



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

---

Number 105

2nd Session

34th Legislature

---

## HANSARD

Thursday, October 25, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2018 Fall Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
<b>Hon. Sandy Silver</b>	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
<b>Hon. Ranj Pillai</b>	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
<b>Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee</b>	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
<b>Hon. John Streicker</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
<b>Hon. Pauline Frost</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
<b>Hon. Richard Mostyn</b>	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
<b>Hon. Jeanie Dendys</b>	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

<b>Ted Adel</b>	Copperbelt North
<b>Paolo Gallina</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Don Hutton</b>	Mayo-Tatchun

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Liz Hanson</b>	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
<b>Kate White</b>	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, October 25, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed with the Order Paper.  
Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is a huge honour to introduce some people who are in the Legislative Assembly today. I am going to do a three-pronged approach here, if that is okay with the members.

I am going to first start with former Commissioner and World War II veteran Mr. Doug Bell, who is sitting in the VIP section here with Mr. Red Grossinger.

If you haven't heard stories of the Yukon, you should talk to Mr. Bell. Of course, with him is Red Grossinger. We also have others members of the legion and other veterans in the audience today. We have Joe Mewett, Terry Grabowski and Morris Cratty as well, and legion member Sylvia Kitching. I would like to welcome them to the gallery as well.

Last but not least on my tributes list — certainly there will be other people recognized today for the *SS Princess Sophia* tribute, but I just want to take special time here to welcome Cathy Burkhard from Dawson, who is a relative of the Bell family members who passed away on the *SS Princess Sophia*, and sending her regrets is her sister — so if we could say thank you to Cathy for being here today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Gallina:** I would like members to join me in welcoming two constituents of Porter Creek Centre to the gallery here today — husband and wife Michael Gates and Kathy Gates.

Kathy is past president of the Yukon Historical and Museums Association and past executive director of the Dawson City Museum. Michael Gates is famed Yukon author and celebrated Yukon historian. Welcome to the Assembly today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hutton:** I would like to ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming some very special guests here today: From the Yukon Transportation Museum, we have Janna Swales; from the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, David Leverton and Brittany Vis; from the Yukon Arts Centre, Mary Bradshaw; from the Yukon Order of Pioneers, we have Gordon Steele, Gordon Ryder, Ken Mason and Peter Murtagh; from the Yukon masonic lodge, we have Tom Mickey, Joe Trerice and Ralph Zaccarelli; and last, but certainly not least, we have a

constituent of mine from Mayo, a great granddaughter of Robert Hager, who went down on the *SS Princess Sophia*, Nancy Hager — and the curator from the Dawson museum, Mr. Alex Somerville. Thank you all for being here.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** One person who has already been introduced — but I think we could do a little bit more — is Sylvia Kitching. She was the registrar at vital statistics for a generation — for a really long time. I got to know Sylvia when I became a wedding commissioner, and the best thing about Sylvia is that she loves stories. She would listen to stories about how people met, and she was there to support people when they were getting death certificates and birth certificates.

Sylvia retired from the government I think in 2012 —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Ms. White:** Okay, so a couple of years ago, but she is fantastic. Thank you for being here in your capacity with the legion, and thank you for the work that you did for the Yukon government.

*Applause*

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign.

Each year following the last Friday in October, we start to see the red poppy blooming on coats and jackets everywhere in Canada. Since 1921, this modest flower which dared to flourish in the midst of the chaos and destruction of World War I has become an enduring symbol of remembrance. It is a silent but powerful reminder of the great sacrifice that so many have made so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we have today.

To the veterans in the visiting gallery today, thank you very much for your service to Canada and to Yukon.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the Royal Canadian Legion's annual poppy campaign for which thousands of volunteer members across Canada will distribute poppies. Tomorrow at noon at Veterans Square at the city hall, please join me and my colleagues here for the first poppy ceremony — that's why we're not wearing our poppies today. We will be getting that ceremony done tomorrow at noon, and I hope to see you all there.

The poppies are given free of charge, but donations are greatly appreciated. Wearing the poppy shows that we remember what the brave men and women of past generations did for home and country. It is a timeless demonstration of our appreciation for everything that Canadian servicemen and servicewomen have done, and continue to do, in the guise of sacrifice.

The poppy campaign itself is a demonstration of the appreciation to veterans — 100 percent of the funds raised by the poppy campaign are used to support veterans and their

families here in the Yukon, which includes members of the Canadian Armed Forces and RCMP as well.

Poppy funds may be used by the legion for the purchasing of goods and equipment that will directly benefit Yukon's veterans. The funds may be used to support organizations that are accessed by Yukon's veterans or go directly to support veterans and their families in times of crisis or to bridge gaps until other benefits become available.

Sometimes the legion receives requests for specific medical equipment needs for Yukon veterans. For example, the legion has donated money to the hospital for purchasing operating room equipment, chemo pumps and various other equipment. In other cases, requests for poppy funds are received from places like Copper Ridge Place, Macaulay Lodge and the Thomson Centre, all of which house our veterans.

Donations have been made to the Honour House located in New Westminster, British Columbia, which serves both as a refuge and a home away from home for service members from Yukon who are receiving care or medical treatments when they are in the Vancouver area. These funds raised through the poppy campaign are used in so many different ways to support our Yukon veterans.

Another way to help the legion is to become a member. I and other members are proud members of legions in this Legislative Assembly. I am a member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1 in Dawson City. I am especially proud of my legion and my community this year. Sergeant Mitchell and Jeremy Lancaster of the Rangers are working with Diane Baumgartner of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 1 to participate in a commemorative expedition up the Dempster to Mount Boyle for a Remembrance Day ceremony.

I hope that this year everyone will join me in wearing a poppy and donating to this very worthy cause, especially as this year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Armistice Day, which is the day in which fighting ended in World War 1. Lest we forget.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** millions of Canadians wear a poppy as a visual pledge to never forget those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. Today, I rise in the House on behalf of the Yukon Party to pay tribute to the Royal Canadian Legion's first poppy campaign. I would encourage everyone in the Yukon to show their recognition by proudly wearing this symbol of remembrance and taking a moment to reflect.

A little bit of history on the poppy — each November — we are going to see it soon — poppies bloom on the lapels and collars of millions of Canadians and many Yukoners. The significance of the poppy can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, over 110 years before being adopted in Canada. Records from that time indicate how thickly poppies grew over the graves of soldiers in the area of Flanders, France. Fields that had been barren before battle exploded with the blood-red flowers after the fighting ended.

The person who first introduced the poppy to Canada and the Commonwealth was Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae of

Guelph, Ontario. He was a Canadian medical officer during the First World War. John McCrae penned the poem *In Flanders Fields* on a scrap of paper in May 1915 on the day following the death of a fellow soldier. Little did he know then that those 13 lines would become enshrined in the hearts and minds of all who would wear the poppy in remembrance.

During a visit to the United States in 1920, a French woman named Madame Guérin learned of the custom. Madame Guérin decided to make and sell poppies to raise money for children in war-torn areas of France. The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion's predecessor, then officially adopted the poppy as its flower of remembrance on July 5, 1921. Today, the poppy is worn each year during a remembrance period to honour fallen Canadians. The legion also encourages the wearing of the poppy for the funeral of a veteran and for any commemorative event honouring fallen veterans. It's not inappropriate to wear a poppy during other times to commemorate fallen veterans, and it is an individual's choice to do so, as long as they wear it appropriately.

I want to say thank you to the millions of Canadians who wear the legion's lapel poppy each November. The little red flower has never died and the memories of those who fell in battle remain strong. Today, we pay tribute to all the veterans, the Royal Canadian Legion — especially the local legion here — and in our communities — we don't have legions in all our communities, and I know there is one in the Premier's riding, but there are a lot of volunteers in the communities. Some are associated with the legion and some are not, but they go forward, they get those poppies out there, and they organize activities in the weeks leading up to Remembrance Day and they're there on Remembrance Day.

So as a proud member of the legion, I understand the work that is done at this time of the year. I can tell you that it is sure appreciated. So please wear a poppy. It's your duty to make sure that the actions of those who dedicated their lives and died for our safety, freedom and independence are never forgotten. Lest we forget.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** It's a great honour to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to acknowledge tomorrow as the first day of the legion's annual poppy campaign. We can easily make the mistake of thinking that conflict doesn't affect us because it only happens in faraway places. We forget that right now in Canada, armed conflict is affecting our friends and neighbours. Families have been separated as men and women have been sent off to distant places. Today, right now, Canadians continue to live with the very real consequences of war.

I used to think that everyone understood the importance of the poppy. I used to think that people generally understood that the red flower worn close to the heart was a symbol of remembrance and that they understood that the poppy was a visual pledge to never forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice for what we have today.

Some days, Mr. Speaker, I am less confident that the symbolism of the poppy is still remembered, so here are a few things to remember. First, poppies are not for sale — you don't need money to get a poppy — you just need to have the will to wear one. Donations are graciously accepted but not required. Secondly, poppies not only acknowledge the sacrifice of those who lost their lives, but they acknowledge the sacrifice of those who answered the call of duty and walk among us today.

Finally, you can disagree with war — you don't have to like it or support it or even want to talk about it. I totally get that. Ask a soldier and they will tell you that they don't like or support war either. The poppy isn't a symbol that supports war. It doesn't symbolize the politicians who make the decisions to engage in armed conflict. The poppy symbolizes the men and women who have borne the cost of those decisions. It lets the families of soldiers know that you care about the sacrifices that they all have to make.

Years ago, the first time I worked at a poppy table for the Legion Branch 254 with my friend Max, I was surprised by the amount of people who wouldn't make eye contact and by the amount of people who, when asked, said, "No, I don't want a poppy." Even after we explained that they didn't need money for the first half hour, only a few people stopped at our table. I asked Max, "Has society really forgotten the symbolism behind the red flower?" Then, Mr. Speaker, a young man came to the table. He reached into his pocket and he pulled out his wallet. He smiled at us and said that he used to be a cadet, so he knew the importance of the poppy and he put \$20 in the box. It was amazing. It was like an invisible barrier had come down.

Max and I continued to explain to people that they didn't need to pay for a poppy and that they just needed to want to wear one and that if they felt like it later on, they could leave money behind at the next poppy table they saw. We pinned poppies on the lapels of a great many people last year, but it saddens me to say that twice as many people passed us without even looking up. That young man changed everything for me. He gave me the hope that the sacrifices made by Canada's veterans — military and RCMP, both past and present — will not be forgotten.

Poppies take such a small amount of real estate over your heart, but they represent so much more. They honour the veterans of the past, they show respect to those serving in the present and they foster the hope for the future. Lest we forget.

*Applause*

### **In remembrance of the *SS Princess Sophia***

**Mr. Hutton:** It is truly an honour and a privilege for me to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia*. On this day in 1918, the *SS Princess Sophia* of the CP Steamship Company sank after running aground on Vanderbilt Reef in the Lynn Canal, taking the lives of all passengers and crew members aboard. Although we will never be certain of the actual numbers, best estimates are that 350 souls lost their lives that day.

The vessel departed Skagway on October 23, three hours behind schedule, at 10:00 p.m. bound for Juneau, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Prince Rupert, Alert Bay and Vancouver — its final sailing of the northern panhandle route for the season. Four hours into the voyage, amidst blizzard conditions and a particularly hazardous and narrow section of the Lynn Canal, the *SS Princess Sophia* was drawn off course, striking the infamous Vanderbilt Reef head-on. Marooned on the treacherous reef, the captain wired for help. Other ships soon arrived, but rescue efforts were immediately thwarted. The other ships could not risk getting too close to the reef and the *SS Princess Sophia* could not launch its lifeboats for fear they would be dashed on the rocks. The captain and would-be rescuers held out hope that the weather would calm, but over the next 40 hours, it only worsened, with tides and gale-force winds combining, washing the *SS Princess Sophia* further atop the reef, twisting and tearing her hull in the process.

This must have been the longest 40 hours ever endured by people. Hopes were raised, and then dashed as each opportunity to lower the boats presented itself and then vanished due to the extreme weather.

Sometime in the early hours of October 25, the *SS Princess Sophia* was swept off the reef, sea water rushing into its torn hull, and she quickly sank, taking with her all on board. When seas and winds finally subsided and the rescue flotilla could once again approach the reef, all that was visible of the once proud *SS Princess Sophia* was her mast.

Before this tragic event, the *SS Princess Sophia* was a crucial lifeline, moving people and supplies throughout remote BC and Alaskan communities along the Inside Passage. Though landlocked Yukon communities were not ports of call for the *SS Princess Sophia*, they nonetheless relied on her as a main cargo and travel route. With her sinking, Yukon lost a core of its mining and transportation community.

Some of the names that I would like to mention include: a prospector, William Scouse; a miner, Robert Hager; esteemed mountaineer, Walter Harper; all seven members of the O'Brien family, pioneers in the Klondike transportation field; and more than 100 employees of the White Pass & Yukon Route. These men were captains, first mates and deckhands on all the steamers and paddlewheelers that provided for our communities throughout the territory. It was a terrible blow to White Pass the next year as they tried to find experienced captains, first mates and deckhands to run their vessels.

I want to talk a bit about Robert Hager. Why Robert Hager was leaving the Yukon is not known, but he was an interesting example of a way of life chosen by a handful of Yukon pioneers. He was born in 1873 and went north during the rush, working as a miner and fur trader. In 1905 and 1906, he served as a special constable for the mounted police at McQuesten post. About this time, he took the fairly unusual step of formally marrying a First Nation woman, a resident of Mayo named Liza Jimmy. During the war, he worked for some time as a carpenter in the Mayo district. I would like to give credit to Ken Coates and Bill Morrison for their excellent book, *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia — Taking the North*

*Down with Her*, and also to the Mayo Historical Society's *Gold & Galena*, and Lynette Bleiler and Linda MacDonald for the information, for preserving this history for all of Yukon.

George Black, former Commissioner, former Yukon Council member, Yukon's MP for 15, who had become acquainted with Robert Hager in 1902 or 1903, testified on his behalf during the hearings that were held following the *SS Princess Sophia* disaster. He described Hager as a man of good habits and who saved his money and invested most of it in mining. In the summer of 1900, Robert Hager was panning and earning \$6 to \$9 a day by panning bars on the Stewart River.

Black also testified that Robert Hager was approximately 45 years of age at the time of his death, and that his son Edwin would have been about 8 years old in 1918. After his father's death, Edwin Hager was raised by his grandmother, Jenny Jimmy.

It was the worst maritime disaster in the Pacific Northwest, with devastating and lasting effects on the region. However, the World War I armistice, coming as it did so shortly after the loss of the *SS Princess Sophia*, global events resulted in it being largely forgotten.

