



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 103

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Tuesday, October 23, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2018 Fall Sitting

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

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| NAME | CONSTITUENCY | PORTFOLIO |
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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 |

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

Yukon Liberal Party

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| Ted Adel | Copperbelt North |
| Paolo Gallina | Porter Creek Centre |
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OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, October 23, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change that has been made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 325, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been fulfilled in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We have a few special guests here today for our tributes: Lance Burton — also known as Lancelot — Skyler Isaac and Alexander Gatensby. From the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we have Samson Hartland, Kathleen Napier, Daniel Little and Mike Burke, as well as Jonas Smith from the KPMA. I would like to welcome all of them to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you so much for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Although he has just been recognized, I would like to acknowledge Samson Hartland. I think he is our first elected municipal person since municipal elections were held last Thursday. I would like to welcome him as a re-elected Whitehorse city councillor.

Applause

Ms. White: I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming the one person in the gallery who hasn't been introduced, Mr. Chris Madden, who is visiting us from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Thank you for coming, Chris.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Kate Carmack's induction into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It is truly my honour to rise today on behalf of all members of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to Kate Carmack, a true Yukoner who will be inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame in Toronto on January 10, 2019.

I would like to take a moment to thank *Shakat Journal* and the Yukon Chamber of Mines for working together to create this winning nomination. Kate will be the first indigenous woman to be inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame. She is such an important figure for Yukon and this national recognition shows that she is an important figure for Canada as well.

The story of Kate Carmack is well-known by Yukoners, and I'm sure many would agree with me that it should be better known across Canada. Being inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame is a wonderful and significant step in that direction. Kate Carmack will be joining the Klondike discoverers group of four men who were inducted almost 20 years ago in 1999. Those men are: George Carmack, Kate's husband and father of her daughter; Skookum Jim Mason, Kate's brother; Robert Henderson; and Dawson Charlie.

Kate Carmack was fishing for salmon with those four and her daughter on August 17, 1896, when they discovered gold in what was then known as Rabbit Creek. This is where the Klondike River enters the Yukon River. That was the famed discovery that caught the imagination and attention of people around the world and launched the Klondike Gold Rush.

History has it that George Carmack, the only white member of the group, discovered the gold because he staked the first claim. The other three men have also been credited with helping to make the discovery.

It has long been suspected, however, that it was not any of those gentlemen who found the first nugget in that creek. It was actually discovered by Kate Carmack — Shaaw Tláa, as she was known by her own family. We will likely never know for certain who saw and picked up that first nugget of gold, but the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame now acknowledges and celebrates that Shaaw Tláa was also an important member of that group. Indeed, it was her skill in sewing mukluks and mittens and marketing them to fellow prospectors that supported the group's work.

Shaaw Tláa was born in 1857 and grew up in a Tagish village near Carcross. She was the daughter of Kaachgaawáa, the head of the Tlingit crow clan, and Gus'dutéen, a member of the Tagish wolf clan. Shaaw Tláa played a major role in changing the course of the territory's history, and it is very fitting that Yukon Women in Mining has renamed its annual Yukon Women in Mining champion designation to honour her.

We congratulate Tara Christie, president and chief executive officer of Banyan Gold Corporation, who will be the first to receive the Kate Carmack women in mining award on November 17.

It is especially important to highlight Shaaw Tláa's inclusion into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame now, as October is Women's History Month.

This year's theme, "Make an impact", celebrates the women in Canada who have made a lasting impact. All too often women are overlooked when telling the story of Yukon's rich and colourful history, so it is fitting that Kate

Carmack is being recognized for her substantial contributions to the mining history of Yukon and Canada.

Yukon has been a global mining destination ever since that fateful discovery over 120 years ago. We are very lucky to come from a territory with a rich history of women in leadership, from matrilineal indigenous cultures to politicians who have broken the glass ceiling to contributors to our Yukon story like Kate Carmack. Women have played a key role in shaping the territory and we are better for it. Perhaps next time we take our families and visitors to Bonanza Creek, as Rabbit Creek is now known, we can take a moment to recognize Kate Carmack and how she impacted the life of everyone who calls Yukon their home.

Applause

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, it is estimated that one in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This is now the most common cancer among Canadian women and the leading cause of cancer death. I would venture to say that every one of us in this Legislative Assembly knows at least one woman who received a breast cancer diagnosis in the past 12 months. She will be one of 26,300 who have been diagnosed in the last year, which means 72 women per day nationwide.

Breast cancer does not discriminate. It also impacts men — 230 men received a diagnosis of breast cancer last year. In Yukon, about 25 women per year are diagnosed. These numbers may seem high but, in fact, the incidence of breast cancer death has decreased since the 1990s and has remained stable for the past five years thanks to an education campaign and early diagnosis.

With new treatment regimes and new drugs, there is new hope. Last week, we heard in the House of the increase in the cost of cancer drugs. Some of the money that goes to support chemotherapy supports breast cancer patients. In the last 20 years, more than \$360 million has been invested in breast cancer research by the Canadian Cancer Society and the former Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation combined, funding more than 1,000 research projects. I'm pleased to say that the rate of breast cancer deaths has dropped by 44 percent since the 1980s. Work has been done to increase the rate of detection and treatment of breast cancer. This work happens on many fronts.

On the local front, I would like to acknowledge the individuals who make the Run for Mom part of their annual Mother's Day celebrations, the local drugstore that supports fundraising for Karen's Fund — which provides financial aid to Yukon women with breast cancer — and the local firefighters who proudly wear their pink shirts and hang up coats at the biannual Mardi Bra fundraising event. We thank the volunteers who donate their time and, last but not least, the health care staff who make the journey as comfortable as it possibly can be.

I acknowledge the artists whose work has graced the Run for Mom t-shirt over the last 20 years, including the beadwork of my sister Shirley that proudly hangs in the mammography unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital. This beaded pink ribbon was her generous contribution in memory of the Old Crow women we have lost to the disease, including our dear sister Sharon and our Auntie Minnie.

But I am hopeful, as we all should be. We have made great strides with the donation, and the work of dedicated research, health care providers and volunteers. For women who may be listening, I encourage you to get your mammogram.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which takes place in October.

Cancer is so widespread in Canada that it's almost impossible for anyone to say they haven't been affected by the disease in some way. Of the many types of cancers, breast cancer has been recognized as one of the highest diagnosed, affecting one in eight women in Canada at some point in their lives, and it doesn't discriminate.

While women have the higher likelihood to be diagnosed with breast cancer, it affects men as well. We have heard the numbers already — an estimated 26,300 women and 230 men will be diagnosed each year. Here in the Yukon, we continue to make great strides to help those suffering from cancer. We raise funds to make the lives of those with cancer just a little easier.

When Karen Wiederkehr passed away at age 37 from breast cancer, her husband created a fund, Karen's Fund, to gift money to Yukon women suffering from the disease. He also created a beautiful and quiet space at the Whitehorse General Hospital, Karen's Room, for Yukoners to receive their chemotherapy treatments.

Through continued innovation in research, treatment and early detection, we will continue to make gains in the fight against breast cancer. There is a growing desire across our country to beat this illness.

Be aware, check yourselves regularly, and be optimistic if you receive a diagnosis of breast cancer. Know that improvements to the survival rates are made every day.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to acknowledge October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

We're fortunate to live in a place where we're surrounded by problem-solvers — people who see a problem or a need and, instead of sitting back and feeling hopeless, they tackle the problem head-on and figure out the best way to help. You could say that breast cancer has been knocked back here in the territory.

With successful fundraisers like the Run for Mom and Mardi Bra, money is raised in the territory and then directed to where it can do the most good, from things like Karen's Fund — which helps families and individuals deal with the often

unexpected costs that arise when dealing with a diagnosis of breast cancer — to the special environment created by Karen's Room, where chemotherapy treatment is provided in a quiet and comfortable place. These initiatives are good examples of what Yukoners do best. We see a need and we respond.

We thank all those who donate their time and energy to supporting those facing the challenge of breast cancer. Thank you to those who donate their hard-earned money to support Yukon women and men with breast cancer. Thank you to the many people who continue to fundraise, volunteer, advocate and support those living with and fighting breast cancer. A special thanks to the visionaries who knew that money raised in Yukon for breast cancer prevention and awareness could stay in the Yukon and directly help Yukoners and took the steps to make that happen.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling a response to the question raised by the MLA for Takhini-Kopper King on October 18.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to consult with northerners on improvements to the Nutrition North program.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Education to confirm that school bus service will be provided to the existing lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision as well as to the 20 new lots in Grizzly Valley subdivision that the government recently put up for sale via land lottery.

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

THAT the Yukon government produce a copy of the terms of reference for the Health and Social Services review.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Yukon Hospital Corporation funding

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, last week the Yukon Hospital Corporation appeared before this House and told us that the current wait-list for cataract surgery is 350 people. They said that this problem has been getting worse and, in fact, to quote them: "... wait times to see an ophthalmologist and receive cataract surgery have been growing rapidly and now exceeds three years."

As we highlighted yesterday, the Liberals have asked each and every department to find up to two-percent cuts to their O&M budgets. Every department has been given the same target regardless of what services they provide to Yukon families. The Yukon Hospital Corporation has told us that the wait-list for cataract surgery is growing rapidly. Many Yukoners are desperately in need of this surgery.

Why isn't the government doing anything to reduce this wait-list?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will absolutely rely on my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, to comment further on the specifics of wait-lists.

The way in which the issues are being characterized, again, is inaccurate. We keep hearing from the members opposite about a two-percent cut, and I want to quote from the document that the member opposite is quoting from. It says directly on it — and I quote: "A corporate approach to finding ongoing O&M savings has been deemed better than including a savings target in individual departmental budgets, as all departments do not have the capacity to contribute equally." To correct the record again, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about efficiencies; we are not talking about cuts. From the document that was tabled by the opposition themselves — they should probably read the contents.

Mr. Hassard: I'm not sure what question the Premier was listening to, but I was talking about wait-lists for cataract surgery. He's quoting from a different piece of material.

The cataract surgery, as we know, is important to improving the quality of life of Yukoners. We're talking about people's vision, and unfortunately, the government is doing nothing to reduce this rapidly growing wait-list.

As we've said, the Hospital Corporation has told us that this problem is getting worse, and there are 350 Yukoners currently waiting for cataract surgery. Yet the Liberals have instructed each department to find up to two-percent cuts to their O&M budgets — not just certain departments. Even departments like Health and Social Services are expected to find the same amount of reduction to their budgets as everyone else, despite issues such as rapidly growing wait-lists for cataract surgery.

Will the Minister of Health and Social Services agree to give the Hospital Corporation the proper resources to reduce the cataract surgery wait-list?

Hon. Mr. Silver: If there's going to be an inaccuracy that is being portrayed here by the Yukon Party, I feel obligated to stand up and to correct the record. We will absolutely allow the continuing dialogue about cataract

surgeries and other wait-lists that the member opposite is talking about, because it is a really important issue.

But again, when we hear the preamble to these questions — they're brought up in a way that is just inaccurate — the members opposite are clearly not fully informed by a document that they tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Again, Management Board notionally approved an ongoing one-percent reduction to begin with — so again, inaccurate information.

Really, the job of the opposition is to do the critique of the departments — for sure — but to bring in inaccuracies like that is concerning, to say the least.

I'm quoting from the leaked document: "A corporate approach to finding ongoing O&M savings has been deemed better than including a savings target in individual departmental budgets, as all departments do not have the capacity to contribute equally."

I'll ask the members opposite: Why do they continue to say that it's a two-percent cut across the board when their own document — the document that they tabled themselves in the Legislative Assembly — clearly does not say that?

Mr. Hassard: Actually, our job is to come here to this Assembly and ask important questions on behalf of Yukoners, and if the Premier would like to talk about responsibilities, his responsibility is to answer those questions on behalf of Yukoners.

As we've highlighted, the wait-list for cataract surgery, which I'm talking about here today, is rapidly growing in this territory. Not only did the Liberals have no plan to deal with it, they have asked each and every department, including Health and Social Services, to find up to two-percent cuts. Meanwhile, the growing cataract surgery wait-list is having negative impacts on Yukoners.

As I have said, there are 350 Yukoners who are living with this condition and are currently waiting for surgery. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services please tell us one — just one — specific action that she is taking to reduce this wait-list?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to respond to the question, as there appears to some confusion. We had members of the Hospital Corporation here last week speaking about their budget, speaking about the programs and services they are receiving. I believe they highlighted the success and the significant partnership that we have worked toward in addressing some of the current pressures that we have experienced over the course of the last year.

For the sake of clarity, the Hospital Corporation is not getting any cuts. We're working at expanding services. In fact, they received a 2.5-percent increase over the last year in their funding.

The obligation there is to provide services and supports and to work with them on expansion of services. We have enhanced the operating room. We brought in the supports that they require, and we are looking at the changing demographics and we are increasing the demand for specialist services, especially by the visiting specialists who address the concerns for Yukoners. We know that there are significant

wait times, as addressed by the hospital, and we are working closely with the Hospital Corporation to address the cataract surgeries and the wait-lists.

We hope that this effort that we are addressing over the course of the next year will address the wait-lists and the serious issues that have been brought to our attention. Of course, it is something that we take seriously and will continue to address with our partners.

Question re: Coroners Act review

Mr. Cathers: We have learned now that the Yukon Liberal government did not properly consult a number of important stakeholders before tabling Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*, including first responders and health professionals. We have heard testimony from the Hospital Corporation on Thursday, where they confirmed that they had not been consulted on this legislation. The Liberals also did not consult with the Child and Youth Advocate.

As we stated last week, we are in favour of modernizing the act, but it has to be done right. The government needs to ensure that stakeholders and the public have their say on the act.

Will the Minister of Justice agree to press pause on the bill, go back out and consult stakeholders from the public before the end of the Fall Legislative Sitting to ensure their input can be incorporated into the bill? If there are any changes required, based on this consultation, will the minister agree to do the right thing and bring forward amendments to the bill?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak about doing the right thing with respect to the *Coroners Act*.

As some Yukoners know, and others will be surprised to learn, our current legislation is based on an ordinance that was introduced in 1958, with very few changes since that time. Modernizing this important piece of legislation is absolutely critical for the benefit of Yukoners and for the benefit of the Coroner's Service to have modern tools and abilities to carry out their investigations for families and the public to receive answers when there is a death that affects them. The Coroner's Service needs those tools. We have introduced them in Bill No. 27, and I look forward to the debate in this House of that bill.

Mr. Cathers: Unfortunately, what we have seen is that there has been no proper consultation with families who have been affected by this legislation or with health professionals. This is starting to sound a bit like the airport act debacle. You will remember last year when the government rushed forward that bill without proper consultation, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works was actually forced to retract his news release in which he claimed certain groups were consulted after those groups said it wasn't true.

