to change hands, it is hard to see how Yukon is better protected than it was when the mine first opened.

What specifically is the minister doing to ensure Yukoners will not be left with an even bigger financial and environmental liability when a new owner takes over Wolverine mine?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just when I am about to commend the Leader of the Third Party for some great questions, and then it's a dig at the end.

First of all, what we're going to do is we're going to get the right number of what it takes to clean this up. Certainly, we didn't have that number. There were millions and millions of dollars that were not calculated. Some of my friends across the way know this file well. That is the first thing. The second thing we're going to do is have active conversations with the company that hopefully has the funds to pay for it so Yukoners are not on the hook. We're going to ensure, in the short term, that we use the security that is in place, because the health and safety of Yukoners comes first, beyond anything that we're doing. That is what we'll do.

With a commitment to Yukoners moving forward as we see this sector grow, we're going to ensure that we have the right protocols in place and the right ability to calculate so that we don't see Yukoners on the hook. This is something that I inherited in month one. I'm going to work through it, but certainly I don't think that we've done anything since coming into government — or the team I get to work with — that would say that it is the days of the past when it comes to some of these liabilities that we have seen. We're trying to make sure we have the right policies in place so we don't see those situations occur again.

Question re: Diabetes statistics

Ms. White: The prevalence of diabetes is on the rise across Canada. In fact, Canada has the highest rates of

diabetes among 34 developed countries. More than three million Canadians have diabetes, both type 1 and type 2.

We've been asking for many years, including to this minister, for a clear picture of the number of people in Yukon who have been diagnosed with diabetes, but have never received a clear answer.

Does the minister now have accurate statistics on the prevalence of type 1 and type 2 diabetes for all Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the great question. With respect to comprehensive data, what I can say is that Health and Social Services has been working with the Canadian Institute of Health Information to acquire detailed information on the data that has been collected for generations, but we have never really analyzed here in Yukon. At the moment, I'm not able to give the specific number. I would be happy to provide that once we get the information.

Taking into consideration the pressures that we're seeing with diabetes and the rise of diabetes, we are working through the comprehensive process to address the concerns that are brought to our attention and ensuring that we provide the necessary supports to individuals through a collaborative care model working with our health professionals. We will ensure that, as we evolve as a government and we look at our health priorities and initiatives on policy direction, we will look at that as a key priority. It is a priority, as everyone realizes. There are many pressures, that being one.

We have made some minor adjustments early on with the concerns that have been brought to our attention with children, ensuring that children are provided the necessary supports, as they have been experiencing some health challenges.

Ms. White: It is important that someone has these numbers. I was hopeful that the Minister of Health and Social Services would actually have them.

Diabetes is a growing health concern across Canada and has huge implications for long-term health planning. Appropriate treatment and management of diabetes can prevent or delay serious complications, including: heart disease, kidney disease, blindness and nerve damage. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease, and this can lead to end-stage kidney disease and the need for dialysis. Institutional hemodialysis is not available in Yukon. The CEO of the Hospital Corporation indicated that the numbers don't indicate the need for this type of hemodialysis services in the territory.

If we don't have the numbers of individuals with diabetes or kidney disease, then how do we know if we have reached a threshold for institutional hemodialysis?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say is that the information that we have available to us — what I have at my fingertips right now — is the information that we have with respect to pediatric chronic diseases relating to diabetes that has been brought to our attention and that we have addressed. Health and Social Services is clearly working with families and children who have chronic conditions such as diabetes, ensuring that we provide them with the supports.

As I indicated, we are working with our partners. We are working with the Canadian Institute of Health Information to get the numbers, get the data and quantify the need for the programming. We certainly see it as a priority. There is no doubt about the fact that the health and individuals with diabetes in the Yukon, especially in rural Yukon communities — it is really essential that we provide them the services and supports that they require. That is why this government is taking a collaborative approach to health care, working with our partners and the medical profession to ensure that all patients in the Yukon have the services and supports that they need, within reason, of course. As we evolve as a government and as we look at collaborative health care and the comprehensive review, we will take those things under advisement and consideration in our rural hospitals and with our health centres.

Ms. White: Still no number — not even on the threshold required for hemodialysis. Mr. Speaker, Yukoners have had to permanently move away from Yukon in order to receive hemodialysis in a hospital in Vancouver. We know individuals who have had to quit their jobs, sell their homes and leave this territory, which is a tragedy. Most are not even able to return for a visit because not everyone is able to maintain themselves through in-home dialysis. When we look across Canada, Yukon and Nunavut are the only jurisdictions without institutional hemodialysis. Even the Northwest Territories has hemodialysis available in both Yellowknife and Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that Yukoners must leave their jobs, their homes and often their families in order to survive due to the lack of institutional hemodialysis. Will the minister please explain what the threshold needs to be for Yukon Hospital Corporation to offer hemodialysis at the hospital?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I certainly respect the member opposite and the questions that are put on the floor of the House today. The hemodialysis threshold and the work that is being done right now with our partners will determine where we land in the future around the services that are critical and essential to the health and well-being of our partners.

What the department is doing is ensuring that the patients who come to the Department of Health and Social Services are provided the supports they need. Whether it is here in the Yukon or Outside, the service is provided. Ideally, we would like to have the services offered in our communities and in our Whitehorse hospital. That is not possible at the moment. It is certainly something that we will work toward and will work with our partners to ensure that we provide the best possible support to all Yukoners where they reside, and with those supports, we hope in the future that will happen.

With respect to specific numbers, Mr. Speaker, I don't have those numbers at my fingertips, but I will be happy to provide the member opposite the information as I acquire the information.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Kent: We are really just hoping for a straightforward answer to a straightforward question. What we know is that the Liberals have asked all departments to find up to two-percent cuts.

What we want to know is if the Premier will rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: You can only cry wolf so many times before the village stops listening to you.

What I will do is I will talk about the efficiencies that we have already been talking about — let's say, improving capital planning, for example. It is one of the main reasons why this government was able to table a fiscal plan that includes running only small deficits this year — much smaller than forecasted in the budget of 2017 — and returning to surplus over the coming years. Along with our response to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, our government's approach to capital planning will serve this territory well now and into the future.

In recent years, the source of the recoveries has predominantly been federal infrastructure programming, and we continue to take advantage of federal infrastructure programs and funding moving forward. Despite an increasing net financial position, we will not allow our territory — our infrastructure — to fall behind and into disrepair and strain those governments that come after us.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to find efficiencies. We are going to continue to reduce the forecasted deficit and finally get this government running into a surplus moving forward so that next generations of Yukoners can continue to enjoy the programs and services that the Yukon Party is trying to convince people are going to be cut.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Ms. Van Bibber: We are going to be persistent on this topic today — if the Premier could just please answer the question.

His government, in the leaked document, asked all departments to find up to two-percent cuts. Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We keep on hearing from the Yukon Party narratives that just simply are factually incorrect. We heard it with substitute teachers last week — somehow connecting this leaked document to the substitutes. We heard it with carbon pricing and with diapers, and we hear it again now with the Yukon Party. This is a great way to get them through a Legislative Assembly when we have a hot economy and low unemployment — when they just keep on asking the same question over and over again. I don't know if they expect me to say something else, other than the fact that the Yukon Party thinks all we can do is cut programs and services. We think that we have a whole bunch more tools in our tool belt and we will use those. We have already shown examples of using those tools in our tool belt.

Again, infrastructure investment, partnering with the federal government, leading to healthy and vibrant

communities, while reducing the annual budget — I think this is something that Yukoners are proud to see happening in the Yukon. What we keep hearing when our phones ring off the hook is: “Yes, please, find efficiencies. Yes, departments are growing at a rate that is not sustainable. Please do something about that.” We have committed to Yukoners — and so we will.

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Istchenko: I am going to try this again, because this is an important question and one that the Premier should be willing to answer on the floor of this House.

Wait times are getting worse for certain procedures such as cataract surgery — that is a fact. Chemotherapy treatments are getting more expensive — that is a fact. The Liberals have instructed all departments to find up to two-percent cuts.

Will the Premier just answer the question? Will the Premier rule out any cuts to the Yukon Hospital Corporation budget: Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don’t think this is playing out as well as the members opposite think that it will. I would expect Yukoners would say, “If you have all these questions, you should probably ask a few more than just one a day.”

We have a four-pronged approach when it comes to the Financial Advisory Panel. This government is going to address near- and medium-term options from the panel. The results of the impact of the financial forecast of these activities will be reflected as we go forward through the main estimates. We will be doing a comprehensive review of health and social programs. We believe that delivering high-quality health care programs and services that meet the needs of Yukoners and enhance the lives of Yukoners is extremely important, and this review will provide us with the direction to improve programs and services so that they can be delivered in an effective and sustainable way. I don’t see the word “cuts” in here at all actually, and it’s really too bad that the Yukon Party is bringing not necessarily an A game to the Legislative Assembly by asking the same question over and over again when we keep on saying to Yukoners what our four-pronged approach is — long term, short term, five-year capital plan and performance plans. We are doing so much more for consultation. We are doing so much more for Yukoners, and I think that those efforts are appreciated, so we make sure that we don’t cut programs and services, and instead we find the efficiencies so that we can keep those programs and services that Yukoners have come to expect.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call the House to order.

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

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

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

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

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Kent: When we left off debate last week, we were having some discussion with the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, and I have a few other questions for her this afternoon to start things off. I have additional questions for the Premier on some IGR and USMCA questions following our briefing last week. We will have some Highways and Public Works questions and a few Education questions before I turn it over to colleagues that have questions about other departments that won’t be coming up for individual debate.

I just wanted to turn the minister’s attention to some of the programs that are being offered under Yukon Housing Corporation. I am just trying to get a sense of where the expenditures are at, if the programs are expected to be fully subscribed to — or oversubscribed or undersubscribed to — this year.

We will start with the home-repair loan program. It is on page 20-8 of the main estimates. The estimate for 2018-19 is \$1.7 million. Is that full amount expected to be expended this year, or are you looking at additional funds being required or perhaps less funds? I go back to the comparable items in the budget, and the 2016-17 actual was \$798,000 and the 2017-18 forecast was \$1.764 million. The \$1.7 million is just slightly under that.

Can the minister update the House on where we are at with respect to expenditures in that program so far in this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I just want to comment on and again remind the Legislative Assembly — the members here and anybody listening as well — the reasons why we are not calling all of the departments for debate in Committee of the Whole during this supplementary budget session of the Fall Sitting. If there are no budgetary increases in expenditures, there is nothing to debate.

In the context of the parliamentary model of the Legislative Assembly, we would get through a Committee of the Whole debate on the department and, at the end of the day, we would have to vote on those increases. If there are no increases, what would you be voting on? This is part of our attempt to make sure that all of our main considerations are done in the mains and our supplementary budgets are used for unforeseen expenses. I am very proud to say that we have committed to that and that is going to continue moving forward.

