



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Thursday, March 21, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Spring 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

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

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

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<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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, March 21, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It's my pleasure and honour to introduce a couple of people in the gallery. I will start with the Grand Chief Peter Johnston who is in the gallery today. Also, Chief Doris Bill is here from Kwanlin Dün First Nation and also the captain of the North Yukon Eagles — also otherwise known as the former MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin — Darius Elias.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would like all of our colleagues in the Legislative Assembly today to help me welcome Jessica Lott Thompson who is the director of the Yukon Human Rights Commission. With her is Karen Moir the chair of the Yukon Human Rights Commission. With them today is Peter Doherty who is an intern with the Yukon Human Rights Commission. Thank you for being here.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I also want to welcome to the gallery Regional Chief Kluane Adamek. With her as well is no stranger to the Legislative Assembly, Monica Nordling.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I am just going to beat the Minister of Tourism and Culture to one introduction. I would like the Chamber to join me in welcoming Erin Linklater. Thirteen years ago, when you were in high school and I owned a coffee shop — who would have guessed that you would be a lawyer and I would be a politician. It is beautiful to have you here.

I think the one thing that I would like to take a little bit of credit for is Erin's love of travelling, as she has just returned home from New Zealand. I would like to think that is partially my influence — law definitely wasn't — but it is lovely to have you here and thank you for coming.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I too would like to welcome former MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin Darius Elias, along with his son Johnny Elias, hockey player extraordinaire. The North Yukon Eagles are also with us — the youth team — Dredyn Kassi, Jayce Charlie, Gavin Charlie and Rylie Bruce-Taureau, and

chaperones Lyndsey Johnson, Cheryl Charlie, Carl Charlie and Loretta Itsi.

Welcome.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I have to be quicker to my feet, I believe.

I really would like to ask all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to help me in welcoming a number of very special guests. We have already heard about many of them today. Thank you all for coming.

I would like to welcome Michelle Dawson-Beattie, president of the Yukon First Nations Hockey Association.

We also have other board members, Jackie Callahan — just trying to make sure I get them right — and staff member Karee Vallevand. We have with us Shirley Dawson and Nathan Wilson. We have Pat Joe — thank you for coming. I would like to take this opportunity — this is the first time that my son is here in the Legislative Assembly since my swearing in, Colin Dendys and his beautiful girlfriend — I know she has already been introduced: Erin Linklater. I welcome you here today. I am so honoured that all of you were able to come here today for these really special tributes that we'll be doing.

We also have Jeff Copenace, who works with our regional chief, and we also have Michele Taylor and Cheyenne Bradley. Cheyenne has been a great volunteer and young up-and-coming leader. I thank all of you for coming today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm really honoured to stand before the Legislative Assembly and introduce members of my community. It's always an honour to see members here and really a pleasure to see the children from my community. We have Lyndsey Johnson, Rylie Bruce-Taureau and Gavin Charlie. We also have Dredyn Kassi, Jayce Charlie and Johnny Elias. Thank you to former MLA from Vuntut Gwitchin Darius Elias.

To get here to the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament, the children spent a lot of time and energy fundraising to get to the city. Their being here says a lot about their commitment to wanting to learn, excel, be part of a broader society and learn about these opportunities that are before them.

Welcome and good luck this weekend. I will be there; I'm sure we will all be there.

I would like to also acknowledge Kluane Adamek, a very dear friend, and of course I have my relatives in the gallery as well. I want to welcome Shirley Dawson and Chief Doris Bill to the gallery.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any other further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Yukon Native Hockey Tournament

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely honoured to rise today on behalf of our Liberal government to pay tribute to the annual Kilrich Building Centre's Yukon Native Hockey Tournament that will take place this weekend, March 22 to 24.

This tournament is hosted on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. I thank them very much. It brings First Nation hockey players from all over northern Canada, British Columbia, Alberta and other areas throughout Canada.

Growing up in Yukon, I volunteered for many Yukon native hockey tournaments. For so many of us, it was like a rite of passage. Approximately 10 years ago, I came back as a major volunteer.

Later I joined the executive and eventually became the board president. During my lifetime, this event has become very near and dear to my heart, as it has for many others.

Founded in 1977 with just a handful of teams, the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament is now the largest First Nation hockey tournament north of 60, and it continues to grow. It was originally started because Yukon First Nations did not have a venue or a place to showcase their hockey talents, and it has evolved to be a very, very elite sporting event.

Again this year, the roster of teams was full within the first day of registration. Last year's tournament brought out a total of 38 teams. This year for the 42<sup>nd</sup> tournament, we have a total of 43 teams and six divisions, ranging from youth to old-timers. Of the 43 teams, 24 come from across the Yukon.

There are several things that make the 2019 tournament special, one being that this is the first year we have an all-women's team competing. Whether through serving on the board, their tireless volunteering and organizing, or the highly coveted "most-dedicated hockey mom" award, women have been integral in the success of this event from the very beginning. It's truly a great day to now see women take their rightful place on the ice as fellow competitors.

This year's tournament will also mark another important progressive milestone as the Yukon Indian Hockey Association formally becomes the Yukon First Nations Hockey Association.

Every year, the opening ceremonies are infused with culture, from the drumming to the blessing ceremonies before the players step on the ice. This year's ceremony will be no different, but they are taking it a step further. Adding to the spirit of reconciliation, this historic evolution from the Yukon Indian Hockey Association formally to the Yukon First Nations Hockey Association will be celebrated with an official naming ceremony to open the tournament.

In addition to the pride, spirit and community created by the event, the tournament also has a huge economic impact with the hundreds of players who come to compete along with countless spectators. Many businesses — from hotels, shops, airlines and restaurants — see a huge early-season boost — given that Whitehorse will also be hosting the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in May, the first time that

the event will be held this far north. Our vendors and our hockey fans are in for a busy and exciting spring.

I would like to take this opportunity to give my sincere thank you to all of the board members, past and present, and specifically today to the current board president, Michelle Dawson-Beattie, to the vice-president, Doug Hogan, to the directors: George Skookum, Jackie Callahan, Khandi Jackson and Robin Smarch — and of course to the hard-working staff: tournament coordinator extraordinaire, Karee Vallevand, and the youth coordinator, Cindy Underhill.

I want to thank the efforts of our tireless volunteers who make this tournament the success that it is every year. To all of the 2019 players and teams, our local athletes and those from around the country, I wish you a weekend of exciting competition. I encourage all Yukoners to join us this momentous weekend at the Canada Games Centre and the Takhini arena. Let's showcase our legendary Yukon hospitality to all of the visitors.

May the games be a tremendous success, keeping in mind our Yukon First Nation values of trust, respect and honour. Have fun and a safe weekend.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to tribute the annual Kilrich Yukon Native Hockey Tournament presented by Victoria Gold.

I begin with that famous phrase that most of us grew up with: "He shoots, he scores". It is hockey day in Yukon for the next three days, with the first game at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, March 22. From the puck dropping at the first game to the final gold medal game, it is a marathon for all involved.

This annual event is such a look-forward-to gathering among the nations and communities that it is hard to put into words. We come together to share in a jam-packed full weekend of hockey, visiting, fun and competition.

The bleachers at the Canada Games Centre and the Takhini arena will be full of family, friends and hockey fans loudly cheering on their favourite teams and favourite hockey players. Old Whitehorse town will be bustling.

The business community will be extremely happy with the influx of visitors and out-of-towners. It's always an enormous economic driver for local restaurants and hotels as well as retail stores and vehicle dealerships.

The visit earlier this month by eight former indigenous NHL hockey alumni to encourage First Nation youth was wonderful. Youth were encouraged to work hard and become anything they wanted to be — truly inspiring. The youth division is an integral part of the weekend, and perhaps one day, one of these First Nation youth will be in the NHL lineup — true role models for anyone. Thank you to the Council of Yukon First Nations for sponsoring this endeavour.

I hear there will be a record five teams playing in the A Division and, as was mentioned, another exciting first — women. The first all-women's team to play in the tournament has registered for the C Division, and I am excited for when they take the ice — outstanding.

Sport and well-being has always been known to go hand in hand, and what better way than to encourage Canada's game — hockey. Again this year, huge congratulations go to all of the organizers, the sponsors and the tireless volunteers who make this such a huge success every year. Well done, and thank you for all you do.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** The Yukon NDP caucus is happy to celebrate another Yukon Native Hockey Tournament weekend and the incredible work done by the soon-to-be officially renamed Yukon First Nations Hockey Association board. We want to thank the dozens of volunteers who will make this another success in a long line of successes. We welcome the teams and players from all over the territory, but especially north Yukon, the NWT, BC and Alberta.

We thank the local businesses and those who are able to add extended hours and the welcome that they offer participants.

It will be over before we know it, with nothing but medals and memories to remind us of all the fun. Good luck, have fun, and we will see everyone back next year.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which takes place every year around the world on March 21. This day of remembrance originated after a horrible event — when 69 people who were peacefully demonstrating against apartheid were killed by police in Sharpeville, South Africa. The United Nations marked that tragedy by declaring March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Racial discrimination, Mr. Speaker, is insidious. It can enter into all aspects of our lives. It may be obvious or more subtle. Within Canada, our own history has demonstrated significant racism and discrimination against indigenous peoples and racial communities. Our territory is in fact a wonderful place to live, but discrimination does exist. No community is immune to racism.

Today reminds us all that taking action against racism begins with each of us as individuals. Action must also happen in our homes, in our schools and in our communities. Many Yukon organizations work together to prevent racism and to combat those who promote hatred. Here in our territory, the Yukon Human Rights Commission works diligently in dealing with complaints on the grounds of race, ensuring that all citizens who are treated unjustly have their voices heard and their experiences understood.

The Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, which delivers a variety of programs for immigrants — including safety training and integration services — works extensively with Yukon employers to aid them in providing an accommodating workplace to our community's newcomers. The extensive

work of our Yukon First Nations is relentless in its efforts to revitalize, maintain and celebrate First Nation knowledge, language and culture. This reconciliation is the core of a modern, more inclusive Yukon and one that is free of racism.

In case our world becomes complacent in its efforts to eliminate racism, we need not wait very long before we are brutally reminded of the challenges. Just six days ago, the massacre of 50 innocent people as they peacefully prayed in New Zealand shows us the need for continued vigilance. Sadly, such horrific incidents seem to be targeted at communities and countries that support and strive for equality precisely because they do. Canada is not immune, as we know.

Here in the Yukon in recent years, rallies have been organized at the healing totem pole in Whitehorse where our communities can come together to stand up against racial discrimination. There is just such a gathering scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, March 22 at noon to support our Muslim community and show support and respect for our friends in New Zealand.

We need to continue to celebrate our cultural and ethnic diversity. It is a strength of our territory.

There is still much work to be done. Equality and peace for every citizen can only exist in a community that does not tolerate racism and that embraces our differences.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize today, March 21, as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This day was proclaimed in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations in response to the mass shooting of people gathered to protest apartheid on March 21, 1960. It was on this day that police opened fire on what was called a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa; 69 people were killed; 180 were injured.

Canada launched its first annual campaign against racial discrimination in 1989, and so this year, we mark 30 years of recognition and awareness here in Canada. The theme for 2019 is: "Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies".

There has been a rise in racially and religiously motivated attacks by extremist groups in recent years, and we have seen this rise in attacks worldwide as well as here in Canada. The effects of these acts of terrorism are felt by communities around the globe, and the recent massacre in New Zealand resulted in Whitehorse residents pulling together in solidarity, leaving flowers and well-wishes at the door of our local mosque.

This annual day of awareness reminds us that, around the world, the steps we must take toward the elimination of racial discrimination must start within each of us. We must raise each generation to understand the idea of racism, why it exists and what we can do to put an end to it. We must teach our children the importance of embracing racial and cultural diversity.

I would like to take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to urge all Yukoners to take responsibility and to do your part to eliminate racial discrimination. Take a stand against discrimination, and be the change, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** The NDP caucus stands in solidarity today in the acknowledgment of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Like many others around the globe, I have been trying to understand last week's violence in New Zealand against the Muslim community. I'm trying to understand the increase of racist extremist movements that are based on ideologies that seek to promote populist, nationalist agendas that are spreading in various parts of the world — including here in Canada — fuelling racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, often targeting migrants and refugees.

I was trying to find a way to vocalize what I've been feeling when I found Vernā Myers. She's an inclusion strategist, cultural change catalyst, influencer, thought leader, social commentator and author. She presented a TED Talk in 2014 entitled "How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them." If you have a chance, I highly recommend that you watch it.

In it, she talks about how biases can be dangerous, even deadly, for young black men in America. As I watched and listened, it occurred to me that what Vernā said not only resonated with me, it is relevant to what we are grappling with in the world today. Her insights are relevant, timely and, I think, helpful.