For many years, it has been called the "unknown Titanic" of the west coast, but events and exhibits leading up to this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary aim to change that. Two permanent exhibits went on display at the Dawson City Museum and the Yukon Transportation Museum in 2017, with a third travelling exhibit touring the territory leading up to this year's commemoration. Through the special capital assistance projects fund, we have proudly contributed to the development of these exhibits, and it is estimated they have already been seen by more than 40,000 visitors.

Beginning today until November 23, the Yukon Arts Centre gallery is hosting the Maritime Museum of British Columbia's excellent *SS Princess Sophia* exhibit. I would encourage all members of this House and all Yukoners to visit this exhibit to recognize and honour these lost souls, who were true pioneers of the Yukon.

This exhibit has already toured British Columbia and Alaska, with plans to bring it to Ottawa, Washington and Oregon in the near future. The Royal Canadian Mint recognized the historic significance of this nautical tragedy, releasing a special silver commemorative coin. Our sister city of Juneau, itself heavily affected by the sinking, has mounted an impressive array of commemorative events, including lectures, graveside memorials, tours of Vanderbilt Reef and even an opera.

I would like to say thank you to all the historians — especially you, Mr. Gates — curators, organizations and community partners who have preserved the memory of this tragic and defining event, which has had such drastic and long-lasting impacts on our region. I would also like to give a special thanks to the authors Ken Coates, Bill Morrison and David Leverton from the Maritime Museum of British Columbia for putting a human face to this tragedy. It's not just a list of numbers; it's not just a number — 353. These were all people. I'm so proud today to see descendants of people who

went down on the *SS Princess Sophia* here in the audience with us. Thank you so much for being here today.

I'll conclude by reading a poem entitled *At Rest*, written by James Parkin Harris and taken from the excellent book written by Ken Coates and Bill Morrison:

She was loaded to the gunwales  
 On her journey south was bound,  
 She was just the boat for Klondikers,  
 A Princess of renown.  
 They waited long in Skagway,  
 Until she hove in sight.  
 And the joy of those old timers  
 Made Skagway ring that night.  
 They left the dear old Klondike —  
 Their hearts all filled with glee,  
 With the thoughts of friends and loved ones  
 And old homes they longed to see.  
 Some were going to old mothers  
 Some to sweethearts, some to wives;  
 Some were going out for country  
 And the freedom of our lives.  
 Some weathered many stormy gales —  
 Brave captains were there, too,  
 Who always landed safe in port,  
 And again it still is true.  
 Some had bags of gold in plenty;  
 Some with nothing but their fare;  
 But you could not tell the difference,  
 Once you breathed the Yukon air.  
 They'd suffered cold and hunger —  
 Reverses were not new —  
 And if you ever needed help,  
 Their gold sacks emptied, too.  
 There were fathers, there were mothers  
 With their children on that boat,  
 And the love of those old timers  
 Was the same as when Christ spoke.  
 But, ah, the good Sophia  
 Through darkness lost her way.  
 And now she's at the bottom  
 Of Lynn Canal this day.  
 A host of friends have left us,  
 But they have gone to join the blessed —  
 Praise God that all these noble souls  
 Have won eternal rest.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* — a century since this tragedy. We also pay tribute to all Yukon and Alaskan families who lost loved ones in this ocean tragedy. Some refer to the *SS Princess Sophia* as the "Titanic of the west", not to be compared in size or grandeur, but rather because the two ships suffered an eerily similar fate. Both ships took their maiden voyage in 1912. We know the *RMS Titanic* did not

finish its voyage and we know much about this so-called “unsinkable ship” through documentaries, books and movies.

The *SS Princess Sophia* was called a “pocket liner” because it offered many amenities as an ocean liner. She went on to become one of the fleet of coastal passenger steamships serving the northwest coast between Vancouver Island and Alaska. On October 22, 1918, the day before the ship departed Skagway, Alaska, a sourdough dance was held in the evening and it was a festive occasion. There were rumours that World War I was drawing to an end, but the call for service was still there and the sense of victory was all around. The men who were making their way south to join the troops were celebrities, but the voyage started poorly. The Skagway departure was delayed, and they quickly ran into strong winds. The ship was quickly enveloped by fog and snow and visibility was limited. It was not long before Captain Leonard Locke lost his bearings and at 2:00 a.m., the *SS Princess Sophia* hit Vanderbilt Reef head-on.

This large, submerged reef is in the centre of Lynn Canal with a length of about seven miles. It was the decision of Captain Locke and the crew that they would be safe until conditions cleared, and although there were rescue boats nearby, he felt it would be too dangerous to take passengers from his ship to other vessels. He would wait and, communication being what it was 100 years ago, this decision was to prove fatal. Imagine — and I know that I can’t — the passengers, who had those 40 hours waiting and hoping for the winds to die, and hope for rescue, and hope, and then despair.

On October 25, 1918, the *SS Princess Sophia* sank, taking all down with her. We know that many Yukoners were aboard that vessel, and ties to the capital, Dawson City, were many.

As we mentioned today, there was the Burkhard family and I didn’t know about the Hager family. We also have Ralph Zaccarelli’s grandfather, who had just sold his store in Dawson and he perished as well on the *SS Princess Sophia*.

Of course, questions abounded. Should the captain have reduced his speed? Should the captain have at least attempted to remove passengers as the winds did die down a bit? But after court battles it was decided that CPR — Canadian Pacific — and Captain Locke were not responsible and had done everything possible to save the lives of those on board. No log book was recovered and no survivors to tell the story. All that remained was the mast above the water and what they could recover from the depths that could piece together a story.

Tragedies such as the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* tend to be forgotten as the years pass and generations pass, but we are so fortunate to have to so many individuals, companies and organizations that prioritize and preserve the history of our territory. This week, Yukoners are being treated to the remarkable history of the *SS Princess Sophia* and as I listened to David Leverton on the radio this morning, it was a wonderful recap of the story. Tonight, there is the opening of the exhibit and the reception at the Yukon Arts Centre at 5:30 p.m. and, as was mentioned, this exhibit will run to November 23. Please make time to visit. It serves us to remind

everyone of our ties to this ocean disaster and to the many who perished.

*Applause*

**Ms. Hanson:** I’m pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party to join the tribute today to the activities commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia* — activities that will culminate today at 5:30 p.m. at the Yukon Arts Centre with the marking of the exact hour at which all on board the *SS Princess Sophia* perished.

Pulling together the fragments of this important part of the history of the Pacific Northwest and its special impact and importance to Yukon history takes vision and commitment. Several years ago, David Leverton, who has already been introduced and has joined us in the gallery today, told me that he was working on putting together a major exhibit on the *SS Princess Sophia*. As a former long-time Yukoner, David understood the importance of bringing back to Yukon an event that many today may not be familiar with, but which is nonetheless an event that has deeply affected many in Yukon and beyond.

When I first came to Yukon many years ago, the story of the *SS Sophia* was part of the mystery of the Yukon. There were folk songs about it. There were people throughout the communities in Yukon whose families were directly affected and yet it was never a high-profile part of our history. Today we extend a special thank you to Mr. Leverton and to the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the many partners along the Pacific Northwest in British Columbia, Alaska and Yukon who have contributed to this anniversary exhibition and the process of engaging with communities all along the route of the *SS Princess Sophia* along the coast of BC and Alaska.

Much has already been said today about the events leading up to the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia*. We will never really know exactly what transpired between 10:10 p.m. October 23, 1918 when she left Skagway and the moment approximately 40 hours later when all aboard perished.

We will never really know how many people actually perished, even though we know the boat had a maximum capacity of 500 passengers and 75 crew members. The initial death toll was around 343 people, but many believe that it is likely there were undocumented work-aways and stowaways on board — an unfortunate fact that is in itself another tragedy.

Putting a name to all who died may never be possible. As the Member for Mayo-Tatchun has already noted, Yukon historian Ken Coates and Bill Morrison, authors of *The Sinking of the Princess Sophia — Taking the North Down with Her*, have tackled the important task of bringing the stories of the people on board to light — at least those stories that were known. Personally, I wonder what stories went down with the 13 Chinese migrant workers listed on the passenger list.

Maritime tragedies have a long history of inspiring music and art and tonight, Mr. Speaker, when we gather at the Yukon Arts Centre for the opening of the *SS Princess Sophia* exhibit, we look forward to hearing local educators and

musicians Chic Callas and Daniel Halen perform Dan's song about the *SS Princess Sophia*. Along that same vein, if you happen to be in Vancouver on November 9 or 10, you can catch The Little Chamber Music Series that could be performing a piece called *Sounding the Sophia*. Inspired by this historic event, they will musically explore the vibrancy of the people aboard the ship, the power of the natural world and the implications of loss.

The human spirit seeks always to rise from tragedy to hope and beauty. Today, we thank those who do so in the name of the *SS Princess Sophia* and all who were touched by her sinking.

*Applause*

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports removing natural gas as a qualifying energy source under the Government of Yukon's independent power production policy.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise in this House today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to work with the communities of Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Canyon Creek, Champagne, Mendenhall and Takhini to improve the standard of highway vegetation control as requested by those communities to address safety concerns and improve visibility.

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

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

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to amend the *Miners Lien Act* to better protect Yukon mining suppliers and contractors and ensure that they get paid.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: School capacity

**Mr. Hassard:** Last week, the Minister of Education said — and I quote: “Accuracy is important to me.” Yet she claims she had only become aware of overcrowding, causing children to be home-schooled, on October 11. That was quickly disproven as media informed her office on October 10. Further, the minister had been sitting on letters dating back to December of last year, detailing serious issues of overcrowding. Now we know the minister doesn't think this is a terrible problem, but she needs to show some urgency, and pointing to a 10-year capital plan that is already a year overdue is cold comfort for the families struggling today.

Can the minister please tell us how much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity in our schools?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I don't like to start the day like this, but certainly there are a number of inaccuracies in the preamble to that question. What I will concentrate on for Yukoners is the fact that an enrolment pressure in our Whitehorse schools, particularly our elementary schools, is a fact. It is something that the department is paying extremely close attention to. We are working with school communities in order to address those issues.

The concept of enrolment increasing is not, in fact, a new problem. We know every year, when projections are being made, how many students are potentially coming to our Yukon schools because we base that number on birth rates here in the territory. Of course, what we can't necessarily account for are families who are moving to this jurisdiction to benefit from the economy and to benefit from our way of life here, which, of course, is something that we all cherish.

Working with school communities is critical — the enrolment pressures, the enrolments in individual schools, working with the school communities and working with the administration is something that the Department of Education is doing on a daily basis.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly did not hear an answer to the question, so we will try again. The question, I think, is very simple and to the point. How much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity? Is that number zero? Is it \$1 million? What is it? Maybe the minister doesn't know or maybe she just doesn't want to tell us, because as we do know, she doesn't think that overcrowding in our schools is a terrible problem to have.

Once again — simple question: How much money will be invested this school year to expand capacity in our schools?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Again, I find this really disturbing. Yukoners deserve better. The member opposite is quoting half of what I said, which is that it is not a terrible problem to have because our economy is booming and our population is growing, and more and more individuals are moving to the Yukon and having their families for the purposes of settling here and making our communities better. If he wants to start with that, I am happy to meet him halfway with respect to that, but if he is going to quote me, I would really appreciate the full quote or an accurate quote.

With respect to enrolment pressures in the Whitehorse schools, it is a top priority for the Department of Education. It is something we work on every year.

Enrolment pressures are recognized and, frankly, have been available to the government for a number of years, because we are aware at least five years ahead with the birth rate, individuals and children coming up through the system, exactly — well, we don't know where those pressures will be necessarily, where individual families will settle, the demographics of neighbourhoods and the changing ways in which that happens here in the territory, but it is a top priority. We are working with the school communities that have ultimate pressures and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think that Yukoners deserve an answer. We know the Liberals have decreased the budget for capital investments in our schools by 50 percent, if you compare this year to last. Meanwhile, the Premier is giving himself a raise. There are schools in Yukon that are in need of investment this year, Mr. Speaker. The minister has had letters dating back to December sitting on her desk detailing these issues, but she has taken no action. It's time to start talking about things and start doing things.

What concrete action will the minister take this year to address overcrowding in our schools — not 10 years from now, but this year?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Unfortunately, just because the member opposite is not listening to the answer to the question doesn't mean I'm not answering it. There is a long list of actions that are taking place on a daily basis. There are concepts of dealing with school councils, working with school administrations to reorganize their space, to do renovations, where possible, to have them supported by the department about enrolment. We are working with the Yukon Teachers' Association when necessary to have an extra student to be put in a class here and there, but we are taking a look long term and widely across the city to determine how we can adjust and deal with and provide the educational services that Yukon families deserve — and that students deserve in Yukon schools and, in particular, in Whitehorse, which is where we're feeling the enrolment pressures. It is something we take extremely seriously and I would very much appreciate if the member opposite could stop saying that, one, we're not working on it and, two, not taking it seriously, because that's just not accurate.

#### **Question re: Coroners Act review**

**Mr. Cathers:** The Minister of Justice failed to properly consult on the *Coroners Act*. The high-level so-called engagement did not allow people who would be affected by the legislation to see key details of the new act. The Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, the Yukon Medical Association, Volunteer Ambulance Services Society Yukon, Yukon Child and Youth Advocate and others should have had the opportunity to see the details of the legislation before it was tabled. The RCMP were consulted, but Justice officials told us they were not allowed

to see the text of the bill, even sections that directly affect the authority of an RCMP member following a fatality.

Will the minister please rethink her government-knows-best approach, press the pause button and immediately go and consult these Yukoners?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I'm very pleased to speak about Bill No. 27, the *Coroners Act*, which is before this House as we speak and look forward to future debate of that in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, it will not surprise you that the *Coroners Act* is outdated. It is based on an ordinance from 1958. It was amended briefly in minor ways in the last 60 years. The Department of Justice conducted a thorough review of the existing act and its regulations and has drafted an updated version, which is before this House as Bill No. 27.

A public engagement survey was made available to Yukoners in July and August 2018. There were targeted engagement letters to the Yukon First Nation governments, to the RCMP and to community coroners. We worked closely with the coroner. We spoke with the former coroner. There was a *Coroners Act* committee that met weekly for months and months and, despite only receiving some comments last week from the Child and Youth Advocate, we are very keen to work with her on the suggestions that came forward. The RCMP wrote comments with respect to the *Coroners Act* that were extremely helpful and taken into account in the drafting of this bill.

**Mr. Cathers:** I know this is reminiscent of the Minister of Highways and Public Works' failure on the *Public Airports Act* debacle. If the Minister of Justice is focused on the needs of Yukoners, she should be humble enough to recognize that she made an error by not properly consulting and take immediate steps to fix it.