With that being said, Mr. Chair, it is a different approach for this government. If you take a look at previous governments, this hasn't necessarily always been so. We are trying to accommodate the opposition parties by having all of the ministers available to answer questions now during general debate. Again, I just thought it was important to reiterate the reason why it is not just a general rule that Committee of the Whole would debate every single department, especially if you are making sure that your supplementary budgets are used for what supplementary budgets are supposed to be used for, and that is, again, those unforeseen circumstances. So if it pleases the opposition, I will cede the floor to the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation to answer the specific question as well.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the question around the home-building loan program, perhaps a little note for those who may not understand, Yukon Housing Corporation owns a grant program that is there to help support the development of quality, affordable housing stock that meets the needs of all Yukoners. Because each Yukon community is unique and different, we look at housing needs, programs and services, and then we design flexibility responsive to the needs of each individual community and the unique circumstances of some of the communities that are not able to access some of the more conventional financing methodologies that are there and available to them, be it through conventional financing or some of our other initiatives through Yukon Housing Corporation.

The loan program helps Yukoners — homeowners and landowners — buy, build and fix their homes. Our grant helps to increase affordable rental housing stocks throughout the Yukon by providing capital grants to developers, contractors, individuals and community organizations. These grants and loans can help to diversify our housing markets, working in collaboration with our municipalities, First Nations and private developers. The various loan programs are for Yukoners who need to buy, build or fix their homes and are, as indicated, having trouble getting conventional financing from various banks.

We are working to improve the loans program and learning a lot about that and looking at the deficiencies with our partners as well — the partners being the lending agents. As a note, we are looking at expanding our loans program. We are looking at ensuring that we provide opportunities for all Yukoners. On the question specific to the homebuilding loan program, we are currently on track to spend the budget this fiscal year, but we are looking at opportunities to expand that, as well, in order to address and the meet the needs of all Yukoners, looking at housing challenges currently faced by Yukoners.

Mr. Kent: Could the minister just clarify — sorry; are they looking at expanding the budget amount for this year or are they looking to spend to the budget amount within this revised program that she was talking about?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Currently, we have 22 repair loans approved. At the end of September, our objective is to stay within the budget to the end of the year. My note was that we are looking at other programs and initiatives that I noted previously in the Legislative Assembly around our partnership-build initiative and other opportunities to ensure that we address the needs of Yukoners by not just staying within the loans program but by trying expand the scope and allow broader opportunities for unincorporated communities and indigenous communities that have never historically had access to funding.

Mr. Kent: Moving over to the first mortgage loan — it is on 20-9 of the main estimates — again, it is budgeted at \$4 million for the entire fiscal year. Can the minister tell us how much has been spent on the first mortgage loan so far this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: To my understanding, we've spent just over \$2 million.

Mr. Kent: I'm going to continue along that same line of questioning. I will include the next two programs that are under capital as well. There is \$500,000 budgeted for the down payment assistance loan and \$1.25 million for the owner-build loan. Can the minister let us know how much has been spent on both of those line items so far this fiscal year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As noted, when we're speaking about specific items in the budget specifically related to projects within Yukon Housing Corporation, the member opposite should know that I don't have direct access to these numbers as I don't have my technical staff with me, but I will give some general information from my knowledge and what I've been briefed on.

With respect to the \$500,000 and \$1.25 million — the owner-build loan program — we spent just over \$1.1 million.

Mr. Kent: I can appreciate that those numbers wouldn't be at the minister's fingertips, but if she could commit to getting us exact numbers on expenditures so far. Rather than go through the other programs — we've talked about home-repair loan program, first mortgage down payment assistance, owner-build — there are a number of other projects, including a municipal matching rental construction that are going through, developer loan and a number of other ones that are on 20-10 of the mains.

If the minister could just commit to getting us, via letter or legislative return, a summary of how much has been spent so far this fiscal year in those various programs that are offered by the Housing Corporation, it would be helpful for us to communicate to our constituents.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to commit that I will attempt to get the numbers for the member.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that. That concludes the questions that I had for Yukon Housing Corporation. Some of my colleagues may have questions later on in the day before we turn the floor over to the Third Party at the end of the day.

However, I wanted to ask a few questions of the Premier — I guess he has his Executive Council Office hat on when answering these ones — with respect to the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement* and the briefing that we had last week, as well as some intergovernmental relations questions.

The one I am going to start with is with respect to the staking bans that are in place in the Ross River and the Liard First Nation areas. I am just wondering if the Premier can provide us with any updates on those staking bans. If the government is actively engaged in meetings with the First Nations, when was the last meeting held and when is the next one scheduled to be held? Obviously we would hope for an idea of a timetable to resolve this. I note that the bans were recently extended and I don't have the extension dates at hand, so perhaps if the Premier has them he could let us know when those two staking bans are scheduled to come off and hopefully, obviously, we get some resolution on identifying lands within those traditional territories that won't be available for staking and, just as important, lands that will be available for staking going forward.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Concerning the moratorium on staking in the southeast part of the Yukon, which I believe the member opposite is referring to, we continue to have discussions. It is not a scenario where there is a once-every-six-months meeting. Our Energy, Mines and Resources teams are consistently in discussions with Liard First Nation, even as of last week, I believe, if not the week before, and I know we have meetings set with Liard in early November. As well, we continue to have our ongoing dialogue with Ross River.

We will continue to have those discussions. They have put a number of priorities on the table. We have committed to a holistic approach as a government, directed by the Premier, where we are having discussions on a number of items, so not just on lifting the moratorium but ensuring that we look at all the needs of the territory. We will continue to do that. There is no dollar figure connected to it, but certainly we will update the Legislative Assembly as information comes in.

Mr. Kent: Can the minister advise the House — aside from the staking moratoriums and talking about them — what the other items are? He mentioned that other items are being discussed as part of this holistic approach being directed by the Premier. Can the Premier or the minister tell us what other items are being discussed with Liard and Ross River with respect to these meetings that are going on?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If there is a specific item that the member opposite wants to talk about then we would love to

answer specific questions. We do have a Government of Yukon and Liard First Nation — we've signed a government-to-government accord to advance our joint priorities. We have the whole-government approach when it comes to the MOU signed with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources when it comes to mining issues as a whole — again a shared priority item as well.

Back to the accord and the accord from the Liard perspective — it's part of our commitment to develop and maintain strong government-to-government relations with Yukon First Nations and also with transboundary aboriginal peoples. Cabinet did approve a government-to-government accord with Liard. It was in August of this year. They shared priorities identified through that accord — things like capacity development, mineral sector agreements, consultation and engagement, traditional knowledge, traditional use, roads, infrastructure, housing and also economic development.

The identification of these joint priorities under this accord is intended to enhance collaboration and reconciliation in Yukon government's government-to-government relationships within a jointly established time frame, to support Yukon government's commitments to working with Liard First Nation and to help build capacity and bring some tangible economic and social benefits to the community. I applaud the direction of Chief George Morgan. I have had some meetings with him and, again, it's quite clear that his priority is the well-being of his community.

When it comes to our government work with Ross River, we continue to bring some positive outcomes to those First Nation members and members of the Ross River community. We're working together on matters related to housing, infrastructure, capacity development and resource development as well. The government is also in discussions with the First Nation concerning other issues when it comes to wildlife management and conservation. We are very committed to working with Ross River Dena Council on a range of matters to find solutions that fulfill our obligations, our consultation obligations — and are respectful of other First Nations as well — and engage Ross River Dena Council in development and other economic opportunities.

As the member opposite understands and knows from his time in government, there is a mineral staking prohibition that continues in the Ross River area in response to two court declarations from Ross River Dena Council litigation regarding mining. Through these whole-government approaches, through memorandums of understanding and through accords and other commitments, we are trying our best to make sure we move together with these governments.

Mr. Kent: No, I did not have anything specific that I wanted to ask about. My question was obviously about the staking bans that were in effect, but then the minister mentioned these other items that were also being discussed at these meetings.

The Premier gave a fairly substantial list, and I can review Hansard to take a look at exactly what he talked about. Are all of those things on the table at current meetings, or is there a priority? Where is the work on identifying lands that

can be staked? Where is that stacking up in this priority list that the Premier gave us just now?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't know if it was mentioned by the minister responsible, but as far as these staking bans — for the record, if it was not already added into Hansard today, Ross River is extended to July 31, 2019, to complete consultations and negotiations, and also Liard First Nation is April 30, 2020.

There are conversations that are based upon litigation and then there are other conversations that we are talking about with the government-to-government accords — with federal conversations and with Yukon Forum conversations as well. I applaud Grand Chief Peter Johnston for his efforts to see at leadership and at CYFN — seats are open at the Yukon Forum for not just the self-governing First Nations, but for all First Nation governments to be at those conversations. When we speak about the different things that we are doing, it is not necessarily just with the memorandum of understanding, but it is also my responsibility — responsible for Aboriginal Relations — to come to the table to have, as many times as possible, meetings, accords and forums that have joint priorities and joint agendas.

There is nothing new to update as of today, but I applaud the work of our departments, of Aboriginal Relations specifically and the good work that they do, as far as identifying issues of mutual concern and mutual interest, but also ones that are being brought to us by the communities to which we have the responsibility to help serve.

Mr. Kent: The two dates that the Premier mentioned — I believe he said July 31, 2019, for Ross River — and he can correct me if I am mistaken — and April 30, 2020, for the Liard First Nation. Does he anticipate that the staking bans will be removed from Ross River and Liard at or before both of those dates — obviously recognizing that some additional lands may be set aside to have staking bans on them within their territory, rather than the entire traditional territory, as we see right now?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have committed to working with both the Ross River Dena Council and with Kaska — with the Liard First Nation as well. The government has put mineral staking prohibitions in place to allow time to address the court declarations. We are continuing to move forward, working with the Ross River Dena Council. We are also working with the Kaska Dena Council on mining cases. We have taken a lot of steps to comply with the court's secondary declaration, which the member opposite knows a lot about from his time as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. We are implementing a notification and consultation regime for class 1 mining exploration activities throughout various regions across Yukon.

We are extremely committed to fulfilling our consultation obligations and the work that we are doing with the First Nations to ensure that the court declarations regarding mining, staking and exploration are met. At this time, no further mineral staking prohibitions are anticipated as a result of litigation, which is good. Specifically, when it comes to the Kaska, we are committed to working with the Kaska to

identify solutions that respect both First Nation and Yukon government interests in land and resource management and providing certainty to industry as well. Tangible benefits to Yukon communities are also extremely important to this government.

Specifically when it is talking about the Ross River area, we have extended the mineral staking prohibition to Ross River. Ross River — just for complete clarity, July 31, 2019 — that is to allow time to complete consultation and negotiations with the Ross River Dena Council on how best to address the declarations. Again, Liard First Nation is April 30, 2020.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to now move on and talk a little bit about some intergovernmental issues that are top of mind. We will start with the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*.

I certainly wanted to start off by thanking the Premier and officials, I believe, from the Executive Council Office and Economic Development for the briefing that was afforded to opposition parties last week on this topic. One thing that did come up in the briefing was impacts on the prices of pharmaceuticals. As we understand it, the agreement will allow for patents to stay longer on some biologic drugs, meaning that it will be longer before our health care system could access cheaper, generic drugs.

I was wondering if the Premier, either as Minister of Finance or maybe in his work as a member of the Council of the Federation, could comment on any work being done to analyze what sort of financial impact this will have on Yukon or perhaps the country as a whole.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll preface any comments today on the fact that, again, the negotiations are federal and do absolutely impact the regions, for sure. It is worth stating for the record that these are federal negotiations — three federal governments. There is nothing really new to report in terms of those conversations other than that they are ongoing. These are important issues when it comes to small jurisdictions. We are absolutely striving to provide as much collaborative care as we can through our health care system and through our pharmacare system — and we ensure the access to the drugs that we need and the treatments that we need, and we need to make sure that we can do that in the most efficient way possible.