It boils down to this, Mr. Speaker: We — you and me — have to get out of denial and recognize our biases. Saying that we don't see colour isn't helpful because, like it or not, every single one of us has biases. Biases are the stories that we make up about people before we know who they actually are. But how are we going to get to know who someone really is when our biases tell us to avoid and be afraid of them, to cross the street or to look the other way?

Vernā tells us to walk toward our discomfort to confront those biases. She says to move toward what is different instead of away. She says it's not the hardest thing to do, but it also means that you have to be conscious and intentional about it. It's not about perfection; it's about connection. You are not going to get comfortable before you get uncomfortable. Be open and honest with yourself and those whom you perceive as different because, despite our differences, we're all human.

The last thing she says that we need to do is the hardest. I know it, but I'm just going to put it out there anyway. When we hear something that isn't right, we have to have the courage to challenge it, even to the people we love. Listen to the conversations around you. Maybe you'll need to say things like "Grandma's a bigot" or "Uncle Joe is racist," and that doesn't change the fact that we love grandma and we love Uncle Joe — we do. We know they're good people, but what they're saying is wrong. We need to be able to call it out

because you never know who else is listening, especially young people or children.

When we wonder why these biases don't die and how they move from one generation to generation, this is the reason. We're not saying anything when we need to. We have to be willing to say: "Grandma, we don't call people that anymore" or "Uncle Joe, it isn't true that he deserved that. No one deserves that." We have to be willing to not shelter our children from the ugliness of racism when racial minorities don't have the luxury to do so — especially those with children. Speaking up and out is all the more urgent today when we add the layer of coded racism and the upswing in online racism that played such an awful role in the New Zealand massacre.

So tomorrow, just like the Minister of Justice did, I invite all in this Chamber to join together with fellow Yukoners who will stand together with the Yukon Muslim community at the healing totem at the end of Main Street at noon. This is a small step in the journey of walking toward our discomfort.

*Applause*

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

#### **TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I have for tabling today a legislative return based on the discussion on Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

#### **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

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

THAT this House congratulates Yukon municipalities on receiving an additional \$16.5 million in federal gas tax funding in the 2019-20 federal budget.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to support the Vimy Heritage Housing Society, including assisting them with the financial costs of constructing their facility for seniors.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to update and modernize the Yukon *Public Utilities Act*.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to engage with youth, First Nation governments and community partners to determine how best to provide comprehensive service and support to Yukon youth.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### *Motor Vehicles Act*

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I rise today to discuss with my colleagues in the House the real progress that we are making on the change to a very old piece of legislation, the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Every day of every month of every year, thousands of people get in their car and drive somewhere. They share the road with other motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. They might be going camping, to visit family or simply to work, but every day of every month of every year, people use our roads.

The *Motor Vehicles Act* is a rulebook for these roads. This act was first introduced in 1977 — and times they are a-changin'. Vehicles today are smarter, safer and faster. We have almost 5,000 kilometres of maintained highways throughout the territory, and it is up to drivers to use those roads responsibly.

There is a lot that we do well, but there is a lot that we can do better. Yukon was the last jurisdiction to make seatbelts mandatory. That was in 1991 — 14 years after we introduced the act.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sad to report we have the lowest rate of seat belt usage in the country. We also have the highest rate of impaired driving in Canada. When it comes to traffic collisions, we have the country's second highest causality rate. These statistics are a reflection of our society. These statistics are facts, and these facts are frightening.

Once in a while people get a chance to shape their society in incredible ways. Mr. Speaker, Yukon can be a leader in road safety with these amendments — with this re-write of this piece of legislation.

The Department of Highways and Public Works is and has been researching legislation, fines, penalties and data looking to create a new, modern *Motor Vehicles Act*. A public survey will soon be launched through [engageyukon.ca](http://engageyukon.ca) for a 60-day period. Social media posts, Facebook events and open houses will also be conducted during this period. Public and targeted stakeholder engagement and Yukon First Nation consultation will occur between March and June 2019. Letters with options on how to provide feedback will be sent to stakeholders, First Nations and communities. There will also be visits to Yukon communities and face-to-face meetings with Yukon First Nation governments and affected groups as well as open house events.

We have looked for answers across the country to hundreds of questions: How do we make roads safer? How do we balance safety and access with tradition? How do we better

protect pedestrians and cyclists? How do we promote the safe use of off-road vehicles?

We did the research and now we are putting those questions to Yukoners. As I noted, in the coming weeks we will be launching a survey asking Yukoners for their input. Do you think we need stiffer penalties against motorists who choose to drink and drive? You tell us. Do you support cameras to catch people who blow through red lights? You tell us. Should young kids have to wear helmets when they borrow a skidoo or go to hockey practice? You tell us.

In addition to the survey, we will be hosting open houses in all Yukon communities. This is an issue that affects everyone. Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraging the members of this House and all Yukoners to participate — we are listening.

**Mr. Hassard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to this ministerial statement.

I have to start by saying that this is a very underwhelming ministerial statement today. I had hoped that the Minister of Highways and Public Works would have actually told us something about what the government is going to do to improve our roads and road safety. Maybe there are changes that are necessary, and I think everyone knows that legislation can always be improved, but the minister hasn't told us what he is considering doing. Instead, we get the minister standing here in the House taking up time that could be spent debating the budget to tell us about a Facebook post he is going to make sometime in the future. Mr. Speaker, that's something that the minister could have easily announced in a press release.

On the topic of highway safety, I also thought it was interesting for the minister to stand here and say that he needs to do an online survey to ask how to improve highway safety. Does he not know? What is the problem he's going to fix with the *Motor Vehicles Act* changes? The whole thing to me sounds like a solution in search of a problem.

The minister stated that he looked for answers across the country to hundreds of questions. Will he agree to provide us with the lists of hundreds of questions he was looking for answers to?

He also said — and I quote: "We did the research..." Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister could table this research so we could see it.

Finally, I find it rich for this minister to pretend he is interested in listening when it comes to highway safety, because if he actually was, the Official Opposition has written letters to the minister highlighting issues with highway safety in Whitehorse and rural Yukon. These letters are asking the minister to take action on various issues to improve safety in the communities, but when it comes to painting lines for turning lanes, new streetlights, traffic lights or crosswalks, the minister shrugs and says he can't do it.

These things, I will point out, do not require legislative changes. The minister and the Liberals could do these things today if only they thought they were a priority. Instead, they prioritize spending on things like increasing the budget to the

Cabinet office by some \$255,000 or giving the Premier a raise.

On another issue of major importance that I have raised with the minister, the RCMP had us ask on their behalf for changes to the rules to make it a requirement to slow down and move over for all official vehicles with flashing lights that are pulled over. I was told many months later by the minister that maybe it would be included in the changes expected at the end of 2020. Why can't he move on something urgent when it comes up? We're not sure — if he wanted to, he could, that much is for certain.

I take issue with the minister pretending that he all of a sudden cares about highway safety when he spent the last two and a half years ignoring the opposition's suggestions and requests for purely partisan reasons. Instead of blaming others and passing the buck, it's time for the minister and this Liberal government to take immediate action to improve highway safety, because a Facebook post and a survey just isn't going to cut it.

**Ms. Hanson:** Actually, we take the view in the NDP that this is the first use of ministerial statements in the 2019 Spring Sitting when we actually haven't had a press release, so we're kind of happy to see the proposed changes being brought forward for discussion. We did have some minor changes made in 2018, and we are happy to see that they're being put forward for consultation and feedback.

As the minister said, it has been since 1977. Traditions die hard. When I arrived here as a young woman in 1978, the tradition and law was that you could drink and drive as long as you weren't drunk, and I would suggest that many people still believe that you can drink and drive. It's not something that we think of often, but getting into our car each morning is one of the most dangerous things that Yukoners do on a day-to-day basis.

We do think that some of the questions in the ministerial statement are ones that would benefit from government leadership.

We would like to know, for example — because we see young people are less likely to drive impaired than an adult driver, but the youth who do drive under the influence are at very high risk of collision — what are we going to do in this legislation to actually address that and some of the consequences of repeat offences by youth drivers?

We know the RCMP do a good job of enforcing and addressing drinking and driving. However, we do think the government needs to make provisions to do a better job of educating youth so that they choose not to drive while impaired or be a passenger in a vehicle with an impaired driver. Some Canadian jurisdictions have or are considering having a zero blood-alcohol requirement for all drivers under 21. Mothers Against Drunk Driving also recommends a zero blood-alcohol requirement for drivers under 21 and for drivers with less than five years driving experience. Will this form part of the consultation?

MADD Canada also urges governments to address drug-impaired driving by prohibiting drivers under age 21 and

drivers during the first five years of getting their licence from being positive for drugs.

Will this be forming part of the consultation? We do believe that these matters should be presented in public consultation documents.

On the matter of impaired driving, we know that there were 487 impaired driving violations in Yukon in 2017 — one is too many. While there has been progress in this area, we are supportive of higher fines.

Distracted driving — right now, it's 500 summary conviction points, three demerit points. The graduated driver's licence program can also lose all hours of driving experience earned and will have to restart the program. It's clear that these fines are much too low, particularly when we look at our jurisdictions closest to us — for example, Alaska. Alaska has the harshest distracted driving penalties of any state. Texting while driving has been illegal in Alaska since 2012. Some members will remember the debate that we had about this here. Texting and driving is a class A demeanour in Alaska, which carries a fine of up to \$10,000 and up to a year in prison. Are we serious about distracted driving or not? Will that be a question in this consultation? Let's put it out there.

Finally, we would urge the government to explore and offer as part of the consultation the idea of a graduated fine system linked to income as a way of discouraging dangerous driving no matter what your income. Currently, Yukon has a flat fine system. On the other hand, in Finland, fines are geared to income. Teemu Selanne, Stanley Cup champion and former Finnish superstar, was once hit with a \$39,000 speeding ticket. Fines like these ensure that the wealthier rule-breakers are similarly discouraged from speeding than their less-well-off peers.

Mr. Speaker, we want to address the minister's comments regarding municipal advisory council and stakeholder consultation. Reaching out is not enough. Municipalities are the ones that set speed limits and address concerns around school zones and they are often the first to hear the comments and concerns. They need to be the priority.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the members opposite for their comments today. They were illustrative.

From the Leader of the Official Opposition, we heard that any changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act* would be underwhelming, that there are changes necessary — solutions in search of a problem — and that stands at odds with what we have heard throughout the community and what I have heard through our extensive community tours. I think my colleague the Minister of Community Services mentioned that we have been through the communities more than 200 times. Through those community tours, we hear about motor vehicle infractions and motor vehicle concerns and concerns about our highways probably more than any other issue collectively.

I don't think that what we're doing with this rewrite is a solution in search of a problem. There are real problems out there, Mr. Speaker — profound problems with an act that is byzantine, poorly written and woefully out of date. It should have been tackled long, long before this, but it never was.



Why is that, Mr. Speaker? I don't know. I think that the Yukon public will have to ask that question, but we are tackling this critical piece of legislation. It's a very important job and a very involved job. It involves a lot of research. We are going to do that research, and we're going to listen to Yukoners.

I want to thank the Leader of the Third Party for her research and thoughtful remarks. Again and again and again, we see the Leader of the Third Party actually diving in and doing a little bit of work before coming into the House and actually putting some thought into her responses. I appreciate that. It was echoed in our discussions over the ATIPP act earlier and I see it happening again. I welcome those thoughtful remarks. I think that will make for better legislation and a better discussion on the floor of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the first major improvements to the *Motor Vehicles Act* since it was introduced more than 40 years ago is a matter of public interest. We are happy to be going out to the public this spring for their thoughts on how the act can be improved. I know the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't like consultation, doesn't like change and doesn't like new legislation, but it is coming, and I hope he gets on board and starts to represent the interests of his constituents when this piece of legislation is introduced.

Already this year, we have made changes to double the fines for drivers who fail to stop for school buses or pass them illegally. We have increased the fines for speeding in school zones. We have increased the fines for speeding in general to try to curb some of the irresponsible driving we see in this territory that is contributing to the huge number of injuries and collisions we are seeing on our roads. We want to try to curb the sloppy driving that we are seeing, and we know that increased fines will do that. Unfortunately, they haven't changed in a very long time. Our government has stepped in and actually taken on the hard work to get that work done quickly because that is what we heard in the community.

There are several other issues and concerns, and many of them require changes to the legislation. They include driver licensing, fees and fines, territorial rules around impaired driving, road user safety, vehicle safety and condition, enforcement technology and off-road vehicles and snowmobiles.