Now we have the *Coroners Act* debacle. The Minister of Justice forgot or chose not to consult with key stakeholders, including the hospital, the Child and Youth Advocate office, the Yukon Medical Association and the Yukon Registered

Nurses Association, and she only briefly consulted with Emergency Medical Services.

Can the minister tell us why she did not properly consult on the *Coroners Act*, and will she agree now to consult on the text of the bill with all of these stakeholders as well as with community coroners, former chief coroners and rural EMS supervisors before proceeding?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: This is an issue that clearly required leadership. It is a piece of legislation that I have worked with over many years and found to be inadequate and not properly serving the Yukon public.

As early as the spring of 2017 in this Legislative Assembly, I noted that the *Coroners Act* was being worked on. It was one of the first questions I brought to the Department of Justice when I became responsible for this portfolio in the late fall of 2016. As a result, we have brought Bill No. 27 here, which has a lot of modern changes that will serve Yukoners and the Coroner's Service well.

With respect to public engagement, the member opposite and I may disagree. There was public engagement. There was targeted engagement. There was input from a number of organizations and professionals who work with the *Coroner's Act* on a daily basis, and I look forward to the further debate of this bill in this House.

Mr. Cathers: But an officer of the Legislative Assembly, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate, would not send a letter suggesting specific amendments if she was satisfied with the consultation. The minister's style of ivory tower leadership is not what Yukoners voted for when they elected that government.

Last fall, the Yukon Liberals brought forward the airports act. They claimed that they consulted with groups who later said that those claims were not true, and the government was forced to delete their press release. Even the City of Whitehorse came out and said that the claims of them being consulted were not accurate. A year later, we would have hoped that the Liberals would have learned their lesson and would do proper consultations on this legislation. From a government that campaigned on the slogan of "Be Heard", I think Yukoners expected more.

There was no meaningful opportunity for families who have been affected by this piece of legislation or for health professionals to provide proper input on the text of this bill.

The minister has the opportunity to do the right thing: Agree to press pause on this legislation and consult on the text of the bill with these stakeholders and with the public. Will she do the right thing: Yes or no?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The member opposite and I clearly disagree on what the right thing is. I think new legislation that hasn't been touched for 60 years is the right thing. I think modernizing the Coroner's Service, giving her the tools that she needs with respect to serving Yukoners when they are in a situation of extreme stress and sensitivity is absolutely required.

There was public engagement. There was targeted engagement. There were letters. There was consultation with former coroners, with community coroners and with the

RCMP. We received input from all of them. I received a letter from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate last week. I'm very pleased to have her suggestions. I will be working with her, working on a response to her and also working with her to incorporate the suggestions that she has made either in the regulations for this legislation or perhaps in the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate review, which has also been long overdue despite the fact that it was legislated.

Question re: Acutely intoxicated persons at risk, treatment for

Ms. Hanson: In December 2010, Dr. Bruce Beaton and Chief James Allen released the *Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk Final Report*. This came out of the inquest into the death of Raymond Silverfox in RCMP cells in 2008. The report came up with 10 recommendations on how to better respond to people who are acutely intoxicated.

Mr. Speaker, today intoxicated persons are transported by the RCMP to the arrest processing unit at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The Beaton-Allen report said that the time has come to share responsibility between law enforcement and health care.

Their first recommendation is that we — and I quote: "... assure that all acutely intoxicated persons at risk receive treatment with compassion, respect and dignity."

What treatment do people receive at the arrest processing unit?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say to the member opposite with respect to options for Yukoners is that we are working with our partners, we're working with Yukon First Nations and we have increased our contribution and our funding to ensure that every Yukoner in every Yukon community is given an opportunity to access pre- and post-care supports.

We're looking at expanding the medical care model as well as the mental wellness units in every one of our communities. We have four mental wellness hubs, and the objective is to ensure that we have supports and timely supports for those individuals who have come upon perhaps some much needed support, meeting them where they are within their respective communities and ensuring that they are given the treatment, whether it be land-based treatment or an addictions treatment program through the Sarah Steele initiative or through a community-based model.

Ms. Hanson: Another recommendation was to rewrite the legislation that authorizes non-criminal detention for intoxication. With the Salvation Army unwilling to admit acutely intoxicated individuals and no supportive sobering centre, that only leaves the emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital or the arrest processing unit. So 10 years after the death of Raymond Silverfox, we are still sending intoxicated people to jail. These individuals are released when sober. No mention of treatment, counselling or supports or even a choice of what they might like to do. If acutely intoxicated individuals are ending up at the arrest processing unit at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre — the

jail — how has anything changed since 2010 when the Beaton and Allen report was released?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Certainly, I can advise the member opposite through this question that these are very serious concerns on behalf of, not only the Department of Health and Social Services, but the Department of Justice, as well, and our work going forward is, of course, to address these and serve these individuals who find themselves in these extremely difficult situations.

I can recall that — although I stand to be corrected — in fact, the APU, the arrest processing unit, at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre where it happens to be located was, in fact, a major change as a result of the case that the member opposite is speaking about. In fact, it was moved from downtown for the purposes of providing better, more appropriate service for individuals who are held for a short period of time for their own safety — or the safety of others — but primarily for their own safety so that they are not harmed while in that particular state. Of course, medical attention is provided for individuals who require it and these improvements must continue.

The comments made by the member opposite are not taken lightly. This is a situation that we must address at all times, case by case, and provide the best service possible.

Ms. Hanson: In fact, Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen made clear that the placement of people in the APU was directly contrary to all 10 of their recommendations.

Eight years later, and nothing has substantively changed in that time. We do have a new Sarah Steele Building and we still send intoxicated people to jail — now the arrest processing unit — or we send them to Emergency. Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen focused on the need for a sobering centre that would embrace the philosophy of harm reduction and be a refuge of safety and security during a time of personal vulnerability. This centre would be capable of accommodating acutely intoxicated persons and provide a continuum of care and support, including medical withdrawal supports. So 10 years since the death of Raymond Silverfox and eight years since the Beaton and Allen report — Mr. Speaker, what has changed? When will this government put into place a safe sobering place and stop forcing people to Emergency or jail?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for a great question. It is certainly something that we have experienced over the course of the last two years. There are immense pressures at the hospital and immense pressures at the Sarah Steele facility. We are working with our partners in our communities to address and alleviate some of the pressures. It is not by any means all of the answers.

We have enhanced and supported the Jackson Lake treatment facility. We are working with our partners. I know that a supportive sobering centre is something that it is much needed, and we are working on ensuring that we provide the supports necessary — the supportive measures that we have in our community. It is certainly long overdue, and it is necessary when we look at substance abuse in our communities and looking at ensuring that we provide supports

— I absolutely agree, and it is something that we are working toward as a government.

We will continue to work with our partners and address the concerns that have been brought to our attention. As well, we will ensure that we have an enhanced scope of collaborative care in all of our communities using the mental wellness model and the land-based initiatives in our communities. We are now working on a strategy with our communities through the mental wellness land-based healing initiative. We have provided \$600,000 last year to do some bridge supports so that communities can start working on a model that works for them in their respective communities.

Question re: Ross River School

Mr. Hassard: Last week, I asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works some very reasonable and straightforward questions about the geotechnical report for the Ross River School. At the time, I certainly didn't get any answers, so I am hoping, now that he has had the opportunity to think about things a little bit, I can re-ask those questions.

When did the minister receive the geotechnical report? Why has he been sitting on this report? Why has he not already spoken to the community of Ross River about the report? When will he make that report public?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am not a mathematician, but I think that was four questions. I will deal with them one at a time. I didn't realize we were asking multiple questions in Question Period.

Our number one priority continues to be the health and safety of the students and staff at that school. I will repeat — as I did last week — that the school continues to be a safe place to work, learn and socialize.

In the past two years, we have ordered a number of engineering reports to both monitor the safety of the school and provide us evidence-based options on next steps. This decision on the school is not one that we take lightly and we have taken the appropriate time to conduct the reviews and analysis necessary. Currently we have two options before us. The first is a long-term option to extend the life of the school to 2040, with substantial and continuous repairs to the school. The second is a short-term option and outlines what is necessary to maintain the school for the next five years while the replacement to the school is designed and constructed.

This is not a decision our government will make unilaterally. We will work with the Ross River Dena Council, listen to the community's needs and jointly determine a long-range solution for the future of this school.

Mr. Hassard: Apparently I should ask five questions because maybe we would have gotten one answer.

Last week, we used the Ross River School to demonstrate how the Liberals five-year capital plan was rather useless. The other day the Minister of Highways and Public Works randomly announced \$3.1 million in capital improvements to the school right here on the floor of the Assembly but, of course, we know that this \$3.1 million is mentioned nowhere in the budget. The \$3.1 million is mentioned nowhere in this capital concept. If a major project like this is isn't in it, then

the only thing you can be certain of is that you can't trust this capital concept.

We know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works regularly loses track of how \$1 million is being spent, as he did when he sole-sourced the contract to a Northwest Territories firm.

Will the minister be able to tell us where we can find this line item in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am troubled by the member opposite — by the Leader of the Official Opposition — as he just said he used Ross River for political purposes. I take exception to that, Mr. Speaker. This is a school that is occupied by students and teachers. It is a school that is safe — and we are keeping it safe — but it is not the greatest structure and it is not the greatest structure because —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

Mr. Cathers: The accusation that the Minister of Highways and Public Works just directed against the Leader of the Official Opposition certainly seems to be in contravention of Standing Order 19(g) — imputing "... unavowed motives to another member..." — where he accused the Leader of the Official Opposition for having a reason other than bringing forward issues on behalf of his constituents when making his point. I think the member opposite should be asked to retract that point and to apologize to this Assembly.

Speaker: Are there any submissions on the point of order?

Minister of Highways and Public Works, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, this is political theatre right here. That is exactly what we engage in — we are politicians. In fact, I just referenced what the Leader of the Official Opposition said himself, which was that he used this school to illustrate, et cetera. I am going to stand by that statement and I will await your ruling.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I will review Hansard, but in my view, there is some merit to what the Minister of Highways and Public Works is saying in that we are all politicians and you are putting forward your perspectives as you view it to be, presumably to the good of your vision for Yukoners. There is, of course, a political narrative.

If I'm missing something, as I said, I will review Hansard, but it seems to me that the debate in the Assembly is intrinsically and inherently political.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: We have released engineering reports for the Ross River School showing that it is structurally sound and safe for use. I'll read that again: We have released the engineering reports. That is something that is rare. It is a new thing — that we are actually releasing

information to the public, to the community and to the media. That is something that hasn't been done before, and I'm more than happy to discuss the contents of those documents in public. It is important that the public get the information that the government collects on its behalf, and I'm more than happy to do that. That is another change that we are doing.

We're also making sure that this school that we inherited is safe for occupancy. That is the golden rule here. We want to make sure that we keep that school safe and operational until we have a chance to talk to the community and decide what the next steps are.

Mr. Hassard: We just mentioned the Liberals' five-year capital concept and its unreliability. We've raised the issue of this — over \$3 million that the minister said he is investing in the Ross River School. It isn't in the budget documents and it isn't in the five-year concept.

We do know that Holy Family School is in the document. When we ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works why it was in the five-year concept, he told us that it was going to be rebuilt, but later the Minister of Education told us that the Minister of Highways and Public Works was wrong. In fact, not only were they not rebuilding this school as the minister claimed, but the government can't even tell us why the Holy Family School is listed on the five-year capital concept. They can't even tell us if it's for painting or renovating.

If Yukoners can't trust this five-year capital plan, they can't even trust the minister.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is interesting to hear from the members opposite that they don't want to see a government planning for the future.

We have been very pleased with the reception that we've received on this capital plan given by industry to date. We've been told by companies like Northwestel, for example, that this is a cost-savings for them as we plan for the future.

The intention of the plan — as the members opposite know — is to create awareness of Yukon government capital plans among Yukoners, the private sector, the municipalities and the First Nation governments. Communicating capital plans early allows all levels of government information to work toward fulfilling the highest priority needs for Yukoners in all of the communities. It allows the private sector to prepare for these government projects, and we've been hearing a lot of great responses from that.

As the members opposite know, long-term planning will continue to evolve. It will improve every year. These plans are flexible for that determination. Plans will change as community needs change as well and as the planning continues with the community partners.

The Minister for Highways and Public Works said exactly that. We are ready to go to the community and talk to the community of Ross River and to see what they want us to do, as far as these options and these papers.

Releasing documents — I remember the opposition tried to make an attempt with that school as well. I don't remember them being as open and as accountable to the good people of Ross River when that determination was being made.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Introduction of visitors outside of the time provided for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask all of my colleagues here to help me in welcoming a wonderful individual from Dawson City, Alex Somerville, who is the curator of the museum in Dawson.

Applause

Notice of government private members' business

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(7), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the government private members to be called on Wednesday, October 24, 2018. They are: Motion No. 340, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North; Motion No. 319, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre; and Motion No. 326, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter now before the Committee is Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 21: *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to start first by welcoming Bhreagh Dabbs from Justice to the Legislative Assembly today and Valerie Royle, who is the deputy minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. Thank you for being with us today and for all of your hard work on the bill that we are considering today.

In my earlier remarks in second reading, I reviewed the legislative changes that we have embarked on in the last two years, changes that led us to the act that we are considering today. Today I will discuss some historical context, talk about the bill a bit more in-depth and consider our present and future directions. I will leave any in-depth discussions on legal matters to my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. However, I know that the law and our Yukon laws are living documents — they are not set in stone. Like all of us, they must be responsive to change in society.

Here is an example: Until fairly recently in human history, a woman was considered less than a whole person, particularly if she was married. The *Married Women's Property Act* is an example of those values. That is why we are proposing to repeal that act. Later, once women obtained rights equal to men's, society moved slowly to recognize gay rights and same-sex marriage. It took the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and a number of high-profile court cases and changes in the law for same-sex marriage to be legal across the country. Now trans people and others with non-binary genders are demanding equality before the law. Like most other Canadian jurisdictions, Yukon took a piecemeal approach to making legislation more expansive and inclusive and, as in other places, the movement toward change has often been a court case, but we are rapidly catching up.

In my second reading speech, I detailed the progress our government has made toward making our legislation more inclusive of LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners. The bill we are considering today marks the next step in this process. Let me go through the bill in detail. A recent review of Yukon legislation found references to domestic partners in 46 enactments. Today, we are amending nine acts. They are: the *Dependents Relief Act*, the *Estate Administration Act*, the *Evidence Act*, the *Family Property and Support Act*, the *Government Employee Housing Plan Act*, the *Income Tax Act*, the *Marriage Act*, the *Spousal Compensation Act* and the *Judicature Act*. Most of these acts are amendments to be inclusive of same-sex partners. Two acts need amendments to be inclusive of non-binary genders.

Rather than give details on each change, I will tell you about some of the examples that we plan to do.