We are very keen to lend our support to the federal advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare when it does come to — I believe it was last week that we had that council conversation. It was great to have that conversation, and it is great to be able to provide information to that. We are very supportive of the collaborative work being done to explore the development of national pharmacare and what that means to Yukoners specifically. We are cautiously optimistic, I would say, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite, because there are still many unanswered questions that we need to address to achieve a redesign of this scope and of this nature. This is a huge undertaking, and we always examine our pharmacare program to ensure that access and

affordability for life-saving treatments are of utmost importance.

So pricing impacts — they are very dependent upon volume of users. These are the concerns that we bring to these national tables. For Yukon forecasting, the number of Yukoners who need these medications is of a much larger uncertainty than price escalations per se due to patents expiring a little later. We are going to continue to showcase the special case that Yukon and living in the north brings to the table as we continue these conversations at the federal forums.

Mr. Kent: I believe the Premier mentioned in that response that, at a recent COF meeting — I think he said within the last couple of weeks, and he can clarify this or I will look at the Blues — we were happy to provide Yukon information. I'm just wondering what information was provided and if that is specific to pharmacare or if that is specific to the new — I'm just going to call it the new NAFTA because it's easier for me — NAFTA agreement, which is what the question was about and the patents that will be staying longer so that it will take us longer before our health care system can get some of the cheaper, generic drugs that may be available.

That's my question. The Premier mentioned in that response that we were happy to provide information to — I think it was COF — and I'm just wondering what information was provided specific to the Yukon to assist in those conversations.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'll reiterate again that we're speaking to the federal government. Pricing impacts dependent upon volume of users is extremely important to Yukon as we have conversation on the national stage. Forecasting the number of Yukoners who need those medications is a much larger uncertainty than those price escalations. What we bring to the table is that conversation.

The costing work still needs to be done by everyone, including the pharmaceutical companies. That conversation is being plugged in as well. This is what we bring to the table when we have our conversations. This is part of it that I can share today — the price impacts dependant on volume of users.

Mr. Kent: Previously, we asked the Premier if his government had done an economic analysis on the impacts of Canada's retaliatory tariffs and what those impacts have been on Yukon consumers. Obviously, this was in response to steel and aluminium tariffs put on by the United States. We certainly support Canada's efforts around trying to have those tariffs removed, but there are impacts of the retaliatory tariffs here on Yukon consumers and contractors, as well as retailers. For instance, boats are captured as part of the retaliatory tariff package. We heard in the summer on CBC from one of the owners of Listers Motor Sports here in town, who spoke about what this could mean for his industry. There were some CBC reports about some significant concerns from — I think the one I read was from Nova Scotia — and what it would mean for the recreational boating industry there as well.

At the time we asked these questions, the Premier hadn't done the economic analysis, but I just wanted to clarify if the government intends on doing any sort of analysis on this, as this part of the trade irritants with the United States continues. I'm just curious if there is any analysis being done. The federal government is obviously compensating people in the dairy industry and other industries — soft wood lumber, the aluminum and steel industry — so perhaps there is an opportunity for some federal compensation if we're able to make the case to Canada, as far as what economic impact this is having on businesses here in the territory.

Hon. Mr. Silver: We have had several conversations on the floor of the Legislative Assembly about this analysis, whether it be with tariffs or with the new USMCA agreement. It is extremely important to reiterate this for the members opposite. The analysis we talk about, as far as this agreement and about trades — this is a tariff process. I did meet with the US Congress and administration early on in these negotiations. I also had frequent conversations with the Prime Minister and counterparts in provinces and territories.

Throughout, I have been briefed by the Canadian ambassador — Ambassador MacNaughton — as well as our government trade policy experts. The Department of Economic Development has also worked very closely with my department, Intergovernmental Relations, and the good people there. Our government has had a representative at all of the NAFTA/USMCA negotiation rounds.

On September 30, the agreement in principle was released, and it is important to underline that this is not the final text. Intergovernmental Relations worked with Economic Development and a consultant to provide a preliminary analysis of the agreement in principle. Once that final text is released in early 2019, as the government has done with all agreements, a thorough analysis will be undertaken to identify any regulatory and program implications for Yukon, Yukon government and Yukon departments.

When it comes to specific questions about steel and aluminium tariffs — as the Yukon does not produce steel or aluminum products, the direct impact of recent tariffs by the United States is small; however, there has been a noted increase in the cost of construction materials, and the member opposite has provided some specific examples of businesses like Listers.

The US tariffs, as well as Canadian retaliatory tariffs — they have the potential to increase costs for local construction activities and also for increases of the price of some imported goods, and we're always monitoring these increases to the trade disputes and also attempt to identify actions that may be considered for local consumers and businesses, as well as for the Yukon government.

It is interesting to note that, overall, steel prices have risen by over 40 percent in recent months, affecting both the cost of the materials and the prices of manufactured items that are used in steel and aluminum. The International Monetary Fund, the IMF, warns that the current wave of protectionism is the biggest risk to the global economic outlook, and it's very

concerning for our local mining sector, given the relationship between global performance and the demand for minerals.

The threat of US tariffs on vehicle imports looms very largely over the Canadian auto industry. This action would cause far bigger impacts on Canada's economy and would undoubtedly lead to further retaliation from Canada, so we continue to monitor the situation.

A little bit of the background — it was May 31 of this year that the United States administration announced the imposition of these tariffs on steel, at 25 percent, and aluminum, at 10 percent, imported from the European Union, Canada and Mexico. The Department of Commerce implemented these tariffs on foreign metals in the States. It's under a rarely used clause in the United States trade law — one that allows the president to put tariffs on imports where they threaten to impair the national security — an interesting fact. We've heard the response from the federal government on how that is just an interesting fact.

July 1, 2018, the Canadian government imposed our reciprocal tariffs on imports of steel and of aluminum and other products from the United States. This is a lot; it is far-reaching — \$16.6 billion worth of retaliatory tariffs — and they launched dispute settlement proceedings under the World Trade Organization and under NAFTA, as well, — fighting back for the rights of Canadians and Canadian businesses.

The Canadian tariff targets goods that are considered easier to source from Canadian companies or non-US trade partners in an effort to limit the adverse impacts on Canadian consumers — these are the Canadian tariffs. In addition, the Canadian government announced spending of up to \$2 billion to support Canadian steel and aluminum industries, including the extension of employment benefits, work-sharing agreements, funding to help companies to diversity where they export and also liquidity support for affected businesses.

There was a study from Statistics Canada released this summer that estimated that the portion of price increases directly felt by consumers from the imposition of Canadian retaliatory tariffs to be relatively small, resulting in only a 0.07 percentage point annual increase to the Canadian consumer price index — just a little bit of background and some statistical analysis based upon the tariffs going back and forth.

I think it would be safe to say that businesses on all three borders in all three countries would like to see the relief of these tariffs, and we will continue the conversation and engage with our federal counterparts to that end.

Mr. Kent: During that response, the Premier mentioned, when talking specifically about the impacts of the US-imposed tariffs and what that has meant for our construction industry — and he also spoke to what I had mentioned about the impact of the retaliatory tariffs on consumer goods coming into the Yukon — he said that we're always monitoring increases — is what I jotted down here on my paper.

He obviously won't have those figures at his fingertips, but if he could commit to getting those to us, we would appreciate what the impact of the retaliatory tariffs and the

initial tariffs have been on the prices of construction materials, as well as those goods that Canada has put tariffs on, such as boats. That seems to be the one that my colleagues and I have heard the most about from local consumers and local retailers. Obviously we would appreciate any of the items that the government has been monitoring the cost increases on — if he could provide us with any of that analysis, that would be great. I'll sit down and just let him make that commitment.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would be happy to forward to the member opposite the statistics from Statistics Canada that I have provided to the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Kent: Just to clarify, the Statistics Canada statistics that he is talking about — do they specifically single out the impact on the Yukon, given that we are a higher cost jurisdiction with additional freight and other things, or is it more of a holistic impact on the entire country?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The analysis was done Canada-wide.

Mr. Kent: Obviously this was something that was announced the day before we came in to this Fall Sitting, which started October 1. The Member for Copperbelt North gave notice of a motion to congratulate the three jurisdictions for completing the deal. We then asked a couple of questions of the Premier on the second day of the Sitting. He talked during that Question Period about how he received — or perhaps during questions from my colleague from Pelly-Nisutlin in general debate — a report by the end of the day on October 1 from his department going through all of the different components of the USMCA. On October 9, the Leader of the Official Opposition asked the Premier for a copy of that report. In response, the Premier did table a report on October 17, and we received a copy at our briefing. We thank the Premier for that. I just want to confirm that the document we received — that the Premier tabled and was given to us at the briefing — is the same document that he received on October 1.

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is an example of the Yukon Party parsing out some words. What I was talking about was analysis, not necessarily a comprehensive review at that time. Again, analysis of the agreement is an interpretive process, and that is what I got from IGR at that time. What the members received was an analysis in time. That is the most important piece.

I am not sure what the Yukon Party is specifically looking for here. They can rest assured that Intergovernmental Relations is continuing a dialogue and continuing to work with the federal government and the analysis is ongoing. As I said, my job is meeting with Congress and administration in the renegotiations of an extremely important piece, and my department analyzing the situation is also an important piece. The members opposite asked for a briefing and we gave it to them. We are sharing information on the negotiations and we will continue to keep the opposition abreast of the process.

Again, Mr. Chair, this is an agreement in principle. It will maybe take years, but definitely months, to figure out for all countries the implications on a national level, let alone on a sub-regional level. I am quite happy with the work of Economic Development as a department and also

Intergovernmental Relations as that analysis continues to roll out.

Mr. Kent: I will take a look back at Hansard from October 2 and October 9. The Premier had previously talked about how he had received a report or I guess an analysis, as he has mentioned here today, by the end of day on October 1 from his department. It sounds like the document that he tabled on October 17 and the one that was provided to us at our briefing is different from what he reviewed on October 1. Will he commit to give us a copy of what he received on October 1?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would have to maybe do a puppet show because, again, it was not a formalized document. A report is a report from the department. I had people from Intergovernmental Relations come in and we had the discussion; that was the report. What we did since then —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: For the Premier, in response to a reasonable question from the Member for Copperbelt South, to respond and suggest that he needs to do a puppet show for that member certainly appears to be in contravention of Standing Order chapter 3, section 19(i) — "... uses abusive or insulting language... in a context likely to create disorder".

Chair: Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Silver: For simplicity's sake, Mr. Chair, I'll retract my statement and just continue on, if that pleases the opposition.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The Chair would find that acceptable.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Again, so a report, an analysis — again, this is not a formalized document that they are looking for. I am not sure exactly what the line of questioning is that has been going on for a couple of weeks now. I'm not sure if they are trying to catch me up in wording.

Again, this analysis is an interpretive process. We gave a briefing to the opposition. If they can ask questions on the issue, as opposed to trying to parse out the "he said, she said" of whether there is a report or document that somehow is floating around that we won't — they got the information and I would be happy to answer questions based upon the briefing that was given to the members opposite and if there are any other specific questions that they can bring forth on behalf of Yukoners. Again, the date — the first date that we talked about an analysis is exactly what it was. The date that we talked about the report is exactly what it was — Intergovernmental Relations verbally reporting to me that the analysis is ongoing.