This is an ambitious project, Mr. Speaker — one that is long, long overdue and one that will bring our rules of the road into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I am very proud to have had a hand in it. I am sure that my colleagues on this side of the House are as well, and I look forward to contributing to the debate in the coming months.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Mining legislation

**Mr. Kent:** I have some questions for the Premier about one of the platform commitments of his Liberal government, and it was — and I quote: "... examining the current mining assessment process to find ways to harmonize the Yukon

Water Board processes within the Yukon Environment and Socio-Economic Assessment Act framework." As I am sure the Premier is as well, we are hearing concerns from mining companies and individuals who are having difficulties with one or both of those processes.

When will work begin on this promise, or has it already started? If so, where can we find information about this initiative?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think it has really been a two-pronged approach, which we have touched on in the Legislative Assembly. There is the progress of course that has been made through the mining memorandum of understanding process, which is key because that is really where we have brought together our First Nation partners and ensured that we have a defined work plan and set of priorities that we can work on together. Then we have ensured that we bring industry to that conversation as well. We have been looking at our regulations and potentially trying to eliminate duplication but also, within that, making sure that we, in the work that I do with our Yukon Minerals Advisory Board — about which we have had lots of discussions — are beginning to have tripartite conversations between YESAB and Energy, Mines and Resources.

That is some of the direction that I have gotten from them just in the last year and some of the work that we will be undertaking.

I know also that the Premier will also touch on the work he has done with the Yukon Water Board on the MOU that has been signed and the work that they've been doing through the Executive Council Office. I will pass it on to him for the second question.

**Mr. Kent:** We in the Official Opposition have heard time and time again how the Yukon permitting process is losing its competitiveness with other jurisdictions. The Premier, two years ago, promised a collaborative framework to deal with YESAA timelines and reassessments, and it appears that promise is now heading for the trail of broken promises that follows this government.

Now we would like to know where they are at with their election promise to — and I quote: "... find ways to harmonize the Yukon Water Board processes within the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act framework."

Can the Premier tell us what the timeline is for completion of this promise that they made to Yukoners? What ways have been identified so far to harmonize the two processes?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It's a pleasure to stand and talk about the work that we've been doing with the Water Board but also with YESAA — starting with YESAA with the reset oversight group.

Working with these agencies, whether it's a quasi-judicial agency or the agency that's in charge of our socio-environmental processes, it's important to make sure that the job descriptions are understood both on the secretariat side — my side, the government's side — but also working with the board. We have worked with the Water Board with an MOU

as far as outlining the responsibilities that are there for all of the individuals who make up this quasi-judicial entity.

Also with the YESAA reset oversight group — again, this is a joint effort between the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon and First Nations as well to collectively seek efficiencies and other improvements to the YESAA process. That group and the oversight and other results of the reset memorandum of understanding demonstrate a genuine commitment by all parties, including this government, to improve the relationships and make progress on long-standing issues.

We do know that the industry is expecting immediate and tangible outcomes, and our government is committed to bringing the industry on board on this and to achieving that goal.

**Mr. Kent:** I'm sure the Premier and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources know and have heard from proponents that are at critical stages in either the YESAA process or the Water Board process. They're looking for action on this promise that the Liberals made during the 2016 election campaign.

We're almost 2.5 years into this government's mandate. Can the Premier tell us if this promise will be completed before we go to the polls the next time?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** This is absolutely a valid conversation in the Legislative Assembly. It has been something that the previous minister tackled, and I'm sure it's something we will continue to try to improve and to tackle as well.

What I can say is that, first of all, if you're going to be doing collaborative work and you're building trust in that process, for me to come out and say this is the timeline we're going to use and not have our partners at the table to define that with me — that alone will erode trust. What I can commit to is that, right now, I know our First Nation governments are going through a process with each and every chief and council.

It's well on its way to get endorsement to work with us and industry on our path forward for our mineral development strategy. That's going to be good work. I think it is work that others have tried, and I think it is going to lead us on a path to really understand both sides of the table — what First Nations feel needs to be improved, but also what industry does. There do need to be improvements — the member opposite is correct.

We will continue to work with our First Nation governments and industry to look to improve — the sooner the better, I know — but also understanding — and the member opposite knows this — that it's an extremely complex situation, but we will do our best to truly improve the situation.

#### **Question re: Government staffing**

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier has gone on a bit of a government hiring spree. Based on numbers that he provided to this House, the Liberals added 652 FTE positions, including 160 in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Budgeting is about priorities. Let's look at the Premier's priorities.

In 2016-17, the budget for the Cabinet office was \$2.8 million. In this year's budget, it's \$3.1 million.

Let's look at the budget for the Child Development Centre. In 2016-17, the budget for the CDC was \$2.4 million, and in this year's budget, it's frozen at that same level.

Why has the Premier prioritized his own political office over other priorities, such as funding for the Child Development Centre?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We have gone over this a few times. Again, Yukoners don't want to be misled, so I will stick to the facts.

Since taking office, there has been an increase of 295.9 FTE positions. This information is from the Bureau of Statistics. There are actual numbers spanning the calendar years from 2016 to 2018, including a lot of FTEs that were put into chairs but not accounted for by the Yukon Party. We had to account for those numbers, Mr. Speaker. We project 160 FTEs to be hired this year, primarily to support Health and Social Services, and we have included these positions in the 2019-20 main estimates.

Again, if all of these positions are hired, the total growth of FTEs by the end of the fiscal year will be 450 — nowhere near the number that the Yukon Party has broadcast and advertised across the Yukon.

As the members opposite cast their aspersions and punch at shadows, we will continue to remain with the facts.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier didn't answer the question. I point out that the number 659 — we added by taking what the Premier told us last fall and what he told us this spring. The Premier's government hiring spree has grown government by almost 15 percent. Meanwhile, important NGOs are left out in the cold. Budgeting is about priorities.

Let's look at the Premier's priorities. He is giving himself a pay raise, which we voted against, and is increasing the budget for the Cabinet office by \$255,000 since forming government.

The budget for the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society was \$1.5 million in 2016-17. According to this year's budget, it's \$1.5 million in 2019-20.

Why does the Premier think that it's reasonable to give an increase to the budget for his political office by \$255,000 while the Yukon Women's Transition Home Society is left asking for money to cover a deficit and pleading for government to provide them with increased funding so they can keep their doors open?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, casting aspersions — Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party, when they were in government, blew over that budget a lot on a regular basis. As it happens, we did as well, so therefore the accounting process was flawed in that particular case.

What did we do? To be open and to be accountable, we actually put the money in the budget for the line item for travel. It's not new. It's something the Yukon Party was doing. It's something that we did as well, and we decided that if we're going to be doing this on a regular basis, regardless of

which government is in power — because it is important money to spend. We need to get to the communities. We need to make sure that all communities are heard. This is important money that's being spent so that the individual communities can talk to their members.

That's what this is about. This is about ministerial travel; this is about travel, and that's what those dollars are including.

Mr. Speaker, we can answer this question as many times as they want to ask it, but again the members opposite are being misleading by saying that this is a new expense when it clearly was something that the Yukon Party was cashing in on but not accounting for.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the Premier is getting his facts, but it is certainly not from the Public Accounts from previous years. The Premier's remarks are not accurate, and I would point out that budgeting is about priorities. The Premier seems to be able to find money for Liberal priorities and perks, including giving himself a pay raise and increasing the budget for the Cabinet office by \$255,000 for a total budget of \$3.1 million, which does not include MLA pay. They spent: \$40,000 renovating the Cabinet office; \$105,000 on new iPads, phones and furniture for the Cabinet office; Liberal staff got \$67,000 in contracts for transition; and a Liberal lobbying firm in Toronto was sole-sourced a \$160,000 contract. Why can the Premier find money for all of them, but when it comes to valuable NGOs, he freezes their budgets? Will the Premier agree to cancel his raise, cancel the increase to the Cabinet office and increase funding for NGOs, including the women's transition home and the Child Development Centre?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, they can regurgitate their briefing notes and their speaking notes over and over again; we've answered these questions time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, Yukoners want an ethical, responsible and accountable government.

I've already answered the questions already asked, so I'm going to go on to what we are proud of. We're proud of putting money toward a more inclusive Yukon, making it illegal to discriminate against people on the grounds of gender identity or gender expression. We're putting money into making sure that we remove the requirement for sexual reassignment surgery before a person can change the sex on their birth registration. We're making changes to boards and committees with more diversity and to support more inclusive decision-making in areas like childcare, violence prevention and social assistance. We are putting the money where Yukoners told us to put the money, and we're also accounting for the money that the Yukon Party spent.

#### **Question re: Land development within Whitehorse**

**Ms. White:** The housing market is hot right now, which is confirmed with the news that the average price of a home in Whitehorse is \$506,000.

Reading from an Energy, Mines and Resources fact sheet — and I quote: "Each land development project is different and the lot price will be subject to numerous factors. In

general, the practice is to price residential lots at development cost. In some instances, lots will be priced at market value."

Mr. Speaker, the government has announced that there will be 132 single-family lots made available in Whitehorse. It appears that, in recent years, lots for sale in Whistle Bend have been priced at market value.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House whether these new single-family lots will be sold at market value or for the cost of development and what the average cost of these lots will be?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, some of the questions — I will be very up front with the Legislative Assembly. When it comes to the exact pricing, I will definitely have to go back to our department to see what our pricing will be for the lots.

I know that the history of this particular question has been something that has been a hot topic. During my time with the City of Whitehorse, a former member of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Doug Graham, and I had reached out to the previous government and talked about how pricing was done.

It really was focused around the lots that additionally led to Grove Street. I can still remember the Member for Lake Laberge sitting where our House Leader is now and speaking to the answer of this. He added — I think at that point — that the practice had become that there was a percentage of approximately 20 percent for administration added on to lots at that particular time. I will have to go back in Hansard to look at his statements.

What has been the practice, I believe — and I will dig into this — is the fact that administrative costs have been added onto development costs, but in the residential market, it has really been stuck to the costs that are associated with the work that happens.

When you say "market", the challenge has been — and that's why we need private sector development — that the government has been the market maker, because they are the only ones who are really developing. They would be the market player.

I look forward to questions 2 and 3 and talking about residential and rural development as well.

**Ms. White:** We heard in an interview this morning about the high cost of Whitehorse real estate, with a trend toward building larger and more luxurious homes, because as it was noted, it turns out that this is good for builders as there is a higher profit margin in building larger homes than smaller ones. Even with the federal government's budget announcements to help first-time buyers, home ownership for first-time buyers in Whitehorse is still out of reach, given that nothing in Whistle Bend is currently listed for under \$400,000.

This morning, the president of the real estate board commented on the need for entry-level housing in Whitehorse. He suggested that one solution would be for smaller lots for mobile homes. Another option would be condo development for mobile homes such as the one initially developed by Yukon Housing Corporation on Range Road.

When will this government plan for affordable lots or neighbourhoods where Yukoners can place mobile homes?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Last week — I think it was — I gave a ministerial statement on this very topic, and I talked about how we are working to provide density with dignity in the City of Whitehorse. We work with all of the municipalities around their official plans and their vision for how their municipalities should develop. Within the City of Whitehorse, we work with the City of Whitehorse planning department as they plan out subdivisions like Whistle Bend.

In the development of it, what I can say — and what I mentioned last week during the ministerial statement — is that there are quite a number of multi-family lots. The idea is to create density within neighbourhoods like Whistle Bend. It is not the same model as it has been in the past with mobile home parks, but it is about creating smaller and more affordable units.

I am happy to talk further about it, but I will wait to see where the question leads and provide more information if I am asked again.

**Ms. White:** We have heard talk about lots in Whistle Bend or infill lots in Whitehorse, and it's great that there will be country residential development, but right now, unserviced lots in Grizzly Valley are priced over \$175,000 while unserviced lots in communities don't seem to be less than \$45,000.

We have talked at length about affordable housing and first-time buyers. We have talked about high rental rates and low vacancies. The bottom line is that, for far too many families and individuals, home ownership is out of reach and rent is swallowing up more and more of their income. What we are left with are employers who can't find workers because they have nowhere to live. The Yukon government experienced this challenge recently in hiring staff for the new Whistle Bend facility because of the lack of available housing.

Can the minister give us some idea of how the recently announced \$60 million, 10-year agreement will tackle affordable entry-level housing for Yukoners looking at home ownership?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will give as many answers as I can. Of course, some of this extends across the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, as that department is where lot sales happen. Some of it extends across to the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation because she has been working diligently to serve all Yukoners in providing more affordable housing. For example, the 16-unit Housing First residence is going to be completed this very summer and that will provide more access for affordable housing in the territory.

Over all, what I want to say is that we have 80 lots in Whistle Bend, including multi-family lots. It's the multi-family lots where we get more density. Smaller lots are more affordable. I agree with the member opposite: Housing prices and lot prices have been going up across the territory. It is an unfortunate situation with a very hot economy, and we are working across the spectrum, as are all departments.

The Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation is working to supply more affordable housing across the territory. I am working with Community Services to

get more lots available across the territory. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is working to get those lots to market.

#### **Question re: Community emergency medical services**

**Ms. Hanson:** When examining the health and well-being section of the 2018 Government of Yukon performance plan, it's hard to miss the stats on Yukon's emergency room visits. According to the document, 61 percent of all emergency department visits could have been avoided. What this means in real terms is that 23,678 emergency room visits in Yukon could have been avoided.

We know that emergency room services are among the most expensive forms of hospital services. Can the minister inform this House how much the Yukon would save on a yearly basis if we eliminated that 60 percent of avoidable emergency room visits?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** It's a really great question, because the question being asked right now is one that is being contemplated through the comprehensive health review. When we look at the major cost-drivers as noted by the member opposite, we are seeing pressures at the emergency room. We have looked at services and supports. We are working with our partners and trying to eliminate the major pressures that we are seeing. We are doing that in full collaboration. We are looking at providing sustainable health care and social supports that meet the needs of Yukoners. We are working with our health centres, but we are also looking at considering programs and services within the departments that are funded by Health and Social Services to better align service needs across the spectrum as opposed to looking just at emergency measures — and that's emergency response services, which my colleague from Community Services is responsible for. We will work with the Hospital Corporation, and we will also work with our non-governmental organizations that receive funding from Health to ensure that we better align service needs for all of our clients.

With respect to the specific numbers, I don't have that in front of me right now to respond, but I would be happy to have further discussions about that.

**Ms. Hanson:** We have been hearing an awful lot over the last year and a half about avoidable costs. One would have thought that we would know some of them.

What we have here is a clear example of how this government could be saving money and providing better health care services, yet the minister cannot or will not tell us how much money the Yukon is actually spending needlessly when it comes to ER visits. Their own performance plan says this.

If an employee at any other job knew that 60 percent of operating costs were avoidable and hadn't taken the time to figure out the dollar value of those potential savings, what would happen?

We know that emergency room visits are on the rise across the Yukon. We know that Yukon spends on average \$1,500 more per person per hospital stay than the rest of

Canada, and we know that we just opened a \$75-million ER expansion to meet a rising demand that is largely — not entirely, but largely — avoidable.

What specific actions — not what they're considering, but what specific actions — is this government taking to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm very proud of the work that this government is doing to build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. That means that we need to work with our community partners in investing in infrastructure and investing in the funding that's required to ensure that we provide the necessary supports within all of our communities. We are doing a lot of good work, and I'm very proud of the work that the Health and Social Services team is doing. I'm proud of the work the hospital is doing.

We have just spent a significant amount of money in building a new emergency room wing at the hospital that we have to account for. We are working with the RCMP; we are working with the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We have created four mental wellness hubs across the Yukon. We have ensured that we have supports — collaborative health care supports — within our communities. We have also looked at a re-enablement unit at the Thomson Centre, and that means less pressures. We have an aging population, and certainly we have to be in tune and aligned with the pressures that we're confronted with — that's right.

We are working toward addressing the pressures that we're seeing. We're doing that and allowing the comprehensive review process to evolve into providing recommendations on efficiencies for us that will better align service needs, knowing that we have these concerns that are coming toward us.

I'm appreciative of the question.

**Ms. Hanson:** It's not lost on Yukoners that it's incredibly unfair that the same government that's nickel-and-diming NGOs that provide essential services over inefficiencies, all the while ignoring a 60-percent inefficiency in one of the costliest forms of health care services in Yukon.

Today, Mr. Speaker, if you call the information line for finding a family doctor, you will find out that there are no doctors taking new patients. Despite years of talk, we have yet to see the incorporation of nurse practitioners in a meaningful way at the hospital or in clinics, measures that could ease family doctors' workloads and reduce ER visits.

What is this government doing to find solutions — to implement solutions — to reduce the huge cost to our health care system of emergency room visits by patients who are having to go there because of a lack of access to family physicians?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to pick up on a comment that was made with respect to nurse practitioners. I'm very proud to say that we are expanding the scope of health care to look at our health centres — exactly. That's what we're doing. We are looking at nurse practitioners across the Yukon, and we now have considered a nurse practitioner at the health centre in Mayo, so we are going to continue that practice of collaborative care. We are working with our health

professions to ensure that we provide services to every Yukoner where they reside, and we are working to ensure that happens in every one of our communities.

Key for us is not to look at acute care, but to look at collaborative care from birth to death. What do we do in that time frame where the individual resides within their community? We will continue to work with our partners to address that. The recommendations that come out of the comprehensive health review will provide us some direction. We are working with all of our stakeholders to ensure that we address the pressures that we are seeing, but we are also doing it in a way that will be supportive to ensure that our partners are appropriately funded and that the needs of communities are being met.

#### **Question re: Contract bid challenge process**

**Mr. Hassard:** During the election, the Liberals promised to tender all seasonally dependent contracts by March of each year. In 2017, they missed that deadline, and in response, the Liberals simply amended their own election promise to say that they would tender all seasonally dependent contracts by March 31, 2018. Then last year, the Minister of Highways and Public Works admitted that the Liberals could not even live up to that amended promise. So Mr. Speaker — another promise made, another promise broken.

Can the minister tell us if all — not some, but all — of this year's seasonally dependent contracts will be tendered by the end of next week? Yes or no.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am going to take a little bit of time this afternoon to expound on the right-time tendering and forecasting that this government is doing to help our contracting and business community bid on and deliver on contracts that we let from this government. The member opposite has asked for a yes or no answer, and I don't think that does the citizens of the territory any service.

We have been tendering projects earlier to help vendors better prepare and plan for seasonal work. Mr. Speaker, I don't find this funny — I think this is a very serious issue for our contracting community, and I know how much they appreciate the efforts that we are making on their behalf to make this work smoother and get it into their hands a lot quicker.

The approach we are taking allows contractors to plan their projects and be ready to take full advantage of our short and intense building season. Contractors have told us that we need to focus on putting out contracts at the right time, rather than just in time, and we are doing that. We are staggering closing dates of public tenders to make it easier for contractors to bid on more than one tender and to encourage prices to remain stable.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just to be clear, this is not something that we think is funny, but it appears that this is just another case of the Liberals saying one thing to get elected and then thinking that everyone will forget what they said.

I will quote from a Liberal press release during the election — and I quote: "A Liberal government would tender construction projects that are seasonally dependent no later

than March of each year...” — no later than March. This was the Liberal party’s promise that they broke in 2017 and 2018, and it sounds like maybe they are going to break it again this year, Mr. Speaker. So another promise made, another promise broken by this government.

Would the minister be able to tell us how many seasonally dependent contracts the government will be tendering this year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am able to answer that question.

The member opposite is hidebound. He doesn’t see the process that this government is taking by implementing and doing, assessing, switching it up to meet the needs of Yukoners and moving forward. That’s what we are doing. We are listening, making adjustments and moving forward.

This year, we have already put out \$50 million worth of tenders for the coming season and expect to put out another \$8 million worth in March. Another \$15 million worth will be tendered in April and May. This is far and above what previous governments have been able to do. I’m proud of the work of the Highways and Public Works department in getting these contracts out earlier and quicker so that contractors can plan and know what’s coming down this season.

Last year, as committed, we put out more than \$41 million worth of our large — i.e.: more than \$1 million — seasonally dependent construction tenders before March 31. Altogether, we put out tenders for small, medium and large seasonally dependent construction projects totalling approximately \$61 million, significantly increasing the volume and total value of earlier tendering over any previous Yukon government. We’re proud of that work, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Hassard:** Once again, we see the Minister of Highways and Public Works with a lot of words but nothing there for the contracting community.

It looks like the only certainty that this minister provides the contracting community is that he can’t deliver on his promises and he will continue to change the goal posts.

We saw it when he broke the Liberal promise to tender all contracts by March. We have seen it with the five-year capital concept that changes depending on the mood of the minister. Last year, he told us that they were going to build a new Holy Family School; this year, they’re not. Next year — who knows?

This year, the Liberals are projecting \$288 million in capital expenditures. These are projects that the private sector is eagerly awaiting to bid on. How much of that will be tendered by the end of March — by the end of next week?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I’m not going to waste the House’s time by repeating the answer that I gave just 30 seconds ago at the Leader of the Official Opposition’s behest.

What I will say is that we promised to implement all of the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel — promise made, promise delivered. We have done so.

Over the past two years, we have made procurement improvements that address each and every recommendation of the Procurement Advisory Panel. We’re using the 10

\$1-million exceptions — the first jurisdiction in the country to do so. We’re doing it again this year. We’re putting more out for Yukoners, contracts that Yukoners will have an opportunity to tender and to bid on — jobs and money staying in the territory — promise made, promise delivered.

We are building a French language high school. Again, we promised that we would do better in making sure that local companies had an opportunity to bid on and win these jobs — promise made, promise delivered.

We meet regularly with local businesses and industry associations and host well-attended annual events to connect staff with vendors — promises made, promises delivered.

We added standard clauses in our value-driven procurements that give points for First Nation participation in northern experience and knowledge — never before done — promise made, promise delivered.

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

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

*Recess*

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

### **Bill No. 210: *First Appropriation Act 2019-20* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

**Mr. Cathers:** I will just begin my remarks, since I had the floor as we finished off general debate on Tuesday. I asked a number of questions regarding —

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

**Quorum count**

**Chair:** Ms. Hanson, on a point of order.

**Ms. Hanson:** Do we have quorum here? Do we have enough people in this Legislative Assembly? There are six people.

**Chair:** Order, please. According to Standing Order 3(4), while in Committee of the Whole, if the Chair's attention is drawn to an apparent lack of a quorum, the Chair shall ring the bells for four minutes and then do a count.

*Bells*

**Chair:** I have shut off the bells and I will do a count. There are nine members present. A quorum is present. We will now continue debate.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, I just would note that when we left off debate on March 19<sup>th</sup>, I had asked a number of questions about projects that were in the budget, as I noted, due to the choice that the Premier and his colleagues made as far as not providing the a level of detail on budget highlights that used to be provided in the past. There are a number of projects — such as ones in my riding, the ridings of my colleagues and indeed across the territory — that people are looking for information on. I would just give the Premier the opportunity to provide the answers to those questions I asked about projects, including whether this year's budget includes money for adding a walkway to the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and others; whether there is money for Takhini River Road; whether there's money for the work that already went through YESAB for improvements at the Mayo Road and Alaska Highway intersection — and I'll just add one to the list that I know is of interest to the Member for Porter Creek North's constituents, as well as my own — whether the government is looking at adding a turning lane on the Alaska Highway in front of Porter Creek Super A.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We will start with a few of the particulars that the member opposite brought up. There was a string of questions. That wasn't all of them, but we'll start with that.

Again, specific questions about pedestrian crosswalks — I don't have that information here as the Minister of Finance in general debate. I believe it would be under the ICIP funding for the Community Services portfolio or for Highways and Public Works, but again we'll have an excellent opportunity with the minister and his team for that department in Committee of the Whole when that department is called. I'm happy to answer those questions at that time if the member opposite wants more information as opposed to less.

Again, we could go back and forth as to whether or not the member opposite believes that we have provided more or less information in the budgetary process. We believe that with the addition of the economic forecast — the economic outlook, the five-year plan and the performance plans — we got rid of a checklist of highlights the previous government used to use to promote line items in the budget. We believe that this approach — again with the engagement website,

putting more information out on yukon.ca as well, and having a website that's more geared toward the public as opposed to public servants — we believe that we are giving more information than less.

I know the member opposite disagrees with that, but again, in the past, there was no five-year capital plan. In the past, there wasn't necessarily the outlook — the forecast. Again, I believe there is more information; the member opposite believes there is less.

We will say as well just to update folks on yukon.ca, since we launched that in 2018, we have added over 2,750 pages. That's an update from the last time I spoke in the Legislative Assembly. I believe then I mentioned it was 2,400, so that's great. The work is continuing to update each page, including a document repository, emergency and safety information, campground and recreation pages, government event listings and a directory of government buildings.

We are also committed to creating new innovative ways for the public to use yukon.ca. That includes things like recent additions of filters for search engines. Again, we're gathering lots of feedback — 900 feedback forms — and we're continuing to adjust content to meet those needs. I am very pleased with this progress. It does take time. There are a lot of folks working on this right now, but to be able to improve the public's positive sentiment since its launching has been really important to this government.