The *Estate Administration Act* will replace the gendered term "widow" or "widower" with the gender-neutral phrase "surviving spouse". Amendments to the *Marriage Act* would replace the gendered terms "widow" or "widower" with the gender-neutral phrase "previously married person whose previous spouse is deceased". To be more inclusive of non-binary persons, we want to amend the *Spousal Compensation Act*. We propose to take out the gender terms "his" or "hers" and remove references to the gendered phrase "persons of opposite sex".

We also want to repeal the *Married Women's Property Act*. In the second reading speech, I described the origin of the *Married Women's Property Act* in jurisdictions across Canada, Britain and elsewhere. It came from a time when women had legal status somewhat above that of a child, but definitely less than equal to a man. Single women could buy and sell land or property and enter into contracts, but the status of married women was much more diminished. Women lost their legal identity upon marriage. Married women could not hold or dispose of property, enter a contract, sue or be sued, or act as a guardian. These common law rules were eventually abolished by statute starting in the 18th century.

In Canada, some married women's property acts like Yukon's were amended when women acquired equal legal rights to men but, since 1982, when equality of the sexes was enshrined into the Canadian Constitution by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, there has been absolutely no reason to keep the Yukon *Married Women's Property Act* as one of our pieces of legislation. It is certainly a remnant of a bygone era and it is time for it to be repealed.

As the bill itself states, it no longer reflects the current state of law or modern society. Along with repealing the *Married Women's Property Act* is a proposed amendment to the *Judicature Act*. This amendment would abolish the doctrine of unity of personality. The doctrine describes the old legal concept that a husband and wife were considered to be one person under the law and note the heteronormative terms "husband" and "wife".

Further amendments to the *Judicature Act* affirm three essential factors. First, in section 29.01(1), a married person is separate and distinct from their spouses with their own rights and duties under the law. Secondly, in section 29(2), a married person must be given legal capacity, meaning the power to make their own decisions as if they were unmarried. In fact, it recognizes each spouse as a separate person. Finally, in section 29(3), it states that the purpose of subsections 1 and 2 is to make the law apply to everyone equally regardless of sex or gender.

All of these amendments, taken together, are part of our ongoing work to make good on our government's priority to make Yukon a more diverse, fair and equal society. Of course, there is more work to be done. Many members of LGBTQ2S+ community have told us that changes in legislation are not enough and we agree. Changes in law are not enough. We need services that meet the needs of our LGBTQ2S+ community members. This bill is a start in the right direction.

I want to emphasize that this bill is far from the last step we will take to make our legislation more representative of all Yukon citizens, no matter someone's sexual orientation or gender expression.

With regard to the bill we will consider today, we did not engage directly with the public due to the legal nature of the amendments. The amendments confirm changes to common law. They are necessary to ensure that Yukon legislation meets our obligations under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This bill affirms the present state of the law and modernizes our legislation. Consulting with the public on

this would not change the need for these amendments; however, we are very conscious that we need to continue moving forward or improving our legislation and services relating to LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.

Let me tell you how we have engaged with the community for the last two years. In 2016, a deputy ministers committee on transgender issues was struck to review internal practices related to non-discrimination. This committee's mandate expanded. It was formalized and it eventually became the deputy ministers committee on sexual orientation and gender identity. Deputy ministers from the Women's Directorate, Justice, Health and Social Services, the Public Service Commission, Education, Community Services and Highways and Public Works have been meeting since then.

Our policy staff and legal staff are also identifying instances where legislation will need to be amended. To ensure our efforts are well thought out and to ensure we are engaging the LGBTQ2S+ community in a safe and dignified way, we have hired a contractor from a BC-based organization called QMUNITY. QMUNITY is trusted in the LGBTQ2S+ community and their leadership will help us to engage the community. Ultimately we are working to help identify and prioritize the needs of this diverse community. With our contractor from QMUNITY, we are building a public engagement plan for later this fall, which will inform our action plan. These three initiatives mark the beginning of significant progress in updating our legislation and ensuring that we deliver the right services to our community. We are confident that we are continuing to make sure our legislation meets the rules and social standards for LGBTQ2S+ non-discrimination.

I look forward to further comments and questions from members of the House.

Mr. Kent: Thank you to the minister for her opening remarks. I would also like to welcome the officials who are supporting the minister here today, as well as all the officials throughout government who worked on putting this legislation together.

With that, the Official Opposition will have no questions during Committee of the Whole on this bill. I will turn it over to my colleague from the New Democrat Party.

Ms. White: I echo the thanks made by the Official Opposition. We thank the minister for bringing this bill forward and the government for moving forward on equality. We're happy to see this, and we have no questions for Committee of the Whole.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 21?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I guess I will have short closing remarks then. Since we have no questions, I just really thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly today for hearing this bill and for supporting it. I think it is a huge step forward for Yukon. We are very pleased to be bringing this forward in this way, and to have consensus among all of us in the Legislative Assembly.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 21?

Seeing none, we will proceed to clause-by-clause debate.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21 read and agreed to

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all clauses and the title of Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 1 to 10 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Dendys that the Chair report Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

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

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

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Cathers: Just in resuming general debate here this afternoon, I will just cap off briefly to remind the Premier and the officials with him of where we finished yesterday in the hopes of getting answers to a few specific questions that I had noted at that point.

I appreciate the Premier's offer of a briefing on Public Accounts and we will certainly take him up on that. I had asked a number of questions, including whether the cost of the Yukon government providing assistance to British Columbia

for the fire season this year was accounted for yet in this first supplementary estimate and, if not, what the additional anticipated expenditures are that will be shown in the next supplementary estimates, as well as what the anticipated recovery is from the Province of British Columbia. I know that if that information is not contained in the budget yet, it will certainly be information that both the Minister of Community Services and the Finance minister have. In the interest of public disclosure and providing us with an updated picture of the finances of the territory to understand whether they are both recoveries and costs yet to be booked — what we can anticipate in the next estimates.

I would also just ask the Premier: How many departments have senior advisor positions to the deputy minister? It would seem that there are some new ones, including a new senior advisor to the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, which we had seen posted. Again, it seems that we are seeing a growth of government at the top level that is out of line with some of the government's statements on no growing the size of government. The question is simply: How many of these senior advisor positions have been created since the Liberals took office about two years ago? How many are currently posted? How many do they anticipate creating?

I would also ask again about the projected growth of the territorial funding formula for the next three fiscal years.

I won't repeat the question — I remind the Premier of the question I had asked about the current cash position of the Yukon government, as well as current holdings in terms of areas such as long-term deposits, GICs, et cetera.

I would just note that — to cap off where the Premier and I were debating the Public Accounts and the Premier made reference that members could go through the Public Accounts once they are presented — while we're certainly capable of doing that, I just have to remind the Premier that even some of his own caucus members have been confused in going through the Public Accounts. I would specifically note that on October 10, 2018 — on page 2931 of Hansard — the Member for Porter Creek Centre, when attempting to take a shot at me, misstated the government's financial position in April 2011 by some \$108 million. I just point out that this is why we're encouraging the government to be a little more proactive about explaining the significant changes from budgets to Public Accounts and provide it in a manner that is more understandable for not only members of the opposition but for the general public who may be reading Hansard and trying to understand what changes had occurred with their tax dollars.

Hon. Mr. Silver: That's a whole bunch of questions added on to the questions that we left from yesterday, so I will do my best to address first the questions from yesterday and then move into the litany of questions that started this session — I think maybe our 16th hour of general debate here.

We will start with the Public Accounts briefing. I do have a time for the member opposite. There will be a briefing for the opposition parties for Public Accounts on November 2 at 10:00 in the morning — if it is not 10:00 and it is 10:30, I will reconfirm with members opposite. It's nice that the member opposite now sees the need for this. I remember five years in

opposition without these briefings from the previous government.

I will go through some of the questions from yesterday. The first question was: Are the costs associated with assisting the Province of BC fully shown in the supplementary, or are we expecting additional costs in the next supplementary? What have we received from the British Columbia government in terms of revenue recovery from mutual aid? How much do we anticipate receiving? The amounts included in the supplementary estimate for fire suppression under Protective Services are net of recoveries. At this point in the fiscal year, the amounts anticipated are only estimates. Our government does not anticipate having final figures for recovery until later this fiscal year. The roughly \$4.5 million — to be specific, \$4.449 million — in the supplementary estimate includes \$5.749 million in additional costs and also \$1.3 million in recoveries. The Minister of Community Services can respond in further detail if needed, as that is one of the departments that is presenting a Committee of the Whole debate because that is one of the departments that has extra expenses.

The second question from the end of yesterday's session was: What is the current projected annual growth rate for the TFF agreement in each of the next three fiscal years?

Again, these are the total anticipated transfers over the next three years and are as follows: for 2019-2020, we anticipate \$1.025 billion; for 2020-21, we anticipate \$1.052 billion; and for 2021-22, we anticipate \$1.078 billion.

The third question from the Member for Lake Laberge is: Could the Premier please advise on the current cash position of the Yukon government, including GICs and investments? This is a question that has been asked quite frequently by the member opposite. The government reports its cash position, including GICs and investments annually in the Public Accounts — as the member opposite knows. As of March 31, 2017, on a non-consolidated basis, the government had cash and cash equivalents of \$18.7 million and temporary investments of \$214.5 million, for a total of \$232.2 million. On a consolidated basis, Mr. Chair, the government had cash and cash equivalents of \$31.2 million and temporary investments of \$214.5 million, for a total of \$245.7 million. There is \$138,000 included in cash and cash equivalents and \$1.5 million included in temporary investments that have been designed by the government for use in meeting certain post-employment and retirement benefits obligations for the Members of the Legislative Assembly. Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash on-hand, balances with banks and short-term investments that have terms to maturity of less than 90 days from the date of acquisition. Temporary investments include treasury bills, GICs, term deposits and other short-term investments having terms of maturity of 90 days or more, but less than one year from the date of acquisition.

The government also holds portfolio investments totalling \$27.1 million on a consolidated and non-consolidated basis. Portfolio investments are investments that are expected to be realized that have terms to maturity greater than one year from the date of acquisition. Portfolio investments include

\$27.1 million that has been designated by the government for use in meeting certain post-employment and retirement benefit obligations for the Members of the Legislative Assembly. When the Public Accounts are tabled, which will occur by October 31, the information will be available for March 31, 2018.

Another question from yesterday was — the government claims to be trying to reduce the rate of growth of government. We see Health and Social Services has posted a senior advisory position. That appears to be new. How many departments have these positions? How many are currently being contemplated? Mr. Chair, senior advisory roles have been added to a few high-volume departments where additional capacity has been required for day-to-day advisory responsibilities to the deputy minister. These positions are intended to help define the strategic direction for respective departments by providing expert senior management advice and recommendations on government and departmental policies.

To date, these positions have been or are in the process of being recruited for the Department of Health and Social Services, Highways and Public Works, Finance and the Department of Economic Development. Within the Department of Finance, the position is a potential efficiency, as the director of Corporate Services will not be hired during the two-year TA for senior advisor.

That is, I believe, the list of questions from yesterday. We can check on the Hansard reference, but the good news is that government's best forecast of the current fiscal year is actually in the supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answers I got from the Premier.

I am disappointed though that he has not yet seen fit to provide the information about the government's current cash position. The Premier made reference to annual disclosures in the Public Accounts, but this is another opportunity to update the public and it's a perfectly reasonable question to ask on behalf of Yukoners — what the government's current financial position is in terms of cash in the bank and investments. It has been asked in the past by other members. Whether the Premier himself asked those questions when he was in opposition or not does not change the fact that I believe this is information that is both pertinent and appropriate for the Official Opposition to know at this point in time but also information that every Yukon citizen has the right to know about their tax dollars and what government is doing.

A lot can happen in the course of a year. To suggest that the public can only expect, perhaps, four updates on the government's cash position and investments over the course of a government's term in office is certainly doing a disservice to Yukoners. I would remind the Premier that it's not in keeping with the commitment he and his colleagues made in the election campaign about increasing openness and transparency. If the Liberal government will not be open with Yukoners about the finances of the territory, what is it being open about? People need to understand what is happening with their tax dollars and they have a right to that information.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The insinuation in that question about somehow being less open or accountable than the previous government is insulting, to say the least. I don't recall ever getting that information on the fly from the member opposite when he was in government — I don't. I don't know if the NDP ever did either.

I will say that the information that Yukoners deserve to get is in the budgets. The forecasts are in the budgets. The Public Accounts is the scrutiny from the federal government as well for that oversight. Unless the member opposite wants us to grow government further every time that he has a need to find out what the current balance statements are, that would take an investment in human capital, I would imagine. I can tell you that the good work of the Department of Finance is quite extensive already. They do a fantastic job with the financial health of this government, especially under the new changes to that department.

Again, your financial health is not necessarily determined by your balance in your chequing account. What you're getting when you check your account is how far away you are from payday. The best information and the information that the member opposite is looking for is in Public Accounts. It is in the budget, it's in the supplementaries and that's what we're here to debate — the supplementary budget. I haven't heard a question from him on it yet.

Mr. Cathers: I know the Premier seems to like to tell members of the opposition what questions they should or shouldn't be asking on behalf of Yukoners, but we do have both the right and duty on behalf of Yukon citizens to ask the questions that we believe are appropriate to ask.

The Premier, as I need not remind him since we have debated this at length in previous Sittings, has removed a significant amount of information from the budget totalling some 77 pages that reduced the information available to Yukon citizens about where their money is being spent. For the Premier to suggest that to provide an update in the fall on the government's current investments — and I did not ask for a detailed breakdown of those investments; I asked for the main categories of investments — he needs to grow the Department of Finance before he can provide that information is quite hard to accept or believe.

For the Premier to suggest that no one knows where the money is invested or how long it is there for, certainly that information is something that officials from Finance will have. I did recognize when I asked about it yesterday that it might not be information immediately available at the Premier's fingertips. If the Premier needs another day or two to provide that information, I would certainly accept that, but I'm a bit surprised to find out that the Premier is indicating that he doesn't know what those high-level numbers are. What information is being provided to the Premier in his departmental briefings on the finances of the territory? What information is being provided to Management Board if the Premier actually isn't able to answer that question?

As the Premier points us back to Public Accounts, I do again have to remind him that one of his own back-bench MLAs made a \$108-million error in reading previous Public

Accounts, so for the Premier to suggest that this is the simple answer to everything is really not living up to this government's campaign rhetoric of being more open and transparent with Yukoners.

The question we're simply asking is: What's the cash in the bank? What is the current balance of both long- and short-term investments? If the Premier isn't able to answer now, I would be happy to hear that information back from him later this week.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The good news is that if the member opposite waits less than a week, the Public Accounts will come out with all of the information he is looking for. Again, the full economic forecast that we are now putting into the budgetary considerations as well is more information that the Department of Finance does as far as keeping people, not only abreast of where we are currently, but also the forecast into the future. Also the supplementary budget as well is another exercise in economic pursuit in the finances of the government.

The fall economic and fiscal statement, again, is something that is new. This is new information from the Department of Finance. Again, we are giving out more information than the previous government, and if the member opposite had any questions on the supplementary budget, we would be able to talk at length of the money that has been sent outside of the mains but is in the supplementary, yet the member opposite refuses to go there.