I want to thank Intergovernmental Relations and also Economic Development for their work, again, with providing the briefing to the members opposite and answering questions that they had there as well.

Mr. Kent: It's our job as the opposition to hold the Premier accountable for the statements that he makes on the floor of the House here, so that is what we are trying to talk about. We asked specifically about the new NAFTA on October 2, and I'll quote — I now have the Blues from that day. The first quote attributed to the Premier on that day is: "My department has read through most of the details of the new agreement already..." The second quote from that date is: "I had a report by the end of the day yesterday from Intergovernmental Relations going through all of the different components of the new agreement." We are just trying to make sure that we have the same information and that we are working from the same body of information as the Premier. It sounds like the document that he tabled on October 17 and gave us at the briefing is different from this report — he called it a report; he did not call it an analysis at the time, so I will use his words — that he received by the end of day on October 1.

Kudos to the department — I understand it's an extremely lengthy document with thousands and thousands of pages — for, as the Premier said, being able to read through most of the details of the new agreement already, which is what he said here in the House on October 2. What we're just trying to find out is if there is a different document that the Premier initially saw versus the one that was provided to us last week.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will report that report was a verbal report. Again, what we talked about was the entire agreement with various chapters and provisions, as far as the entire document goes, providing Yukoners the right to import and export, to work, and to invest in both the United States and Mexico. Yes, there was a report on that. It wasn't a physical document, just to set the members opposite at ease. It was a verbal report.

Virtually all tariffs on goods remain at zero, as was the case under NAFTA, which means that the Yukon's current exports in the United States — mostly minerals — will be unaffected. That would be a verbal report I was given at the time.

We went through all the chapters. We went through the temporary entry on chapter 16, for example, or customs and trade facilitation on chapter 7. Cultural and cultural industries, general exceptions — this is an important chapter, for sure, when it comes to self-governing First Nations and the fact that Yukon is leading Canada in that pursuit. That maintains Canada's existing cultural industries' exceptions, which is fantastic. Yukon obtains its flexibility to support the creation, distribution and development of Yukon's artistic expression or content, including the digital environment. Rules of origin chapters — we went through that.

What I'll just say, in wrapping up, is that the members opposite got their briefing. They got a chance to ask questions on the analysis that was provided and the good work that the departments did going through thousands of pages of this report. To say that we read it on the first day and finally came out with some kind of diminutive analysis — no, that's not what I meant when in the Legislative Assembly. I'm glad that the member opposite is giving me the opportunity to talk

about how the report that I received at the end of the day was exactly that — a verbal report. I'm very glad to provide a briefing to the members opposite when they ask for them — something that is new to this government, to have the opposition having briefings outside of just budgetary briefings. It is something that we continue to do for the opposition.

I think I've made myself very clear as to what kind of report happened in the first day. I think Yukoners listening in as well would be aware that we do have a government that does very well and contributes more than should be expected, and they do a great job of that.

To have a complete, final report after a day — that's not what I meant. Good thing that we can put the members opposite's minds at ease.

Mr. Kent: For the Premier, this is his quote from October 2: "My department has read through most of the details of the new agreement already...", and then today he laughs it off, saying that this would be impossible. Perhaps the Premier didn't have the correct information on October 2 at his fingertips, and that's also an acceptable answer, but it certainly isn't one that the Premier seems willing to give on very many occasions, which is unfortunate, because he was floundering through that on October 2, and he was floundering through talking about — he said "I had a report", which now turns out to be a verbal briefing on the new agreement.

These trade agreements, while we are not a huge manufacturing jurisdiction, will still have an impact on us as consumers and on the cost of living up here and other things, and that is why we ask these questions.

Just before we leave the trade file, during the month of June Canada conducted consultations on the retaliatory tariffs that they were going to put in place. Did the Yukon government — I know the Official Opposition sent a letter with our concerns to Minister Freeland. I am curious if the Premier can let us know if the Yukon government made representations about any specific concerns with respect to those retaliatory tariffs and, if so, would he provide us with a copy of that correspondence?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What I will do is I will check in with Economic Development as well to see their correspondence. I don't have a list of the particular letters here or the timeframes, and with the member opposite I have to be very specific about dates and titles, so I will get back to the member opposite with that information.

Again, there's no floundering. If the members opposite want to decide that a report means something specific as opposed to something general, that is up to them and I stand behind the good work that the Intergovernmental Relations branch does. I am happy that the members opposite wrote a letter to Minister Freeland. I am thankful for them doing their part when it comes to talking about the importance of NAFTA negotiations when it comes to regional-specific concerns we have in the Yukon.

Mr. Kent: Actually that letter was specific to the retaliatory tariffs put in place with respect to the steel and aluminum, so the Premier is clear what we are looking for —

just to get a sense if, during that 30-day consultation window, the Government of Yukon did any representations to Canada with respect to concerns they had about the fairly extensive list of items that were being considered for the retaliatory tariffs that are still obviously in place.

Perhaps this is a question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works or the Premier. Today we saw a joint news release — Yukon and the State of Alaska applying for \$25 million USD to a new government fund called the "United States better utilizing investments to leverage development" — the BUILD fund. This was a joint announcement between the two governments. I am just wondering if the minister could provide us with some details as to what this \$25 million will be spent on. I know it says that it "... would support maintenance and reconstruction activities from 2019-20 through 2024-25." I am assuming there would have been additional details provided in the application, so I am wondering if the minister can share with us exactly what the \$25 million will be spent on.

I do note as well that the estimates — work to stabilize and upgrade the road into Alaska — is estimated to cost \$340 million CAD, so obviously this \$25 million will have to be prioritized along the route on some of the more difficult areas or areas of concern.

I'm just curious if the minister can give us some details on what exactly they are looking at spending that money on if — and again, recognizing that they still have to be chosen as a successful applicant and that's not guaranteed at this time. I think it's in December. That is what I read in here — that the decision on the application is expected in December 2018.

If they are successful, where will that money be spent?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just before the Minister of Highways and Public Works responds the member opposite's question, I do want to, again, comment on tariffs. Having the Leader of the Official Opposition sending letters to me and also to the federal government on this is extremely important, and we're glad that they are taking an active stance on that.

For the record, as well, we as a government have notified the three chambers in Yukon of the public consultation, and we're encouraging Yukon businesses to provide feedback on the proposed tariffs, which is an extremely important narrative for all of Canada. We remained in close contact as well with Canada and receive updates and information as it becomes available. That's our job.

But again, we recognize the potential impact that the tariffs have on pricing of materials. It is extremely important to recognize, particularly steel coming from the United States as a result of Canadian tariffs that may be applied on the federal government. Each tender that is led by the Yukon government is examined on an individual basis, and bidders have the ability to adjust their proposals and their proposed costs based upon market conditions — consumer price indexing or tariffs, et cetera.

I would like to assure the members opposite that Yukon government construction contracts include clauses from the Canadian Construction Documents Committee — documents stating that taxes or tariffs added to material prices at the point

of entry will be paid by Yukon government. We will continue to include these clauses in our construction contracts. In the coming months, as we move into another hopefully hot construction cycle here in the Yukon, contractors submitting bids for Yukon government contracts will be taking that market price into consideration when they're putting in their bids.

But again, but we appreciate the efforts from the Opposition. We will continue to advocate at the Council of the Federation table, the First Ministers' meetings and the financial ministers meetings. Those are the three tables where my voice is heard on a national basis.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. As members on this side of the House, we consider the Shakwak program along the north highway to be very important, and I know members of this House consider this to be a very important project, so we have debated it and have had discussions on the floor of this House in the last year about its importance.

As the members opposite well know, funding provided to this government — the Yukon government — through Shakwak has been vital, and that cost-sharing agreement has run out of money. We no longer have it. I think this year we're spending the last of it, and \$1.4 million will be contributed to our GDP through the final money of this program, which has been transferred to the Yukon government for many, many, many years.

We have been working closely with our partners in Alaska to try to secure funding to continue the Shakwak project. We are talking about the section of highway from Haines, Alaska to Beaver Creek, Yukon.

In July 2018, Yukon government staff worked with Alaskan partners to support an application to fund permafrost remediation and rehabilitation on the north Alaska Highway to fill the funding gap left by the exhaustion of the Shakwak funds. What we came up with was bridge funding. There is a new program — sort of a bridge funding program — for transportation initiatives across the United States. It is a very big pool of people, but we identified the need and, working with our Alaskan partners, we got the application in on time. My department and Alaskan officials worked very closely together to meet a very tight timeline. I want to take this moment to commend the Yukon government staff who worked on that project. I know how difficult it was and how tight the timelines were. I know how hard they worked to get that in on time. It was tremendous.

We are now in the running for some bridge financing on the Shakwak project. The maximum available is about \$25 million. That is not a lot of money, Mr. Chair, as the members opposite know. We spent hundreds of millions of dollars repairing the north highway, and it is going to need a lot more work into the future. This is bridge funding until, perhaps in the future, we get another agreement with Washington, with federal transportation officials, to fund this internationally significant, strategic transportation asset that links Alaska — Anchorage — with the Lower 48. This government doesn't have the means to do that alone. In July,

the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Commissioner, Marc Luiken, and I collaborated on the application.

As I said, it was our department officials who actually did the heavy lifting on that work, and they did a tremendous job. We are now waiting to see how that application is handled by Washington. We are hopeful that we will be selected, but we will have to wait and see. As I said, it is a big pool of people asking for a limited budget, and we will be competing alongside the rest and hopefully we are successful.

As for the question, I don't think we are going to deviate from the work that has to be done on the north highway, which is permafrost and road remediation in an area that requires it. As I said, it is a strategic asset for the continent. It is important for both Canada and the United States. The work on that highway hasn't ended just because the money ran out. We have a lot of work to do and we are hoping that this \$25 million — should we be successful — will go a little way to keeping that road operational into the future.

Mr. Kent: The minister said, I think, that they would continue to do some of the work that is already underway with respect to permafrost issues and that type of thing. Do they not have to put more details in this application with Alaska as to exactly what projects you were looking at, or is it just sort of, "Give us \$25 million over this time frame and we will spend it on maintenance and reconstruction activities." I'm assuming there were more details that needed to be provided in this application.

Again, if the minister doesn't have those details — and if he can provide us with an non-confidential summary of the application — if the actual application itself is confidential until it has been vetted, that would be helpful, especially for my colleague, the Member for Kluane, who has a number of constituents who will be interested in the type of work and where that work will be taking place on the north highway. That would be important for him to be able to share with those Yukoners who live up in that neck of the woods.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Like my good colleague opposite, I'm very excited about this announcement — this news release that we were able to put out today in collaboration with our partners in Alaska. The Governor of Alaska, Bill Walker, and Marc Luiken have been very complimentary, as am I with them. It has been a great partnership. I appreciate the collaboration we have put together on this. It is tremendous. We have taken a tangible step toward securing money for Shakwak, which has been absent — we've been running on fumes for a long time. I'm very happy that there is a potential for new money, at least for the short term — \$25 million.