There are four weeks left in the Fall Sitting. The government can go out today with an expedited consultation on the text of the new *Coroners Act* and speak to all of these groups and partners before proceeding. If there are changes necessary, we can make them and pass the bill before the end of this Sitting. We're offering a constructive solution here.

Will the government please go out and consult these Yukoners?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The Coroner's Service needs support of a modernized piece of legislation. An updated law will also ensure that the correct professional resources oversee each stage of the coroner's case and the independence and impartiality of the Coroner's Service is protected. That is what Bill No. 27 is designed to do.

Some of the suggested comments that we received — over 220 responses from Yukoners during our public engagement — were obviously taken into account with respect to going forward with the drafting of Bill No. 27. Some are already in Bill No. 27. Others can be addressed in regulation, which is a process yet to come, or perhaps through amendments to other pieces of legislation.

The *Coroners Act* is a tool that will provide our Yukon chief coroner and our community coroners with the authority

and the tools they need to carry out their important investigations on behalf of Yukoners.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Liberals ran on the slogan of “Be Heard”, but now that they’re elected we’re seeing a pattern of ministers dropping the ball on consultations or failing to consult entirely. Then when it’s pointed out how they made a mistake, instead of taking action to fix it, they ignore the voices of Yukoners who were left out and plow forward. If this Liberal government really cares about consultation and ensuring the voices of health care professionals, first responders and families are heard they can go out today and consult on the *Coroners Act*. We can still easily pass an amended version of it before the end of this Sitting.

Why won’t the minister agree to consult? What is the worst thing that can happen by agreeing to consult the Yukon Medical Association, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, Volunteer Ambulance Services Society Yukon and the hospital?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I suppose I forgot to object earlier in the answer to the last question about the personalizing of debate and I do find the language being used insulting.

I do think it’s an opportunity now to remind the members of this House and Yukoners that the Coroner’s Service provides a quasi-judicial investigation independent from government, law-enforcement, agencies and health authorities. That is not to say that we are not very keen to know what those organizations have to say about the effect of the *Coroners Act*. We have consulted publicly and broadly, asked for interventions, received interventions and comments and great suggestions that have been incorporated into this piece of legislation.

The independence of the Coroner’s Service is important to recall. There is a process through which we will be adopting and consulting for the purposes of engaging the public about the regulations that will come forward, many of which will be detailed and will provide the additional tools that the Coroner’s Service needs to serve Yukoners.

#### **Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre inmates’ mental health**

**Ms. Hanson:** The Yukon Review Board is an independent panel established under the *Criminal Code* to deal with individuals who are found to be unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible due to a mental disorder. When an individual is unfit or not criminally responsible, it is up to the review board to look at the history and psychiatric assessment information of the individual and make a disposition.

The disposition or ruling can be a discharge or direction for the individual to be held in a designated hospital or other restrictions in order to keep the individual and the public safe. Sometimes it is necessary to send individuals under the Yukon Review Board Outside to receive appropriate treatment and supervision that is not available in the Yukon.

How many individuals are currently under a Yukon Review Board disposition and how many of those individuals are currently placed outside of Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I take no issue with any of the description of the Yukon Review Board process or authority noted by the Leader of the Third Party. I do not have at my fingertips the number of individuals who are under the review board process or who are being treated through that process outside of the territory. I will endeavour to get those numbers for her.

**Ms. Hanson:** We appreciate that commitment from the minister.

When an individual is sent Outside to receive treatment, hopefully to improve their situation, one would expect that the review board would be following their progress. We know that the board must review the status of individuals under a disposition at least once a year to determine if they are still unfit to stand trial. Though the individual may be under the care of a facility or treatment centre, the public understanding is that the Yukon Review Board is ultimately responsible for the person, including their well-being. It is now known that an individual under a Yukon Review Board order at a facility outside of the Yukon died while incarcerated in a provincial remand centre.

Our question, Mr. Speaker, is: Where does the responsibility of the review board begin and end when directing an individual to treatment outside of the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Again, I don’t disagree with anything in the preamble to the question by the Leader of the Third Party. I do think that her question raises facts and, in particular, queries about a specific legal jurisdiction. That is a question that will require research in order to provide her with that information.

Again, I will endeavour to contact her outside of the Legislature in order to provide that, but it would not be advisable for me today to speculate about that. It is certainly a question that we are working on at the department with respect to another matter that is dealing with the jurisdiction of the review board.

**Ms. Hanson:** We do look forward to that additional information from the minister because, Mr. Speaker, a young man under the care and direction of the Yukon Review Board died in an Outside remand centre — that is the fact. In the past, he had also received services from Health and Social Services. The fact of the matter is that he is not the only person who has been sent away from family, community and Yukon to receive a level of care and supervision not offered here. We know that there are services Outside that provide better supports than here, but when do we as a community say “Enough”? Currently, the government is paying nearly \$2 million to Outside agencies and service providers. One agency alone receives over \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is a more general question: When will this government look seriously at the complex needs of Yukoners and start planning services for them here rather than sending them away from family and community?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I appreciate the question. It is getting close to speaking in the Legislative Assembly about a specific case, and I want to be careful not to do that.

I certainly want to take the opportunity to note that, with some of the individuals who are subject to the review board, there are — as the member opposite noted — simply not the services available to treat their specific issues here in the territory. The review board — and not to speak for them, but certainly my experience in appearing before them is that they always try to take the opportunity to connect individuals to family and supports and to keep them in the territory if at all possible, but in some cases, that simply isn't possible. We have a great relationship with the forensic hospitals or the treatment centres in other jurisdictions that help Yukoners on our behalf.

**Question re: Home warranty programs**

**Ms. White:** The front page of Monday's *Whitehorse Star* reports that a condo corporation is suing a condo builder for construction deficiencies. This is what happens when there are no home warranty programs to protect homeowners. Their only recourse is the courts. I asked the minister a couple of weeks ago what work has been done on this file since the Assembly unanimously adopted my motion a year ago calling on the government to look into bringing in a home warranty program. At the time, his answer certainly didn't make it sound like a home warranty program is a priority for this government.

Now that this issue is on the front page of the paper and in front of the courts, will the minister acknowledge that the current system doesn't offer sufficient protection for homeowners?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank the member opposite for the question. What I will say is that, based on that motion that we debated here on the floor of the Legislature, the department is going through a work plan this year to investigate the home warranty program as per that motion.

I followed up with them recently to ask how that was progressing. I am sorry that I don't have a response here today, but I know that work is ongoing. I will say that we are committed to programs that ensure that homes are properly and safely constructed. We recognize the significant investment that Yukoners have in their homes and will explore ideas that could give homebuyers more peace of mind about the quality of their new home or renovation.

In the Yukon, we do not have a mandatory new home warranty program; however, a robust building inspection process exists for new buildings and renovations. The City of Whitehorse and Community Services help to ensure that these standards are met by performing building inspections in their respective areas of responsibility, and we encourage prospective homebuyers to work with their contractor or home builder to ensure that a warranty is in place prior to purchase.

**Ms. White:** It is interesting because building inspections were highlighted with concern for this very issue. Last week, the minister tabled a legislative return saying that the department conducted a cross-jurisdictional analysis. The problem is that I have another legislative return that the same minister tabled in June 2017 — more than a year ago — that speaks of how other jurisdictions, like British Columbia and

Manitoba, address this issue. So it seems like the cross-jurisdictional check was already done even before my motion was adopted.

The only new step that the minister is taking, according to last week's legislative return, is that a letter was sent out to the contractors association, the real estate association and real estate law firms.

Hopefully, sending letters is not a year's worth of work for the minister, but aside from that, why has he not also engaged homeowners to this day, a year after the motion was adopted?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I hope I can make it clear that it is not me who is physically doing this work — that it is the department, and I actually think they are doing a fair job. When I asked them to come back to let me know where they were in the process, it appeared to me that they were being diligent in their work. I have great faith in the department and in the work that they are doing, and I look forward to getting the report back.

Mr. Speaker, it is always a matter of process that we do a cross-jurisdictional scan whenever we start looking at policies and regulations to try to compare ourselves to other jurisdictions. You want to draw from the best that is out there. We may disagree here in this Legislature about what is best — that is totally fine — but I don't think it's right to suggest that the department isn't doing its work.

I am happy to return to the department again and get a further update for the member opposite. My understanding is that the work is ongoing over this fiscal year, and I look forward to the results of that work. I think that the point I want to emphasize is that we will continue to explore this issue and are committed to programs that ensure that homes are properly and safely constructed.

**Ms. White:** It is interesting, because this isn't about the work of the department; this is about the minister's priorities. I am convinced that if the minister said, "This is a priority and we need to move on it", the professionals at the department would get the job done. With all due respect, the minister's words, as nice as they sound, don't match his track record on the issue. A full year after this motion was adopted, all the minister has done is send a few letters and he hasn't even reached out to homeowners. How are we to believe that in all this time he will actually get the job done? If a unanimous motion by this Assembly wasn't enough to make this a priority for the minister, what will it take? Yukon homeowners deserve better protection, and a home warranty program has been proven to work in other jurisdictions. The least Yukoners deserve is a clear timeline from the minister to make up his mind.

When will the minister be done with his so-called "exploration" and be ready to make an actual decision on a home warranty program for Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This is just fascinating timing. This morning, I happened to have a conversation with the Leader of the Third Party about this very thing and I did give her a timeline — that timeline was in it. I think I alluded to it in my earlier responses.

After we had the motion here in the Legislature, I turned to the department, I asked them about a timeline to do this, and they said to me that they would do it over this fiscal year — that is the 2018-19 fiscal year. When I turned back to the department and checked on them recently, they said that the work was underway and going well, and I anticipate a response by the end of this fiscal year. There's my commitment.

The direction that I gave, by the way, was to make sure that this happened because it was a motion that we had here and agreed upon in this Legislature. That's the reasonable thing to do. What I'm not doing is calling up homeowners myself, but if there are homeowners who have concerns, I remain totally open to receiving that information. I will certainly pass it on to the department that is doing this work.

**Question re: McKinsey & Company association with Government of Yukon**

**Mr. Hassard:** We know that the Deputy Premier invited and hosted a senior partner from McKinsey & Company to Yukon. This company was referenced in a story in *The New York Times* where it was stated that they produced a report identifying critics of the Saudi Arabia regime. Those critics were later arrested.

This company and a senior partner were tied to another scandal in South Africa. According to *The New York Times* report from June, they signed a \$700-million illegal contract with the South African government. To quote from the story: "I take responsibility," McKinsey's managing director, Dominic Barton, said in a recent interview." This is from June.

Does the Premier believe that it's appropriate for the Government of Yukon to associate with this firm?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Just to recap — I had the opportunity to participate in a discussion with Dominic Barton, to whom the Leader of the Official Opposition is referring, as well as Tosh Southwick and the deputy minister of Economic Development earlier this week.

I've also had the opportunity to do the opening address and introduce him for the Opportunities North conference and then had an opportunity to speak to local media in our scrum yesterday. I certainly don't condone some of the activities that have taken place in the Middle East. There have been a number of occasions when I have worked with the college to invite individuals to speak to hear their perspective.

It's interesting — today is poppy day. I had an opportunity to bring Roméo Dallaire there and speak. We've had First Nation leaders come and speak. I think it always helps to have that — especially in an academic setting — to hear different people's perspectives.

I did a quick scan just over the last week — the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, senior members from different political parties across the country, University of Waterloo — different individuals and organizations who continue to stand by and at least listen to these perspectives.

I'll wait for questions 2 and 3, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hassard:** We heard this morning on the radio the Deputy Premier brush off reports of the Saudi government using the McKinsey report to arrest critics of the government as — quote: "... just one news story".

I don't know how many news stories it takes for the Deputy Premier to start to get concerned, but a quick Google news search this morning turned up 59,000 results when you searched this company in Saudi Arabia. To dismiss these reports, I think, is rather disappointing.

*The New York Times* reported this dictatorship as silencing their critics with the help of a document from the firm whose senior partner the Deputy Premier held a public event with. Given that the Deputy Premier now knows of these revelations, and given that there were revelations of a corruption scandal in South Africa that this company was involved in, would he invite them here to do a public event with him again?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Official Opposition. What's a bit of a challenge is that I will leave it to my constituents and the Yukon business community, which I have worked with for many years, and the many NGOs to stand behind the record of what my decision-making is and if I take the proper values behind my decision-making and the individuals I associate with. Once again, I do not belittle activities that are happening.

The article that was presented by *The New York Times* — I'm guessing last Sunday — spoke of an activity the company took part in that took place in 2015. Once again, I don't think that data should be misused. I don't believe that companies should undertake this activity — if that's all accurate — but I also think this is a bit of the opposition trying a bit of a smear campaign. I understand that and Yukoners understand that.

Would I attend another talk by Dominic Barton if I was at the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference or Waterloo University? I probably would — and others; I think the discourse is good. But I'll wait for the third question and a little more smear, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hassard:** Yesterday evening on CBC *Northbeat*, we saw footage of the Deputy Premier running interference against the local journalists to prevent them from being able to ask questions of Mr. Barton. Does the Premier believe that this is appropriate, for members of the Liberal Cabinet to interfere with journalists who are trying to do their job?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Once again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite is talking about local journalists who wanted to have a discussion with me. I believe the protocol that CBC stands by is if somebody is asked for an interview and they accept that opportunity, then there can be an interview. That situation was a little interesting. There was a bit of dialogue between the reporter and back to the cameraperson to run a camera, although there had not been consent for an interview. At that same time, I know that Dominic Barton had said he would do an interview but just didn't feel it was appropriate to speak to this specific topic, being that he was not a managing partner anymore.

Once again, I'm always open to speak to this topic — more questions next week. I really believe that I didn't

undertake anything that was inappropriate. I would hope that the Leader of the Official Opposition, if there is something I have done that is inappropriate, would please let me know and we can continue to talk about that in the Legislative Assembly.

I do want to thank the Yukon chamber for a great Opportunities North conference and the standing-room-only event that happened at the college. I once again look forward to continuing to work with our chambers.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Deputy Chair (Mr. Adel):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

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

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

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

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

Is there any general debate?

**Mr. Istchenko:** Before I get into some questions today, I do want to thank the Deputy Minister of Finance for coming today. I welcome her to the Legislative Assembly and thank her for her time.

My first question is to the Premier. Can he tell us what date the government is going to close the government-run cannabis retail store?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We will definitely give him time to get in line before we do so he sees the beautiful facility. I

haven't been in yet, other than well before it was open, but I will get in there and take a look.

We're going to go back and forth between the Yukon Party thinking that we should have immediately started this whole thing out with a private sector investment as opposed to us taking on that obligation now that the federal government has legalized cannabis in Canada, but I am going to continue to disagree with the member opposite. We talked just yesterday about price point. We know that when California legalized, the illicit market price went down almost 80 percent overnight.