I believe that the Public Accounts is good financial information, I believe the supplementary budget is good financial information and I believe that the mains budget is also good financial information. The fall economic and fiscal statement — new information, more information than the previous government so, again, we are accountable for the taxpayers' dollars that we have the privilege of managing. I look forward to more questions on the supplementary budget.

Mr. Cathers: It is interesting that in the Premier's world, 77 pages less information and budget details are somehow more, in his mind. Unfortunately we are not likely going to get an answer from the Premier here, but I would remind the Premier that if he claims that the information is already in the budget, can the Premier explain why the \$3.1 million for the Ross River School, which has been debated in this Assembly this Sitting, is not contained in the budget of the supplementary estimates and is not in the government's five-year capital plan? If that information is indeed public, where is it?

I do have to make the point that the information I am asking about — the status of Public Accounts — although the Premier himself may not have asked those questions in opposition, I am not the first Official Opposition Finance critic to ask for that information in the Legislative Assembly. Although the Premier was trying to imply to the casual listener that in debate with me, perhaps I had not provided that information when I was apparently the Finance minister — although I have never served in that role — the Premier did not ask me the questions that I am asking him. But I am asking him questions that are very similar to what previous

Official Opposition Finance critics have asked the Finance minister of the day regarding where the government's money is and both its cash position and its short-term and long-term investments. It is not unreasonable for Yukoners to expect that the Premier might see fit to disclose that information to the citizens of the Yukon more than once a year.

Hon. Mr. Silver: A lot of inaccuracies there. Again, just because I didn't ask doesn't mean that a government is, by supplying supplementary budgets, special warrants, main budgets and now fall economic forecasts and statements — the information that the member opposite is looking for is in the Public Accounts. The information he is looking for is in the budget.

He says that the Ross River School is not forecast anywhere. The \$3.1 million is there in the budget for the Ross River School over five years, but it is in those smaller pieces on the statements in the budget documents. It is there — again, inaccuracies, Mr. Chair.

In two years, as far as being open and transparent and giving more information than less — in two years we have supplied over 150 legislative returns, and in five years I believe the Yukon Party supplied one legislative return. That is a good ratio — 150 to one — as far as information coming out the door from this government. Changes to the ATIPP act as well — I believe it was the members opposite who clawed back some information in the ATIPP act. Again, we are trying our best to be more accessible to the public.

Before October 31, the Public Accounts will come out with the information that the member opposite is seeking. If there are any other questions about the supplementary budget that we are supposed to be debating today, I would love to answer those questions.

My whole team is here ready to answer general questions, as well, as we enter into probably hour 15 or 16 of general debate on a supplementary budget that is one of the smallest in Yukon history.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier is failing to recognize the fact that, although the change in the supplementary budget may be a smaller one than in comparison to some years, overall the amount of money that this government is spending on behalf of the people of the Yukon, or on behalf of itself, is the largest amount in any fiscal year in the history of the territory. Debate on the budget is the opportunity all members of the opposition have to hold the government to account for that and to ask questions on behalf of Yukoners, such as: Where is their money right now?

The Premier said \$3.1 million for the Ross River School is indeed in the budget. I would invite the Premier to point to what page it is on, because I know that my colleague, in looking through this looking for information about what is very important to his community, has not located that. Perhaps it is included in another line item, but again, this is an area where the Minister of Highways and Public Works appears to be changing his story on this. If the Premier can point to where that money is, we would be happy to see it.

I do have to also point out for those listening or reading this in Hansard that a substantial portion of the legislative

returns provided by this government have been follow-up to questions they have been unable to answer in Question Period and have responded to with very high-level — often meaningless — rhetoric and talking points. They have been forced to follow up later via legislative return with the actual response to the question.

The question to the Premier is: Where is this money for the Ross River School? Please point to a page in the budget and a line item. Last but not least, I would just encourage him to have a change of heart and to recognize that it is not unreasonable for the opposition or the public to ask the government as much as twice a year where their money is and what the current cash position of the territorial government is.

Hon. Mr. Silver: The mains are a good opportunity for knowing where our money is. The supplementary budgets are also a good exercise in knowing where our money is, and the financial statements, the fiscal statements and the outlooks that we are providing as well are good, timely and regular — for the first time ever — reporting of where we are forecasting our money.

The member opposite categorizes it — because we have done 150 legislative returns, that somehow means that the government doesn't know what the government is doing. That is quite insulting to the government and to the members sitting here in these seats. I remember being in opposition and being very frustrated — maybe a similar frustration that the member opposite is feeling — thinking that my questions that are designed not to have any answers aren't getting any answers. At the same time, what we are doing is providing more information and yet, somehow, through the lens of the Member for Lake Laberge, that means less — so more is less no matter how much we try to provide more. That is some good math.

I will say, though, that I am very pleased with our government's ability to develop on our promise to provide Yukoners with more comprehensive information on the government's planned capital investment over the next five years. This is just one example of our commitment to be open and transparent with Yukoners, with municipalities and with First Nation governments. The five-year capital plan is a signal to the government of the priorities and will allow Yukon businesses to be prepared for upcoming projects. It was developed with the best information available as to what capital projects are needed, but it is flexible, and that is the beauty of the design. It will evolve over time, unlike some people.

This long-term capital plan allows us to address planning and forecasting and the timing of the procurement for the development and the maintenance of contracts, providing greater certainty for Yukon vendors and other vendors. We will put tenders out at the right time, not just in time, so that vendors will have a better opportunity to prepare for the seasonal projects.

I am not hearing from the private sector that this five-year capital plan is — to paraphrase the Yukon Party — a waste of time or somehow useless. I am not hearing that. I am hearing, "Thank you for putting that out. Thank you for coordinating

with the other communities and taking a look at a Yukon perspective” — a community-by-community perspective when we coordinate our efforts to build Yukon for our future generations. I don’t hear that the five-year capital plan is a waste of time. I hear from major corporations, saying, “Do you know how many thousands of dollars we save by knowing the direction that you’re going in?” They don’t sit there and say, “There is one project that wasn’t on that plan; therefore it’s a complete failure.” No, it’s the Yukon Party saying that.

What we are hearing is, “Thank God it’s flexible. Thank goodness that we can have a plan that, with more debate and with more flexibility, allows us to plan for unforeseen things. It allows us to do more with less. Again, it allows us to coordinate. You know, Yukon is a boom-and-bust society, and we know that from over the past generations. To have a five-year capital plan that is flexible, that allows municipalities, First Nation governments and the private sector to coordinate their planning. That, to me, helps to build a competitive, capitalistic market in the cities and towns in which we serve.

I will not be apologetic for a five-year plan. As opposed to being apologetic, I will always bestow the virtues of such a pursuit and I will congratulate and thank the public servants who have worked on this whole-of-government approach. It means a lot to the communities we serve, so I want to thank them very much for their hard work.

As far as looking through the different pages — if the member opposite would take his Budget Address 2018-19 and turn to the five-year capital plan, which is at a tab in that, and if he takes a look at page 2, “Table 1: Five-Year Capital Plan gross expenditures by category”, under “Real property (buildings)”, that line would include the \$3.1 million for Ross River School.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer but, as the Premier should acknowledge, to expect the average citizen or even an MLA to look at that line item and say, “That must include the Ross River School” — it is certainly not transparently disclosing that. Anyone who wishes to compare this government’s budget documents to that of the previous government will see that it is not more transparent now; it is more opaque. The Premier removed 77 pages of budget detail and reduced the budget highlights from 11 down to four.

I am not going to spend a lot more time on this particular issue, because I know we are going to get the same talking points back from the Premier that he has been parroting since we first began debating this. I am going to ask him a few specific questions related to areas that we have raised with government and for which we are still waiting for any sign of action or even a response.

I will ask him a question that relates both to the *Coroners Act* but also to several departments across government and what he likes to call his whole-of-government approach. In the spring of 2017 during debate with the Premier, I mentioned some of the issues related to the surge in homicides, as well as issues related to an increase in opioid deaths, and I suggested that there was a need to review the structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders and people in other

front-line services, including ensuring that there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions.

I also suggested — again, in Hansard — on May 9, 2017, that the government should assess whether or not the Coroner’s Office needs a second full-time coroner position. We haven’t heard any steps from government being taken to improve this support structure of critical incident stress management for any of these government staff or first responders, including volunteers. Since I first raised this with the Premier about a year and a half ago — and it does cross departments, including the Department of Justice, the Department of Community Services and the Public Service Commission — I would appreciate it if the Premier could tell us: Has the government done anything in this area, and, if so, what?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We were just working on that supposed whole-of-government approach over here. Sorry for the delay.

If it pleases the members opposite, we do have a couple of different responses from the minister responsible for workers’ compensation, also from the Minister of Justice as well.

We recognize, on this side of the Legislative Assembly, the importance of the work that is done by our first responders. When it comes to the crises that we find in our communities, whether it has been from alcohol abuse or drug abuse — and that’s why one thing that we did that the previous government refused to do was to provide post-traumatic stress disorder legislation for our initial responders. I think that has gone a long way.

When the member opposite asked what we have done — well, we’ve done what they wouldn’t do. I’ll start with that.

I do have two other ministers who would love to get up here and talk specifically about some other initiatives, if it pleases the member opposite. We can start with the Minister responsible for the Worker’s Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I’m happy to rise today to discuss a couple of things. Last fall, we did amend the *Workers’ Compensation Act* to introduce post-traumatic stress disorder presumption for emergency response workers.

I will move on to the other act that was added, as well, as another tool for us to address psychological injury in the workplace. When we passed that legislation, it was a very proud moment for our government. It was a very profound moment to be able to recognize the psychological stress that our first responders deal with on a day-to-day basis. This was very welcomed by all of those who are directly impacted. We remain committed to safe workplaces for our first responders.

When the House amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* last fall, it opened the door to important new regulations aimed at preventing psychological injury in the workplace. As we are all aware, this is a spectrum of risk that could affect the mental health of Yukon’s workers, from exposure to traumatic incidents to the threat of violence. New regulations are necessary to provide guidance to workplaces

on how to establish measures to prevent psychological injuries from occurring. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working toward consultation on this matter and I'm confident that they will be able to do some very good work around this. Consultation with Yukoners in the summer of 2017 revealed strong public support for regulations aimed at preventing psychological injuries in the workplace. Causes of psychological injury include direct exposure to traumatic events, real or perceived threat of violence in the workplace, bullying and sexual harassment. There is a link between psychological injury and a worker's sense of real — sorry. Enforcement can currently occur under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, although it does not contain provisions that specifically relate to preventing workplace violence or bullying or protecting the mental health of workers.

The Government of Canada, as well — I will just touch on this — consulted Canadians in the fall of 2017 to develop regulations under federal health and safety legislation in the *Canada Labour Code* to address violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. This is something that we take very seriously. Our work toward making our workplaces safer and the prevention of psychological injury is certainly a priority for our government and one that the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is working on as we speak.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I will speak specifically to the question about the Coroner's Service. I am happy to have a chance to do so again today because I can implore the Members of the Legislative Assembly to support the new *Coroners Act*, Bill No. 27.

Of course, the present *Coroners Act* is outdated and best practices have surpassed the act's provisions. The Department of Justice has conducted a thorough review of the existing act and its regulations and has drafted Bill No. 27. I won't spend too much time on that, but I can note that the public engagement survey was available to Yukoners. There were targeted engagement letters to First Nation governments and the RCMP. I personally met with community coroners and with a former coroner, and there were weekly meetings of the drafting committee and the *Coroners Act* committee for many months with respect to bringing this bill to the House.

The Yukon Coroner's Service needs the support of modernized legislation. The updated law will also ensure that the correct professional resource oversees each stage of the coroner's case and that the independence and impartiality of the Coroner's Service is protected.

I note, as my colleague has, that we ask a lot of our first responders. Currently, of course, the Coroner's Service, coroners, the chief coroner and community coroners are often involved in first response. They are certainly involved in the investigation of situations that would cause many of us to cringe — that is the difficult job they have — and they take on the responsibility on behalf of Yukoners and need to be supported in that.

I think part of the original question was about a second chief coroner. What I can note for this House and for

Yukoners is that there are provisions in Bill No. 27 that allow for an acting chief coroner to be appointed. They don't exist in the current legislation. We have also put provisions in that piece of legislation that allow the coroner to properly instruct community coroners and others who might be working in the Coroner's Service with training manuals, investigative skills and techniques. There is education that goes with those positions already, but I know that the chief coroner is keen for that to be an integral part of the duties that we request of community coroners and, in fact, of the chief coroner. While there is not a provision to hire a second, full-time chief coroner — and I have a bit of trouble with the idea that a chief coroner is more than one person — but the chief coroner herself, in this case, has provisions in the new legislation that will help her to have modernized practices and support in, not only the role that she takes on, but the role of the community coroners on behalf of Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: I do appreciate the partial answers provided by both the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Minister of Justice, but they actually missed the key issue. I do have to point out that, in addition to raising this issue first with the Premier and others of his colleagues who were here during debate in the Legislative Assembly on May 9 and 10, 2017 — I would just remind members that my remarks in the House and my letter in follow-up were predicated by the increase in volume that the RCMP, the Coroner's Service, Victim Services, first responders and others were dealing with as a result of the increase, not only in homicides that had occurred, but also the increased problems related to the misuse of opioids as well as the number of tragedies in that area — and that prompted me to raise the point.

The key point of the letter, which the Premier apparently missed and the Minister of Justice and the minister responsible for workers' compensation didn't know — I really want to emphasize this part because it's still a key issue — is the need to review the support structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders and people in other front-line services, including ensuring that there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions. Just for the reference of Hansard, that part can be found in a letter that I wrote on July 14, 2017, and is a tabled document in this House with the date stamp of March 6, 2018. That is when I tabled that. That's the key part, and I would appreciate it if they could provide an update on that.

Another question that I would ask is: Is the Premier confident that the government, since taking office, has lived up to all of its legal obligations to employees under part 6 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The member opposite is quoting from a letter sent to be caseworked over a year and a half ago. What I will endeavour to do is I will look up the response that we gave him at that time and I will determine whether or not it needs an update.

As far as the specific questions on part 6, I do not have that information in front of me and we will endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

Mr. Cathers: I will look forward to hearing that response from the Premier about whether the government is confident it has lived up to its legal obligations under part 6 of the *Workers' Compensation Act* to all of its employees.

I'm just going to again go back to the letter and note that, yes, I did receive a response, but the key thing that seems to be missed by ministers in this is — what I was asking is: What action has government taken on that area? I'm not the first person to raise that issue. Staff have raised that internally from a variety of different perspectives in the past. There is a growing recognition as well in the field of research related to first responders dealing with critical incident stress management that those things can be cumulative and lead to post-traumatic stress disorder.