But the member opposite — there are a couple of things here. First of all, he is getting a little bit ahead of himself. The application is in. We haven't been approved yet. When that approval comes, should it come — and I'm hopeful we will be approved but we'll see. As I said, it is a competitive process. If it is approved, then we will then start to plan out the projects according to the stipulations in the grant program.

The member opposite wants specifics. I know the Member for Kluane and the member opposite know full well the work that has to be done on the north highway. That work is underway this year, but \$1.4 million is added to our GDP because of the work on the north highway to remediate and fix some of the frost heaves and work on the north highway to improve the road for the traffic going up there. That work is what we're talking about. It's not going to change.

The application was — I'm sure the member opposite isn't disparaging the work of the department. There is a lot of detailed work that went into that in a very short period of time under very tight deadlines to meet the requirements for the funding application. There were cost-benefit analyses laying out why this is an important project for the State of Alaska, for the country of the United States and for Canada, the Yukon and BC — a lot of places. That work was laid out in our application. I'm hoping that, when that application is vetted by the people in Washington, they see the merits in continuing to fund this program, which provides land access to a number of Alaskan cities — Fairbanks and Anchorage — strategic points of interest in Alaska. I hope they look favourably on our application.

Mr. Kent: I guess we'll wait until we see if the application is successful to get a detailed work plan for 2019-20 through 2024-25. Hopefully that will spell out what I'm assuming is included in the application, which is a little bit more detail on what portions of the road between kilometre 1680 and kilometre 1902.5 of the Alaska Highway will be worked on.

While I have the Minister of Highways and Public Works, I wanted to ask him a couple of questions about progress on the *Public Airports Act* regulations, as well as the establishment of the aviation advisory committee. On October 31 of this year, the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association Yukon sent a letter to the minister that they posted on their Facebook page with a number of concerns about the set-up of the committee, specifically. They had concerns on composition, committee meetings and committee functions. I'm just wondering if the minister has had a chance to respond to this letter that was written to him by COPA Yukon and, if he will commit to table his response here, that would be great.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm very glad to see the Official Opposition has come around to support the *Public Airports Act* and the aviation advisory committee.

Last year, as you know, we spent an awful lot of time here on the floor of this Legislative Assembly discussing the legislation — having a very robust discussion about it. I'm really glad to see that they have come around and actually support the legislation.

We have reached out to Yukon aviation companies for their nominees for the advisory panel and received a number of nominations to date. We are going to consult with the aviation industry stakeholders on the Yukon advisory committee's terms of reference. The terms of reference — I have not yet seen them. When they are prepared and I have vetted them, we'll provide them to the advisory committee and aviation industry stakeholders for feedback.

We're still fairly early in the process, and we'll take the time to get this right.

The member opposite has spoken about the letter that was posted publicly on a public website. That's where I first saw it. They brought forward concerns and we'll work collaboratively to address them. They're not very onerous, the concerns that they brought forward, and I'm sure we'll be able to reach an agreement with them.

We've been working to set up a meeting and haven't had a chance to do that yet, but we will. The advisory committee will include up to 10 representatives from a variety of backgrounds, including representatives from the aviation industry, the tourism industry, the business committee, the mining sector and Yukon communities, as well as members of the Yukon public — a diverse group.

I look forward to striking that committee and then getting on with the work of starting to come up with the terms of reference with the committee and then managing any issues up at the airport.

Mr. Kent: Again, recognizing that he is going to be addressing the concerns of COPA that were raised with him in this August 31 letter, when does the minister anticipate the actual airport advisory committee being in place?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Like the member opposite, I am very excited about this work and anxious to get on with it, but we are not there yet. When I am ready to make an announcement on the formation of such a committee, I certainly will do so and share it with this House and the members of the public.

Mr. Kent: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate that from the member opposite. Just to clarify — he will be setting up the aviation advisory committee, establishing the terms of reference for that committee and then working with the committee to develop the regulations that accompany the act that we passed 11 months ago or so. If he can just perhaps give us a timeline of what he anticipates being done with that, that would be helpful. It doesn't have to be exact times, but just some sort of a general appreciation of the steps that I have laid out and whether they are correct or not and when we can anticipate getting these regulations in place.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The member opposite is clearly excited by the passage of this piece of legislation and the opportunity to have an aviation advisory committee in place. This aviation advisory committee is going to provide a chance to vet any regulations we bring forward. Once we have the committee in place, I will make announcements and will clarify some of the timelines the member opposite is looking for. I am not prepared to do that this afternoon — no spoilers. I don't want to tip our hand on all of the great things we are going to be doing on the airport advisory panel.

I know the member opposite is excited about it and I applaud that. I think that is great. That is a good change of heart. I know there were some misgivings. I am glad that he is on board with us. I am glad he is excited about seeing the committee struck and, as I have more information, I will certainly give it to this House and to the members of the

public and to the aviation community that so depend on this work.

Mr. Kent: I appreciate that response from the minister. Again, we concluded debate and received assent last November. We would have hoped that the minister would have been a little bit further along than he is in establishing this airport advisory committee, which he shall establish thanks to the change we made to the legislation last year. Again, we are looking forward to getting a chance to review the regulations and have the industry be full participants in the review of those regulations, unlike the establishment of the legislation.

I won't take us for a trip down memory lane, but it was a pretty bumpy ride for the minister last year when it came to consultations and having to pull quotes from news releases and taking news releases down. Hopefully he gets the regulations right when developing regulations that he said were much more important than the act itself when we were talking about this last year.

I have a couple more questions before I turn it over to my colleague, the critic for Tourism and Culture. They are on education-related matters. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining — I think the members know — was established a number of years ago and has a governing council that provides advice on what courses will match up with opportunities in the industry. One of the initial things that we did as part of the Yukon/Alaska accord and an educational sub-accord was to set up cross-border training opportunities where Yukon students were trained at underground mine training centres — I think close to Delta Junction, Alaska. I am just curious if that cross-border training is still taking place.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: If the member opposite can just go through the last part of that question again, then I will speak to the CNIM curriculum and programs that they are undertaking.

Mr. Kent: One of the initial successes with CNIM was transboundary training. Yukon students travelled to an underground mine training facility close to Delta Junction. I am curious if that exchange is still happening or if there is something different going on now.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: For those Yukoners who are listening — for those interested, the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining falls under the jurisdiction of Yukon College — soon to be Yukon university. The centre was funded a number of years ago. I think the member opposite played a role in that and there was a great deal of Yukon support. I think our previous senator worked on it, as well, along with the executive team at the college.

The challenge was that part of what was negotiated at that time was that the previous federal government had committed that there would also be O&M. Once again, we are in a position where there is a beautiful space in a beautiful building, but the O&M commitment was not fulfilled.

I have worked with my colleague, Minister McPhee, and I believe that we have continued to have the \$1.2 million in place — I believe that is the number; I am sorry, but I don't have the Education budget with me. We are continuing to provide that funding. There have also been multiple

conversations at the federal level. We provided industry leadership and opportunity last year during Yukon Days to go to Gatineau to speak with some federal officials — with industry and college leadership — as well as having ministerial meetings with Minister Hajdu to talk about a go-forward.

So the specifics — of course, the industry, on that advisory committee, works with the college to define what the curriculum should look like based on industry needs. At this particular time, I am not sure if they have another trip to Delta Junction in place. We certainly are continuing to have dialogue — actually even this week, continuing to have dialogue — with my counterparts there — Shelagh Rowles, who is a VP and continues to work there. We also received a long-term training proposal just last week. We have reviewed it with some ideas — some great partnership concepts from Goldcorp, looking at what a workforce should need and what the core competencies and essential skills are that we have to make sure are in place.

Then, of course, last week at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, we saw that there was an accreditation based on the geo program — the technology program. So I once again commend CNIM on that work and gaining that important accreditation. We continue, as they move into the status of university, to have a discussion and not only talk about how we look at building an appropriate workforce when it comes to extraction, but understanding that we have an enormous amount of reclamation work — so also continuing to take a look at mining and reclamation as another really important aspect of what the curriculum looks like.

We're very supportive also of — Tosh Southwick has now taken a senior role. We have had discussions as well about maybe a knowledge-based curriculum as well — looking at relationships and bilateral relationships and how we can help companies work through some of that. That ties in, of course, to their degree that was just launched in September — that first homegrown degree north of 60, which focuses on self-governance. Of course, that all has key components when you're talking about bilateral relationships, whether from a series of governments or from mining sector leaders.

I think there's great strength in the program that was delivered in conjunction with the post-secondary in Alaska and, of course, with Delta Junction, but also broadening that conversation so that you continue to look at underground. Of course, we are: watching closely what will happen with Minto, understanding that you want to put your priorities where, of course, you're going to need that workforce; thinking about what Eagle looks like going into production in open pit; understanding what is going to happen potentially in Coffee if they go through the appropriate processes and are permitted; and again, looking at Kudz Ze Kayah. So in many ways, understanding that there could be and there should be an opportunity for an underground workforce — if we see Minto come around and they define that resource, increase the deposit and look at that as probably the most efficient way — which they've informed us — to make that project work, but understanding too that we will need, at CNIM, to talk about

innovation and the digitization and automation that we'll be seeing in the workforce.

As we look at other projects that some of these key players are doing in other parts of Canada — how do we make the workplace safer when you're dealing with explosives, large equipment and things such as that, and how do we still improve people's quality of life and have them in a position where they can live in a community or work remotely from Whitehorse and still be at home at the kitchen table with their family at the end of the night versus maybe in a camp atmosphere, which puts more challenge and pressures on people and their families.

Those are just some of the things that the college is taking into consideration. I want to thank my colleague, Minister McPhee, for giving me the opportunity to work hand in hand on some of those curriculum items and working with leaders in the department and also with my deputy ministers — both of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources, which have also had an opportunity to work in conjunction with Education on the important curriculum at the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining.

Chair: Just as a reminder, Mr. Pillai — when referring to your colleagues — to refer to them by a portfolio as opposed to by name.

Mr. Kent: So one other question with respect to Education — and it is a structural question within the Advanced Education branch. Have there been any changes — if the minister can advise us of any changes — to the leadership format in Advanced Education? I guess the question I have is: Does Advanced Education still have an assistant deputy minister, or an ADM? We have heard otherwise and I just want to give the minister a chance to clarify whether that is the case or not.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question. There is not often an opportunity to comment on or provide information in this format with respect to some of those kinds of changes at the department level.

The Department of Education was reorganized in April 2018 with changes made to some branches and units in order to better align services for Yukoners. The new structure is based on a service delivery model that reflects Yukon's cradle-to-careers approach to lifelong learning. The changes to the structure take a more holistic approach to meeting learners' needs, and the changes also aligned with Education's service delivery and program planning for early learning through K to 12 to post-secondary and labour market training, so the concept of all of those things taken into account. As an example, the former Advanced Education services such as training programs and student financial assistance are now part of the schools and student services branch with Education's other programs that serve current and former Yukon students.

There were no changes to the overall budget or FTEs of the department in making these changes. It was really an opportunity to reorganize and align the priorities of the department with the important and skilled folks who work there. Prior to the reorganization — I think, as the member

opposite knows — the immigration unit had already been transferred to the Department of Economic Development, so as part of that evolution, those are the changes that were made back in April.