If the member opposite knows of a business that could present a business case to a government where the price — where they would have to come into — had to be negotiated by the federal government, as far as excise tax, and where the distribution had to be controlled, just like liquor, through the territorial government, and then be able to provide a product that is registered through the federal government, where they don't really know the competition — which is the illicit market — they don't really know where that price point is going to end, I would love to know who they have up their sleeve to do that.

This is a responsibility that we don't take lightly. This is a regional responsibility that this territorial government believes we need to do first and foremost because of, not only just the legislative reasons and the regulatory reasons, but I also think it would be very hard for a private sector investment to be able to, from day one, get into this market and be competitive.

For this reason and this reason only, we don't expect a profit on this. All of the reports that have come out have said that within the first year there are no profits to be made here. I am not sure exactly what kind of business case the Yukon Party is looking for as far as getting somebody into a retail market where there are no profits, necessarily, with all of the excise tax and with all of the distribution considerations.

Again, we have been talking with private sector interests here in the Yukon. We are excited that there are going to be some options. There is some further legislation that has to happen on the edibles market as well, which is another product that may or may not be part of this picture. We believe that it is our responsibility to take on the brunt and make sure that we are ready for legalization. Anytime I have an opportunity to give a shout-out to the Liquor Corporation — to the board — and to the whole-of-government approach, when it comes to all of the different departments that have fed into the working groups that come along with this herculean task — it is a lot of work. Time will tell, but we don't anticipate being in this business for long, but we will be in this business for long enough to not set up the private sector for failure.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I gather that you are not going to be in the business forever, but there is no real date. I don't know if the Premier can have a little bit more of a timeline, but it would correlate to my other question: What date will the private sector be allowed to open cannabis stores in Yukon communities? When this government closes their cannabis store, will the private sector then be able to open their stores?

Will it be before? Will it be after? The Premier alluded to it earlier that if we know of someone — of course, we know of someone, because we have told them to get in contact with the government and the Premier has heard from people who want to open private stores. My question again is: When is the store going to close, and will the private sector be able to open before or after it closes — and some timelines, if at all possible?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am not going to speculate as to when that time happens. We definitely took a look at the regulations and the legislation from a hybrid perspective and understood that we would start and the private sector would get into this business. We continued to develop the regulations to support the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act* so that the territory was prepared when cannabis became legal on October 17. Our priorities for cannabis legislation are more than just the capital sales. The private sector coming into a market where, by all accounts and from very conservative think tanks saying that there are not going to be a lot of profits here in this industry because of the set-up costs, but also the educational campaigns and social considerations — our mental health hubs — we believe that we have to be there and present as this becomes a legal market. I think that is the conscientious thing for a government to do.

I think what the members opposite are trying to get at is that they think that we are going to be in this business right up through our term and into the next term, but we do not think so. We really are waiting for us to — one of the biggest waits was to see that the sky doesn't fall. I think there are always conversations about legalization that make you wonder if people think that marijuana has now become available because it is legalized.

That is simply not true. The issues of marijuana are known. Canada, as a country, has a high proportion of users compared to anywhere else in the world. Yukon has huge rates as well. There are huge health concerns and educational campaigns that we want to be involved in with the legalization.

To set the minds of the members opposite at ease, we never anticipated being in this business for long, but we do believe that, in this particular case, we have to be there at the beginning for legislative, health and business reasons. I think we have done a good job of getting ready. Again, when you take a look at the store — everything there, the way that they hired staff, the way that we had temporary assets in that building — all things lead to the fact that we are waiting to be able to hive this off to the private sector to make sure that we have another business consideration here in the Yukon for the private sector to enjoy.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I really didn't get a timeline, but the Minister of Community Services speculated in this Legislative Assembly that it would be in the spring. Does the Premier agree with him?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The good news about the Minister of Community Services is that he will be available in Committee of the Whole to stand up and answer a plethora of questions from the members opposite. I would ask them if they have any

specific questions for him that they wait until then. But again, if the minister is confident in a certain timeline, then I am confident in my minister.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Regarding the large shipment costs for cannabis from online government-run retail stores — we brought this up in Question Period — it was mentioned by CKRW that the cost was \$12. So some questions: Is the Premier able to tell us that this is the same cost for every community or just Whitehorse? Will the government-run store charge more for shipping to the communities if it isn't? Can the Premier also tell us if the \$12 the cannabis store is charging for shipping goes 100 percent to Canada Post? Is Canada Post charging the government-run cannabis corporation \$12 for shipping on something as small as a joint?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We keep hearing this number of \$12 or \$13. We heard \$18 from the members opposite before. That is not the lowest price per gram, as the members opposite know. When we are talking about shipping costs, we can get that information to the member opposite.

I want to talk about the negotiations that we did on a federal basis to make sure that we had the lowest possible cost before legalization. There was a huge conversation going back and forth about the excise tax and how much of that was going to be shared from the federal government and the territorial government, and the feds started out wanting most of it. Then, when it got to the Finance ministers meetings, it got down to 50-50. All of the regions did an excellent job of identifying the cost pressures, — whether it is education, health and social services or working with the RCMP — and how those costs are related to the territorial and provincial governments compared to the federal government.

In that conversation, we were very happy to get a 25/75 split, so that 75 cents per \$1 of an excise tax comes back to the Yukon. That was a big effort, but again it was based upon evidence from all jurisdictions and it was a good conversation to have.

Now, in that conversation as well, you have to remember that we just have the GST, whereas other jurisdictions have higher prices as well — higher prices from a harmonized sales tax — so we do have a benefit as a government comparatively to offer the product for a lower price than other jurisdictions. The conversation was about \$10 a gram and we significantly reduced that price. I'm very happy to have that low cost.

Now, whether it's a private consideration or a public conversation, the shipping charges are going to be the shipping charges. We are focusing in on making sure that our price point as a government is as low as possible because I'm assuming that the reasoning for this question is based upon competing with that illicit market and making sure that we have the best ability to do that. I am as concerned as the member opposite — now that it's legalized, it will be interesting to see what the illicit market does for their price point. As I have mentioned before, we have seen other jurisdictions where that illicit market went crashing down comparatively. That is a really important part of the conversation. Equally as important — I would even say more important — is the fact that through the distribution and the

regulation of a controlled substance, of a controlled drug, the harms of extra chemicals let alone, dare I say, other drugs being in a product is being taken care of when you have a product that has been distributed and regulated through the federal government and into the territorial and provincial government.

There is lots going on, but members opposite can be assured that, when we are looking at the price per gram, we're doing our utmost to be competitive while at the same time having an education campaign, an enforcement campaign and a legislative agenda that works. We are prepared for the next installment as we look at the federal government and what they're going to do with more products in this field like, for example, the edibles market.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I was asking about the \$12 in shipping and basically the question was: Is that going to be the same when it goes to the communities or is it going to be more expensive to ship to the communities?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That would be a flat rate of \$12 everywhere and again, a private sector is still going to have to figure out shipping as well. That would be a consideration regardless of whether it's a government or a private sector interest.

Under being open and transparent, if the members opposite would like to take a tour of the cannabis facility tomorrow morning, then we would love to host them and give them a tour of the facility. If there are any other questions that they have specifically for the amazing manager and her staff, this would be welcome from this side of the House.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Yesterday in Question Period, the Minister of Community Services stated that the federal government is requiring single joints to be shipped in oversized boxes much larger than the actual items.

Just to confirm — the federal government insists that a single joint has to be shipped in a six-inch by four-inch by four-inch box. Could the Premier or minister provide a legislative return indicating where the federal law states that a joint has to be shipped in that size of a box?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would respectfully ask the member opposite that if he has any questions for the federal government to ask them those questions. We are concerned about packaging, that's for sure. We're concerned about the extra amounts of plastics that are being used in the shipping of these materials and we will be hoping that this conversation will be continuing with the Liquor Board, the Liquor Corporation, the minister responsible and the working group — and also me. I will hopefully have a chance to be able to speak directly to Finance ministers meetings and to the Council of the Federation when it comes to packaging. It is a big issue. This is a lot of plastic that we're seeing in these packages, but if the member opposite has specific questions about sizes of packaging from the federal government, then he should ask that government.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I had just explained the size of the shipping box and I was looking to see where, or how, the store knew that it had to be shipped in that size. There should be some information out there that the department has. If the

minister doesn't have it at his hands today, if he could find it that would be wonderful.

Can the Premier also update us on how many supply agreements, contracts and purchase agreements the government has for cannabis supply?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As we work on the finalization of the regulations to support the *Cannabis Control and Regulation Act*, there are lots of questions, for sure. Currently, the answer to the member opposite's question is that we have eight, but I do want to go on a little bit here about our priorities.

Our priorities for cannabis complement those of the federal government — that's an important piece to remember as well: Providing for the legal, controlled access to cannabis, and again, to displace that illicit and criminal activity and also to prioritize public health, public safety and harm reduction, with a focus on protecting our youth from the negative health effects of smoking and ingesting marijuana.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation, as the designated distributor corporation, is responsible for the distribution and retail sale of cannabis in Yukon. We've heard questions from the opposition before about how we lavishly spent \$3 million on this product. Again, it needs to be said, well yes, anybody would have to buy the product, and then there are going to be profits from that product as well. I just need to state that, because we've heard the Yukon Party say a few different times about how this is a lot of money, but yet, we see and hear stories right across Canada of people running out of supply right away.

At Opportunities North we heard from distributors down south — some of the concerns that they have is that there will be a glut in the market over the first six months. After that, things will stabilize and they'll actually be flush with product right across Canada, according to these conversations that I've heard from Alberta companies who are working with the governments there.

It's interesting; we do have eight companies that we're working with right now. Distribution — that responsibility lies with the government — same with alcohol — so these are things that we need to make sure the members opposite understand as we make the debate public. It's an important piece.

Another piece of information again from packaging: packaging requirements are set federally, so we are writing to the federal government about our concerns about packaging; so we do share the concerns of the Yukon Party as far as packaging from the federal government goes. Again, if there are specific questions he has about why the federal government does certain things, again we would ask him to send that conversation over to the federal government.

We are working hard to be ready and to accept applications for private sector retail licences. It would be great if we could get that going as soon as possible in 2019 and see all the legislation and regulation work that has been done. It is a big task and I do believe that having the Liquor Corporation operating the temporary cannabis retail store in Whitehorse makes a lot of sense, as well as the e-commerce site to ensure that Yukoners have access to purchase non-medical cannabis.

The store and the e-commerce sites are both up and running. We have heard some stories right across Canada that it might not have been such a smooth transition. I'm so extremely proud of the government and the workers and the team who got us to the finish line in time.

There were a couple of little snags when it came to online for the first hour, but just a real group effort. I really believe the public servants deserve huge recognition for a milestone accomplishment in the Yukon. It's one of those things: you don't know what it looks like until it happens. The sky didn't fall, and now we're very busy to make sure that we educate people about the harms when it comes to youth engaging with cannabis, but also getting away from that illicit market. We're hearing so many horrible stories Canada-wide when it comes to drugs in our communities. Any step we can take to separate the illicit market from a controlled substance is something that, on this side of the House, we will support.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I will remind the Premier that distribution only lies with the government because the Liberals decided to go that way. Pharmacies are able to do it without the government's help — just imagine the profits to the private sector instead of government coffers.

I had asked about the purchase agreements the government has and he answered that. What is the total value of the purchase agreements, and how much product do those agreements represent — amount to — a number?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think we are just going to continue to agree to disagree on how a regional government should be — and has responsibilities to be — here and now when it comes to the legalization of what was once an illicit substance.

The member opposite can talk about pharmacies, but you could also talk about liquor and the regulations on tobacco and the monitoring that needs to be there, in our opinion. I believe that we are doing the right thing. If the narrative is that they think that we are never going to get out of this business, I guess we don't have a crystal ball, but I am sure Yukoners will see that we mean business when we say that we want to get out of that business.

When it comes to sales, there was an initial order-in-council and there was an initial order, I guess, for \$3 million. Sales to date — these are fluid numbers. We have to make sure of two things — one is that we put enough money up front to make sure that we had enough product, because all of the stories, all of the reports and all of the analysis that was happening up until legalization was that, Canada-wide, there was not going to be enough supply. We made sure that we had enough agreements with enough companies and wholesalers to have product. Sales up until yesterday at the store and at the online store are around \$218,000, with 4,500 store customers and 3,100 site visits. Again, if this was hived off to the private sector, we probably wouldn't get these numbers.

There is a lot of statistical relevance when it comes to the legalization that is really important for the government to be involved with, let alone putting out something that, by all accounts, there isn't going to be a profit on and to saddle the private sector with being responsible for the selling of a

product that, by all accounts, doesn't seem to have a big profit in the first year. We think that we have made a good decision, and we are looking forward to working with the private sector once we get past the first few days and months and figure out how we can make sure that transition is smooth and we don't saddle a company with something that may fail from the private sector perspective.

Also, you have to look at the difference between — the member opposite talks about pharmaceuticals, but we are talking about intoxicants here. We are talking about legal cannabis being an intoxicant, and so you have to compare oranges to oranges on this one. I am not sure particularly — we have seen different votes from the Yukon Party as far as moving forward on particulars about this, but I am interested if the members opposite are in favour of legalization of cannabis. We know that they want the private sector involved, but we haven't really heard from them necessarily on how they feel on the actual legalization, which is an interesting conversation that is happening right across Canada.

**Mr. Istchenko:** In the Premier's comments — did the Premier just suggest earlier that the Government of Yukon orders and distributes tobacco? I think he said that.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We work with the companies that provide that. We do have an obligation to make sure that the taxes being paid on that drug — on tobacco — are accounted for, and that is how we are involved in that market: making sure that the taxes are paid. As the member opposite knows, we have increased those costs to try to get ourselves realigned with other neighbouring jurisdictions, but that is where our participation is involved with tobacco.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Last week, there were some reports that the government-run store only received about 40 percent of its supply. Can the Premier or the minister update us on that — provide some clarity around that?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That is correct — 40 percent of a bigger amount that we are ready for and we have that commitment for. Again, that is planning — just to make sure that we don't run out — that is the hope. Again, on the first day I believe we ran out of some specific strains, but we did have lots of alternatives. Again, 40 percent up front with a commitment for more — just to make sure the supply chain continues throughout that time frame where, in the first six months, there are lots of studies and analysis that say it will be hard to secure additional sources. I think it was very savvy of the Yukon Liquor Corporation to pick the percentages for warehouse supply but also for a commitment with these companies and wholesalers to make sure that we have a continuing supply as we turn to the first few months of legalization.