The member opposite did mention as well about — some folks might be as far as the engagement section unscrupulously using the engagement processes when it comes to our surveys. I would say that these are things that the government is aware of and the department is aware of, if it happens. It's hard to limit this information by saying to only take one IP address per engagement. The reasons for this are obvious. If you had a community centre or a youth group or some public computer that was being used, it wouldn't necessarily be the same person over and over again who is using that particular IP address, so it would be hard to actually limit the engagement based upon that. But again, the departments always have an eye to the technologies available to make sure that the information that we get is succinct and is coming from Yukoners. That's an important piece as well.

The member opposite did ask some questions about medical subsidies. His questions kind of led toward us feeding into that independent process. I am not going to prejudge the recommendations of that independent review process on medical subsidies or any other field or file as far as that review goes. I do appreciate the member opposite's urgings, but at the same time, that would be a prejudgement and we want that process to be done as independently as possible.

Also there were some conversations — again, the specific infrastructure points. If there is a specific infrastructure question for a specific department, again, the members opposite will have the ability to have a breakdown line by line in each department. Those items can be expanded as much as necessarily possible.

I think and I hope I answered the member opposite's questions. If not, I am sure I will get them in the next round.

**Mr. Cathers:** I do have to point out that the Premier had noted that the specific projects that I asked about are ones that he doesn't have the information on. I do just have to point out — I am sure the Premier is not going to change his mind or his position on the budgeting details this afternoon — but previously when there used to be around 10 or 12 pages of budget highlights, information about whether projects such as turning lanes or walkways being added to bridges, such as I mentioned, would be available not only to members but to the general public the day the budget was tabled. We are two weeks in and not only do I not have that information, but the Premier himself says that he does not have the information. That certainly seems to be less transparent in terms of providing that information in an easily accessible manner for the public. As I noted, the projects I mentioned are ones that I regularly get inquiries from constituents about. I have written to the Premier and I have written to ministers about those projects.

Again, when people approach us and say: "Well, is this in the government's budget?" We are left with the situation of having to say: "Well, I don't know and the Premier doesn't know either — hopefully we will get an answer at some point." It is not the most accessible way of providing that information. I will just leave that point there. I am sure that the Premier is not going to change his mind this afternoon, but if there is less detail in the budget highlights, no matter how you try to present it, it is just less detail.

The Premier made reference to surveys and the criticism that I made about the government's survey process — the fact that it is anonymous, that it is easily usable from somebody multiple times — the Premier says that the department can filter that out. But if it is not being done by IP addresses, how does the department filter out the multiple responses from the same person? Since they are no longer asked to give their name, somebody can comment from multiple computers if they have multiple computers and phones, as a number of people do. For people who are sharing a family computer or for people who don't own a computer and are using a public library to access the Internet, they risk being filtered out by anything attempting to catch the IP address. If the government is trying to do it through some similarity in comments, how can they be sure that they are not filtering out similar thoughts or similar views from members of the same family or friends who happen to talk about their views on a subject?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We can answer questions here — I have all my ministers here. For the departments, I can answer questions generally about these very specific questions about very specific line items, but I guess if the member opposite actually wants real detail as opposed to — I don't know what else he would want. We are offering up briefings. He could have asked these questions in the briefings of departments. That was an opportunity for him that he already had, and if he had these questions he surely could have asked departmental officials as he had those briefings. Also, in general debate, I'm happy to answer those questions here generally, in general debate, but also during Committee of the Whole, so we're offering as many possibilities as possible for those questions.

Whether he wants a general answer or a more specific answer — I guess that remains the question.

When it comes to an engagement process, we asked and we have reached out, partnering with the city. How do people want to be engaged?

People want to be engaged this way. They want to be engaged using modern technology, but that is not the only effort. We have many different forms and ways in which we can make sure that the ideas, thoughts and concerns of Yukoners are part of our decision process, and we will continue to do that. We will continue to expand upon that.

I am happy with the engageyukon.ca website. Since 2017, we have hosted 53 engagements on engageyukon.ca. We have been asking Yukoners to rate their experience, and we are getting those details back. Every year, every day and every month, we are getting better and better at engaging. We are increasing our abilities. We are making efforts to find meaningful public engagement and to see what that looks like for Yukoners, and we will continue to work on that.

**Mr. Cathers:** Clearly the Premier and I are not going to agree on this subject here this afternoon, either on the details in the budget or on the issue of the government's surveys. I would point out that when the Premier refers to people rating the government's surveys — if you can submit a survey multiple times — which you can — and if it also allows you to rate the survey multiple times and say how wonderful you think it was, it does leave the possibility open that anyone — such as the Premier, members of Cabinet or indeed anyone who has multiple devices — can comment multiple times.

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

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Streicker, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I think I just heard the member opposite suggest that members of this government were filling out surveys multiple times. Not only is it incorrect, it is just inappropriate to hear him suggest that. It would be a deliberate falsehood. He is saying that we did that, and I know that to be incorrect. I think it is just wrong for him to be stating that.

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

**Mr. Cathers:** I don't believe it is a point of order. I think the minister may have misheard me. I did not say that members of Cabinet were filling out surveys multiple times. I said that it's possible for anyone who has multiple devices, such as members of Cabinet or others, to fill them out more than once.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I will have to review Hansard tomorrow to make a decision on that because I didn't hear it.

Carry on, please.

**Mr. Cathers:** I will move on to other areas. I am just trying to point out a flaw in the system that could allow anyone who happens to have multiple devices to comment multiple times, and we haven't heard an answer yet from the government on how — if they are not filtering out, based on



IP addresses — they can have any idea — when they are screening out comments — which is a duplicate comment from the same person and which one may be a similar comment from a family member, a friend or someone else who just happens to have a similar view as the first person whose survey was looked at. It seems to me that if indeed they are filtering them out at all, they are leaving a tremendous amount of discretion to whoever does the filtering to decide what is a duplicate response and what is not. That is a huge problem in the methodology of the surveys.

I am just going to ask a few specific budget questions here that I just asked the Premier to confirm.

We talked about the increase in the number of full-time equivalent employees for this year, including the 160 new FTEs that the Premier indicated the government is adding this year. In comparing the dollars budgeted for personnel for the 2019-20 fiscal year with the dollars budgeted for the fiscal year that we are just finishing, it doesn't seem that the increase reflects the entire year's costs of those new full-time equivalent employees, which would be understandable, of course, if employees were hired partway through a fiscal year. The portion of the fiscal year that they were expected to be working would be the portion to be budgeted.

My simple question for the Premier is: For those 160 new FTEs that he has indicated that government is adding this year, what is the annual cost of paying for those positions? Once we're dealing with a full year of those people working, what is that total cost going to be?

I know that number is not going to be reflected in this year's budget, but that number will be reflected in future fiscal years for these new positions.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite is right as far as timing, but we also included a vacancy factor, which reduces those numbers a bit. If you take a look at numbers like the 40 or so hires for the Sally Ann, those will be in and then out again because they are a temporary solution.

**Mr. Cathers:** I think I heard part of an answer, but I don't think we got the entire number, which is that total cost. The Premier has indicated that the Salvation Army — the 40 staff — are intended to be in again and out again, as he put it. That would lead one to assume that government is planning on handing over — transferring — that service to someone else to provide it.

Can the Premier tell me what the government is looking at doing in terms of the future operation of the former Centre of Hope — who are they considering handing that service over to and at what stage that work might be?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** No decisions have been made on that.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, that didn't really answer the question. If the government is considering making changes and if they're planning on those 40 FTEs being temporary, then surely the government must have some ideas about what it wants to do for the future of that place.

The question is: Who or what are they considering transferring the management and operation of that over to? Even if they are in discussions or haven't finalized what

occurs, clearly they have something in mind or they wouldn't be indicating that these will just be temporary positions.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Conversations — as far as that goes, we're going to work with partners and stakeholders. We're not going to make a decision here on the fly because of the member opposite's curiosity. No decisions have been made on that yet. When decisions are made, the member opposite will be one of the first to know.

**Mr. Cathers:** That's not a very open and transparent answer. It's not my curiosity. I'm asking a question on behalf of taxpayers. Yukon citizens are wondering about the operation of this facility, what its future will be and what the government is considering doing.

I really don't see why the government has anything to hide about indicating what they are thinking of and what options they are considering. I'm not going to speculate on which options they are considering. I'm just asking for an indication from the Premier of what options his government is considering for this facility in the future. I think that's a perfectly reasonable question for me to expect an answer to and for Yukoners who have asked us about this to expect the Premier to give an answer to.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I completely agree with the member opposite that Yukoners will be very excited to know what our plans are going to be.

I will tell you that I have had the fortunate opportunity to tour the facility twice now with the minister responsible — once when the facility first opened and again just a couple of days ago, actually. We had an opportunity to speak with Dot, who is one of the leaders there now and who used to work with the outreach van. My heart goes out to that particular individual for her oversight.

To sit there and to talk to some of the people who worked in the old Sally Ann building — and they came forth to say, very importantly: "Look around this room that you see just right now. What do you see? You see a lot of support staff, and you see a lot of women in here as well. In the past you had a situation where the women did not feel comfortable in this building, and now there's overflow for women, and they feel comfortable and safe."

God only knows, Mr. Chair, where they were sleeping before, but now there is hope, now there is a place where care workers can work with individuals in a setting where they can feel more comfortable to actually share in their strife and to share in finding solutions.

To tour that facility with the minister, the deputy minister and other members of our team, to hear about the opportunities that we have in that space — to share that space with other stakeholders, with other non-governmental organizations — and to use that as a living, breathing centre where we can focus on health, on individual programming, on getting people to walk a better path.

I tell you — one of the main things that I noticed coming back there for the second time — first of all, it was great to see so many people who were working there originally still working there. That really warmed my heart. But there is a

different feel and a different energy there right now. People do feel safe in that building.

Under the care and guidance of the Minister of Health and Social Services, we will have a plan. Their department works with NGOs, other stakeholders and other governments. I know that Chief Bill has lots of insight and plans. But for me to get up here now and to somehow make an announcement when it's not ready — that's not going to help the process.

I will say this: It's a new day at that emergency shelter, and I'm very proud of the work that the Department of Health and Social Services has done.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, that's really not much of an answer. In terms of asking the Premier what options they are considering, I would leave it to stand on the record for any Yukoners to read: What is unreasonable about asking the question?

The government has decided to take over, potentially temporarily, the operations of the Salvation Army. In asking what options they are considering for its future, we're not trying to paint the Premier into a corner here.

We're simply asking a question of what options they are exploring and considering the resources that government has directed toward it — the fact that they've expended a couple of million dollars in capital on purchasing the asset, that they're adding 40 government staff to that facility and that it deals with a number of our most vulnerable citizens — I would challenge anyone to give me a reasonable answer as to why it's not fair to say: What options are you considering for the future of this building?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe I gave the member opposite an answer as best as I could with the information that we have available today.

**Mr. Cathers:** Clearly I'm not going to get an answer on that, though that is unfortunate.

The announcement that the government was taking over the Salvation Army Centre of Hope came in December 2018. The press release is quite unusual for government press releases. What was notable in the press release — and I will quote from it: "The Government of Yukon and The Salvation Army have reached an agreement in principle to transfer the ownership and operations of the Centre of Hope to the Government of Yukon. The agreement is subject to Management Board approval."

A very simple question for the Premier: Why would government announce this takeover without first subjecting it to Management Board approval? It's highly unusual to make a decision to spend that much money without the decision made by Management Board — for the average citizen, this means Cabinet wearing the financial hat. One of the benefits to the Management Board approval process is that any plan that is being considered — any proposal that is going forward — is subject to scrutiny by officials not only in the department initiating the request, but also by the Department of Finance through the Management Board Secretariat, and they often identify very useful information to present to the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues when they're making a decision about the options before them.

Bypassing that scrutiny leads to rather shoot-from-the-hip decision-making occurring, and it's quite unusual to see a minister operating outside of the Management Board process by making that announcement and it's quite unusual to see even the Premier bypassing the scrutiny of the staff of Finance and the Management Board Secretariat on a project — specifically a multi-million dollar one such as this.

Can the Premier tell me why this announcement was made without going before Management Board first?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to maybe respond to some of the comments because I would like to provide some clarity. The Salvation Army Centre of Hope was built and handed over to the Salvation Army from the previous government without any programming, without any supports and without any structure. So when we talk about being irresponsible, that in itself was irresponsible — irresponsible to transfer over a building of that magnitude, not to mention the costs associated, without any long-term plan or vision around safety, security, emergency measures, the opioid crises, drug and alcohol supports or the health and well-being of our vulnerable citizens and with no plans around the transition housing units. That is irresponsible. There was no programming in place. There was nothing.