I'm happy to report that they are very successful. Under the guidance of our current acting deputy minister, the senior management team of the Department of Education is working diligently on the priorities set forward, not only in my mandate letter but in the business plan and developing the business plan, and going forward with the priorities of the Department of Education and to align all of those things for the services of students from cradle to end of career — lifelong learning.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Is there any further general debate?

Ms. Van Bibber: I have one final question for the Department of Education. It is just a request. The member was just about to wrap up and then we had a break, so I will just take over that. We are looking for an Education department organization chart — if we could have that for our perusal.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will get one from the department. I will probably table it and provide it to members opposite with that method.

Ms. Van Bibber: Tourism and Culture — in the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy — Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future.*, under the heading, "Action Plans" and "Governance", it states that a new government agency will be established and we are sort of left wondering why. A government agency is usually something that is owned by everyone or a Crown corporation, such as CBC, whose mandate is to deliver programs to all Canadians or a postal corporation which is available for all Canadians. In the Yukon, we can look to the Yukon Energy Corporation, which delivers fair market value of electricity to all Yukoners, or in the case of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, where it ensures all Yukoners have access to health services.

Can the minister tell us the rationale behind creating a new government agency, as suggested in the tourism strategy?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The draft Yukon development strategy lays out a vision for Yukon to be a vibrant, sustainable component of Yukon's economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

The vision is guided by — as the member opposite has pointed out — eight core values, three goals and measures for success for interrelated pillars that outline 24 strategic actions. This draft was developed with the guidance and expertise of Yukon tourism development strategy steering committee,

which is comprised of 15 individuals who represent Yukon First Nations, municipalities, the arts and culture community and the tourism sector.

Where we're at right now with the draft Yukon tourism development strategy is that our last consultation ended on October 3. The committee has reviewed — they have more comments that they gathered during that two-week period. I understand that they have met one more time. I have not received the final recommended draft Yukon tourism development strategy.

The entity that the member opposite is talking about is one of many proposals that have been made. We will consider that. As I haven't received the final draft, I'm not sure what the final wording is on that particular proposal. When we receive it, we will do our due diligence and review it within government and determine if that is the path that our government will embrace.

Ms. Van Bibber: As we know, under the umbrella of Tourism and Culture, there are many departments, such as heritage, archaeology, palaeontology, museums and, of course, the cultural centres. As opposed to the marketing agent, would all these arms of the department be under a government agency as well?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I haven't received the final draft of this strategy. This is a Yukon tourism development strategy, and once we receive that final draft, we will bring it into our system and we will do our analysis and due diligence to ensure that we're making the right decision and moving tourism forward in the direction that Yukoners have guided us.

During Question Period and other various times, I have been able to talk about the draft Yukon tourism development strategy. This is the first strategy — a new strategy — that will be introduced in Yukon since 2000, so it has been 18 years. I'm looking forward to moving tourism to the next level in Yukon. There are many proposals within that draft strategy. I'm not sure if the member opposite is interested in any of the other proposals, but I would be happy to talk about some of those ones as well.

Ms. Van Bibber: A notable inclusion in this tourism strategy was the creation of this new government agency. On the 15-member board, there were also two deputy ministers who were a part of this process, so it is wide and encompassing.

We did notice that the “what we heard” document contains zero mention of anyone asking for a new government agency. Does something as major as creating an entirely new government structure seem like something we should do with the document, as it summarized with “what we heard”?

Can the minister or the Premier tell us where the idea of this new government agency came from?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee is comprised of 15 members. That's quite a wide range: the Tourism Association Industry of Yukon, the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Arts Centre, the Department of Economic Development, Yukon First Nation

Chamber of Commerce, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Association of Yukon Communities, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Yukon Historical and Museums Association, YG Department of Tourism and Culture, Association franco-yukonnaise and the Klondike Visitors Association.

The committee was co-chaired by Rich Thompson, who is the CEO for Northern Vision Development Corporation, and the deputy minister of Tourism and Culture. We received a lot of feedback from the public. Over 600 Yukoners participated in a broad engagement from January to April 2018 either in person or through written submission or via the online survey. A total of 12,000 comments were received, which helped inform the draft strategy — 115 online surveys were submitted, both in English and in French, and 55 sessions were held with First Nation governments, their development corporations, municipalities, tourism stakeholders, tourism businesses, other Yukon departments and the public.

I have the full list of all of the engagement sessions that happened. This was the most extensive consultation that has been done to date for Tourism and Culture.

There were many written submissions — in fact, that is where the suggestion of a Crown corporation came in. It came from two members of various associations who are members of this committee.

We engaged and followed the direction of Yukoners. Last year — over a year and some months ago — we held a round table that included 50 members, stakeholders and partners in tourism, and I asked them how they wanted to proceed with this. We have followed the exact direction given by our partners. They have tabled a draft Yukon tourism development strategy that includes a public entity, as the member opposite has pointed out, and it is one of many proposals within the strategy.

We relied on the expertise around that table and that is, in fact, why we put together a table such as this to develop a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. This is a Yukon development strategy; it is not a Government of Yukon strategy. Some of the proposals are absolutely going to be the decision of Government of Yukon, but the task was to develop a tourism strategy that reflects what Yukoners want to see, and that is what the committee is tasked with.

So they have brought forward a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I have not received the final draft. I expect that it will come soon and I will bring it into our system and make the decisions that are appropriate for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: With respect to the tourism strategy, the government's website states, and I quote: “Over 500 Yukoners shared their thoughts through an online survey, through formal submissions, or in-person at one of our 55 engagement sessions.” As the minister just mentioned — I believe her number said 600 of those — she suggested that we should create a new government agency. There were two mentions. Were there any other mentions in the 55

engagement sessions that a new government agency should be formed?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Again, yes our numbers are for sure not lining up. I will go back to the department and ensure that I have proper numbers or if the website is correct or not. We received many, many comments. We engaged the tourism industry to its fullest and relied on the expertise around that table to bring forward a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I will be receiving that, I'm sure, very soon, and we will then make the appropriate decisions based on what is best for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The draft tourism strategy argues that the Liberals need to create a new government agency because — and I quote: “The Government of Yukon should get out of the business of doing business and change its governance structure.” Again, I had mentioned this before in the House — according to this year's budget documents, the Department of Tourism only generated \$16,000 in revenue and zero dollars in profit. So I am wondering what business the department is doing. Can the minister explain to us what private sector business the Department of Tourism is currently involved in that the government is contemplating getting out of? Could she also explain why the creation of a new government agency removes government from any area of private sector business?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We haven't received the final draft of the Yukon tourism development strategy, but I expect to receive it soon. When we receive it, we will do our due diligence and make the decisions that are best for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: One of the goals in the strategy states that we hope to double the revenue to Yukon tourism businesses to \$525 million. I am assuming that this is for a year. Does the new agency have anything in mind to accomplish this goal?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. We have yet to receive the final draft, which I am expecting to have in my hands soon. We will assess it and look at the opportunities. There are many sectors that are still untapped in Yukon. Our intention is to bring tourism to the next strategy. This is the goal that the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee recommended, and when we receive it we will assess it, do our due diligence and make the best decisions for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The document states that we want to: “Ensure at least 80% of Yukoners have a positive attitude about tourism.” That seems to me to be a wonderful idea; however, I do know that unless visitors are directly involved with you somehow — through employment or your own tourism business — it is kind of difficult to order people to have a positive attitude toward tourism. I realize that this is a draft, but this is a draft that was given to all of us to ask questions of the minister. Could the minister tell us by what avenues the department is planning to meet the goals of ensuring that 80 percent of Yukoners have a positive attitude?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will make a couple of comments, but again, I reiterate that this is a draft Yukon tourism development strategy. I haven't received the final draft as of yet. We will do our due diligence and make the best decisions

for Yukoners. In terms of a comment on community satisfaction, that is incredibly important.

We were just at a TIA conference recently and we had the pleasure of listening to a presentation from the Māori tourism association from New Zealand. They talked about exactly that — that it was a critical point in tourism development in their country and they have been very, very successful in terms of sustainable tourism that is culturally enriched and truly sustainable around the environment. They talked about community satisfaction being one of their highest considerations — that you cannot lose your community in tourism development, and that balance is absolutely critical in the success of tourism in any destination but particularly when we have the pristineness that we have within our Yukon Territory, which is something that we want to protect. That's what we heard from Yukoners.

I think this is a critical element of any type of tourism development. So hearing the Māori talk about that being a critical component of theirs tells me we're on the right track.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer.

Airport facilities were mentioned. It is stated that government will work with national and international carriers. Can the minister tell us which national and international carriers that would be? Would it just cover Air Canada, WestJet and Condor, who currently come to Yukon? Or is the Yukon government reaching out to others as well?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Given that this is — actually, I just want to clarify one thing: We do not have items in this supplementary budget. I just wanted to clarify that. We're diving deep into areas that we're happy to answer questions about on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, but I just want to clarify that we do not have any requests within this supplementary budget from Tourism and Culture.

I would like to get back to the member opposite with this information. Again, it is part of a draft Yukon tourism development strategy and we're waiting for the final draft. The draft that the member opposite is currently reviewing is a draft that went out to consultation. More information was received. Other meetings have happened since then with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee. I'm expecting that we'll have a final draft soon.

Ms. Van Bibber: In the tourism industry we're always talking about recruitment, retention and training for our front-line workers. It was very noticeable this year, as it appears that there are a lot of people looking for staff and who are unable to keep staff.

What are the initiatives that will ensure a steady supply of workers and retention in the territory?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is one of the areas identified for an immediate plan and one that we know has caused pressure in our industry, so it's one of the immediate action plans that would happen as a result of the implementation of the tourism development strategy. It certainly is something that weighs heavily on our operators and is an area that we will work on from our perspective as a one-government approach, but we will work with all of our partners in the

industry to ensure that we have the best plan going forward and that we are addressing operators' needs.

Ms. Van Bibber: On June 20, the Minister of Tourism and Culture attended a conference of the tourism and culture ministers. In a joint communiqué that the Minister of Tourism and Culture signed off on, she committed to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review of the *Copyright Act* currently being conducted by the House of Commons. Can the minister provide us an update on what actions the government has taken in a follow-up to this commitment, and does the Yukon have any concerns or given any input into the review of the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I just want to clarify that this meeting that is being referred to — are you referring to the culture and heritage ministers meeting that happened in June of this year? Because it's not tourism, it's culture and heritage. I just want to clarify your question.

Ms. Van Bibber: It was held on June 30 and I understood it to be a conference of tourism and culture ministers.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It is, in fact, culture and heritage. Tourism — they have a separate federal-provincial-territorial meeting. That is something that we — I was part of the communiqué out of this meeting. Ministers agreed to continue to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review on copyright currently being conducted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

That's something that was a broad area of concern for our ministers of culture and heritage and something that we're continuing. As it says in the communiqué, our department is working at the officials level.