**Mr. Istchenko:** The Premier mentioned regulations, so a couple of questions: Will there be public consultation on the regulations? When will they be completed? When will those regulations come into force?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** To set the stage, first and foremost, there have been lots of conversations with the private sector as we move from the initial date of legalization and get through the bumps of that and supply. There will be more to come, as

far as dialogue. This is one of those things where the department and all of the ministers who are working on this are really champing at this bit to make sure that we get more information out. These things will happen in time.

We have been doing an awful lot of engagement in the Yukon in the last two years. I am very proud of the amount of consultation that we have been doing and we will continue down that path — more to come on those specifics. We know that some groups and stakeholders in the past have felt that they have not been adequately engaged on important issues. That is why we changed the approach of how we engage in the Yukon on important issues. We want to get better at this and I believe in the last two years we have been getting better at this. We have committed to continuous improvements and learning from our mistakes. We are very proud of the efforts that have been taken over the past year with things like developing a tourism strategy, for example, or talking Yukon parks or with the cannabis legalization. It has been a huge effort for public engagement and working with stakeholders, working with the private sector.

In the past year alone, we have hosted over 38 engagements on [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca), and we are asking Yukoners to rate those experiences to make sure that every time another month passes — another season passes — that we get better and better at that engagement and continue to meet our commitments with continuous improvement in the aspect of consultation. There is more to come specifically on cannabis and how we're going to get out of that business. Thanks to the whole-of-government approach from the Minister of Community Services, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Economic Development, this has been a comprehensive file. I'm extremely proud of the departments.

**Mr. Istchenko:** So will there be public consultation on the regulations moving forward? When will those regulations be completed? When will those regulations come into force?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm at a place right now where I'm confident in the information that has come out of the corporation. We have had public dialogue and engagement on the cannabis legislation — very comprehensive for the legislative piece. We're going to continue consultation moving forward. The minister has spoken about spring 2019 — again, we will continue and we will update the members opposite as these consultations and conversations continue. I have nothing more to add today other than what the minister has communicated through his department and press releases and here in the Legislature, but when more information becomes more available, I will let the members opposite know.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the Premier for that.

I just want to go back to one thing. I want to clarify — the \$12 for shipping that the cannabis corporation is charging — does 100 percent of that go to Canada Post? Does the minister know that answer?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm assuming that the member opposite is asking if we as a government are keeping any of

the revenues from the postage costs. I'm looking at a verbal yes — and the answer is no, we're not.

**Mr. Istchenko:** How many employees are currently working at the cannabis corporation in retail, warehousing, distribution, ordering, et cetera? What are the plans for those employees once the government shuts down the government-run retail store?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When we looked at staffing — both the retail store and the warehousing of the product — we were making these considerations fully knowing that we were not going to be in this business in the long term. For example, the manager signed a contract — not a full-time commitment. By the way, that person is amazing — a great and very enthusiastic person to meet — and really wants to help to get rid of the stigma of this as being an illicit market — and coming into the legal trade.

When it comes to department employees, or FTEs, what we tried to do most was to borrow from other departments — borrow from the Yukon Liquor Corporation — so that we weren't hiring full-time new employees for something that we know that we are getting out of the business of. I think the department did a fantastic job of doing that.

Those are very specific numbers. We did invite the members opposite to a tour tomorrow. We can have those numbers available for the member opposite by tomorrow's tour if there is anybody from the Yukon Party going on that tour.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I guess that would extend my question because the Premier brought it up. Across all of the government — dating back to the drafting legislation, consultation, enforcement training and everything — how many FTEs were dedicated to this, and what was the total cost to the government? If I can maybe get that in a legislative return? I know I won't be there at the tour tomorrow. The Premier had offered to get those FTE numbers, but I know there were a lot of FTEs from different departments that started working on this — like I said — back at the drafting of the legislation, the consultation, the enforcement, the training and a lot of the other stuff that went with it. If I could get that in a formal legislative return, that would be good.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Other than the FTE numbers that we're going to be giving the member opposite, there is no additional cost. I remember in the Legislative Assembly over a five-year period asking the Yukon Party how much money they spent on litigation for the Peel. When they gave us those numbers, they didn't calculate all of the Finance department and Justice department public servants working on these files, so it is the same thing.

When you take a look at just the regular business of moving forward on legislation, the regular business of working with the departments — this is the job of the public servants and that is their job as we move forward in whatever direction. Whether it is the legalization of cannabis or hauling back the legislative changes made by the Yukon Party with the ATIPP act or moving forward on the *Societies Act*, these are the things that take a whole-of-government approach. This is the job of the legislators — in Justice — and the

departmental officials. Again, there are no extra costs other than the FTEs, and we will get those numbers for the member opposite.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the Premier for that and look forward to seeing those numbers. One thing just popped back into my head about the shipping. The Premier is saying that Canada Post charges basically the same — shipping in Whitehorse or shipping to Old Crow — and also that the corporation is not keeping any revenues from the shipping costs.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Real shipping is \$14 to \$15 per package to communities, and it is \$10 to \$11 in Whitehorse. What we did was set a flat rate, so that flat rate is \$12 so as to not create a barrier between rural and urban. I guess that understanding might be where the member is getting his questions from. When you take that average of the cost to extend — it is more expensive the farther you go from Whitehorse. Again, we have taken that as an aggregate. We have taken that and said we will do a \$12 flat rate. We are not collecting money — and I have been very clear on that — when it comes to the postal services to ship marijuana. What we have done — to make sure there is not a divide between rural and urban communities — is we have set a flat rate. Even though Whitehorse shipping would cost us less — \$10 to \$11 — shipping to those communities would average out at about \$14 to \$15 per package to those communities. I hope I have answered the member opposite's question.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Just for clarification then — if the shipping costs a lot more to ship to the communities, will the government be paying those shipping costs but only charging the proponent the \$12 or what the Premier just said in this House?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes, the member opposite is correct. Actually, if you take a look at what we're doing here to try to average out the cost to Yukoners, we may actually be subsidizing a bit. There is not going to be more spent by Yukoners than what we are actually paying on this. We have done it in a conscientious way to make sure that we average it out to make it fair and, in the end, we may actually be subsidizing a bit of the cost to mail out the product.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Another question would be: When will the information and details on the new condo corporation regulations for condo boards regarding cannabis be ready? Will there be training or information sessions for condo corporations regarding obligations, responsibilities and the rights around cannabis?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** This is under the responsibility of Community Services, so I would ask the member opposite — as Community Services does have an expense in the supplementary budget and will be appearing here in Committee of the Whole — to address all questions that are related to Community Services at that particular time.

**Mr. Istchenko:** This month, British Columbia revised its mandatory course on the responsible service of alcohol for bars and restaurants to include a section on identifying patrons impaired by alcohol and cannabis. Has the Yukon done the same, or is it planning on doing that?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you to British Columbia for such an endeavour. We will be doing something similar, and that is on the way.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Can I get the Premier to repeat his answer for me please?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The answer was yes.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Is this work being done internally or will it be contracted?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It will be internal. We're taking the BARS approach — the Be A Responsible Server approach — to liquor and we're trying to apply that to the cannabis industry. That work will be done internally but, again, we will be partnering with stakeholders as we move forward.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the Premier for that. Can the Premier let us know the status of the collaborative framework he promised the mining industry to address timelines and reassessment?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Can I get the member opposite to just ask the question again and I will answer?

**Mr. Istchenko:** I was just wondering about the status of the collaborative framework that the Premier had promised the mining industry to address timelines and reassessment.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The work continues on the collaborative framework. We're just working on finalizing our details for a tripartite meeting that will take place during geoscience — where we will see corporate leadership, government and First Nation leaders come to the table. We have discussed the agenda for that collaborative framework in our last two MOU chief subcommittee meetings — one in Dawson City the day after the last Yukon Forum and one about three weeks before that. The work continues — shared priorities — and continues to focus on how to reduce duplication, streamline regulation and, at the same time, address some of the long-standing concerns by First Nation governments.

**Deputy Chair:** Order. We seem to have a little trouble hearing. If we can check that mic or perhaps, Mr. Pillai, when you answer again, you can just move over one mic.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The other day in Question Period, two days before cannabis became legal, we raised a number of questions regarding obligations and responsibilities of employers once cannabis became legal. Those questions came to us straight from employers who felt that they were left in a state of not having any information. At the time, the Minister of Community Services said, "Don't worry; everyone has the information they need."

As I said, those questions came straight to us from a number of employers who had not received the information, even after trying to. Despite the minister's claim, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board issued an information document for employers 14 hours after cannabis became legal, which was a little odd considering the government had a long time to prepare and let everyone know what was going on. Could the Premier let us know why they waited until after the legalization to send this information to the employers?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Not being responsible for Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, but again, when departments act, we assume they are acting as soon as they possibly can. If the member opposite is assuming some kind of coincidence there, it might just be that — a coincidence as far as timelines — but I am assuming that the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is not going to wait on information; they are going to give it out as soon as they are ready to do so.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I just found it interesting that the minister said, "Don't worry; everyone has the information they need." Then 14 hours after cannabis became legal, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board issued an information document.

According to the government website, one of the key themes this government heard during the initial engagement on the *Liquor Act* review — and if the Premier can actually give us an update on the status of the *Liquor Act* review — was that the government should review the rules around minimum and maximum liquor prices. Can we get a status on the *Liquor Act* review? Can the Premier let us know what sort of policy changes the government is considering in this area?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Work is ongoing, and I don't have any update for the member opposite right now but, as updates become available, I will let him know.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Will the Premier then be able to update us on the status of the warning labels on liquor and beer in the territory?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, I don't have any updates to share about liquor labels right now.

**Mr. Istchenko:** We know there were some stories over the last years about the disputes with major alcohol manufacturers around the warning labels. Can the Premier, or maybe the minister, update us on the status of those disputes?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do not have any updates for the member opposite.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Does the minister have an update on that?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We do not have an update for the member opposite right now. I do have, interestingly enough, a legislative return submitted by the Minister responsible for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board from October 16 to the Member for Lake Laberge, following up on the implementation of legalization of recreational cannabis as far as information being put out there to the general public when it comes to legalization of recreational cannabis — questions like the responsibility and liability for employers with respect to the potential impairment, also what help will the government provide to help employers determine impairment with regard to legal cannabis, also a question on the case of workplace incidents investigation and what tools will be used to determine whether cannabis impairment was a factor — all submitted before legalization.

**Mr. Istchenko:** According to the "what we heard" document, there was support for changes to retail channels and rules as they apply to retailers, such as stand-alone beer and wine stores, sales in grocery stores or remote sales. Can

the Premier or the minister comment: Is the government considering any of these options?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Suffice it to say that there is consultation ongoing as we go through the regulations. A lot of different opinions have been given as we've gone out and talked with business and stakeholders, and those consultations are ongoing.

**Mr. Istchenko:** One more thing, before I turn it over to my colleague, about warning labels: Are they still being applied today?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The study has been completed.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Are there still warning labels being applied then? Are the warning labels being applied in every community?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We're back to the original labeling now that the process has been done.

**Mr. Hassard:** I will stick with the marijuana questions for a few minutes, if we can, since that seems to be the line that we have been following.

The Premier talked about, in terms of shipping, that if there was a deficit, the government would cover it. What happens if there is a surplus in — I guess we will call it — the shipping account, for lack of a better term?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is highly unlikely but we would readjust. We're not trying to make money on shipping.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly wasn't insinuating anything. I just was curious what would happen if that was the case.

I have another question regarding the training part of when all the training was taking place when marijuana was becoming legalized or about to be legalized. On the public contract registry, there is a contract for Appendo Learning Systems for \$22,000 for the development of Be A Responsible Server. Did that have anything — you can't hear me? I can't talk any louder, so we have a problem. It says the mic is on. The blue light is on. The button is not pushed.

The tender for Appendo Learning Systems for Be A Responsible Server — the direct award contract for the fiscal year of 2017-18 — the start date on it was January 18, 2018, the end date, April 30, 2018 — \$22,000 — did that have anything to do with the legalization of marijuana? Was that training for that?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** There were a lot of initiatives that were ongoing at that time to make sure that we were ready for the sale of cannabis. I don't know specifically. We will have to get back to the member opposite, as far as if that particular contract was specifically for cannabis legislation. I can get back to the member opposite for that.

**Mr. Hassard:** If the Premier could get us that information, we would certainly appreciate it.

I have a couple of questions regarding housing. First, I was wondering if we could get updates or if there is anything new for the housing action plan. I know that we heard the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation mention it a few times in the Legislature here, so I am just curious if she could, or if the Premier could, point to anything new or anything that has been added to the housing action plan.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Our strategic initiatives and partnerships to increase affordable housing in Yukon are guided — as members opposite know — by the housing action plan for Yukon. The pillars of the plan do support housing options for Yukoners at all stages in their lives. We are extremely excited that the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation is taking a second term on a national level as the chair of housing initiatives. Again, anytime that we have the opportunity on a federal basis to explain the differences of Yukon to other jurisdictions and also to have a voice at the table that has decades of experience when it comes to self-governing First Nations and those considerations on a national level, it is very important and it is always great for Yukon. In the last year, we have increased the housing options available to Yukoners by extending the municipal matching rental construction grant and launching the developer-build loan program and also initiating the housing initiative fund, which will provide funding for new housing projects for Yukon.

Seniors are a priority for this government and we are committed to working with the public, stakeholders and partners to more clearly define what aging in place means to each community under the category of housing. We are also providing housing for vulnerable Yukoners by building a 16-unit Housing First build, supporting Blood Ties construction and also the Steve Cardiff tiny home community. We are also continuing to make land available to support the construction of new housing for Yukoners.

This includes land development work in Whistle Bend and in Yukon communities. That is actually one of the supplementary items. We do have an increase because of the added pressures and need for land. That is one of the line items that are in the budget — it is nice to finally get to one. We are committed to maximizing those opportunities available through that national housing strategy by working with our partners to implement priorities, as outlined in the housing action plan for Yukoners, and also through the Safe at Home plan and the forthcoming indigenous housing strategy as well — much more to come on that.

I believe that we have nearly completed the review on social housing, which will initiate a new approach over the coming years, and we have initiated a new approach to staff housing. We will continue to work throughout our recommended options this fall to make sure that we support the Government of Yukon staff in Yukon communities and promote economic growth in those communities as well.

**Mr. Hassard:** I was wondering if the Premier could maybe just give us a few details on this new approach to staff housing in communities.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I wish I could, but we are not there yet. When information comes in, we will make it available. It is really important that we are continuing to work with staff housing and to make sure that is available to Yukoners.

In the 2018-19 budget, just to continue on with the members opposite's questions when it comes to investments, the 2018-19 budget highlighted close to \$40 million in investment in housing and new building lots, including:

\$6 million for affordable housing; allocating \$2.4 million for the northern housing fund; \$3.6 million for the housing initiative fund; \$15 million to develop new lots in Whistle Bend subdivision in Whitehorse, and of course, we know that there are added pressures there as the supplementary budget has shown; \$1.8 million to plan and develop rural lots; \$8.9 million to improve existing housing; and I think \$2.7 million was allocated for Housing First residences for vulnerable people.