I know I'm not going to get more information from the Premier here now, but I want to point out that this is an issue. It's an important issue. I will raise it again after the Premier and his colleagues have had time to consider it. My question is — citing that key part from my letter of July 14, 2017, which was in follow-up to my remarks in the House on May 9 and 10, 2017 — the issue is — and again quoting from the letter: "... the need to review the support structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders, and people in other front line services, including ensuring there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions." This is an issue that affects people across a number of government departments. It affects people in the area of victim services. It affects employees in the area of emergency medical services, as well as volunteers who provide our emergency medical services in rural Yukon communities. It can also affect people in the coroner's office as well as community coroners. It can also affect others, including firefighters who respond to an incident, whether they are full-time firefighters or volunteer. It can affect highways employees and others who are the first to arrive on the scene of an accident.

This issue I outlined to the government about a year and a half ago and have reiterated on two occasions since then, both through my letter and reminding of the letter through its tabling — I maybe even mentioned it more than I am recalling at the moment, but I have raised this on a number of occasions. I am raising it again. The reason I am doing so is that it is an important issue for Yukoners in these areas. I would like to know what the government has done and what steps they are planning on taking.

Stepping away from that, I do recognize and thank the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for tabling the legislative amendments that were in relation to the presumption of PTSD for some employees but, as the government themselves know, they heard during that consultation — and it was clear, as well, from a number of Yukoners who had been affected by PTSD or simply dealing with trauma in the course of their duties as

an employee or in their service as a volunteer — the message to government was also that more can and should be done.

I am asking: What has the government done and what are they going to do in this important area?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the member opposite was going over the issue, I had a chance to take a look at Hansard. The Minister of Community Services did answer a very specific question for general debate — answered it in the Legislative Assembly. We did the casework. There were two different pieces of casework on this. I will endeavour again to look back at the answers to the very specific questions that the member opposite asked. This is an important issue and we did respond to it. If there any updates on our response that we gave to the member in a timely fashion, I will pass that along to him.

Again, the question was asked and answered in the Legislative Assembly. Casework was done on this particular, very specific question — a very important relevance with the rehabilitation issues in this particular section. I agree with the member opposite of the importance, as it pertains to our initial responders and others. We have answered his question and, if there are any updates, I will happily provide them in a response to the member opposite.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate that response from the Premier and I will move on from this issue, while noting two things.

I look forward to hearing the update and I would also strongly encourage the Premier and his ministers with the key affected departments to make this issue an ongoing item that they keep reviewing with their departments — and that it is a top-of-mind issue — which is: What is the government doing to act and improve its services to both its employees and its volunteers in the area of critical incident stress management, and provide them with the appropriate structural support so that they are safe, as well as so that there is a reduced chance of them suffering from PTSD or other challenges as a result of what they are exposed to in the course of their duties as a government employee or volunteer emergency service provider. I would hope that they keep this as a top-of-mind issue going forward, and would not only be prepared to answer when I ask those questions but also expect and ask the senior staff of the department to regularly report to them what else is being done in this area to support our employees and volunteers.

I'm going to move on to the specific one that I've raised several times, both through a letter and in the Legislative Assembly, regarding whether or not Grizzly Valley subdivision can get school bus service to that area. I know the Premier may prefer that we discuss other items in budget debate, but the reason that I'm asking is that constituents do feel they've been getting a bit of mixed messages from government. I have an outstanding request to the Minister of Education on this subject. The minister has previously sent me letters indicating that Education would not provide service to my constituents in this area. We have received a confirmation — I thank the Minister of Community Services for his legislative return dated, I believe, October 2 — in which he

confirmed that the subdivision was designed to allow for school bus service.

The government has now recently in another department taken steps to release 20 lots in the Grizzly Valley subdivision phase 2 for sale by land lottery. That announcement was put in the paper on Friday and is currently out for application by Yukoners. For both my constituents who live in the area and for potential future constituents who are considering whether or not to buy one of the 20 lots that are out for sale, the question is this: Is the Minister of Education going to provide school bus service to people in the Grizzly Valley subdivision?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is important to put into Hansard right now that the Yukoners who do live in Grizzly Valley subdivision do have bus service — it's just not up on the loop. There are issues with the loop. The previous government did design and develop this particular subdivision. I remember that it was one of the first files that I got in 2011, where the government was asking for \$1 million for a moose culvert for this area. The road was not necessarily completed to stand the test of time. If you go up there now, the loop is not continued. We're dealing with this issue.

It is worth saying that the safety of students is extremely important. It is our first priority. It is not always safe for school buses to travel on the Grizzly Valley Road in the winter, as winter conditions affect the ability of school buses to safely travel on this road that was developed and designed by the previous government.

When it comes to the safety of students, we err on the side of caution. We are not necessarily prepared to potentially put any students at risk when safety concerns are an issue, so we need to get those safety concerns identified from this road. That is the time we are taking now, so as of now, there will not be bus services on that road until this is figured out.

Students who live on the Grizzly Valley Road can still access a school bus, but they do it at a designated school bus stop at the end of the road where it is safe for the buses to travel. I believe this was brought up in Question Period already and I believe the answer was given by the Minister of Education. We are working on it and we will update the member opposite as updates become available. It was mentioned by the minister as well that the families who live in Grizzly Valley are being provided subsidies for the inconvenience of having to get their kids — their students — to these designated bus stops.

Thank you to the Department of Education for providing those subsidies for the students who live in Grizzly Valley.

Mr. Cathers: I am certainly very disappointed by that response and would encourage the Premier to reconsider it. I also have to point out that it leaves me thinking, well, so much for the whole-of-government approach, because we have heard directly contradictory messages from the Minister of Education and from the Minister of Community Services reflecting what his staff indicated, which was that the road was designed, engineered and built to allow for the safe use by school buses.

To use the excuse that school bus services are provided ignores the fact — or doesn't recognize the fact — that for my constituents living in the Grizzly Valley subdivision, for their kids to walk to the bus is about two miles or maybe a little more. If the Minister of Education wants to take a drive up either one of those accesses, she would see that neither one of them have sidewalks. I would question whether any member of this Assembly who has children would want their kids walking along the side of that road in the early morning or afternoon without supervision. To say that services are provided, but that they will be a couple of miles away or maybe three miles away, really doesn't cut it. We are getting directly contradictory messages from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources officials have indicated in the past that they agree with the Department of Community Services that it was actually built to meet the standards. I would not disagree with the Premier's statement that we don't want students at risk, but to suggest that students should walk along the side of the road would be to put them at risk. To suggest that their parents have to be there to drive them to the bus stop, both morning and night, places a significant impact on the ability of people to work and restrictions on their availability to be employed if the only way they can get their kids safely to the bus is to drive them.

I am not going to push this issue that much this afternoon. I would rather that government had an opportunity to step away from this, think about it and recognize that the right thing to do is to provide that school bus service. I would point out that this is a very important issue.

I would note, as well, that, both for people who bought the existing lots and people who are considering buying the 20 lots there, the fact that the government may not ever see fit to provide school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision is a significant issue that has a significant impact on property values as well as whether people choose to purchase those lots, because effectively, for some, it may be indicating to government that, if you live in Grizzly Valley subdivision, your only option really is to maybe home-school your kids because they can't get bus service.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It isn't necessarily the best of circumstances to have parents using their own vehicles, but it is being subsidized. It would have been great if the previous government, when they designed and built this road, had taken into consideration maybe a path to be walking on, but there isn't one. So we can't use a walk path because they spent \$1 million on a moose culvert as opposed to putting that money into having a road that could be a complete loop, which it isn't now, and maybe with those walking paths designed into it. Again, the previous government designed and built that road, and we're dealing with it now.

The most recent advice was from Standard Bus — and that this was a safety concern. I will let Standard Bus know that the members opposite disagree with that. Initially we are discussing with Community Services and Highways and Public Works to do a joint briefing note about that and to give more information here. We may be asking Standard Bus to

check the road again this year to ensure that their advice still stands — that's the due diligence we're doing. We will let them know at that time that the members opposite believe that they designed a great road.

Transportation does allow up to \$13 a day per household, and it's based on kilometre rates in our travel directive — that's great, and thank you to the department for that.

Bus drivers also — and this is important as far as safety goes — have the right to refuse to drive a road if they have safety concerns. The member opposite seems to believe that there are no safety concerns. I'm going to take the advice of the bus drivers who have our kids with them. We're taking their advice seriously. We encourage the members opposite to do so as well. We always encourage drivers to assess driving conditions and ensure the safety of these students on board, and that's what we're going to listen to — the companies that are busing our students.

This road is designed and engineered to meet the standards. The school bus provider has expressed concerns about winter conditions and we're dealing with it. That's the bottom line.

Just to reiterate, three departments are working on this. This is extremely important to us. We're trying to solve this problem and I would rather have a whole-of-government approach to that. I'm glad for the departments that are taking on this initiative and I'm glad that we have provided subsidies to make sure that these students have equal access to education.

As we all know, in different rural communities we have a lot of students who are walking quite a distance in certain cases, and we have a lot of students who are being driven by their parents to school on a regular basis. I just want to give a shout-out to those parents, thanking them for making sure that education is an extremely important part of the development of their children as well.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate part of the response provided by the Premier. I just do want to note that this is an issue that goes beyond political differences of opinion. It is a very important one for my constituents in this area.

I do have to point out to the Premier that Grizzly Valley subdivision and the roads were designed and engineered by government staff. I am not an engineer — I don't pretend to be one — but when those staff who are engineers signed off on the road, it was designed by the government, it was engineered by the government and it was signed off by government inspectors, and, as both the Department of Community Services and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources officials have confirmed, from their perspective it meets the technical requirements, including — as the Minister of Community Services confirmed in a legislative return — that it meets the Transportation Association of Canada standard for a road of this type.

I would encourage the government to look at it. The Premier said he would take the opinion of the bus drivers over mine, and I don't disagree with that, but I would point out that, in saying so, the Premier is also saying that he is going to take the opinion of employees of Standard Bus over the

opinion of staff of two Yukon government departments that have the technical — pardon me, three Yukon government departments, since Highways and Public Works would also be involved in an assessment of the TAC standards for the area. I don't want to belabour this point. I would rather that the government step away from it and, rather than digging in their heels, come back with confirmation that they will provide school bus service to my constituents.

I do also have to note that, since government just released 20 lots via land lottery that are currently out for sale, the fact that government still hasn't decided whether they are going to provide school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision is a pretty relevant point for any Yukoner considering purchasing one of those lots who has kids. This is something that I would urge government to get sorted out before the lottery closes on, I believe, November 14, because I would suggest that this will have a major impact on the purchasing decision of any Yukoner who is aware of this potential issue around the ability to get school bus service in the area. It not only affects those who have children or are planning to have children, but a lack of school bus service is certainly a negative influence on your property value now and down the road as you develop your home — your ability to sell your home if you can only sell it to someone who doesn't have kids who are of school age. It is going to have a significant negative impact on future property values.

Last but not least on this issue, I would suggest that, until government has decided whether they are providing school bus service into Grizzly Valley subdivision, they should put a warning label on the 20 lots that are out for sale that they may not provide school bus service to people who purchase those lots.

I am going to move on to another area related to rural land development. It looks like this year, most of the budget was spent in Whitehorse. We have also heard that some was spent in Dawson City. Could the Premier or one of his ministers indicate how much was spent in municipalities other than Whitehorse and which ones those were, as well as what they are looking at doing — as they are in the planning stage for next year's budget — with rural municipalities to address their needs in land development?

I know that a number of my colleagues, including the Member for Watson Lake, heard about the availability of land being a very high priority for her community and her constituents. I think it's fair to say that the Town of Watson Lake, the citizens of Watson Lake and, of course, their MLA would appreciate hearing about it. As well, I'm sure that my colleagues, the Member for Kluane and the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, would appreciate hearing about any work that is underway in the communities they represent.

I know that some of those decisions may not be finalized for next year's budget. We're asking what work is ongoing, looking at the planning for next year's capital budget and potential lot development in any of those rural communities I've mentioned or any others.

Hon. Mr. Silver: As Community Services is one of the departments that has a budgetary consideration in the

supplementary budget, I would ask the member opposite to bring up those questions specifically to the Minister of Community Services when they appear here in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Cathers: I would hope the Minister of Community Services will take note of that and I look forward to hearing an update on what work they're doing and what work they're looking at doing, including discussions with rural Yukon communities about their needs.

I would also note — and the Member for Watson Lake can correct me if I'm wrong on this point — I think it's fair to say that the Department of Community Services could perhaps — and the minister might want to check in with the newly elected mayor of Watson Lake, Ms. O'Brien — and congratulations to her for that role — about the pressures within the Town of Watson Lake, as well as what the priorities are of the Town of Watson Lake for seeing some assistance from the Yukon Government in terms of addressing their pressures and developing more land within the Town of Watson Lake.

I am going to move on to another issue related to — we've heard the Minister of Community Services musing about implementing tipping fees, and we know that the Premier has stated on a number of occasions that they're looking across government in their whole-of-government approach at increases to fees and fines. I would like to ask two questions: Are they prepared to make public the cost analysis of what tipping fees would be and what the cost would be of administering that at any dumps run by the Department of Community Services?

Secondly — and this falls over into at least two other departments: the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Department of Environment — following the implementation of Whitehorse's tipping fees, there was a noticeable spike in illegal dumping in rural Yukon near Whitehorse, including in my riding. A number of those areas include — I'm going to give a few specific examples where there have been problems with illegal dumping: just off the Mayo Road, behind the Yukon Energy substation, actually on YEC's right-of-way. We did have that cleaned up through work by myself as MLA and through the actions of the Department of Environment.

There were also issues around illegal dumping on Kwanlin Dün land, as well as Crown land in Ibex Valley. There have been issues with illegal dumping off Scout Lake Road, and there have been a number of times when the Deep Creek transfer station has been closed — and I assume the same happens with other dumps.

The Deep Creek transfer station's gates are closed. There have been a number of occasions where people have dumped small or large volumes of garbage at those gates. This has all gotten worse after Whitehorse implemented tipping fees. The question that I would ask is: Is the government looking at implementing tipping fees? Have they costed out what those would be and what the cost of administration would be? Do they have an environmental cleanup plan to address the increase in illegal dumping that will likely occur? If they do

have an environmental cleanup plan, I note that there are already issues that haven't been fully addressed related to both illegal dumping on Crown land and an increase in abandoned cars. There was an e-mail that one of the ministers will recall getting from a constituent of mine regarding a car abandoned along the Alaska Highway coming into Whitehorse. It was sent to the minister and me. There was also another vehicle that I had personally noticed and reported to the RCMP out along the Mayo Road this summer, which, upon investigation, they determined appeared to have been abandoned likely with the intention of avoiding tipping fees in Whitehorse and due to Deep Creek being closed at that time.