As far as I can understand from the community, we had Bible studies happening in the facility, and that was the extent of the programming. That is irresponsible. If we want to talk about bypassing anything, the bypassing of the transfer and the building of that magnitude without input by the citizens of the city and the citizens of Yukon to effectively engage in a successful community centre that better meets and aligns with Yukoners' needs so that we can provide healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities — that is not responsible.

So the decision was not a difficult one to make. We took into consideration with our partners — we had the housing action plan and the Safe at Home plan. We had the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. We had everyone working with us to address the concerns in our community so that we could start working to address the pressures we were seeing at the hospital with emergency situations where clients were being locked out of the Centre of Hope and not getting access to shelter. That is irresponsible.

We are seeing success in our community now, and I want to hold up my hands to the members who have come forward, who are participating and who are engaging. We're seeing now more community members engaging with us, and for that I am ever grateful. I will continue to look to the future to make this a community centre that best aligns with their needs.

**Mr. Cathers:** That was quite the answer. I wonder whether the minister and the Premier are aware of the fact that the Salvation Army was open for many years operating a shelter and if either one of them could tell us how many years they were open, funded by governments of every stripe in this territory, to provide shelter service. We have heard a very, shall we say, disrespectful view of the Salvation Army coming from the minister. Those were not very complimentary remarks she made toward their project.

The previous government did enter into an arrangement with the Salvation Army to support the construction of the facility. The arrangements the government made afterward actually increased the resources from beyond what the original agreement was for the facility. We understand there were operational issues. As I said previously in this Assembly, I don't disagree that some changes were necessary to how that facility was being managed, but the government had a choice of supporting the operation of an NGO or choosing to take over, as they did. There would have been other options as well.

It's interesting to hear the Minister of Health and Social Services speaking in that manner about the Salvation Army, dodging the questions about it. Again the question comes down to, regardless of what mud the Premier or the minister may attempt to fling at previous governments: Why did the government bypass the Management Board process and operate outside of Management Board scrutiny in making such a major decision? Why did they not allow officials from Management Board Secretariat to scrutinize the plan, scrutinize the deal and then present it to Cabinet for a decision before that press release was issued?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I watched as a minister did everything she possibly could in her power with her department to prop up an agreement that was pretty shaky. Again, for security reasons, for safety reasons and for looking at the best interests of marginalized individuals, this decision was made, and as soon as possible — I believe that the decision was made in December to take over, and then in January was the Management Board meeting for that — so as soon as possible, which is a little bit different from the previous government, which hired — I think the number was definitely over 50 new teachers and support staff — EAs — and put them into jobs without a Management Board submission, with an election looming. That is what the previous government did, or put funding into a very important project like MacBride Museum — money that was announced in the summertime without Management Board scrutiny.

It is pretty rich to hear the member opposite with his crocodile tears on the Management Board submission, when we put something out there because of an emergency situation. We have a new government that has a new mandate for collaborative care — that is, putting more money and more resources into mental wellness hubs in Carmacks, in Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Dawson — that integrate and streamline services so that Yukoners can receive the support that they need when they need it and where they need it. We have hired mental health workers to provide professional services for Yukoners in need of addiction support and mental health support.

We have secured additional funding from the federal government to improve access to mental health and addiction services in the territory, which includes access to quality treatments and services for people with substance use disorders. We have introduced presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder for emergency response workers, and all the member opposite can say is how dare we make a

critical decision outside of Management Board? It is pretty rich coming from the member opposite when clearly this was something that they had done themselves with no explanation.

Actually, as opposed to an explanation, they have dodged that and have said it is just not true — that it didn't happen — when really, the teachers were already sitting in seats, the EAs were already working with students, the support staff was already in the schools, and yet somehow the members opposite would have Yukoners believe that somehow, before the election, that was a Liberal hire and that was the debate in real time here in the Legislative Assembly.

Again, I stand by the minister in her decisions and her department's decisions to embrace collaborative care, to embrace mental wellness and to put more money where it is needed, especially in these modern times. I want to thank the Salvation Army for the years of dedicated service that they have given our community. If the member opposite wants to tell people that somehow we believe otherwise — again, that is just false. We believe that they have done extraordinary work in the Yukon.

It is a new day in the Yukon, Mr. Chair. Two little granules of a drug nowadays is killing people. We have to act collaboratively. We have to act in a new mindset. We can't wait for people to be sick anymore. People are dying, and we have to make sure that these marginalized individuals have the support that they have. That is why we are having a Housing First strategy for the first time in Yukon. These are the progressive things that we are going to continue to do. The decisions that are coming from the Minister of Health and Social Services' department, with her leadership, I stand behind 100 percent.

**Mr. Cathers:** In the Premier's rather heated and defensive response, what we didn't hear was an answer to the question. It is not enough for the Premier to — on the one hand he stood up and claimed that the previous government — the previous Minister of Education — hired staff without Management Board approval — hired teachers and EAs — and to make that claim and to criticize the action that he claims occurred and then go on himself or allow his minister to make a multimillion-dollar decision affecting the hire of some 40 new full-time equivalent employees, ultimately through the government's plan — to make that decision to do the takeover, to spend around \$2 million in capital on purchasing the building — the Premier can correct that if I am misrecalling the number. I don't have that section of the budget open in front of me — to hire 40 staff and so on.

It is a very simple question: Why bypass the scrutiny of officials who would review the plan, review the estimated costs and identify potential flaws in the plan to government before making the decision to take over the Salvation Army Centre of Hope? Why bypass Management Board scrutiny? It is a very simple question that deserves an answer.

For the Premier to suggest that it takes more than a month to be able to get together a Management Board meeting, that's quite a surprising statement to have after-the-fact approval more than a month late, when on December 20, when the announcement was made — unless there weren't enough

ministers in town to hold a Management Board meeting — it is hard to understand why they couldn't have held a Management Board meeting and allowed the proper scrutiny to occur before that press release was issued. It is a very simple question. Is the Premier going to answer it, or is he going to just dodge the question again?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe I answered the member opposite's question as far as the scrutiny of Management Board. It did happen, unlike the previous government, which made decisions outside of Management Board, and that scrutiny didn't happen by their government. It had to be done by us after the fact. Again, we of course did that scrutiny with people already hired. We have extended contracts into June for these hires right now to work with our stakeholders, to make sure that we have a plan together, moving forward with NGOs and other service providers. The contract services — the decision was being made because those contractors — I believe the service provisions were up and it was time to have that discussion and make that decision, and that is exactly what happened.

**Mr. Cathers:** It doesn't look like we are actually going to get an answer to that here today, so I am going to move on to other areas. I am going to recap again. I did ask the Premier for the 160 new FTEs that he is adding this fiscal year, and that led to this question about the Salvation Army, where the Premier seems to be indicating that he is not confident that the 40 employees associated with the Salvation Army, will necessarily be reflected in future budget years. He was unwilling to provide an explanation of what options government is considering that might avoid that.

I am going to ask again: For those 160 new positions that are being added this fiscal year, clearly the budget increase for personnel this year doesn't reflect an entire year's cost of those 160 new FTEs. If whatever options government may be considering for the Salvation Army don't pan out and they keep those 40 full-time equivalent employees into the next fiscal year, what is the total annual cost associated with hiring those new full-time equivalent employees?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'm not going to answer speculative questions — whether or not something happens or doesn't happen. Those are details I don't have here, but the Minister of Health and Social Services, with her department officials, will have those numbers, so we will provide those numbers.

The member's question is now on record and we'll get those answers.

As far as the money that we're going to put in this budget, we'll give him the numbers that we have for FTEs for this budget — not any speculative or future budgets — if and or when something may or may not happen.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the Premier said that he is going to get back with some information or allow the Minister of Health and Social Services to, but anytime Management Board approves the addition of new full-time equivalent employees, in the information submitted by whatever department is making the request will be an understanding of what the annual cost is for those positions on a go-forward basis.

If the Premier wants to provide me the number for the 120 that doesn't include the Salvation Army, at least that would be some progress, but it is very hard to believe that the Premier doesn't have access to the information about what the total annual cost of adding those 160 full-time equivalent positions will be. It just seems like it is a bad-news number and the Premier doesn't want to provide the information here to the House.

Again, it's not just me asking as Official Opposition Finance critic, but I would argue that every Yukoner has a right to ask this question and have an answer provided. If government is adding 160 new positions, what is the annual cost of doing that — understanding that at this point, some are coming in partway through the fiscal year, but if they carried forward, what's the cost of that?

That's not a speculative question; that's a question that is based on information that would have been presented to Management Board when they made the decision about whether to approve these FTEs or not.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I completely agree with the member opposite that Yukoners have the right to know the answers to these questions, but the member opposite would also know that if he actually wants to have those answers, he can ask those of the department that is responsible during Committee of the Whole. Because it may come as a surprise to the member opposite, but I do not have that Management Board submission here at the desk with me right now as we're discussing general debate in Committee of the Whole.

Again, there is a time and a place for that, and that information is readily available through the Minister of Health and Social Services. The member opposite knows that, but again is trying to paint some kind of picture here. If he really does want those answers, he knows that he could have asked those questions during the briefings; he also knows that he can ask those questions during Committee of the Whole. I do not have a Management Board submission from January at my desk.

I do have my Acting Deputy Minister of Finance here ready to answer questions in general debate with me on things in general, but for specific questions like that, I would beg the indulgence of the member opposite to direct that to where he knows he can get the answers — specifically, quickly and transparently.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier can say that, but that has not been reflective of our experience. When my colleague the critic for Health and Social Services has asked questions of the Minister of Health and Social Services, often the answers have not been forthcoming.

Again, the Premier is trying to dismiss this issue, but I do have to ask the question, and I'm not the only one asking this question: If the Premier and Finance minister isn't paying attention to the finances and to the effect on the finances of adding government employees, who is?

If the Finance minister can't even tell us how much the 160 new positions being added across government would cost on an annual basis, it either suggests a lack of transparency or

a casualness about the public finances. Either one of those is disturbing.

I give the Premier the opportunity to provide that information yet again, and I will ask him one other question that should be very simple. I would ask the Premier: What is the combined increase compared to the 2018-19 fiscal year estimate — the mains he presented last year at around this time? What is the annual increase in the grant from Canada, the Canada health transfer, the Canada social transfer and the cannabis transfer combined? From our understanding from the briefing with officials, that annual increase in major federal transfers is some \$53.4 million. I would just ask the Premier to state his understanding of that amount.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite is going to have to repeat his last question, because we're looking up the information that we do have here on his questions about personnel.

The increase in personnel this year is \$12.6 million. If you take a look from 2018-19, in 2019-20, the increase is there, and we went over those numbers the other day, so the member opposite knows which pages we're talking about. We're looking at an increase this year of \$12.6 million. As I said, that would work out to about \$78,000 per FTE, again, if all these hires were to be put in place this year. This is a modest increase for programs and services that are extremely important and necessary for the Yukon public. These are services and programs that we have come to trust in, and they will continue.

His other question, he'll have to repeat.

**Mr. Cathers:** My other question was a simple one: The increase in the amount — comparing this fiscal year and last year's main estimates tabled about a year ago, what is the total increase in the major transfers from Canada? I would just ask the Premier to state his understanding of it. I know that from the information we understood from officials and from the budget documents, there appears to be a \$53.4-million increase in that number. I would just ask the Premier to either agree with that number or state what his understanding of it is.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes, from mains to mains. I agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate that the Premier did agree with that.

I would just note that one of the reasons we do like to get the Premier and ministers on record regarding this — as well as projects the government is doing — is so that we do not just rely on the information — the Premier is trying to direct specific questions to briefings with officials.

We do appreciate those briefings with officials and we do appreciate the information officials provide, but the information that we often ask for from ministers in the House is so that if government changes its plan or it changes its narrative or talking points or is attempting to walk away from commitments that were previously made — we don't like to get into a situation where the evidence we have comes from officials and we're dragging officials into the discussion. The political debates should be between politicians, and we always endeavour to avoid dragging officials into them whenever we possibly can because they do not put their names forward on a

ballot and do not expect to be dragged into political debate. By my understanding, most of them do not enjoy it very much, either.

That's one of the reasons we ask for accountability here of ministers in the Legislative Assembly, and for them to state their plans, their projects and their understandings of the numbers and so on also allows the public to review Hansard and to hold elected officials accountable for the commitments they've made. This is also an important part of the traditions of the Westminster system, which expects ministerial accountability, not simply the department to be accountable to the public. While department officials should be accountable to the public, this should not take away from ministerial responsibility.

I will look forward to further information from the Premier at a later date on these items.

I think I have just one more question before handing off to the Third Party — unless the Premier's answer sparks another question — which is the question: Between this fiscal year and next fiscal year, how much does the government anticipate the major federal transfers to increase when comparing this year's main estimates to the current expected federal revenue from those transfers next year?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Our long-term forecasts predict a modest two-percent increase, but again, these forecasts are way out. It won't be until next year, as the member opposite knows. He's very familiar with the process as far as the TFF goes. Right now, at this point, it's a very modest forecast of two-percent growth.