Regarding staff housing, we will let the public servants do their work. We are waiting for the evidence to come in — taking a look at the analysis and making sure that we are providing services in each community based upon community need, and that is the most important piece. I know that the member opposite has been to the Association of Yukon Communities conversations and knows that, as we talk about housing, the concerns in Faro are different from the concerns in Dawson City or in his community of Teslin. They are working to make sure that we are finding efficiencies in all departments. Again, we are initiating an analysis there as well, and if we have any more information, we will gladly make it available to the members opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** This analysis that the Premier is speaking of — is this some kind of community consultation that is taking place? Who is doing the analysis? Who are they talking to? Who are they getting the information from for this analysis?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I gave the member opposite the information. Internally, we are taking a look at housing and there is more to come on that.

**Mr. Hassard:** At the start of that, the Premier said that they have launched a new approach into staff housing in the community. Is it actually launched to do something or what exactly are you getting at? What has been launched? I asked what is new and you said you have launched this new thing and you are doing this analysis. I guess I am asking: What exactly does it entail?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** What we have launched is for housing, to take a look at how we can most efficiently work with all communities to provide housing in those communities — launched.

**Mr. Hassard:** In regard to community housing advisory boards, have there been any changes made in terms of the roles and responsibilities of community advisory housing boards?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is the same process — no changes.

**Deputy Chair:** Introduction of visitors outside of the regular time.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kent:** I just wanted to draw the House's attention to the gallery. Two people sitting up there are very important to me: my wife Amanda, who joined us during this Sitting and previous Sittings, and also my son Eli Kent, who is no stranger to this House, but I think this is his first time during this current session of the Legislative Assembly. He visited us

before in 2015. I would just ask all members to welcome Amanda and especially Eli to the House here today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** My understanding was that there have been some changes made to the — I'm such a computer genius — the programming in the computer system for the Yukon Housing Corporation for the housing managers in the communities so that there is no longer the involvement of the board in choosing who is moving into houses. That's obviously something that has changed and that's one of the things that I was curious about. I believe that would be considered a change in roles or responsibilities of the local advisory board. I guess maybe the Premier could confirm if that is that the case. Do the local advisory boards no longer go through the applications to determine who is eligible or who receives housing in the communities?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm happy to say that the Yukon Housing Corporation — as it expands its role in Yukon communities, we look at the housing navigators as a means in which to provide necessary supports to clients who are accessing units in the communities. We have a rating system that determines clients — how they fit into the criteria of accessing houses in terms of more imminent need versus those who are on the wait-list. The computer system does that rating system for us. I think the staff can't really manipulate it. The objective is to neutralize and provide supports where necessary, but we do have housing navigators and we have the tenant relations officers who provide direct support to clients in our communities. That's exactly how we provide service delivery.

**Mr. Hassard:** I thank the minister for that. I'm not sure — I know my head's kind of stuffed up. Maybe my ears are plugged too, but my question was: Does the local advisory board still determine who receives housing or is it completely on the computer through the point system as determined by the computer?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** With respect to the question around whether or not the community advisory board makes decisions and take on the role of allocating units, I think we are, in terms of looking at essential needs of individual clients — that is not determined by an advisory board.

We have an advanced process that we're looking at to ensure that for every client who comes into Yukon Housing Corporation — whether a client of Health and Social Services or Yukon Housing Corporation — we ensure we provide the supports they require and that the department provides support through a navigator and through the tenant relations officers.

We are modernizing, so we are looking at the role, as we move with the advisory committees in our communities and their efficiencies. Of course, there are opportunities for the community advisory boards to perhaps grow as well and look at some input from them on efficiencies.

**Mr. Hassard:** If I had a question for the minister, it would be: How does she see the advisory boards in the communities growing? What could possibly cause them to grow if their roles and responsibilities are actually decreasing?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Interesting question. The communities are changing. As the communities evolve, we see added pressures in the communities and we see an aging population, so when we speak about housing and housing access in our communities, we really need to modernize and look at providing services that are essential and meet individuals' needs in the communities. As we expand the scope of services through the Yukon Housing Corporation and through the budgetary process and the service delivery process, it's really incumbent on us to look at modernizing and providing efficiencies, especially when we're looking at rural Yukon communities.

We speak a lot about the programs that we have and the link between health and housing around the Housing First initiative. We're looking at every door being the right door, looking at opportunities to be safe in your own home and looking at initiatives to ensure that the funding and the resources that are available in Whitehorse are also extended to the communities. When we speak about modernization, that's exactly what we need to look at, because 10 years ago is not where we are today. We have a growing population, we have an aging population and we have a booming economy, meaning that we need to start looking at efficiencies in our communities.

**Mr. Hassard:** Not quite sure what any of that really meant, but I'll try one more time.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Hassard:** Okay, thanks. I'll continue.

The question I asked was: If the advisory boards' roles and responsibilities are decreasing, what does the minister see as growing in terms of the advisory boards in the communities?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I don't recall saying that the role was decreasing. I talked about modernizing. I talked about added pressures in the communities and looking at meeting the demand where the demand is needed, ensuring that we work with the Yukon Housing Corporation Board and that we look at efficiencies in our communities, because every community is different, as we know.

We have some unincorporated communities that have no services whatsoever, and we try to align the services and supports for each one of those communities.

As we look at the community advisory board, we look at opportunities in some of these communities that perhaps don't have efficient services. Modernization could mean a lot of things. It means implementation of resources that we receive and ensuring that it gets out to rural Yukon communities in an efficient way — that every individual who requires support is given the support and the advice that we receive from the advisory board or from the Yukon Housing Corporation board of directors or from community partners all feeds into an overall modernization and efficiency of services.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am going to try this one more time — maybe I will focus in. Okay, I will use Teslin as an example. The Teslin Housing Advisory Board is now no longer responsible for determining who receives a house. The minister just told us here a few minutes ago that their role is

growing in other ways. So again, maybe if I am more specific: For Teslin and Watson Lake, how are the roles growing and expanding for those community advisory boards?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think the question was answered a couple of times. As far as when communities are modernizing and when technologies are modernizing, new pressures do come, and so we will be relying on these boards and communities throughout all the communities to also modernize and to change responsibilities, and that work will be ongoing. The member is looking for something specific. This work is ongoing and so the answers will be ongoing as well. I think the minister responsible has answered the question a couple of times. It might not be enough information for the member opposite, but again, I think he can understand that, as we modernize and as we move forward as societies, we have new obligations and that work is ongoing.

**Mr. Hassard:** I understand modernizing and moving on, but clearly the answer from the minister made absolutely no sense, but anyway — let's try something else.

I had written a letter to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation on June 26, 2017, specifically asking about one unit because, as everyone here in the Legislature knows, housing has been a big issue in Faro in terms of selling. The town has sold several units and Yukon Housing Corporation has been sitting on three units in Faro that are out of service and obviously not going back into service. I had written a letter to this minister, as I said, on June 26 asking about one of those units in particular — and the unit number is 862100. I received a response back from the minister in August 2017 saying that these units were in poor condition and, due to the scope of major repairs, these units will not be brought back into service, as they have been deemed beyond economical repair, that Yukon Housing Corporation's intent is to remove these units permanently from their stock.

It is 14 or 15 months later, and I am wondering if the minister could provide us with any update on where the Housing Corporation is in terms of moving those three units out of their stock?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** The information that the member is asking for specifically as to whether one unit is out of stock or not — I will certainly follow up with the department. With regard to addressing housing needs and looking through a budgetary process, the department is looking at each community's needs and aligning that according to the budget process.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think that selling these units off would help with the budgetary process. I would appreciate it if it is possible for the minister, through a legislative return, to provide me with an update on some timelines on when these units are going to be sold. I have been talking to a couple of individuals over the last couple of years who were hoping to purchase these units. I have asked them to wait patiently because it was coming, because I have a letter saying that it is going to happen. Could we receive that information from the minister — hopefully with some timelines on when those units will be removed from the housing stock?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I will provide the member opposite with the information, but I will not endeavour to put forward a legislative return. I can get that information and note that we are not — as I understand it — proposing to sell the units as the member opposite noted — perhaps I heard wrong. As we go through the exercise of the reviews and needs of the communities, we will take into consideration all of our communities and, in particular, where we are with units that we take out of the system. As the member opposite knows, a lot of units that we have in Yukon Housing Corporation stock are well over 30 years old and not a lot of resources have been put into that housing stock. Modernization is really something that we want to consider when we look at bringing the buildings up to the national building standards and ensuring that they meet building code requirements. That assessment is being done right now on all of the housing stock across Yukon — all units that are under the management of Yukon Housing Corporation.

**Mr. Hassard:** With respect to these units, the assessment has been done. The letter says that the assessment has been done. The units have been deemed beyond economical repair for our purpose. The intent is to remove these units permanently from Yukon Housing Corporation stock — I said this earlier. Yukon Housing Corporation will dispose of these units accordingly. I guess I am curious now: Is the minister saying that they don't plan on getting rid of these units, Mr. Deputy Chair?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I informed the member I would provide the information. I would be happy to do that directly to the member. I'm not making any suggestions. I'm saying that we're taking it under budgetary advisement and we're working with the Yukon Housing Corporation on assessing all of our housing stock across the Yukon.

**Mr. Hassard:** In July of this year, a contract was awarded to a BC company to undertake a review of Yukon Housing Corporation's loan program to provide the corporation with recommendations on possible program closures, revisions or realignment. The RFP document stated that a first draft of this review would be completed in September of 2018, with a final completed by the end of October. We haven't seen any drafts yet of this report, so we're curious if the minister has because we are, as you know, nearing the end of October.

Would it be possible for the minister to provide us with an update on the status of this review? Has she seen the report? When does she expect it to be released to the public?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** The work is still under review by the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors.

**Mr. Hassard:** Does that mean that the draft has gone to the Housing Board for review?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** As I stated, the board of directors is reviewing all of the information that they have before them. The note that the member opposite makes is with respect to how things happen within the Housing Corporation. The board takes the information and works in collaboration with the president of the corporation and, once that work is completed, the recommendations and the review will come

back to me as the minister responsible, and I will be happy then to share that out once it has gone through its due process.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just to clarify, the Housing Corporation board has a copy of this draft review and they are currently reviewing it before they bring it to your attention? Is that my understanding of what you are saying?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I believe I answered the question. I said that the Housing Corporation board is looking at the information they have before them. I'm not making any suggestions or responses to the member opposite with regard to whether a draft exists or not. I'm saying that the board is taking under advisement and under review the process that is in question.

**Mr. Hassard:** I don't think that the minister understands. I'm asking a question about an RFP that the Yukon Housing Corporation put out. The draft was supposed to be ready for review in September, so I'm asking: Is that draft being reviewed now? For the minister to say that the Housing Corporation board is looking at information — is the information from that draft review? That's the question that we're trying to determine.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Let me take a different stab at this. I believe I am trying the best I can to simplify the information.

The RFP has gone out. We have worked with the contractor, and the preliminary findings are with the board of directors as we speak. Once that process concludes, we would be happy to provide information and summaries.

**Deputy Chair:** Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

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

**Mr. Hassard:** Continuing on with some housing questions, many existing Yukon Housing Corporation loans — including home ownership programs, such as owner build, first mortgage and down payment assistance program, home repair programs, home repair loans, emergency repair grant, rental development and repair programs — are very important and very well-subscribed to throughout the entire Yukon. I'm curious if the Premier could tell us what is being considered with regard to these programs — if any of them are on the chopping block, I guess we'll say, or if there are any plans for realignment of any of them.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Yukon Housing Corporation loans and grants are intended to provide support for the development of quality, affordable housing stock that meets the needs of Yukoners. Because each community is unique, we look at the programs and services that have been designed historically and we look at flexibilities and responsiveness to community needs. So our loan programs help Yukoners and homeowners

and landowners to buy, fix and repair their homes. Our grant programs help to increase affordable rental stock within our communities.

We put some resources into some alternative programming to support and enhance the loan and grant programs throughout Yukon by providing capital grants to developers, contractors, individual homeowners and community organizations. The grant programs help to diversify Yukon's housing market in Yukon communities and to collaborate with Yukon municipalities, First Nations and private developers — so really trying to look at expanded scope — providing support through various loan programs to meet Yukoners' needs and support them in getting resources that they need if they're not available through conventional financing.

We know that in some of our communities — unincorporated communities or communities that don't have facility land available or are governed through a self-governing process — people are not able to get conventional financing. We need to look at some flexibility.

As we look at the affordable housing stock and when we speak about meeting the needs of Yukoners, we need to consider all Yukoners.

**Mr. Hassard:** I agree. As I've said, these are very important and very well-subscribed-to programs, and they certainly have their place here in the Yukon.

My question was: Are any of these programs planned on being cut or changed, or are there any major realignments to any of those particular loan programs?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would direct the member opposite's attention to the main budget on page 20, section 4.

The capital vote, when it comes to Yukon Housing Corporation, for 2016-17 actuals was roughly \$31.7 million. The amounts to be appropriated for this year, the 2018-19 year — whether it be in repairs and upgrades, home ownership, community partner and lending, social housing, staff housing — if I went to the total capital appropriation, the actuals were \$14 million — sorry — for 2016-17 and \$30.8 million, as estimated. There is nothing new to update other than the capital dollars that were put in the mains.

**Mr. Hassard:** We know that the minister announced more money for the rent supplement program, so does the minister have any idea how many families or how many units that will transpire into?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** At the moment, I don't have that at my fingertips.

What we do with the rent supplement program is we look at those individuals and families in our communities who are hard-to-house individuals, and we try to provide supports that they need. We know that we have growing pressure from rural Yukon communities, so the intent is to provide supports to those individuals as we look at addressing the demand being offered. It would really depend on the uptake.

Currently, our program helps 100 clients, but that fluctuates. That is something that we will continue to work with, and we will provide supports to all of our clients and utilize the tenant relations officers and, of course, the housing

navigators and address the pressures and the concerns that come to our attention.

**Mr. Hassard:** In addition to the review that we were talking about earlier, the contract for the Yukon Housing Corporation loan program survey was issued in July. I'm curious if the minister would be able to update us on whether or not that survey has been conducted, and who is included or invited to participate in the survey?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I don't have any updates for the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** Sorry, that was too quick and I did not catch what the minister said.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I don't have anything further to update.

**Mr. Hassard:** There was a contract issued in July, so I am curious: Has a survey been conducted?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I don't have anything further to update, but when we do get the information, I would be happy to share it.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly would hope that the minister would know, if she put out a contract, what would have happened with it. I guess we will wait for something further on that one.