If government is looking at increasing fees and fines — and perhaps they could elaborate on whether indeed they are — what is their plan to deal with the increase in illegal dumping so that we don't have that spillover effect of trash and, in some cases, even toxic materials being increasingly dumped in the Whitehorse periphery, affecting my constituents as well as those on the south side of town and the west side of town?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, there were two parts to that question. One was specific to Community Services and the other was based upon a fee review that we have mentioned. Again, I will ask the member opposite to reserve all of his questions about Community Services for when they appear in Committee of the Whole. I know that my minister is champing at the bit to get to that conversation. It turns out that there has been illegal dumping probably for a long time. You can talk about community landfills like Dawson City that haven't been able to take certain fluids from the mining industry for a long time — years — and under the previous government's watch as well.

It's interesting the way the question was phrased, but I will leave that to the Minister of Community Services, who has an excellent understanding of the current situation and the issues that his department is facing. I look forward to that debate in Committee of the Whole when Community Services gets here.

When it comes to the fees and the fee review, as we know from the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, they did present a number of options to the government to return ourselves to a healthier financial position. This includes raising revenues through fees and fines. The panel did note that fees and fines in the Yukon were considerably lower than other Canadian jurisdictions and that the cost of providing those services to Yukoners was considerably higher than the fees charged by the government. It would be interesting to see if the members opposite agree with that statement or not.

Our government is working on a preliminary review of all fees and fines and the sale of government goods and services as well. The numbers quoted — it's quite interesting — the total number of government spending in the Yukon is barely over five-percent funded by user fees.

That is five percent in Yukon. The national average is 13 percent. This is a type of own-source revenue. The Northwest Territories currently raises approximately 10 cents for every

dollar through fees. We haven't seen an increase in those fees and fines, in some cases, for decades.

Again, during the Financial Advisory Panel's public engagement, Yukoners were generally not supportive of raising additional revenues through new or increased taxes. Fifty percent of surveyors responded and identified a reduction of government spending as the preferred option for returning to a healthier financial position. Should there be any new revenues raised through fees and fines, this will lessen the need for us to curtail other investments in Yukon. Many Yukoners support raising revenues through those increased fees. We are doing a preliminary review, and it should be noted again that most fees and fines have not been raised in over 15 years, and they have not kept pace with inflation either, over the years.

That is an update on the fee review and we will reserve questions and answers to the departments that do have supplementary budgets for when they appear here in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Cathers: It is disappointing that the Premier is getting a little bit worn down here in general debate and is hoping that we can get into other departments, but I don't know where else he has to be. This is an important part of the job — being accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

I would just note that in this area, as I mentioned, a potential increase in tipping fees. Because of the impact that this has had in the riding I represent as well as in other areas, there was a notable spike — this is not just my assessment; this is what I have heard repeatedly from constituents — following Whitehorse opposition against tipping fees. Because this is a concern that is out there with my constituents — and I know others — about whether an increase in tipping fees will lead to a significant increase in illegal dumping, the question was not just whether government plans to implement tipping fees and what those fees are, it was the question of whether those fees, because of the costs of administration, would actually even make the government money.

The other related question is: What is the cleanup plan? If there is an increase in illegal dumping, does any one of these affected departments — whether it is Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources or Environment, or in the case of illegal dumping on the powerline right-of-way, the Yukon Energy Corporation — have a cleanup plan for dealing with an increase in illegal dumping? That is not just a Department of Community Services issue; that is, as the Premier likes to call it, a whole-of-government issue.

I would ask the Premier to answer those questions or to have one of his ministers provide that information — or those questions. I would note as well that, based on a previous analysis that had been done, it was suggested by Community Services officials in the past that implementing tipping fees because of the cost of administration and the cost of equipment would in some cases at certain dumps result in government spending more money than it anticipated making. I would ask that if they are doing a cost analysis of tipping fees — whether they would agree to make that public to Yukoners so that we are not just asked to trust them and sign

off on the blank cheque or accept that there's a pig in the poke, but actually show us the details and let all Yukoners know what the costs and what the revenues are in this area, as well as what the cleanup plan is and the cost of that, if indeed there even is one.

I'm also going to touch on a couple of other areas. We have asked in the past but are still waiting for information — we have seen that the government has launched the innovative renewable energy initiative. At this point, they have spent about \$1.5 million over two years. We have still not heard what the rates will be for these projects. The question is: Has government spent all this money without knowing what rates will be paid to IPP projects, or do they actually know the answer to that and have just not seen fit to tell taxpayers?

We will ask one more question in a related area, that being the microgeneration program, which has been quite successful since it was implemented during our time in government. Does the government plan to keep the rates and structure the same as they have been in the long term, or are they planning to make changes to the program and, if so, what might those changes be?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is a change to the YDC budget this year; therefore, Yukon Development Corporation will have an opportunity — and I would love to have a thorough discussion with the Member for Lake Laberge on any issue concerning YDC at that time. We just need to complete this very tenuous and robust conversation around the supplementary budget so we can get to those questions the member opposite feels are important to ask.

Mr. Cathers: I would thank the minister for the answer if I had gotten one, but I guess we'll have to revisit that issue again. This is one that crosses several departments, which is one of the reasons we have chosen to ask that question in general debate.

I noted with the innovative renewable energy initiative that we're not saying that this structure may not be a reasonable approach. What we're looking for is that transparency and accountability on whether government has spent money on projects without knowing what the rate of return and the cost of those projects would be, in terms of the rate per kilowatt hour or whether government actually does know what that will be and has just not seen fit to tell Yukoners.

It is ultimately taxpayers' money and ratepayers' money, so it's reasonable for people to expect government should give them an answer to those questions, should provide that information when asked of members of the Legislative Assembly, and that people should have the ability to judge those programs on their merits or on their weaknesses.

Also, both with the innovative renewable energy initiative and with the microgeneration program, we don't yet have clarity from this government on what area they're being funded from. What I mean by that is, if there is a subsidy being paid for the rates, if the proponent of either a home generation project or an independent power production project is receiving a rate per kilowatt hour that is more than what that

energy is being sold for, then the question is: If it is being topped up, which pocket is that coming out of?

Is it coming from the Yukon Development Corporation side? Is it coming from Yukon Energy Corporation and being put into the rate base? Is it coming from Energy, Mines and Resources? As the minister will recall with the microgeneration program, it was set up as a pilot project with the funding initially coming from Energy, Mines and Resources with the long-term idea that those costs might be folded into the rate base at some point in the future. As the minister will know, the cost of going to a rate hearing and allowing those costs to be passed on to ratepayers far exceeded the cost of running the program within Energy, Mines and Resources, so it simply made sense to do that as a pilot project in that manner. All that we are asking for is that long-term clarity on whether the program is continuing and who is funding it — which area is it coming from. Hopefully the Premier or the minister will see fit to provide us with that information this afternoon.

I am going to ask one more question before what I anticipate might be an indication by the Chair for the standard afternoon break. I am going to ask about emergency medical services and particularly how it relates to the ability to have the medevac plane dispatched to and land safely in Yukon communities. Which airports and aerodromes can the medevac plane currently fly into? Which ones of those have all-hours strip capability? What steps, if any, is government taking to upgrade any airports where the medevac plane is not currently able to land?

Again, I have to point out to the Premier that the reason we are raising this in general is that this touches multiple departments, not all of which will necessarily come up for debate. That includes the involvement of Highways and Public Works in managing airports, the involvement of Emergency Medical Services in being responsible for the ground units and, of course, last but not least, the involvement of Health and Social Services in being responsible for the actual aircraft contract with Alkan Air for the medevac plane. I will leave off with those questions for the moment, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I can speak to a few items, Mr. Chair, from some of the previous questions that were tabled by the Member for Lake Laberge. There are a couple of components. First, there was the conversation on the IREI program. That is our innovative renewable program that we have used to support communities across the Yukon. We are happy to discuss more during our presentation of the Yukon Development Corporation budget, but certainly we are excited because we have had the opportunity to work in Old Crow, in Teslin, in the Whitehorse area and in Burwash, as well — just a number of communities.

My sense is that we are really talking about numbers. The member opposite wants to ensure that the taxpayer and the individuals who pay for electricity in the Yukon are not burdened with any extra costs of this program or speaking to that model we're looking at.

We have taken that into consideration and, as we move the work that we need, there was really a gap in work. There was an announcement that was made that there would be independent — there was a line item of about \$1 million for Burwash, but there was no — it was sort of all spaghetti and no meatballs. There was really a lack of language there and tools to do what people — the previous government — said they wanted to do.

We have had the Yukon Development Corporation, Energy, Mines and Resources, Yukon ATCO — all the players — come together to do that work. Energy, Mines and Resources is certainly leading that to be able to have the tools and gazette that work. Really there was a lack of clarity to Yukoners about what was really there compared to what we found in the work that we have had to do. The officials have done a lot of great work there.

I look forward to the Yukon Development Corporation discussion where we have had a change. Yes, the micro program was put in place by the previous government. It is a program that is highly subscribed to, which I think is great. It will be good to have a discussion about that because, again, we're in a position where it has been very robust, but it continues to pull more dollars from other areas.

I would say that I think if we're going to talk about the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy and if we're talking about dollars, I think what we really need to think about — I think the biggest strain that we have had is — and you might remember; we discussed this before — the \$40-million loan. I really think that has probably put the most pressure on our staff. We're looking at our cash flow and now — we didn't — I find it really — I don't know, I'm actually — believe it or not, I'm at a loss for words. We're talking about cents on rate — we've made that commitment — but what we're not talking about is — you want to talk about a boulder that we've been pushing up the hill, it's the \$40-million loan that was put in place with a three-year amortization, I believe — I might be off a year — and no plan to pay it back.

As I sit through hours of discussion and listen today about our ability as a government and our Premier to provide financial stewardship, I think two things: I always think about the \$1.50 spent for every \$1 we have coming in — very simple finance — and I always think about the \$40 million that was borrowed with no plan to pay it back.

What we have done is, YDC has now amortized that over a longer period of time. At least two generations of Yukoners will take on that responsibility to pay it back. I would say that is the biggest strain at YDC, but we certainly take into consideration that, as we put in an IPP, that we want to reduce risk and not have it as an open-ended program so that we have a tremendous amount of interest, like lessons learned from Ontario and British Columbia, but also that we handle some of that previous liability, that we make sure we have a financial analysis, which is great. We will be able to come and maybe discuss some of that work, as we have had — I believe it is PricewaterhouseCoopers, an international brand that can come

in — and we can talk a bit about some of the decisions that were made previously.

I think even some of the members who are here today who shared some of this work that I'm doing and they have done — we can talk about those decisions. I think that's probably going to be the great work that we can talk about.

I look forward to talking about YDC. I stand behind the staff at YDC and our decisions on how we look at renewable projects, how we have been creative, how we can reduce the cap ex on those and bring them to market and how we can have a larger, diversified portfolio of energy. If we want to talk about financial stewardship, I'm always excited to jump in and share with the Premier on that discussion.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would like to respond to some of the questions that were raised by the Member for Lake Laberge on airports in his previous run of questions.

He was talking about safety of our aerodromes and airstrips across the territory. Medevacs, I think, were mentioned and the work of Community Services and Health and Social Services. Airports certainly fall squarely under the mandate given to me by the Premier to improve the economic opportunities by airports and also improve their safety. I am more than happy to talk about this a little bit this afternoon and contribute my few minutes to this 19-hour debate on the supplementaries as it continues this afternoon.

At Highways and Public Works, we are at the beginning stages of planning the future of all things Yukon aviation. A comprehensive, multi-year investment plan will make sure we are meeting Yukon's current and future aviation needs. Over the next year, Highways and Public Works will engage with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation system should be. Stakeholder feedback will inform an investment plan that combines safety, efficiency, stakeholder needs and operational requirements for Yukon aviation.

We are going to be doing a number of things in the coming year to improve the economic viability and economic potential of airports and aerodromes across the territory, as well as their safety.

In your riding, Mr. Chair, we are going to be doing some work. At the Mayo aerodrome, we are expecting increased resource industry activity in the Mayo region. I was just recently out at the Victoria Gold mine and saw the tremendous work that is being done on that site to prepare it for gold mining operations next year. It is absolutely incredible.

Our aviation branches work with two local carriers and Transport Canada to obtain a one-year aerodrome authorization that allows the two carriers to provide temporary scheduled air service into Mayo. We are using this year to assess the present and future needs of the aerodrome to inform future investments at the site, and we will be moving forward with a multi-year strategic investment plan for the Yukon aviation system over the next year, as I have said. We will be meeting with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investment in the Yukon aviation system should be.

We are starting work on Mayo right now. The members opposite will remember Mayo. They had requests for years to fix the Mayo aerodrome and those requests fell on deaf ears.

There was very little if any work done on Mayo. As a matter of fact, I know that those requests had come in and very, very little was done. There was another promise, Mr. Chair, that the members opposite made to pave the Dawson City airport. Do you know what? It wasn't done, Mr. Chair. They didn't pave that runway either. Promise made; promise failed to deliver.

There were also requests to fix the baggage handling equipment at the Whitehorse International Airport. That work was cut from the improvements that happened at the main terminal here in Whitehorse. It didn't get done, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to report this afternoon on the floor of this Legislative Assembly that work is being done. We're going to have new baggage handling equipment. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite as efficiently handled, because we had the whole thing up and running and they could have put it in there, but they cut it from the budget, and so now I have to step in and do it from scratch. So we are putting in that much needed baggage handling equipment. A new sky bridge for the new bridge to aircraft is also being built. It absolutely needed to be done. Those key investments in the Whitehorse International Airport were never followed through on. We are going to pick up those pieces, make good and actually improve things up at Whitehorse International Airport that should have been done long ago. We are actually going to make it better for our travelling public.

I'm more than happy to do that and to talk about that quite a bit this afternoon. The expansion to the Whitehorse International Airport that the members opposite executed almost landed in the courts because of a dispute with the First Nation because they didn't want to put through a YACA agreement, I think. So that's another change that we're seeing now: We're working with our First Nation partners, making sure that we loop them in and include them where they should be included in our developments. Again, I think that's an important change in the way government works in the territory, one that I'm very happy to be a part of.

Carcross is another one, Mr. Chair. In Carcross, for years, they've called for a fence for the Carcross aerodrome. Once again, we're working with multiple stakeholders, including the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Carcross Aerodrome Society and Transport Canada to find a solution for the

situation in Carcross to prevent people from wandering onto the runway when planes are coming in to land.

The member opposite brought up airports and how important they are. They really are. When I was offered the post of Minister of Highways and Public Works and spoke to the Premier about fixing airports, I started to do some research. I came across a website called “The war on aviation in Yukon”. This was back in December of 2016. The war on aviation in the Yukon —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: The minister appears to be repeating his comments from the debate on the *Public Airports Act* last year and seems to have forgotten that we are talking about the supplementary budget. It appears to be needless repetition and he has also lost his train of thought and gone off the road into the ditch.