**Mr. Cathers:** I do appreciate the answer, and I do understand that forecasts are forecasts. I would note that although the Premier may question it when we believe the government has had a change in its estimates for a reasonable reason, we're not going to give them too rough a time for that. It is those areas where we believe otherwise or have questions where we will.

With that, I will wrap up my remarks here at general debate in the interests of allowing the Third Party to ask questions and to move into individual departments. I thank the acting deputy minister, officials from Finance and others across government who have put work into developing the government's budget for their work.

I would just again emphasize that when we criticize the decisions made by elected officials of the current government, those criticisms are not intended to reflect on the actions of officials. We appreciate that you follow the direction you are given and act to implement it.

With that, I will conclude my remarks.

**Ms. Hanson:** Since we are in general debate about the budget, I have some general questions with respect to the means by which the government is communicating its strategic objectives and performance measures. I am going to come at this again because I reviewed what was given to us as a performance plan. Quite frankly, Mr. Chair, I am really hoping and searching for answers from the Minister of Finance that will indicate to me that this is a very preliminary initiative.

I would ask the Minister of Finance if he could just simply outline for me and for us in this House — because when I step back — and my understanding of a performance plan is that it comprises the actual output or results of an organization measured against what it intended to do — so its goals and objectives and not a bunch of statements about cumulative: “This is what we have done, this is what we are going to do” — so nothing about how you would measure whether that is going to achieve anything against the \$1.5 billion that are being expended on behalf of Yukoners. It goes back to paraphrasing one of my former colleagues in this House who used to always talk about what gets measured: If you can’t measure it — what gets measured gets done. You can’t manage what you can’t measure.

I have said this before, but I went online and so I am looking at — because I am not making this up. Other provinces and other territories, in fact — not so much the territories, but I will say other provinces — not only do the work of strategic planning, but they make them available to the public. When they do that, Mr. Chair — and I just want to give you a brief sense of what I am trying to get at here — and when I look at an example of a government that says that they are going to do this and has done it — you see that they will publish their strategic plan. This sets out the big lofty goals that I have heard and seen largely in the Budget Address, which is great. These are the four sort of key pillars of this government, and that is the strategic overview of what this government says it is going to do, but at some point it has to move from that lofty language into something that citizens can say, “Yes, that means this.” That is how that is measured.

One of the things that I think is really important in another jurisdiction is where they actually say, “Okay, from that strategic plan, each ministry, each department, each agency will develop business plans that will link into that.”

When I see that, they also provide a reader’s guide. In the front of their budget document — my goodness, this would be nice — is the name of the department, the phone number in terms of the key contact and their website information — goodness, website information that works and has accurate information. That’s for the future. I understand it’s under work — under play.

What I look for when I look at a performance plan — and I think citizens have a right to be able to look at what the outcomes are and what the broad statements are saying what that ministry is looking to achieve. What are the strategies, including the significant courses of action that are being taken in each of the departments here to accomplish the outcomes they said they wanted to achieve? What are the performance measures that will indicate to me as a citizen and to me as a member of the Legislative Assembly the degree of success that the department has had in achieving its desired outcomes? They have to contain targets. We have to say where we’re reaching for. You don’t do that and don’t achieve anything in any aspect of life unless you know what you’re reaching for. I don’t see those targets anywhere. So how are we, as members of this Legislative Assembly, supposed to make informed assessments rather than hearing repeatedly the broad, bland

statements about this is how good we are and I’m proud of what we’re doing?

Citizens need to have more than how proud a government minister is. It’s good to see people feeling good, but you need to be able to back up why you’re feeling good, and that’s not present right now, Mr. Chair. There needs to be performance indicators assisting to help assess whether or not — to assist in assessing the performance. One of the things that’s really important is we need to say to citizens that there are lots of things that go on in terms of what will affect the performance and the outcome of what you set as targets that are not necessarily causal links. There are environmental things that occur; there are economic factors that come into play. We’re counting on the continued robust economy because we hope and think that there will be a fully operational mine maybe by the end of this calendar year. Lots of predictions are made on that.

Without that kind of information and without that kind of data that says “by department” and then sets out clearly — when you set out those measurements you say, “This is what our target is and this is what we’re doing to achieve it.” Then I look at this, Mr. Chair, and I go, “Sheesh.” We see that 60 percent of Yukoners report mental health as excellent or very good and the national average is 62 percent. That to me would beg: What’s our strategic initiative? What are we doing in terms of performance measures? How are we going to assess? How are we going to move those indices from being below the national average?

Or when we see — this is another classic one. Yukoners who got the flu shot — 24 percent in 2017; the national average is 33 percent. I would expect to see in the performance plan what we are doing as a government to move that up. What are the initiatives? It’s not here. This is not a performance plan, Mr. Chair.

When we see — and I guess it’s the question I asked this afternoon — that 61 percent of all emergency department visits could have been avoided. That’s fact. That’s a performance indicator — bad. So what are we doing to make the change? What are the strategic and what are the actual things we’re doing to make those changes — concrete actions against which we can be measured?

Again, I know these are gross averages, but they’re indicators; they’re indices against a national average of 201 of the same quantum.

My point in raising these is that, as we’re moving through the departments in specific budget debate, we need more than a document that says, “We feel good about ourselves; we want to feel good, and we’re going to sort of make some of these little statements, but we’re not to say what we’re going to do about it, and we’re not going to acknowledge that there are counters, particularly on the economic side.” So we post on page 41 that the average weekly earnings is \$1,094, and that’s great, compared to the national average, but we don’t point out that our own Bureau of Statistics also tells us that 33.3 percent of Yukoners earn 30,000 or less.

That’s an important thing because it says, against that performance indices, what are we doing to bring those 33 and

one-third percent up to that territorial average that we would wish for all Yukoners?

So we need to have some indicators, some plan. I guess what I'm asking the Minister of Finance is: Where do we, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, and where do members of the public find where each department, his own department, has identified what their key strategies and performance measurements are, how they articulate what outcomes they're going to have, what the key strategies for achieving those outcomes are and what performance measures they're going to establish — or have established, because I'm presuming they have — to be able to measure and assess that there has been progress in each of the key areas that we hope is represented by the rollup document that is tabled as the 2019-20 operation and maintenance and capital estimates, which really are just that?

I'll leave it there, Mr. Chair. I really am — I think the Minister of Finance has figured out by now that this is an area that I personally, and our party, believes is critically important to an evolving and growing government. We hear the words and believe the Minister of Finance has been clear that he wants to have a government that is open, transparent and accountable, and I will continue to say that will require sharing real information with Members of the Legislature and real information with members of the public that goes beyond communications synopses — basically communications documents and websites that don't work but actually have what the measurable outcomes are.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Our websites do work; there's a transition period; we're going through a transition, because we do want to be open and accountable, and we just again, today on the floor of the Legislative Assembly did an update on the numbers of pages that have been transferring over from one older website to a newer website.

Again, there are two different websites to go to, so hopefully the member opposite knows that. The old one is still up as we transfer into the new one. I will agree with the member opposite that we do need to have more indicators, and we need to go on those. I do take offence that she thinks that the performance plans are good-news stories. They are not necessarily, and that is what we are getting away from. As opposed to having highlights that tick off boxes to say we are putting money here, putting money there, a performance plan does exactly that. It says where we are in a moment in time compared to other jurisdictions.

If the member opposite — I was patient; I sat and I listened to everything she said, and yet when I am speaking, she cannot help herself but to talk over me. If she wants to actually hear the answer, I would really appreciate if she would listen.

As we are doing this — those performance plans — are they done? No, they are not. Are we happy with where they are now? No, there is more work to be done, there really is. The information she is looking for, we are going toward that. In the fall of 2018, those near-term performance measures were identified primarily through departmental activity, updates and databases. The long-term indicators were

identified with the assistance of the University of Waterloo and its affiliated index of well-being. We are not making this up. This is a nationally recognized indication, but are we there yet? No, we are not there yet.

That index of well-being offers 64 indicators of well-being. Twenty-seven of them have been comparable data that has been available for the Yukon. We are not there yet. We are working toward it — we really are. I would encourage the member opposite to ask every member, every minister, as they get up in Committee of the Whole, what are they doing — to go past not just necessarily the speaking notes from the speech — I agree. That is just getting up and touting the good work, but there are also the mandate letters that go beyond the pillars. Those mandate letters are an indication of what each department is supposed to be doing as concrete examples of moving forward in the direction that we want to turn.

Even past that, every department needs to be working with — as we expand upon the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and get all of those 64 indicators in place — it's a lot of difficult work. I am really proud of the team that actually is working on this, because they are working from nowhere, from nothing. We didn't have performance plans in the past, so this is taking time. Do I wish it was taking less time? Sure, but as I am watching the progress from the public servants, I know they are working on this very diligently.

You could take a look at what we are doing in Finance, for example, as we take a lens to where we are socio-economically, if you will, or culturally or these different indicators. Every department needs to look at those and say, "All right. How can we do better?" We need to enter into a culture of evaluation, and that is the direction we are going. That is the instruction from the Department of Finance; that is the instruction from me.

In Finance, for example, a valuation unit has been newly staffed. This is creating outcomes and a framework to evaluate and to measure those exact outcomes that we are speaking about. The tool of the well-being index — this is being adapted from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's better life index and has been used in a number of Canadian municipalities, sub-provincial agents and non-profit agents. Not only are we going to be able to create a better indication of where we are, not just necessarily for the territorial government, but we are going to be able to create indices, these indicators, these 64 indicators that will transcend into other governments if they so choose to invoke a similar evaluation process.

I know that other governments are extremely interested in a cultural valuation, whether they want to come on board on this particular performance plan — index of well-being — we'll have those conversations. I encourage the Minister of Community Services to have that conversation at AYC. We will have that conversation at the Yukon Forum talking to the chiefs. Is this something that they want to get involved with as well?

Are we there yet? I agree with the member opposite. We're not there yet; we aren't, but we are working toward it and so, as these measures of well-being and progress are being

developed in recognition of economic indicators like GDP — maybe that's not necessarily the best way for us to look at how we decide whether or not we as a society are progressing. We have other things we need to look at. These performance plans — they're not fully baked yet, I agree, but they will provide all orders of the Government of Yukon, as well as those community groups and the public at large, with regularly updated information on various dimensions of social well-being.

The member opposite doesn't like to hear that sometimes we're proud of things, but I'm extremely proud of this one — I really am. This is how my brain works. You need to have those indicators. You need to be able, in a moment of time, to look to the past and look to the future. Each department is working on how, from a whole-of-government perspective or individual departments, we can make sure that we're evaluating that — and our valuation unit in the Department of Finance is doing that good work.

**Ms. Hanson:** I do respect the Minister of Finance's sensitivity. I simply said when I was off-mic that this is not a performance plan; it's a statement. It's a series of statements. What I was looking for, so I can understand — and I'm seeing the indices of well-being, and they're used in different contexts, but what are the tools the government will use to measure how it's achieving movement of those indices? How are you going to measure that is what I'm looking for.

When I look at — the Minister of Finance says that his Department of Finance has been doing a lot of work, and I do believe that is one of the things that they spoke to in various fora, including Public Accounts Committee hearings when there were issues raised with certain performance aspects of three or four departments, and it was mentioned at that time that Finance was moving toward forming a central agency a valuation function. That's a great thing, but that's only one aspect of what Department of Finance does.

My question still remains: Is it the intention of the Minister of Finance that, as part of reporting to this Legislative Assembly in terms of the accountability and to the public, that there will be actual strategic plans and business plans available? A strategic plan written largely by the government? Then within that, the business plans that will say how — and review it each year so that we can see it evergreened as targets are achieved — with targets — measurable targets. It's not radical.

This doesn't give you that measurable yardstick. There is nothing that has given you measurements in here. They are statements. We partnered with — we travelled to Ottawa; we developed interpretive panels — good. Those are nice activities, but what was that in aid of? What was the objective? What was the intention? How many interpretive panels or whatever were going to be done? What was going to be done in those broad areas?

Making statements that are like narratives is nice, but it's something that you put in a newsletter, not when you are trying to assess performance.

I am looking for what the next steps are and how the Minister of Finance sees migrating some of the information

that might be contained in this document to something that will actually become an assessable performance plan — measurements of performance for which he and each of the ministers opposite can be held accountable.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, as we are here today discussing the documents that we have put forward now, this is the first year of these indicators. They weren't here before. There were no performance plans before, and the member opposite can say that this isn't good enough — okay — but it is more than has ever been there before. We are going in a certain direction.