Ms. Van Bibber: Does the Yukon have any concerns with the *Copyright Act*?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: This is an area — when we're dealing with artisans — we've had a lot of discussion at this FPT about cultural appropriation and issues such as that. So I think it is right across the board with all culture and heritage ministers. It is a concern in the entire country, which is why it is being discussed at the level of the federal-provincial-territorial ministers of culture and heritage.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer, minister. At the same meeting, the minister also committed to strengthening work to promote safe workplaces for those working in the tourism sector. What new initiatives has the government done since June 20 to follow up on this commitment? Are there any new training initiatives or funding for tourism operators and employers to promote safe workplaces?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I'm really happy to have this question again. The ministers had a very thorough discussion and agreed that everyone working — again, this was not a tourism ministers' meeting. This was for culture and heritage. I just wanted to clarify that. So the ministers agreed that everyone working in the arts, culture and heritage sectors are entitled to a respectful work environment free from any form

of harassment, abuse and discrimination, and they agreed to work together to promote safe workplaces and to strengthen collaboration between jurisdictions through sharing of models and approaches.

When you're talking about ministers of culture and heritage, we have to remember that this is the entertainment industry as well. In light of the Me Too movement and what has happened in that industry, it's incredibly important that we have safe workplaces for those who are working in these industries.

When I was at this meeting, I was happy to discuss with the ministers there for culture and heritage that, being the Minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, we had just passed legislation for safe workplaces — for workplaces that are free from psychological injury. That includes harassment. That is directly in line with this priority that the culture and heritage ministers had put up as one of the high priorities for us to discuss at this meeting.

I was really happy to have that discussion. We have started considering mechanisms with our own funding agreements to ensure that we are funding projects and organizations that have policies in place that protect against harassment, abuse and discrimination and that all workplaces are safe. From every angle that we can, Mr. Chair, we are trying to ensure that people are free from this type of harassment and discrimination.

Because the member opposite has referenced this question around tourism — again, this was not a tourism ministers' meeting — I will just go into an answer around safety and training for tourism and other industries under the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is always focused on enhancing the safety of Yukon workers and industries, including tourism. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board provides safety and outreach to all industries, including tourism. Examples of outreach activities include: the volunteer, education and career fair, the Kwanlin Dün volunteer fair, YG's industry conference and Skills Canada Yukon.

Training activities include: assessing and minimizing risk for community summer camp operators; safety training for workers new to Canada, which includes many workers in the tourism industry; and workplace solutions, which is a forum to provide education and training to any Yukon employer on timely and relevant topics like mental health in the workplace and impairment in the workplace. Age-specific workshops are also delivered in Yukon schools on topics like safety at home, online safety and mental health. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board also developed industry-specific educational materials on request — for example, a pamphlet addressing risks and hazard assessments has been developed for wilderness tourism operators. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is always working to engage industry associations and other groups in partnership to enhance workplace safety.

That is a bit of a snapshot of some of the work that we are doing around tourism, but again, that specific meeting was for culture and heritage. I am glad that I had a chance to clarify that, because that question was framed in an awkward way during a previous Question Period that didn't allow for a thorough answer, so thank you very much.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thanks for the extended explanation. It was well done. The goals around tourism have not changed much since I first became involved in tourism. Being from Dawson, that has been a heck of a long time. Perhaps the catchphrases have changed a bit over time, but the story is the same: build and share great products, care and ensure that tourists enjoy a visit and, of course, the staff issues are still with us.

It is a short, intense season, and if you love working with people, that is the business to be in, but the pillars and goals have to be revisited time and again as demographics change, travel interests and destinations change — and it is all good.

Does the minister see any new trends that should be looked at immediately — perhaps which may have been identified during the TIA conference recently held in Dawson?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We had great discussions at the TIA conference. I was a keynote listener, really — that was my role, to listen, and that is what I did.

I listened to what is important to tourism operators, and for sure, we heard all of those same issues that have been around for a long time, which is exactly why we need a Yukon tourism development strategy. That is exactly why. Tourism has plateaued a little bit in terms of increase of GDP and increase of where we want tourism to go in a good, sustainable way that really holds the values of Yukoners, which is really very important. Having said all of that, having a good, new lens on tourism and having some very specific action plans that address all of those areas is really vital.

You had made one comment that it is a short season. Our goal is to make it a much broader season. Yukon should and could be a year-round destination, and that is exactly what we are aiming for, to keep the level — we have the highest number of tourism-related jobs in Canada, and our GDP related to tourism is the second highest in Canada. We represent 3,500 good paying jobs in the industry that can go year-round and increase — that is for sure.

In terms of trends, we work very much from an evidence-based approach, always. With tourism, that is the way we make our decisions. We work very closely with our partners at Destination Canada to help us to determine the markets that are really looking at Yukon, or destinations like Yukon, as a possible place for them to visit. We work very closely with Destination Canada and that's really how we determine the markets that we market to.

In terms of other trends that I may have heard about at TIA, I think we have talked about a lot of them. I think that there is a real optimism in Yukon about where we are going. I attended TIA last year and I attended TIA this year, and the level and the closeness of the discussion seemed to change from one year to the next, and that was really noticeable for

me as minister. Again, I was a keynote listener. I listened intently to what's important to our industry, and we have an industry that works hard. They work hard. They have invested their time. They've invested their money, and I think that there is a real optimism in the industry right now about having a lot of focus on tourism as a distinct industry in Yukon.

Ms. White: I just have very few questions for, interestingly enough, the Department of Education so I will give it a shot with the Premier.

When the announcement came out that there would be water testing done in schools for lead in the water, one of the questions I just had is — if a child is in a school for, let's say, eight years, if you go from kindergarten through grade 12 — that is one thing, but you could have educators who had been in the schools for much longer. You could have someone who served their entire career for 20 years in the same school, having consumed water from those schools. Is there any thought about looking toward staff to make sure that people who had been in schools identified as having high lead content in the water — if there were any concerns around the staff consumption of water?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We will let the Minister of Education answer that question specifically, but if it's the health of the staff or the health of the students, both are extremely important, and I believe that the department has been very proactive in this — taking a look at all schools as opposed to just as those problems arise.

I will let the minister respond but, coming from an ex-teacher, for all of the individuals who are in these schools, it's an important consideration, and I will let the minister responsible have a more thorough response when it comes to that. I think the minister has been on her feet quite a lot with this question, talking about the safety of our students. I'm sure it extends to our teachers as well.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will address this question in general because I stepped out for a moment to work on something else. Unfortunately I didn't hear all of the question, but I'm happy to try to answer what I think is the question. This was certainly a situation of concern when it came to our attention. There was a report of elevated levels of lead in a Yukon school, and we took action to proceed to test all of the schools because that wasn't something that was happening before.

It certainly started with all the schools that were built around the same period — before 1990 and of that vintage. From those tests, we learned that a number of schools required a replacement of water fixtures. Now, of course, my first question was: Was it piping? It appeared to be isolated to the fixtures themselves in the schools, which was good news because it meant that it was a relatively succinct and specific repair job. So a replacement of fixtures began.

I'm pleased to say that the mitigation work is done in some schools and ongoing in some others. The recent tests that have been done of the new fixtures show that levels are well within the national standards, so that's also good news for schools. I'm also told that the information has been put on the website and that they are continuing to update that website

information as changes are made or as the mitigation work is done, and they anticipate that all of it will be completed this fall.

Prior to this current process, there were no requirements — I'm sorry to say — to regularly test water or water fixtures in schools, and that clearly will not be the case going forward. All of the testing and mitigation work marks improvement from this government in the monitoring of water in the schools. The chief medical officer of health has assured us that there is no short-term risk to health. We're happy to have that mitigation work done and well underway.

I also understand that part of the question may have been around teachers in schools. What I want to clearly say is that this concerned some fixtures in some schools. There were lots of fixtures — water fountains and sinks. They were primarily sinks. I do not want to misspeak about this, but my understanding is that they primarily were faucets and sinks that were used during that period of time and installed in schools and that they had not been updated.

I will retract my comment about water fountains because that is my recollection, but if you are looking for more specifics about that, we can probably get a list.

What I am keen to say also is that, based on the way in which this was revealed and the work that is being done, it is certainly a concern that people who have been working in those buildings long term may have been exposed, but the chief medical officer of health advises us that he does not see any short-term health risks and that presumably, unless someone was drinking only from that water for a prolonged period of time, there would be no ill-health effects.

I am not the chief medical officer of health and I am not a medical professional in any way, so I am not going to comment any more on what the effects might have been other than to say that we have clearly wanted to mitigate that with schools. Any concerns of staff that might come forward are being dealt with by administration and at the department level. They certainly are welcome to bring any of those concerns forward.

Ms. White: I thank both the Premier and the minister for that answer. This is not a criticism about when the testing started because — not being a building professional and certainly not understanding the codes prior to 1990 — this would never have crossed my mind. The reason why I am specifically asking about staff is I can tell you that between when I graduated from high school awhile ago to now, the attention around hydration has changed.

You would typically fill a water bottle, not from a water fountain — because we have all tried to do that before — but from a tap. I am just asking if staff had been informed. For example, you could have an entire career — a two- or three-decade career — in the same school and you could have a favourite tap, and that tap could have been one that was changed. It was just to be sure that teachers have been informed and that the conversation is ongoing and that, if someone makes a claim with the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, it is viewed with the seriousness that

all claims are. It would be an unusual one, for sure, but it would definitely have merit — just to flag that.

The last question I have is around the equipment room at F.H. Collins. The minister and I have been in an e-mail exchange. I can let the Legislative Assembly know that the Minister of Education is responsible for the weight room and the Minister of Community Services is responsible for the track. Everything is sorted out on the track at this point in time, but I haven't had confirmation about the weight room.

My question around the weight room had to do with the access door. In the existing plan, it is a 36-inch door, which I appreciate. Concerns were raised by the faculty at F.H. Collins who will be using that facility that the room is not big enough for the Olympic lifting station that was constructed for the school. The thought by the department was that it was built in three pieces. I was assured by the user groups that it wasn't three pieces; it was one piece. What they had been asking for was the opportunity to have a rolling door, like a garage door, so equipment could easily move in and out. I believe my last e-mail communication was that we were waiting to find out. So here I am, and the reason I am asking about this very specific question right now is that the building is under construction. If we are to make any changes, now is prime time to do it. It is just about the new weight room at F.H. Collins and whether or not the door is adequate for the uses as identified by the primary user groups.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Chair, I do not have the e-mails in front of me. I probably have them here somewhere, but I don't have access to them.

I do have information from September 5, but I know that I have spoken with the deputy minister since then. The short answer is that I am assured that the doors that they are going to put on that building will accommodate the equipment that needs to go in that building. That is the short answer.

I am hoping that is satisfactory to the member opposite. I can say that, for Yukoners listening and for other members of the Legislature, the construction of this stand-alone — I sometimes refer to it as the sport building or the gym that hosts the materials for the portion of the sports school at F.H. Collins — was an outstanding part of the original F.H. Collins replacement project. It was not — I am not aware of the reason — included in the original plans. New F.H. Collins — great — no space for all of the sports school equipment.

Last year, I worked diligently with the administration at the school and with the department to make sure that there were some immediate improvements to that building, including some proper electricity and some proper heat. That, unfortunately, cost the taxpayers some money because it wasn't done initially, but it made that building more comfortable for the students who are in there every day during the school year for the time being, and then plans were immediately put in place to build the new spot. The new spot is under construction. I don't have a date for completion. We are hoping it will be near the end of this month, although I haven't been over there myself recently. We expect that it may be a little bit longer than that and a request for an

extension may be coming, but completion during this school year is anticipated.