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

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to the member opposite, that is pretty rich. We have been here for 19 hours on general debate. The Minister of Highways and Public Works is giving a thorough answer to hours of questions. This particular question was two-pronged. One was for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the other for the Department of Highways and Public Works. He is merely giving the member opposite exactly what he is looking for.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair's ruling

Chair: I would certainly characterize this as a dispute among members.

Carry on, please, Mr. Mostyn.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am more than happy to carry on, because there is a lot to say on this file. As I was saying, in December of 2016 when I took this job, I started researching the post and came across “The war on aviation in the Yukon”. On it, I would bet that there are 40 pages-plus of problems with our aviation system — a long litany of problems. I thought, “Holy smokes, this is an awful lot to fix, but it’s time that we rolled up our sleeves and started to address these things.” One of the first things I did, as the member opposite has alluded to, is the *Public Airports Act*. I’m more than happy to have delivered on that piece of legislation here in the House, because we didn’t have a piece of legislation that governed the management of the airport facilities for 25 years.

Successive governments failed to deliver on this promise. That failure to deliver on promises ended with this government. One-quarter of a century of inaction was ended by this government with the passage of the *Public Airports Act*.

I was very proud of the work of the department to bring that about. All of which is to say, Mr. Chair, that there is an awful lot of good work being done on the airport file.

Another one is airport leases. We are currently working on a plan to guide land management decisions on future growth at the Whitehorse airport. There is a plan for subdivision development that is expected to be ready later this fall and it will then be submitted to the City of Whitehorse for subdivision plan approval. New leases at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport are on hold because we need to establish legal authority to issue new ones. Why? Well, you don’t have to look too far back into the past to find out why that is the case, Mr. Chair. It is another situation that we inherited — one that we are going to fix. We will be in a position to enter into new leases in the spring of 2019. We will work with businesses and individuals on a case-by-case basis to support development projects at the airport in the absence of final survey and management plans.

I could go back to how we had to pass legislation and how important that was for the territory because we didn’t have the authority to actually manage the facilities that we own. That is a remarkable situation in a territory our size — one that has been fixed.

I could talk about Whitehorse airport runway conditions or the airport panel, but I think at the moment I have answered most of the member opposite’s questions. If he has any more questions about airports, I am more than happy to stand up again and contribute more to this scintillating debate on the budget this afternoon.

Mr. Cathers: First of all, the Minister of Highways and Public Works is playing fast and loose with the term “contribute” as it pertains to debate. Really, this was a rehash of what we heard from the minister in his attempt to cover up his failures on the *Public Airport Act* debacle. The minister’s rhetoric is so out of touch with reality, I feel like I should buy him a red hat that says, “make airports great again” on it. In fact, the minister did not actually answer a single one of the questions that I asked. Those, of course, pertain specifically to the ability of the medevac flight, currently operated by Alkan Air, to land the medevac plane in a situation requiring emergency response or community medevac in Yukon communities.

What I asked the Premier for was a list of which communities currently are able to be served by medevac flights at those airports or aerodromes, as well as which ones of those had day or night capabilities and which ones might only be accessible during daytime. Of course, the third important question which, by the way, the minister has completely trivialized with his soliloquy about airports, since it relates to the ability to provide emergency medical services to citizens in our communities when they need it, is: If there are community airports that aren’t able to have medevac flights land at them at this point in time, what steps, if any, is the government taking to upgrade those, and which ones are they?

We received a very disconnected, long-winded, repetitive speech from the minister, rehashing his rhetoric from the *Airports Act* debate, but for Yukoners who are listening and are wondering about emergency medical services in Yukon communities at a time when they need them, what they didn’t

get from the minister was an answer to the question: Where can the medevac flights go? If there are areas where they can't go, what, if anything, is the government doing to fix that?

It's unfortunate here. We have heard a lot of rhetoric from the government about their openness, their transparency and their planning, but when it comes down to a very simple and a very pertinent question that Yukoners are asking about emergency medical services, all we got was a lot of long-winded rhetoric from the minister. We didn't get an answer.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Was there a question there?

Mr. Cathers: Yes, and since the Premier seems to have missed it and the minister seems to have missed it, I'm going to ask it again: Which communities can currently be served by medevac through Alkan Air if there is an emergency medical services issue? Also, if there are airports where that service cannot currently be provided because of airport conditions, what steps, if any, is government taking to resolve those issues and which airports or aerodromes do they relate to?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to be on my feet again to address the issue of medevacs in the territory. I know how important they are to the territory and to servicing our far-flung communities. This is a very important service to our territorial citizens. There are no two ways about it.

Recently, this government awarded the territory's air ambulance service contract to Alkan Air again. It's a local Yukon company, as the members opposite and the people in this Legislative Assembly know full well. We did that through a value-driven procurement process. I'm very pleased to see that a local company won that competitive value-driven procurement at a cost of about \$25 million. It was a change to how that procurement was done.

It leads into a whole other discussion this afternoon that we could have about procurement and the changes and the improvements we're making on that front, because we know how important that is to the territory and how much people in the territory have demanded changes in the way we procure goods and services. Again, Highways and Public Works is doing a lot of excellent work on that front.

To the member opposite's question about medevacs and how important they are, a value-based tender considering both price and quality of the bid was used to ensure the successful bidder could provide the quality of service Yukoners deserve. The contract is for a four-year initial term from April 1, 2019, until March 31, 2023, with options for one two-year extension and one one-year extension to provide additional pricing over the life of the contract. It's for a longer time so that we get a better value for price. The contract includes a pre-operational term from June 25, 2018, to March 31, 2019, to allow the contractor to prepare for the provision of tendered air ambulance services. The Yukon government has been pleased with the medevac services offered by Alkan Air — and I have to thank Alkan Air for the service they provide this territory. It has been exemplary and I'm happy that they actually won this contract.

The member opposite is talking about services to our rural Yukon. I don't think he was listening, but I did speak earlier about our comprehensive, multi-year investment plan

that is there to make sure we meet Yukon's current and future aviation system needs. I'm not going to go all fast and loose. I know that's the old way of doing things. We're doing things in a new way. We're committing to doing things like paving the Dawson City Airport and then actually proceeding to do that — not promise and then not deliver.

We have a five-year capital plan now that is in place to show what we're going to do and then follow through on it. In the past, projects would be proposed and then would never be followed through on. They would fall by the wayside. It wouldn't go into capital budget, either. You wouldn't see what happened to that stuff. We're not doing things that way. We're planning; we're being consistent. We have a plan in place that allows us to be flexible. If a need in a community arises, we can add it to the plan and adapt to changing circumstances. That is really the core principle of planning. We're doing all these things and we are going to be planning to improve our airports over the coming years with the input of stakeholders — people who use the airports and communities these airports serve.

As for the current state of medevac access in the territory, I will check back with my department. I don't think it's changed at all since the members opposite were in these seats. I think it is probably very similar to what it was and it's only going to get better, because we're looking at following through on our commitments and improving. So there it is.

Mayo, if it is certified, will need an upgrade — perhaps new lights — and we will do that. If we do that, we will have more service in Mayo. These are the things that we are doing, Mr. Chair. We are more than happy to improve services, be it medevac services, procurement or paving runways. The whole point, though, is to make all of these things that I have talked about — the baggage handling, the paving of Dawson, working with Mayo to improve that because of the amount of traffic coming through. Those are all of the things that we are doing to improve airports overall. That will contribute to better access, better economic opportunities and better safety for those communities. That is really at the core of what I have been charged with doing. It is one of the things that we are working toward every day, and I am more than happy to do that work.

Mr. Cathers: It is really unfortunate here that this government seems to be focused on platitudes and being good at their talking points — very interested in photo opportunities — but when you ask for a simple answer to a question, we get a repetitive talking point about how the minister is going to make airports so much better. Again, the joke is that the Minister of Highways and Public Works needs a red hat that says, "Make airports great again", because it is very similar to the bombastic rhetoric we hear south of the border. What I am asking for is a very simple question on behalf of Yukoners.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Chair: Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Bombastic rhetoric, red hats — I think these are insults, and I would ask the member opposite

to retract them and refrain from using them in a method of questioning every department in the government at his leisure.

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

Mr. Cathers: I think it is a dispute between members. I was simply comparing rhetorical styles of one person to another.

Chair's ruling

Chair: The word "rhetoric", depending on the context in which it has been used, has been ruled every way in this House, but I think it is getting very close to the line when you repeat it four or five times within a 15-minute period. I would ask that you refrain from using the word "rhetoric" if you possibly can.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Again, the questions that I am asking the minister are quite simple and they relate to emergency medical services. They don't relate to the minister's talking points about planning and changes in procurement model. I do have to remind the minister that, while he touts his change in the procurement model for the medevac contract, the end outcome was exactly the same as it has been for decades in terms of who received the contract. The model changed; the outcome didn't.

Which airports in the Yukon are medevac flights operated by Alkan Air's fixed-wing service currently able to fly into? Which community airports are they not able to fly into or only able to fly into during certain hours or conditions? Which airports is the government looking at upgrading to potentially allow medevac flights in the future?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have tried very hard this afternoon to provide relevant information to the members on the opposite side of the House who have been asking questions now for approaching 20 hours. I am sorry if the amount of information that I have attempted to provide the member opposite this afternoon wasn't done in a manner that he found compelling or interesting. I will strive to do better.

But as far as his question about medevac services, to the best of my knowledge — I will repeat myself this time. I don't believe those services have changed in any substantial way from the way that they were administered under the previous government. If they are lacking, I am hoping that the strategic plan and the strategic planning process that we are bringing in will identify those shortcomings that have existed for several years. We will address them as the budget and priorities allow.

Mr. Cathers: I hear the Premier commending his minister off-mic for a good answer, but we still didn't get the answer. We are probably not going to get an actual answer from the minister this afternoon, but I do have to point out — for any Yukoners living in rural Yukon who are concerned about emergency medical services — the fact that the minister doesn't even see fit to list which airports can be accessed by medevac plane and hasn't yet committed to getting back to the Official Opposition with a list of those is something that I don't think they will find acceptable behaviour by this Liberal government. I am going to repeat the questions one more time.

Which airports are medevac flights operated by Alkan Air currently able to fly into? Which community airports are they not able to fly into, or only able to fly into during certain hours? Which airports is the government currently looking at upgrades to in order to allow medevacs or to better accommodate medevacs in future? These are three simple questions.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister responded adequately for the question. The status quo has been maintained from when the Yukon Party was in to when we are in. If there are any updates, we will let the member opposite know, but he has been asking the same questions over and over again and he has been getting the same answer because that is the answer. If he doesn't like the answer that we are providing for him, I apologize, but that's it. No substantial changes have been made to the situation from when his government was in to where we are now. If there are, I will work with my Minister of Highways and Public Works to provide any extra information past the status quo that he fully knows existed during his time in government.

Mr. Cathers: We did at least get an answer from the Premier, sort of, in that clearly the government is not looking at any upgrades to community airports — at least not any that are on the radar screen of either the Premier or the minister. That is unfortunate, but at least it is close to an answer.

I am going to ask about another airport. It is one that is in the Premier's riding. We have heard reports from people in the Dawson area about a sort of grandiose, potential plan for runway realignment and changes in the area, but at the moment we are dealing with lack of detail and lack of clarity from the government on what their plans actually are.

So what I'm providing the Premier with the opportunity to do — or the Minister of Highways and Public Works — is to let us know what scope the government is actually looking at for upgrades to the Dawson City Airport, including paving the runway and potential changes to the area. We have heard reports that the upgrade plans may have a price tag as high as \$100 million, but what we're relying on right now is that the government just really hasn't told us the scope of this. Perhaps that's the number, or perhaps the number is something entirely different. What I'm asking, again on behalf of Yukoners who are interested in the government's capital plans, since this is not clearly described in the government's five-year capital plan, and for Yukoners who are concerned as taxpayers, is: What's the actual scope that government is looking at in terms of these upgrades?

I hear the Premier kibitzing off-mic, but the Premier should recognize that the government has not actually defined what its plans are for this runway area. Again, we're just looking for information. We're not trying to hang any particular number around the government's neck at this point in time. We may have heard reports from people who were incorrect in the information they presented to us. We're simply asking for clarity and transparency from the government about what they're planning with the Dawson City runway and surrounding area and what the estimated cost and time frame is of that.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think we're hitting an all-time low here. We get up and say that the status quo has been maintained to date, and the member opposite interprets that and twists the words around to make that seem like we are not in the future going to do anything. That is just a — I just don't even know what that is.

Then to go ahead and quote numbers like \$100 million for a simple paving of a runway in Dawson City — it's just ludicrous that this member opposite, this previous minister, can get up in the Legislative Assembly and create these false narratives like that. I don't know what service he thinks he's paying to the general population but, my goodness — I would like to know where he got the amount of \$100 million for the paving of the runway in Dawson City. My goodness gracious — it's beyond.

Our plans, which we have been clear on — we're going to pave the runway. I guess that's why the member opposite might be a little bit in the misunderstanding category, because his government said the same thing and didn't do that. We actually got in, and when we did get in, we asked: What were the plans? How much engineering? What were the costs? What's the O&M? None of that work was done, yet that promise was made a year out from the election — over a year out from the election.

I can see why the member opposite doesn't know how much it costs to pave a runway because they simply couldn't get that done, but at the same time, this is misleading. To sit here and to say: "Some people are telling me..." and "I'm hearing from sources that it is going to cost \$100 million to pave the runway in Dawson" — it's an all-time low for the member opposite. It really, really is.

The minister has been clear. We are going to pave the runway. He can talk about the costs as those numbers come in, but I will tell you that paving the runway is not going to cost \$100 million — my goodness.

Mr. Cathers: It's really interesting what the Premier zeroed in on what I said, and the Premier failed to acknowledge that I specifically told him that we had heard from Yukoners that there were grandiose plans around other work around the airport area, and we simply asked the Premier for information.

Instead, the Premier got up and tossed personal remarks toward this side of the House rather than doing what I asked him, which is to tell us what the actual plan is for the runway. What is the actual plan for other work in the area of the Dawson City Airport, and what is the price tag on it? If the only work being done is, as the Premier seems to be indicating, paving the runway, what is the price tag on that? It is a simple question. If that is all of the work that the government is looking at, then just tell us that. There is no need for the Premier to get angry on this issue or to toss personal insults — just tell us the numbers. Again, when it comes to whether other upgrades are planned to other airports, we still don't have an answer on that.

I am going to touch briefly on another area since I know my colleague, the Member for Kluane, also wants to ask questions this afternoon on behalf of his constituents, and I

had agreed to cede the floor in the interest of allowing him to do that. In addition to providing the Premier and the minister the opportunity to actually provide an answer where they failed to before, I'm going to touch on a couple of other areas related to the impact of the still ongoing tariffs on steel and aluminum that have not been solved by the federal government signing on to the new NAFTA agreement — or USMCA. The question is: Are there currently increased costs of drugs or medical equipment related to that? If so, what are they? Is this having an impact or expected to have an impact on the cost of other medical equipment or items or equipment, such as fire trucks or ambulances?