On April 9, 2018, the federal-provincial-territorial ministers endorsed a new housing partnership framework. In the communiqué from those meetings that the minister signed off on, there is reference to the national housing strategy. To quote from that communiqué: "... the National Housing Strategy (NHS), is an ambitious 10-year, \$40-billion plan that will remove 530,000 families from housing need and reduce chronic homelessness by 50%."

I'm curious if the minister can tell us how much of that \$40 billion over 10 years is allocated to the Yukon and if the minister has any idea how many of those 530,000 families who will be removed from housing need are Yukon families.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I am pleased to speak about the National Housing Strategy. As the chair of the FPT committee for the second year in a row, I think we have really pushed hard to look at the unique circumstances of the north, which we have not considered historically, as well as the unique circumstances defining — as language in the federal framework didn't cover the obligations to the indigenous communities — the catch-up, keep-up historical costs. I am really happy to say that we were able to push that language through the national framework, so we welcomed the announcement last November and negotiated specifics of our agreement. The National Housing Strategy sets out a target for the next 10 years to increase housing stocks by 15 percent.

The question was asked specifically around direct numbers; it is very difficult to put a number on that, but what I can say is that we have advanced initiatives in Yukon Housing Corporation — the housing partnership build and the housing initiative fund — that saw spending of \$3.2 million which equated into \$26 million. I gave a list to the Member for Porter Creek North in this legislative Sitting a couple of weeks ago. That information has been noted numerous times.

We are taking a leadership role and working with our federal and provincial partners on a strategy that was founded on a rights-based approach to housing, consistent with housing as a human right. We believe that increased housing, affordability, quality and accessibility of housing will promote quality of life and well-being for all Yukoners, including all rural Yukon communities. We are co-developing our strategies and collaborating with our stakeholders in Yukon to look at new initiatives.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe to clarify: would the minister be able to let this Assembly know how much of that \$40 billion over 10 years is allocated to the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I can't say that as the bilateral agreement is still under negotiation with the federal government, but we do have resources under the northern housing initiative — \$24 million over the next 10 years. We have some other funding that we have looked at — co-investment resources that we have worked on with our communities for implementing a housing strategy across the Yukon.

**Mr. Hassard:** Okay, let's try this one. Would the minister be able to tell this Assembly how many housing units Yukon Housing Corporation is building in this fiscal year?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I do believe that I provided information previously to the members opposite on how many units are being built in the Yukon. We have a partnership initiative through the housing initiative program and through the partnership build program. We have a total — as I stated previously and am going to state again — and I can go through the list, but I prefer not to, given that I have done that three times already. I will just summarize and acknowledge that there are pressures in the Yukon. We are working to meet the demand of affordable housing throughout the Yukon with our partners, with the private sector and other governments and non-government organizations, including the indigenous partnerships.

We will continue to work with Canada as we evolve on our bilateral discussions and improve delivery of affordable housing programs for Yukoners.

Currently through our affordable housing over the last two years we have provided 74 affordable housing units in Yukon and we will continue to expand that. In 2018-19, we have committed to housing supports of 133 households. We have some conversions of six units and we have some new initiatives of 214 units.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think I just have one final question in regard to housing. I'm just curious if the minister could update this House on when the next housing FPT meetings are taking place and where they're taking place.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** We're currently working with the provincial and territorial colleagues on defining a date that will work for everyone.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess the other part of that question was: Does the minister know where those meetings will be held, in which part of the country?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I can't answer that until I collaborate with my colleagues. Of course, my preference is to have that

meeting here in the Yukon and always bring the colleagues to the Yukon and promote what Yukon has to offer and share a little bit of our culture and tourism with our colleagues.

**Mr. Hassard:** I couldn't agree with the minister more. Thank you for that.

I have a few questions regarding Highways and Public Works, as they won't be appearing as well. We know that there was a \$226,000 contract awarded in 2016 to demolish the old McDonald Lodge which was then cancelled. We're curious if any money was paid out under the original contract.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I believe the question this afternoon is centred on old McDonald Lodge. That building is well past its functional life — was well past its functional life — and was slated for demolition last summer. In response to concerns raised by Dawson about the potential for an empty lot, the demolition was delayed. Through consultations with Dawson, it was decided the building would be demolished and we have agreed with the City of Dawson on the landscaping feature. That site may be repurposed in the future, and that's all I have to say on McDonald Lodge this afternoon.

**Mr. Hassard:** I hope the minister has a little more to say than that. The question was if the minister could tell us if there was any money paid out under the original contract.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'll endeavour to get back to the member opposite with that information.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the minister be able to tell the House why he decided to cancel that contract?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I gave that answer about three minutes ago. In response to concerns raised by the City of Dawson about the potential for an empty lot, the demolition was delayed.

**Mr. Hassard:** So could the minister tell us when they decided that it couldn't happen and why it took the length of time that it did to come to that conclusion?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I believe that it was last summer. The demolition was delayed and we met with the city. Once the city was comfortable with us proceeding, we proceeded with that.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the minister be able to tell us how much money, either through fees or penalties, the government has had to pay as a result of the original cancellation?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It would have been a lot less if the community had been consulted before that initial decision was made. We had to do our due diligence. We did that and took action. That's how it goes. It is always better, of course, to map these things out ahead of time and that's the way we are proceeding.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm just curious — does the minister intend to answer the question or just insult the previous government?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm just a bit perplexed. I've actually answered two of the questions this afternoon. This is four questions to answer two questions that I've already answered, but I'll do it again.

I have said that I would endeavour to get the information for the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** Can the minister tell us what the total cost to government will be for demolition of the old McDonald Lodge, including everything associated with the old contract and the new contract?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'll endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** Not that I don't have complete faith in the minister to do that, but would the minister be so kind as to commit to doing returning that information through a legislative return?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe the minister responsible has answered the question. When we're in general debate, we don't have line-by-line item numbers from the main estimates in front of us. He is going to endeavour to get back to the member opposite; he will endeavour to get back to the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly hope that the Premier's definition of "endeavour" is the same as mine and we hope to see that information sooner rather than later.

Yesterday the Minister for Community Services announced here in the House that the Minister of Highways and Public Works now had the criteria for the CFTA exemptions. I'm hoping that the minister would be able to provide us with an update on that or some information or maybe tell us what the criteria are.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I believe the member opposite is asking about the 10 \$1-million exceptions under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement* that we employed last year and we're going to employ this year — the first jurisdiction in the country to do that. We did that by creating — because I didn't want to go off just handing out contracts under an exception. I wanted to have criteria under which we acted, and so those criteria were developed last year. I did talk in the Legislative Assembly about our criteria and about how I wanted criteria, and we actually put those in place. We were the first jurisdiction in the country to do that.

I'm very proud of the work of the department on the procurement file. This was another success for the great staff of Highways and Public Works on this very important file. We were, as I said, the first jurisdiction in Canada to use the 10 \$1-million regional economic development trade exceptions. That was last year.

To help us select the best project, we made adjustments to the project selection criteria with input from the procurement business committee. We will be doing them again this year and we will be keeping more money in the economy this year by using those exceptions, and by the way, we're attempting to use, whenever possible, a competitive process so that we get the best price for the public under those exceptions.

**Mr. Hassard:** I don't think I actually heard the minister say that the criteria are in place. If they are, will we be seeing it?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I do believe I answered that question earlier. I did say that we had criteria in place. I have spoken on the record about how we went about issuing these 10 \$1-million exceptions. I believe there have been many statements made on this whole process in the House.

We have criteria in place and I have nothing new to add on this file. As new information becomes available, I will endeavour to get it to the member opposite, but at this time, there is nothing new to report.

**Mr. Hassard:** I would think that the criteria would be something new to report. Since the minister has confirmed that he does, in fact, have the criteria in place, would the minister share the criteria with the Legislature?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** There is a theme emerging here where the members opposite, during general debate, are asking for more information than is timely to give. If we could maybe stick to questions on the budget or questions about procedures — but if the member answers the question and says that there is nothing new to give at this time, then I would appreciate it if the members opposite would understand that there is nothing new to give at this time. We are not going to be giving information on the fly in general debate that hasn't already been out through department websites or through communiqués.

I am seeing a theme here: Are there any updates? Are there any updates?

The members opposite know very well that updates come through press releases and through websites and not necessarily updates on the floor of the Legislative Assembly for what is supposed to be a general debate — general debate that is going on 20 hours now. If the minister says that he has nothing more to report at this time, then he has nothing more to report at this time.

**Mr. Hassard:** Highways and Public Works will not be up for debate, as we all know, so this is our opportunity as opposition to ask questions about departments such as Highways and Public Works. I am sorry that the Premier feels that he has had to sit here too long and listen — that it has been too many hours — but this is our avenue to ask these questions. We are paid by Yukoners just like he is and just like the minister is, so I don't know where else the Premier thinks that we are going to ask these questions. It is our job to ask these questions. We are going to continue to ask those questions. It doesn't matter if it takes two more hours or 20 more hours — those questions that need to be asked will be asked.

If the Premier thinks that Yukoners should just sit idly by and wait for press releases to come out — and that they are the only way that Yukoners are entitled to receive information from this Legislature — then I think the Premier needs to seriously look at his understanding of how the Legislative Assembly works here in the Yukon.

I will continue to ask my questions, and I will continue to hope that the Premier and the ministers will be able to answer those questions.

In March of this year, there was an RFP in regard to the Yukon Foster Parents Association, and section 33 talked about First Nation participation. It says that the contractor shall comply with the First Nation participation plan. I am curious if the minister or the Premier would be able to provide us with some information on what the First Nation participation plan is.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That would be a question about foster care and will come up in debate. It is a question for Committee of the Whole for that particular department. I would ask the member opposite, if there is another specific question about a policy or direction outside the department that will be appearing here as a witness — I do take offence with the member opposite. I am not saying that we don't want to answer questions — not at all. What I am saying is that we are not going to be giving updates here in the Legislative Assembly. We will be giving updates as they come in and we will give them immediately as they come in — absolutely.

We have absolutely proven that we will answer the questions from the Yukon public here in the Legislative Assembly. Again, it is coming on 20 hours of general debate here. The spring of 2017, we responded to 50 legislative returns. In the fall of 2017, we responded to 52 legislative returns. In spring of 2018, we responded to 35 legislative returns. So far this year we have had 14 as well, which is 151 legislative returns. In the five years of the Yukon Party, there was one legislative return.

We have said before — the members opposite are saying we don't know the answers to the questions. No, that is not it. We are giving more information than ever before. We are happy to have all the ministers available to answer questions in the Legislative Assembly. I am merely stating, for the member opposite, is that, as a policy, we are not going to be giving updates in the Legislative Assembly. If there are specific questions — and the one that he just asked is a very specific question — we are happy to answer it in Committee of the Whole when the minister appears. We will sit here for the members opposite as long as it takes and answer these questions. But in the spirit of working together and getting answers, maybe ask questions that you can get answers to.

When you are asking for an update on a particular file, when the minister spends three questions — whether it is the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation or the Minister of Community Services or the Minister of Highways and Public Works — and we answer the question three different times and we don't have any other updates, I would suggest that there are no more updates.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think the Premier maybe needs to be reminded that he is paid by Yukon taxpayers and he is here to answer questions for those taxpayers. For him to say that they are doing a better job because they have provided more legislative returns than the previous government — I think that is certainly quite a stretch.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Hassard:** The Premier did say that because he said there have been 150 as opposed to one. That means that you have done more.

I certainly know from my experience in this Legislature — others who maybe have not been here as long know that the reason for that is because the opposition is not receiving answers to their questions on the floor of the Assembly. I will move on.

In a legislative return — one of those many legislative returns that we are certainly happy to get, since we don't get

answers to the questions — the minister told us that there are 11 Government of Yukon staff currently on secondment to First Nation governments.

Can the minister or the Premier confirm for us how long they have been on secondment?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would just like the member opposite to clarify. He said that he got some information from a minister. Is he directing his question to the Public Service minister or to me when he's talking about the 11 secondments?

**Mr. Hassard:** Yes, if memory serves me correctly, it was the Public Service Commissioner.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Just to remind the member opposite, the Public Service Commission will be appearing in Committee of the Whole during debate here in the Legislative Assembly on the supplementary, so I would ask him to reserve his questions for the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission at that time.

**Mr. Hassard:** Very true. I apologize for that. I will reserve the rest of those questions until then.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Highways and Public Works told us that the government was going to spend nearly \$1 million on the aerodrome in Old Crow. Would the minister be able to provide us with an update on this project? I know they don't like to provide updates and don't like to tell us how things are going, but is the full scope of the project going forward this year, and how much is being spent on that project this year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm very sorry, I didn't hear which aerodrome that the member opposite was speaking about, but I think it was Old Crow — if he could verify.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It is Old Crow. I'll endeavour to get an update to the member opposite about that.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate the update that we will receive.

Earlier this year, the Minister of Highways and Public Works also told us that the government was going to spend nearly \$750,000 — or in that range — on the Mayo aerodrome. Would the minister be able to provide us with an update on this project? Is the full scope of the project moving forward this year, and how much has been spent this year on that project?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I think we had spoken about this in the House recently. I don't know whether it was a question in Question Period — the members opposite, of course, have the ability to ask questions during Question Period on matters that their constituents and Yukoners want to know more about. That's another avenue.

As far as the Mayo aerodrome goes, I have spoken to it before. We are committed to operating safe airports and aerodromes. I think that goes without saying. In anticipation of increased resource activity in the Mayo region — as the members opposite know, the economy in the territory is doing very well these days — the aviation branch has worked with two local carriers and Transport Canada to obtain a one-year

aerodrome authorization that allows the two carriers to provide temporary scheduled air service into Mayo.

Recently the Premier and I travelled to Mayo, and I could actually see how busy the Mayo Airport is these days, so we're using this year to assess the present and future needs of the aerodrome to inform future investments at the site. We will be moving forward with a multi-year strategic investment plan for the Yukon aviation system over the next year. We will be meeting with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation — what they should look like. That's the update I'm sure the member opposite was looking for.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess it was part of the update I was hoping for, so we'll take that and be happy.

The minister told us the government was spending \$550,000 on the Carmacks aerodrome, so the same question, I guess, is if the minister can provide us with some update on where they're at with this project and how much is being spent this year as well.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** What I can say and what I will say this afternoon is that we are at the beginning stages of planning the future of all things Yukon aviation. It's quite an exciting time, I think, for the people who support and work in the Yukon aviation community. As the member opposite knows, we finally passed the Yukon *Public Airports Act* so we can actually manage the facilities. That was a tremendous benefit to the industry and to our airport users. Now we're working toward a comprehensive multi-year investment plan that will make sure we're meeting Yukon's current and future aviation system needs.