I very much appreciate the details being brought forward by the member opposite because, while we have great faith in the planners and in the designers of this particular space, we do want to make sure that we can deal with any questions or concerns about that before it costs more taxpayers' money to fix it. We want to solve the problem now. I am assured that this is, in fact, the case, and I will ask for an updated piece of information with respect to that and with respect to the dates. Hopefully the member opposite and I can continue our e-mail exchange to make sure that information gets to her. I have great confidence and I am very pleased that this piece of the F.H. Collins saga, as I will call it, will be completed in the very near future and that those students will have access to new and appropriately heated and appropriately designed space for them.

Mr. Cathers: I am pleased to rise here again in debating the supplementary budget. I am going to begin by asking the Premier some questions about the budget and its basis just so we can understand what is in the budget, what isn't and what may have been adjusted.

From the spring, the last adjustments in the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18*, which, of course, reflect on the starting position in both the budget for this year and what is included in the supplementary estimate this year — have there been any adjustments to the 2016-17 fiscal year since the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* that haven't been tabled here yet in the House, or are we seeing the final numbers in there? Have there been any lapses, revotes or significant changes in accounting policy that have an impact on the closing position as of March 31, 2018, and, of course, a corresponding impact as shown in this year's supplementary budget?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It brings me great pleasure to talk about the supplementary budget and some budgetary considerations. As members opposite know, the 2018-19 *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* requests \$4.76 million in additional O&M and \$8.63 million in additional capital. In addition, O&M recoveries and forecasts are decreased by \$6.24 million. The forecast spending increase is offset by \$8.8 million in additional revenue and nearly all of those revenue increases are a result of land sales, as we have talked about in the Legislative Assembly before. The strong demand for lots was evident in the recent land lottery in the Whistle Bend subdivision.

As far as our annual deficit — \$4.5 million that was tabled in the Spring Sitting in the 2018-19 main estimates is now forecasted to be at \$4.8 million, and the net debt forecast at the end of the year went from \$21 million to \$28 million. The increase in net debt of \$7.4 million to \$28.4 million is due to changes in investments and tangible capital assets which support and improve services to Yukoners, as well as changes to the amortization expenses.

When it comes to any changes from the mains of last year's budget — the Public Accounts will be tabled by October 31, and any of those changes that the member

opposite is looking for will be calculated and reported in the Public Accounts.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the portion of the Premier's response that was an answer to some of the questions related to the budget; however, there are some outstanding questions. The reason that I'm asking the Premier this question directly about any changes since the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* is that, in going through the Public Accounts — many Yukoners may or may not realize the Public Accounts do reflect the government's year-end position, but it's a pretty thick document. When one is in opposition or is a member of the general public and you're trying to piece together and determine significant changes made by the government since the last legislation debated here in this Assembly — for example, in going through the Public Accounts from the fiscal year 2016-17, which is the most recent one we have here — that's a 388-page document and does take some time, even when someone like me has some familiarity with the budgeting process, to go through that and try to find those significant changes made by government.

That's why I'm asking in a much simpler and more direct fashion if the Premier could tell us of any significant changes that we may see that change what the financial situation was as of what was presented in the *Third Appropriation Act 2017-18* that was voted on in this Assembly. I'm asking in terms of lapses, expenditures and any significant changes in accounting policy.

If the Premier doesn't have that information now, I would be happy to hear from him the next time we rise to debate this legislation, but I am asking a simple, straightforward question, rather than requiring me as the Official Opposition Finance critic or any interested Yukoners to go through the entire Public Accounts and try to find significant changes in the document that presumably, like last year's, will be around 380 pages. Having that information provided in a short summary would be helpful and would avoid Yukoners having difficulty or being confused by the numbers they see in those Public Accounts for the last fiscal year once they are tabled in the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's a hard question to answer. With the tabling of the Public Accounts, there are always changes in accounting and changes in processes, and that's what the Public Accounts documents are for — unless the member opposite can maybe tip his hat a little bit to ask a question about what he's looking for specifically — what type of changes. If we went to the Office of the Auditor General and how that process works, no changes have happened there. A cross-comparison between Public Accounts to Public Accounts, whether it is 2016-17 or 2017-18, would show the member opposite any of these changes that he's looking at in general. If he could give me some more direction as to what processes he's looking for or what particular line items he's looking for, then I would be happy to try to accommodate.

Mr. Cathers: I guess I'm not going to get more of an answer here this afternoon, but to help the Premier out and hopefully get a more detailed answer from him during the next time we debate this legislation, what I'm looking for are any

significant changes. I'm not looking at specific line items. The Premier has the detailed financial information regarding the last fiscal year that I currently don't have. I presume that the Public Accounts for the year have probably either been approved by Management Board or are about to be prior to tabling, and so I'm just looking for that information about significant changes.

By significant changes — I'm not going to point to a particular dollar amount. I think it's fair to say that we're not interested in a dollar here or a dollar there but \$1 million here and \$1 million there.

We are starting to talk about significant impacts on the last fiscal year. It is information where I can and have gone through all 388 pages of the Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, but for the average citizen who is trying to understand the information, and even for me or an accountant or somebody else with some financial background, it does take a significant amount of time to go through the Public Accounts. It is not always apparent, even when those numbers show change, exactly what the reasoning behind that adjustment in the Public Accounts was. I would hope the Premier would undertake to provide more information later.

I am going to move on to a specific item in these supplementary estimates. One of the significant changes seen is the increase in Protective Services due to fire activity in Watson Lake and the surrounding areas requiring additional Outside resources — that latter line being the explanation provided to us in the information handed out by officials. The question I would ask the Premier is: Are the costs of assisting the Province of British Columbia with firefighting in BC this summer fully shown in the supplementary estimates, or are we expecting additional costs to be reflected in the next supplementary estimates for the cost of suppression? Secondly, and very importantly, what have we received from the BC government in terms of revenue recovery for mutual aid? How much does the Premier anticipate receiving from the Province of British Columbia in payment for the services that Yukon Wildland Fire firefighters provided to them this summer under the mutual aid agreement?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It has been about 11 hours of debate in general Assembly. It is good to have a question on the supplementary budget. This is a particular department that will be appearing in Committee of the Whole. Community Services will be appearing in Committee of the Whole, so I would ask the member opposite to reserve his question for that time — for Committee of the Whole — when department officials are here with the minister and they can have a thorough conversation about a concern that his government has gone through as well. It is always an interesting conversation about the agreements between different regions. We have relied on BC before or Alberta has relied on us. It is a great arrangement — well, I don't have to tell you about that, Mr. Chair, with your vast experience in this field.

With all due respect to the member opposite, we do have the Minister of Community Services appearing here in Committee of the Whole for a specific department because there is a supplementary budget item, and this is it. Those are

great questions and the minister has heard them, so he will be ready with some answers as well.

I know that the member opposite understands the process of the Public Accounts. He knows that we are finalizing those processes as we speak and that the information that he is looking for is in those Public Accounts. He has spoken a couple of different times about it being a lot of work, so we can, if he needs the help, offer a briefing from the officials on the Public Accounts.

Mr. Cathers: We would certainly take the Premier up on the offer of a briefing on Public Accounts. We do appreciate that information from officials. Again, primarily the reason for it is that my colleagues and I can read the Public Accounts and compare numbers, but having the explanation for those numbers and the significant changes is not always, in all cases, fully captured in the Public Accounts. There will be an explanation that meets the standards for accounting disclosure, but it does not always provide a good explanation of the full story behind it.

I note — again if the Premier is not able to answer the question that I am asking related to the BC wildland fire costs — again, what I'm actually asking about is primarily not what is in the budget, but whether the amounts in this supplementary budget fully account for the costs of what have already been expended by the Department of Community Services and perhaps other departments, if others did provide that support.

The question I am asking is: Are we expecting to see an expense come in and be shown in the next supplementary estimates?

The government should be aware of that information by this point, since they should know whether the number that was included in the supplementary budget reflects the final costs for the year, or whether additional costs came in after that point; and if additional costs did occur after that point, I'm quite sure that both the Minister of Community Services and the Finance minister have been provided an explanation of those additional costs in the Department of Community Services — so we're just asking for them. The question, in my view, is very appropriate to ask of the Minister of Finance, since it relates to the accuracies of the budget projections and would help us understand and would help Yukoners understand whether the amounts contained within this supplementary estimate are accurate or were already out-of-date before the ink was dry, as it pertains to Community Services.

I want to make clear that I am certainly not criticizing the mutual aid agreement with the Province of British Columbia and other provinces. That agreement is one, as the Premier correctly noted, the Yukon has taken advantage of on numerous occasions and provided support on a number of occasions. It is really an excellent example of where provinces and territories working together can help complement each other's resources and provide some surge capacity in times of higher firefighting years. The result of those agreements, of course, has been, quite literally, saving homes and property and effectively suppressing wildfires in the Yukon and

provinces and territories, which jurisdictions would otherwise either have been unable to fight or paying a far greater cost to provide those services.

The only two questions I am asking about this is whether the supplementary estimates fully show the cost that the Yukon government has already incurred for suppressing fires and sending firefighters to the Province of British Columbia during the summer of 2018 or whether there is an additional amount that has already been expended. If that money has been expended, how much is it? Last, but not least, how much are we expecting to recover from the Province of British Columbia as their payment for the services that we provided to them during the summer?

Those are the questions I had hoped that we could get more information on at a later date.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank and acknowledge our firefighters from across the territory who went to British Columbia this summer, for putting themselves in harm's way — as they did in many situations — and as well as fighting fires, which is rarely easy work. We should be proud of the work that they did on behalf of all Yukoners and our fellow Canadians in British Columbia.

I'm going to move on to a couple of other specific areas that hopefully the Premier can provide an answer to when we are next here in this Assembly in debate on the supplementary estimates.

The first of those questions is: What is the current projected annual growth of the TFF — the territorial funding formula — for each of the next three fiscal years? Next, could the Premier and Finance Minister please advise what the current cash position is of the Yukon government, as well as current holdings, in terms of term deposits, GICs, et cetera?

I understand that the numbers, as of March 31, will be reflected in the Public Accounts that are to be tabled before the end of October, but as the Premier will, of course, know, a number of months have passed since the end of March and we're simply asking for a current update on what the government has in terms of its short-term investments and how those are being held. There have been problems, as the Premier will recall, in the past with investments, when the Yukon government has had temporary issues.

There are also concerns, of course, as markets are volatile, about the exposure of certain types of deposits, and we're simply interested in hearing information. Much as members receive an update on the MLA pension plan through Members' Services Board, we're simply interested in hearing an update of where the government has its money invested on a long-term, short-term or medium-term basis and the current status of each of those accounts.

I'm going to move on to another question, and that relates to the government claims regarding trying to reduce the growth of government. We have seen positions posted, I believe most recently, for the Department of Health and Social Services for what appears to be a new position — a senior advisor to the deputy minister. We have heard of that in a couple other cases with other departments, so these do appear to be a new class of position and appear to be positions that

look like they are growing government, unless we're provided with an explanation of where a different position may perhaps be closing. It certainly looks like the growth of government and growth of government at the top, rather than at the service-delivery level.

The question is: How many departments have senior advisor positions to the DM? How many of those positions are currently being contemplated? What is the total growth of government as a result of those positions?

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Cathers that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 207, entitled *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 22, 2018:

34-2-157

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Cathers related to a Ministerial Statement on cannabis legalization (Dendys)