We have heard from Yukon small businesses that these tariffs have had an impact on products, including boats. I heard from a Yukoner who owns a hair business that it has an impact on their ability to purchase hair spray, which completely surprised me, as it never would have occurred to me that it would be one of those items impacted by the steel and aluminum tariffs.

We have questions about whether these tariffs are having an impact or an expected impact on the cost of items such as trailers, fencing and as well — because we are not clear on the fine print as it pertains to the new USMCA and how that affects vehicles — whether there is any anticipated increase in the price of vehicles here in the territory as a result of the steel and aluminum tariffs — or whether, because of the fine print in the USMCA, those matters appear to be dealt with. If those matters are beyond what the Premier can provide an answer to this afternoon, we would be happy to receive it when he next rises or take it as a legislative return.

Hon. Mr. Silver: If the member opposite can give us some information that he is getting as far as who he is hearing from in the general public that it is going to cost \$100 million to pave the runway, I would endeavour to allow him to please connect us with these individuals so we can set them straight.

That would be \$20,000 per foot and that is incredible. As far as his specific questions about steel and aluminum tariffs — this is a good question. It is interesting to remark that a study that was released by Statistics Canada on August 16 of this year estimated that the portion of the price increases directly felt by consumers from the imposition of Canada's regulatory tariffs to be relatively small, resulting in only a 0.07-percent point annual increase in the Canadian consumer price index. That is to say as well that we are closely monitoring this. There are some surprising places — I will agree with the member opposite — where these tariffs are affecting consumers and retailers. Any of that information is greatly appreciated as we head down for conversations at First Ministers' meetings, so I appreciate that from the member opposite.

Also, the increases in costs of drugs and medical equipment — not as of yet, but we are keeping an eye on this and will update the Legislative Assembly as information comes in.

Mr. Istchenko: I do have just a couple of questions today. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics' latest demographic report shows that our population has changed over the past

few years. The total population went up 18 percent over that period. The number of Yukoners over the age of 60 went up more than three times as fast. Those aged over 85 went up 65 percent and Yukoners in the 65-to-75 age bracket more than doubled. Meanwhile, our youth number isn't growing. Things have changed in the demographics of seniors. We are starting to see a lot more seniors. I was speaking with someone this morning who mentioned it to me, and I heard it on the radio: "My parents moved here." Lots of people are moving here.

I have a question for the Premier and/or the minister. I have been asking the Premier and/or minister to go meet with the seniors in Haines Junction. I am just wondering whether there is a timeline — if the Premier or the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation has had that opportunity to get out there or plans on going out there. We have a full facility out there. They have been asking for that long into my time and before, asking for an extension of phase 2 of the seniors facility — if there are comments on that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to the aging population — recognizing that, by 2030, we are going to see 30 percent of our population exceeding the age of 55, which all of us in this House will likely exceed. The objective is to ensure that we provide collaborative care, including the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, I'm sure. We need to ensure that we provide supports and collaborative supports to all Yukoners, and we have committed to doing that. Aging in place is really an engagement strategy that we have to take with Yukoners, recognizing that we have this population that is getting older. We have committed to doing that.

We met in June of last year through a directive — the seniors action group. We have met with them and triggered the consultation, and we have now gone out to every community in the Yukon. To date, we have held engagement sessions in Destruction Bay, Burwash, Beaver Creek, Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Tagish, Marsh Lake, Mount Lorne and Keno.

The objective is to meet with individuals and groups with a vested interest in seniors programming, aging in place, the home first initiative and home care programs in their communities. The following locations have been booked: In the coming two weeks, we have Old Crow on October 22; Teslin on October 25; Haines Junction on October 26; Carmacks on October 29; Faro on October 30; and Ross River on October 31. The objective of that is to ensure that we have a comprehensive process and that we have input from all our seniors. At the end of the consultative process, we will then have a summit like the one that was held last June. At that point, we'll bring back to the seniors a report on what we heard, which will then give us some direction on a Yukon-wide approach.

Mr. Istchenko: I will remind the Premier and the minister that one of their platform commitments was to seniors housing in the community. Will the minister or the Premier be attending the meeting this Friday, October 26, at the Da Kų Cultural Centre for the community luncheon?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite. At the moment, I don't plan on being in Haines Junction for the

October 26 meeting. As a note, I was just in Haines Junction last week for the tiny home project. I met with the First Nations at that time and members of the community. I would be happy to arrange a future meeting in the community. It's always great to go back to Haines Junction and to meet with the community.

Mr. Istchenko: I'm disappointed in the answer from the minister. The correspondence I received from the seniors was that the minister would be there on October 26. I do understand the minister was there last week. I would hope — if the minister was there last week — that she would have met with the seniors who have been asking for this. It's unfortunate the minister won't be there on October 26.

I have another couple of questions. On May 23, I sent an e-mail addressing some of the issues related to Highways and Public Works. I'm going to try to get through one of the issues because it's very near and dear to me, being that it is coming up to Remembrance Day. I mentioned it to the minister. This is the second year in a row. The veterans signs lay in a ditch or in the highways yard all summer. They weren't put up. They weren't up during the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway when the tourists were driving through.

Employees who work at the highways camp there put them up last fall and the wind blew them over again. The local workers put in a request for the sign crew to put them up, and this year again, all summer long, they lay in the ditch. Grass grew over them and they weren't up all summer long. The highways guys again this fall have put them up and tried to use bigger signs. They need to be put on four-by-four posts. I want to thank the local highways crews for putting those signs up. I'm just disappointed in the minister, because I know that the major priority this year was to get the dope signs up at both borders, and you could find all the time in the world to get that done but you couldn't get the veterans signs up. I'll leave it at that.

With the ongoing and yearly right-of-way brushing and vegetation control in the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash, Destruction Bay and Haines Junction in the riding of Kluane, which actually runs south all the way down to the Member for Watson Lake's riding, can the Minister of Highways and Public Works or the Premier let Yukoners know: Are they engaged in any communication with any of the municipalities or any of the local advisory councils — in those communities that aren't a municipality — with giving them some sort of a budget so that they can keep brushing going when the previous government — we did a good job at getting brushing up and running in those communities, but it grows fast and it needs to be done again already.

The brushing budget, I believe, was cut in half the first year. It increased again this year, but we're behind on it again.

Can the minister answer that question please?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate it. I am more than happy to talk about brushing and vegetation control this afternoon.

The member opposite is correct. The first year in office — faced with the financial picture we were dealt — we did actually roll back the brush-clearing budget that year as part of

our efforts to wrangle the budget. The Yukon Financial Advisory Panel — we've spoken a little bit about that this afternoon — and the fact that the territory was spending \$1.50 for every \$1 collected — we had to take action, and we did that.

Brush-clearing is important to the territory. It is a small line item in a budget, but it has a very significant impact on our communities. I certainly got that message loud and clear and we restored and actually expanded the budget a little bit.

We're talking about tree removal and vegetation control within highway right-of-ways. This year, we tendered eight projects for a total value of about \$1.2 million. Clearing brush and trees from the right-of-way increases lines of sight, it facilitates safe passing and merging and enhances drivers' ability to see wildlife approaching or crossing highways and makes road signage more visible. I will attest to the effectiveness of that, because I have seen first-hand, on very narrow roads where that isn't the case, how difficult and how taxing it can be to drive. I understand that it is important. It is important for the local communities as well. I was up the north highway this week and saw that.

Brush-clearing is important. We have increased the budget this year and we're more than happy to do that. We have about 5,000 kilometres worth of road, and we want to make sure we get to the brush-clearing methodically.

We are going to plan out into the future and make sure that we are doing it in a methodical manner, applying the roughly \$1-million budget in a way that clears brush efficiently and well for our communities.

Mr. Istchenko: I do understand all that, but the question that I had asked the minister was if the minister had been in any negotiations — when it comes to the minister's budget — with any of the municipalities — or like the community of Destruction Bay with the Kluane Lake Athletic Association, which runs the community, or Burwash Landing or Beaver Creek — having a conversation about giving them a portion of that brushing budget so they can keep and do their communities every year.

It's about public safety — school kids going across the road. It's about wildlife. The Trans Canada Trail runs through Haines Junction and Beaver Creek and people are afraid to walk the trails when the trees grow up because we have bears. We had a grizzly bear and three cubs all summer long at Pine Lake walking that road. If the brushing was down, people would be able to see the sightlines and it would be a lot safer.

My question is simple: Has the minister or will the minister?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. I know it's coming from a good place and I appreciate that. I have actually spoken about brush-clearing with the communities of Teslin, Watson Lake and even First Nations — Kluane First Nation is up there and had a long talk. He didn't mention First Nations, but I have spoken to the Kluane First Nation in Burwash about brush-clearing, so I have had those conversations. As a matter of fact, most communities I go to — Mayo — they talk about

brush-clearing. It's very important to those communities. I have had many conversations.

Mr. Istchenko: It doesn't sound like I am really going to get much of an answer if there has been a commitment from the minister funding-wise with Burwash, being Kluane First Nation, Champagne being Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, Haines Junction being Dakwakada, being Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — I go through the list. Those are the communities that people drive through and they need to be safe.

The bypass road that goes into Champagne is the old Alaska Highway and it is very narrow too, so if the minister has the opportunity to travel, he should probably travel through there and have a look at that too. They have been asking for that.

I think it's imperative for public safety and for the tourism industry to know they're coming into something — a very nice community. It is lucky that in the Premier's riding it's all gravel when you pull into the community. There are piles and piles and it's a theme and it's awesome and I love it — I love going there every year — but you can see. There is visibility and it's safe — but go into our communities along the north highway.

Another request that comes from a lot of the residents who live at Mendenhall and Takhini subdivision is a turning lane. I'm just wondering if the minister has put any thought into, for safety reasons again — there have been quite a few accidents on those lanes, and there is a lot of traffic and school buses go in and out of there. I'm just wondering if the minister has had a conversation with his department about turning lanes. That was one of the other questions I had sent to him earlier on May 23, and I'm awaiting a response, so I will ask it now.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Safety, of course, should be front and centre in all our minds. I will look into the errant letter the member opposite referenced from May and provide that response. I attempted to provide a fairly cohesive and heartfelt answer to the member opposite about brush-clearing.

It is important to communities. We have increased the budget to \$1.2 million. I am looking at doing a methodical brush-clearing strategy. We have roughly \$1 million and we know how much road we have. We know how much within a ballpark it is per kilometre to do roadwork, and I am going to look and see if we can do a plan so that communities know when their next brush-clearing is about to happen. We are going to start to bring some method to brush-clearing so we don't have 30- or 40-year-old trees growing in our rights-of-way and try to make sure that we keep on top of those things. That is what I have heard from a lot of people who have 30- or 40-year-old trees — and, of course, clearing those away is a lot more expensive than just going out and clearing away smaller shrubs. I appreciate that, and we are always looking to improve our highways and areas where they are needed. Turning lanes — where the data supports putting in turning lanes, we will do that, but money is tight and we are not going to do it willy-nilly or fast and loose.

Mr. Istchenko: I am not exactly sure what data the minister would need. It is brush on the road and it needs to be cut. Every community along the Alaska Highway and along the north Klondike or the Campbell Highway — those communities usually have a local contractor who could do that sort of work. It provides an opportunity for jobs for those local contractors looking to pick up some work and it provides — like I said, it's a safety issue.

I am going to change a little bit to the Destruction Bay Marina. I had asked a question of the minister in the House. There was a meeting the previous week, and they learned at the meeting that in November they would get the results of the study. The lake has been at the same level the last few years. Of course, there were some great articles and a great TV show last night on Kluane and the glaciers and climate change. I am reminded that the climate in Kluane has been changing for a long time. My community was under 300 feet of water 180 years ago, so glaciers melt, but it has changed the lake. It has sort of stabilized the lake level, which is ultra-low, and the marina needs dredging.

I have two questions. The results will be given to the community in November. Does the minister have plans, or are there plans in the works, as to what work will be done there? If not, will the minister allow the Kluane Lake Athletic Association — because the Minister of Highways and Public Works and that department hold the water licence — to put in an exemption on the water licence just like they did at Sheep Mountain so that this work can get done and let the local community do the work?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I think it is important that we fall back on a statement that the Premier has been making and that many of us have been making over the last several months and years of getting out of the business of doing business. This government has stated that intention, and so I think it is in line with some of the sentiments that the member opposite is expressing here this afternoon in hiring local contractors to do work. The member opposite has referenced the meeting up in his riding recently on the marina.

The results he has referenced will be out in November and I am not really going to speak in advance of what those results show. I think that a meeting was held with the community and I think we owe it to the community to give them the results when they come back.

Mr. Istchenko: My follow-up question would be then, with the Premier's budget this year — being that it is a little difficult sometimes to find line items — I think we had that discussion here earlier today about how sometimes it takes a minister and an MLA some time to read through and find a point where we can find the line item — is there a line item or is there money that is set aside for just maintenance? It is maintenance, like plowing the roads, like brushing, like the Pine Lake campground boat launch when it needs a little bit of gravel — or the one at Fox Lake, just another boat launch that the government has. Is there money in the budget somewhere in a line item that I can't seem to find?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just a couple of comments — to answer the question outright, of course, there are line items for

these items. I also want to comment on what the member opposite spoke about as far as his community once being under water. We all know that glaciers move and sometimes they go through one valley and sometimes they go through another valley. This takes thousands of years to happen, Mr. Chair, and what we're seeing right now with one metre of glacial degradation per year is something different completely. With the Slims River no longer being fed from a glacier, this is something different altogether.

I hope the member opposite is not suggesting that this is just the natural ebb and flow of Mother Nature when we see these things happening in his community, because I would beg to differ. I would say these are the effects of man-made climate change. I believe from previous conversations I have had with the member opposite that he agrees and believes in the science. Again, I just want to clarify the difference between — you know, changes are always happening with glaciers, but the time frame is astounding in comparison. It's a really important piece to —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess the Member for Watson Lake thinks that's funny. That's also interesting and very telling, I guess.

My other point is: I agree with the member opposite. As far as communities being able to and having the gear to do brushing and contracting that way, I agree. I had a really good conversation with Selkirk First Nation about exactly that. They did a fantastic job this year of doing a lot of garbage cleanup and a lot of brushing as well, which wasn't even in the budget. They just did it; they went ahead and did it just to say, hey look, we have the capability to do brushing as well.

I would love to talk more with the Member for Kluane about his experience when he was the minister responsible for Highways and Public Works and what other communities he knows of that have that capacity.

We have a budget — it is a finite budget. The minister responsible talked about it. It is about a million dollars a year. How can we be most effective with that budget? I would be really interested in hearing from the Member for Kluane about that because he does have vast experience in this field.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Silver that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 21, entitled *Equality of Spouses Statute Law Amendment Act (2018)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled October 23, 2018:

34-2-158

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: hospital bed shortage — surgical beds at Whitehorse General Hospital (Frost)