Over the next year, Highways and Public Works will engage with stakeholders, airport users and the public to gather input on what priorities, operations and future investments in the Yukon aviation system should be made. Stakeholder feedback will help inform an investment plan and combine safety, efficiency, stakeholder needs and operational requirements for Yukon aviation. That again is the update that the member opposite, I think, is looking for. I don't know what else I can tell him.

**Mr. Hassard:** Let's try a few questions in regard to fleet vehicles.

The annual report for this year states that the third-party rentals are projected to go down. Can the minister clarify what third-party rental is? Is that referring to when the agency rents vehicles from Driving Force or some other rental agency?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As the member opposite knows, at the moment I don't have my officials here so I will endeavour to get back to the member opposite. The reason I don't have my officials here is that we don't have a supplementary budget because frankly we're trying to be a little bit more diligent when it comes to our budgeting, making sure that we spend what we say we spend and not spend what we are not going to spend.

This afternoon I don't have my officials here, but I will endeavour to get the answer to the question for the member opposite on fleet vehicles and third-party rentals.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe when the minister is finding out that information, he could find out for us a little bit about what is leading to the reduction of those third-party rentals. The fleet vehicle report states that the agency plans on purchasing 51 to 97 vehicles this year. Maybe he could find out how many of those vehicles have been purchased so far.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I absolutely appreciate the interest from the member opposite in fleet vehicles and I will be more than happy, as I said before, to endeavour to get him an answer on those fleet vehicle questions.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe it would be easier if the minister could provide us with a list of answers on things he does know. It might quicken things up a little bit.

If you go to the government website, Mr. Deputy Chair, it only lists three reports for the Fleet Vehicle Agency: 2015-16 annual report, 2016-17 annual report and then the 2018-19 business plan, but there is no report for 2017-18. Would the minister have any idea why that is? Does he know if and when we would be able to receive a copy of that report?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Had we had a supplementary budget and had I had my officials here, I am sure we would be a little bit more responsive to the member's specific needs because we would actually be talking about money and spending that we were putting forward, but in this case, it is sort of a budgeting improvisation that we are doing. I will continue to endeavour to listen to the questions that the member opposite has from his constituents on third-party rentals of the Fleet Vehicle Agency, and I will endeavour to get him an answer to those questions.

As for the 2017-18 annual report of fleet vehicles, I will consult with my officials and find out exactly why that is not posted.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess the last question I would have when the minister is finding out that information is if he could confirm what percentage of the fleet vehicle purchases are purchased locally — if that is possible.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I would be happy to endeavour to get the member opposite that information.

**Mr. Hassard:** I have a few questions on the tourism file, if that would be acceptable. I am wondering if the Minister of Tourism and Culture could confirm if Cabinet had a chance to review the draft tourism strategy before it was released publicly on September 19?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Last week when we had questions from my critic from the Yukon Party, we discussed specifically the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* and where it is currently. I have not received the most recent draft from the steering committee yet. When we do, we will take it through our due process and make an informed decision on behalf of Yukoners.

**Mr. Hassard:** The question actually if Cabinet had a chance to review the draft tourism strategy before it was released publicly on September 19.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I know that folks in the Legislative Assembly know that the member opposite was in Cabinet previously and would know that there is such a thing as

Cabinet confidence and that I would not be discussing the matters that are discussed within Cabinet.

**Mr. Hassard:** In the last few days, the Minister of Tourism and Culture said that since the draft tourism strategy was released on September 19, other meetings have happened since then with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee. We're curious, Mr. Deputy Chair, if the minister could confirm: With whom did those meetings take place, how many of them there actually were and were any of them with the government?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Yes, the last round of consultation was completed on October 3. The committee has met, I believe, twice since then. I have not received the latest draft of the *Draft Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. I am anticipating that it will be soon.

**Mr. Hassard:** My colleague from Porter Creek North highlighted the issue of training and retention of staff in the tourism sector, and the minister said that the government is working to help industry to address this issue. Would the minister be able to elaborate a little bit on what type of work she is doing to support this industry to recruit and retain employees?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** When my critic asked the question last week, I said that this is a major focus of the draft tourism strategy and that the committee had identified this as an immediate action area, that there would be an action plan developed specifically for this area of concern and that it has absolutely been a concern for operators for a good many years.

The member opposite said that these issues have been around for decades. I said at that time that this is exactly why we need a new Yukon tourism development strategy. We're going to work with our government and all of the partners to address this very specific issue. That has been the essence of this new draft tourism development strategy — to work in partnership with all the partners around the table.

**Mr. Hassard:** In regard to the federal *Copyright Act*, the minister agreed to closely monitor the progress of the statutory review. I'm wondering if the minister could tell us if the government has provided any input into the statutory review and, if so, what that input was?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** As I discussed last week, this was a topic at a recent federal-provincial-territorial heritage and culture ministers meeting, and this was identified as a top priority for many of the ministers across the country.

When you think about it from the perspective of copyright within Canada — from book editors, writers, those who work in that particular area within the cultural industry — it is of great importance for all ministers across the country and it will continue to be something that we monitor and work on with our colleagues from across the country.

Right now, the House of Commons is conducting the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. It is at a high level within the country and will remain something that we monitor. If specific information is

required of us, we will endeavour to bring our concerns forward from Yukon.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm curious now then: Are there specific clauses in the act that the minister feels need to be changed or updated? What parts of the act does the minister feel are not working or are maybe working against the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I didn't specifically say any of that. I said that we are continuing to work with our colleagues from across the country. This is of importance to all those who work in the creative industry, and we will continue to monitor that. We will ensure that, if any specific information is required of us from Yukon, we will provide that.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe I better step back for a minute and ask a couple of questions that I felt had been asked but maybe they haven't. What specific concerns does the Government of Yukon have in regard to the *Copyright Act*?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** This is again an area that we discussed at a recent federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting on culture and heritage. There is currently the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We will continue to work with our partners across the country and, if there are any concerns that we feel we need to bring forward from either the ministerial level or the officials level, we will do that on behalf of Yukoners.

**Mr. Hassard:** I would take it from that response that the Yukon government has no specific concerns with the act and has not provided input so far?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite can presume all he wants. The minister answered his question.

**Mr. Hassard:** Then, very simply — has the government given any input into the review?

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I am not going to say thank you for the question because I think we have answered it three times — maybe four.

I am going to continue to say that we are working with our partners across Canada. This is a high-level issue in Canada, particularly for those who are working in the creative industry. There is currently the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology and there is collaboration with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We are going to continue working with our partners and we will provide information on behalf of Yukoners, as needed and when needed.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just because you stand up and say words, it doesn't necessarily mean that you have answered a question. I mean, it was a pretty straightforward yes-or-no question. Has the Yukon provided input into the review: Yes or no? To stand here and talk about how important it is and who is involved and all of the different organizations and groups — yes, we know that and we understand that. I just simply asked: Has the Yukon provided any input into the review?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is answering her question to the best of our ability with the information that we have. We are not going to speculate. We

are not going to talk about things — we are going to answer the questions based on the information that we have and the information that we are willing to share at this time. If that is not good enough for the members opposite, at least we are not spending the 20 minutes of our response like the previous government did when the opposition was not happy with an answer. We are giving the information. The minister has given the information that she has available. The member opposite is looking for more specifics. We do not have more specifics at this time to discuss or debate. I would ask him to move on to the next question.

**Mr. Hassard:** I will remind the Premier that when I was sitting on that side of the floor answering questions, never once in my entire time did I use anywhere near the 20 minutes to answer a question, and I think he is well aware of that.

I think that the most interesting thing that the Premier said out of that, though, is that the questions are being answered with what they are willing to share. I think that is a little bit disrespectful to the Legislature. I think it is disrespectful to the taxpayers of the Yukon. I think that if they have the information, they are pretty much obligated to share the information. For him to say that they are only going to share with us what they want to share is a pretty tough one to swallow.

I guess we are not going to get any answers on that, so we will move along.

Earlier this session, the Premier said that the Yukon was very keen to lend its support to the federal Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. I'm curious if the Premier is able to elaborate a little bit on what sort of input and support Yukon has provided so far on this file.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite will hopefully appreciate the fact that I am not going to take a quote from him without looking at the context of it, as we have been seeing lots of quotes taken out of context in the Legislative Assembly this session.

The Department of Health and Social Services is going to appear because they do have a budgetary item here in the supplementary budget. The minister responsible will, at that time, be happy to respond to those questions.

Maybe the member opposite, when he got up, didn't spend his 20 minutes, but to say that he answered all of the questions — well, I think we will disagree with that. I will agree to disagree that he answered all of the questions that were asked of him from both opposition parties. I remember seeing an awful lot of frustrated days for the Official Opposition at that time and also for me in the Third Party when it came to answering or not answering questions. I will also give a little bit here as well. I know that, in opposition, some questions are designed that way.

Moving on — we are going to continue to do our best to provide the information that we are ready to provide to Yukoners. We have been more than open and transparent in that pursuit, especially when you take a look at ATIPP. We are trying to roll back some of the changes that the members opposite inflicted on that particular legislation to make us more open and more accountable.

Again, I think there were a lot of times where the members opposite — the Yukon Party — would spend an awful lot of time going on at length and not answering the questions. The minister is providing information. It may not be the information that the member opposite is looking for specifically — I will admit that. But again, working with stakeholders, working with others and working with other governments, we will give information as we can get it out there. With respect to the First Nation governments and the municipalities that we are working with — and the stakeholders and the federal government — we will give that information out as it becomes available. I am sorry if the members opposite think that we are not sharing enough information, but I believe we are doing a fantastic job here with the whole-of-government approach to answer as many questions as we possibly can in the time provided.

Again, we are going above and beyond with legislative returns. We are working on casework and making sure that the casework that we get out is done in a timely fashion. It doesn't always happen that way, and I do apologize for that. There have been some times — and we have seen some questions from the Member for Kluane who has spoken about some legislative returns that haven't been responded to in a timely fashion. That is absolutely not acceptable, and we are working on that.

But again, these are the things that we are trying to do to be as accountable and as open as possible to the Yukon public whose taxpayer money we are debating here at the Legislative Assembly.

I will apologize to the Leader of the Official Opposition if he is looking for some specific answers that, at this time, we are not able to provide for him. We will continue to endeavour to answer as many questions as we possibly can, knowing full well that the very specific questions that are being asked in general debate today, two days ago and over the last 20-or-so hours — sometimes we don't have that information at our fingertips. It is better when the ministers are presenting with the officials from the department for very technical and specific details. Sometimes we have seen the members opposite — and I have done it in opposition as well — saying that they just want a simple yes or no, and sometimes it is not as simple as that.

So we will continue to safeguard the confidence of the Cabinet decisions and, at the same time, being as transparent as possible when it's time to get information out to the general public.

**Mr. Hassard:** The question that I just asked the Premier, that we got this long history lesson on, was about the federal advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare. My understanding is that this is a premiers working group that came out of COF — I believe it's called the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance.

I don't think that this is a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services, so maybe if the Premier can elaborate — as I asked — a little bit on what sort of input the Yukon has provided so far into this working group.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We are always interested in the panel's report and recommendations, including the federal government's contributions to any of the national pharmacare programming. There hasn't been, in the past Council of the Federation — the last time we met in Saint John, New Brunswick, in the communiqué for that, there were no specific additions to the communiqué, again being very careful with the conversations that happen at COF at that table and then the communiqués coming out. I don't recall any specific updates on the communiqué at that time. I will re-check to see if there are any updates on those communiqués, but I do not recall that being one of the topics that was provided an update at that time.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm not sure the Premier totally understood, so I'll just re-ask the question just to clarify. I had said that, earlier this session, the Premier said that the Yukon was very keen to lend its support to the federal Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. I am curious if he is able to elaborate a bit on what sort of input and support Yukon has provided, not for an update on what was happening with the council.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, nothing new to advise right now. Maybe after the next First Ministers' meeting there will be more, but the conversation, when it comes to national pharmacare, would be under the Health and Social Services guise. There could be some updates from the department, but as far as specific updates from the First Ministers' meeting on this particular issue, there may be some more updates on that after the First Ministers' meeting coming up here before the end of the year, but I don't have anything to elaborate on with the member opposite right now.

**Mr. Hassard:** I wasn't asking for an update; I was asking what sort of input or support the Yukon has provided so far.

Kind of along those same lines, we've asked questions about whether or not the Government of Yukon has done, or will do, an assessment of how the USMCA will impact the cost of pharmaceuticals in the territory. Would it be possible to find out from the Premier if the government is, in fact, doing this assessment?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I didn't hear most of the question on pharmacare. I believe we're still on the USMCA, the *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement*, in that context.

We have been asked before as well about this question and basically — I think the question we were asked before was based upon any analysis done at the provincial level and the territorial level, and this goes into the working group on potential costs and implications when it comes to the patents and these types of things.

I can say that the cost of drugs does fluctuate based on market conditions, currency exchange rates and supply-demand conditions, extensions of patents specifically, if you want to talk about that, patent protection — these are conversations that have been addressed through the USMCA deal.

The extension of that protection patent, it does mean that it will take longer for generic drugs to enter the market. As

such, the cost of some drugs will remain higher for approximately two additional years as compared to the current protection regime in Canada, so, for example, 10 years instead of the current eight years. I don't know if I'm answering the question specifically and I do apologize. I didn't hear the entire question, so if there is anything else in that, I'm sure the member opposite will continue.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am going to have to ask the Minister of Highways and Public Works a couple more questions and maybe one of them will be: Can he get someone in here to turn the volume up on these mics? Because it seems to be a bit challenging to hear. Maybe we need to holler at one another more or something. Mr. Deputy Chair doesn't agree.

Another question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works is: Would the minister be able to inform the House what work is contemplated for the Holy Family School, as referenced in the five-year capital concept?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm more than happy this afternoon to talk about the five-year capital plan we have brought into being — the first for the territory — which is a promise we made and a promise we delivered. The five-year capital plan and that process was introduced to make the government's construction and infrastructure projects more transparent for Yukoners and for those in the private industry. If the member opposite is using it, I'm elated. I really appreciate that.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Chair, the five-year capital plan informs Yukon government's priorities and will help Yukon businesses prepare for upcoming projects. This is a new thing for the territory — having a five-year capital plan. I can understand the member opposite's unfamiliarity with that process, but what we have done by putting projects into a five-year capital plan is signal our intention to move forward with that project. As the budget year comes into being, we will start the procurement process and everything else to do that. The contractors will then bid and go forward on that basis. It signals our intent to the contracting community and then, as the budget year progresses and we get closer to the year where we are delivering on those projects, we get more information

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

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Mostyn that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

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

### Chair's report

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

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Monday.

Have a good weekend.

*The House adjourned at 5:27 p.m.*