The member opposite wants to know what is going to be next year and what is going to be next year as far as business plans. We are not there yet; obviously we are not — otherwise, they would be presented. But we are working forward every year to make sure that our performance plans, our indicators and our evaluation process get better and better every year.

Can I tell her on the floor of the Legislative Assembly today what we are going to do tomorrow? No, I am not prepared to do that today. I am prepared to talk about the performance plans and the progress on the government commitments to have planning for our priorities. Right now, we do have the performance plans that detail our commitments to Yukoners, laying out a pathway forward to deliver on our priorities. With the December report, we have taken steps toward producing a more robust profile of our territory's social, economic and environmental well-being. I can speak about that today. I can speak about that report, including an update on the work being done across government — measuring our performance on key priorities and outcomes — and some of the new evidence-based indicators of Yukon's long-term well-being.

Are we done here? No, we're not, Mr. Chair. We will want to move forward.

I appreciate the member opposite's direction. I appreciate the member opposite's research. Looking at where we are right now and demanding better — I commend her for that. A researched debate in the Legislative Assembly is always good.

But again, we are here right now with our index of well-being. We are here right now with the performance plans. They will continue to evolve. Talking about the valuation unit in Finance — that is new. As we move that forward — having that evaluation process and having a culture of evaluation — that is new.

As we move through the Executive Council Office on the index of well-being — a new initiative that I am extremely proud of — more will come on those individual endeavours.

I do encourage the member opposite to draw down on each department and ask them what they are doing as far as business plans and business cases for individual departments.

That work will continue, and hopefully next year when I'm up here speaking again to another budget cycle, we will have more in that evaluation criteria or in that evaluation direction, and hopefully the member opposite will see some progress.



I see the progress. I have seen the progress over the last two-and-a-half years. I do see that culture of evaluation in a whole-of-government approach in each department, and I do see progress here. I won't make any apologies as to where we are right now because I do see the hard work that got us to where we are right now.

I do agree with the member opposite that we're not done yet, and more will come as far as making sure that we have an accurate account — not just bragging about the good news, but actually saying where we are in time on some really tough issues and have that presented alongside a five-year capital plan, alongside a fiscal and economic outlook. More data, not less, will definitely be the direction we're going in.

**Ms. Hanson:** I appreciate the Minister of Finance's comments. I guess the question remains: How can you evaluate something for which you haven't set any measurable outcomes?

Some of those measureable outcomes can be quantitative and some of them can be qualitative, but you have to say which you are measuring and what you are measuring, and you have to be able to say that this is where we are moving, this is what we are holding ourselves to account for, and this is how much money we are putting into this.

Yes, I appreciate and think that it's really good to look at how various departments contribute to that. I would hope that the plans will indicate and show that. So if it's something that is happening that should and could have input from Health and Social Services, Community Services and Highways and Public Works — that strategic plan should show that.

It should then show how each of those ministers is being held to account for what they are doing. I don't get how this is morphing into that. I'm simply asking for some clarity as to how the Minister of Finance will be in a position to evaluate progress if he does not have anything quantitatively to measure qualitatively.

There's the general language of the indices, but where are those general indices of well-being? They're certainly not stated at the outset here, so it's really difficult for a plan — to even call it that.

Maybe there are other documents that the Minister of Finance would like to be made available to members, and maybe he has made reference to documents that we haven't availed ourselves to. If he would provide those to the House, that may be helpful, and we can come back to this.

My sense is that we're treading around on the same path here, but I do want to make it clear that we — as Members of the Legislative Assembly — have reasonable expectations for more than what we have seen presented in this — more in the sense of what I've already outlined.

I will continue to encourage the government to do that, because otherwise, they really do risk coming off as a government that looks like it's into communications and not substance. I don't believe that's the intent, but absent any clear statement that we have an intent to provide all members of this Assembly and the public with clearly defined statements — both of strategy and business approaches or the performance approaches that the government will be setting

out for itself globally and then within the various departments and agencies — how they intend to be measured against that and also where the financial resources that are needed will be allocated — how that will be measured and how success will be measured.

Because one of the things that we all want — and I can tell you that public servants also take pleasure in being able to say, "We said we're going to do this, this is what we achieved and we stayed on budget", but we need to be able to assess that.

Right now, we can't even assess that. It has lots of trickle-down effects — and trickle-up effects, really, when you start talking about performance pay for certain cadres in our system. What are we getting it for? How are we assessing whether or not they are worthy of it? Do we like them? That's a nice thing. It needs to be more than that.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** With that last comment, I can assure the member opposite that performance evaluations aren't based upon "like", but I digress.

Suffice it to say, through the Executive Council Office, there is ongoing work right now to make sure that we have a better balanced approach to strategic initiatives and budgetary consideration. That work is ongoing as we speak. We will have a clearer vision of allowing not only the pillars, not only the mandate letters, not only the budget speeches — the strategy piece right now, as we speak — the Executive Council Office working with Finance, working on a whole-of-government approach — is working to better align those strategic initiatives with budgetary considerations.

In the past, that just wasn't there, and we're building it. Does it take time? Yes, it does take time. Is that work happening? It absolutely is.

**Chair:** Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

*Recess*

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

Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*?

Seeing none, we will now proceed to clause 1. Clause 1 includes Schedule A, containing the departmental estimates.

#### **Department of Finance**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 12, Department of Finance, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We are pleased to be presenting the estimates proposed by the Department of Finance for 2019-20. In doing so, I again want to welcome Chris Mahar and thank her for being here this afternoon to assist me in answering questions from the members. I also want to sincerely thank her and her staff for the work that they do throughout the year. I want to thank them for the pancakes, and I encourage any

other department, if they have an opportunity, to go out and have a beverage with the Department of Finance. They are not only extremely dedicated to the public service, but there are a lot of very funny people in the Department of Finance — very good people. So I will maybe make a challenge for every department to see who has the “funnest” staff to go out and have a beverage with. The “funnest” — yes, there you go, Hansard.

The Department of Finance is seeking a total appropriation of \$13.9 million for the coming fiscal year. Most of this — some \$12.8 million — is for operation and maintenance expenses. Of that total, \$10.7 million, or 83 percent, is for salaries. This represents the same percentage as last year.

Beyond salaries, there is another \$1.9 million in program costs such as banking services, supplies, telephone, travel, contracts and other items required for day-to-day operations. The remaining \$295,000 is for an ongoing transfer payment related to workers' compensation supplementary benefits. Members will notice a \$213,000 reduction of the public utilities income tax transfer. Historically, this transfer has been made up of \$213,000 distributed between two utilities that then further disbursed this funding to almost 20,000 customers on a monthly basis. The end result was a lot of administrative effort to give customers a monthly credit of about 60 cents. Basically, Mr. Chair, the public utilities income tax transfer did not meet any clear policy objectives. It had no measurable outcomes, and the grant was largely inefficient. For these reasons, our government decided to end it. This change is in line with the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's recommendation to review grants that do not achieve clear public policy objectives.

With respect to capital expenditures, the department is seeking approval for \$1.1 million in 2019-20, or a slight decrease from last year. The largest portion, \$665,000, will go toward a corporate budgeting system. This project, which is continuing from last year, will result in a centralized budgeting system for the Government of Yukon. It will be a huge improvement, Mr. Chair, both in terms of increased efficiency and a reduced duplication of effort from the current budget process, which relies on data collection and data entry using various Excel spreadsheets currently. The department issued a request for proposals, which closed in October 2018, and a contract was signed with budgeting software company Questica in January.

A further \$150,000 is being directed toward the corporate financial system modernization. This builds on work started last year due to the age and obsolescence of the government's main accounting system. Including its operation system hardware and peripheral systems, we need to upgrade the corporate financial system. If we don't do this, we run the risk of a system failing, which would mean the Government of Yukon would no longer be able to pay vendors, individuals, First Nations or others.

In addition, \$153,000 will be spent in order to maintain the current system as we transition to a new one — to a new, upgraded tool.

Finally, \$140,000 of capital investment is required to reorganize office space to accommodate existing or new staff within the department.

On the revenue side, there is growth in our four major federal transfers, including the cannabis transfer introduced last year. The territorial formula financing total is increasing to \$997 million from \$950 million last year. The Canada health transfer for this coming year is set at \$44.4 million, an increase of around \$4.5 million from the previous year. The Canadian social transfer is set to increase to \$16 million, up \$1.3 million from the previous year.

Mr. Chair the increase in these transfers is largely a result of revised population numbers. As members know, these transfers ensure that the Government of Yukon is able to fund a large majority of the services that Yukoners expect and to help increase the quality of life for our territory's residents.

The fourth transfer from Canada — the cannabis transfer — has increased from \$387,000 last year to \$620,000, which represents a full year of revenues. Last year's revenues were only for part of the year, as cannabis was not legalized until October.

With respect to revenues from taxation, there are increases from last year, partially as a result of population increases. In total, taxation revenue is estimated to be \$115.4 million in 2019-20; \$75 million comes from personal income tax, up about \$3 million from last year; and \$14.9 million will be generated from corporate income tax, a decrease of about \$3.9 million from 2018-19. The balance comes from taxes on fuel oil, insurance premiums and tobacco. Revenue from other sources — like banking and investments as well as received interest payments — accounts for an additional \$5.3 million in revenue.

The last item that I want to speak about is a new revolving fund listed under the Department of Finance's restricted funds. This fund captures all of the revenues and expenses associated with the newly developed Yukon government carbon price rebate. Mr. Chair, this year you will see \$5.2 million in revenues and \$4.4 million in expenses. These correspond with the amounts of revenues returned to Yukon from Canada and the associated amounts rebated to Yukoners. You will see that there is a balance of \$809,000 at the end of the year. This is due to a time difference between revenues and expenses, as monies are collected in one fiscal year, and a small number of groups are rebated during the next. As the levy rises, a small surplus will be shown. This will balance out once the levy reaches \$50 per tonne in 2023.

I look forward to discussing the rebate in more detail during debate on the corresponding legislation.

This concludes my summary of the requests — appropriations — for the Department of Finance. I want to thank again Ms. Mahar and her department staff in Finance for all of their hard work, and I look forward to questions from members opposite.

**Mr. Cathers:** In beginning my questions and remarks here on the Department of Finance, I will just start by noting that I noticed an increase on page 11-7 in the area of financial operations revenue services — an increase in the amount of

the line item of banking, investments and debt services. It seems to have increased from the 2018-19 fiscal year as well from the 2017-18 financial year, and the increase between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 fiscal years appears to be in the neighbourhood of \$100,000.

Can the Premier just explain what that increase is due to?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** A key budgetary change from 2018-19 would be a \$87,000 increase in personal costs — so that \$81,000 is for a new banking and financial services coordinator position — and also broken down in that number is a \$23,000 increase in operating and support costs, so that \$23,000 is for contracting services with respect to community banking.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would also just ask if the Premier could both clarify and put on record the number of new positions that are being added to the Department of Finance this fiscal year — the size that it will bring the department to — and how much the Department of Finance overall has added in personnel between when the Finance reorganization started and now.

Part of the reason that I'm asking the Premier to do that is that we have had some debate in the House about numbers that the Premier previously provided around the growth across government of full-time equivalent employees — and the Premier then debating what he previously indicated. So I'm just asking, for the sake of clarity, for the Premier's understanding of how many positions they have added overall to the Department of Finance, including those that were moved over from the Department of Economic Development, and what, with the new FTEs added in the upcoming fiscal year, that will bring the department size to?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As the member opposite can recall from a previous year, we had a bump up in positions of 11 FTEs. We are now complete at that because now the 2.7 extra this year completes those new staffing positions in the Department of Finance. A summary of these positions — a policy development officer would be one, so that is a job description that is being finalized, with an anticipated hire in June of 2019. We have a modeller, which is a new director of economic research, who has been hired already. That was September 4, 2018. Once this position is in place, we will finalize the economic modeller job description and submit it for classification. We have a director of tax and fiscal policy, which is a job function that is being done by the current director of fiscal relations while he works with the contractor to finalize the job description. A copy of the JD has been submitted to Compensation and Classification and Labour Relations. We are just waiting on a classification and an exclusion decision.

As we spoke in the past about the increases to the Department of Finance, there were 11 hires. This budget is — of course, those 11 weren't hired in that year completely, so the 2.7 new positions that we see on the books for these mains is a finalization of those 11 hires that we spoke about in detail in previous mains.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the answer from the Premier. The one piece of information that I think he missed was: With

the addition of those 2.7 FTEs, what will that bring the total staff number for the Department of Finance to?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** With the total now complete with these 2.7 new positions, the total FTEs for 2019-20 is 91.75.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the answer.

Moving on to another area of the department and what it is responsible for, with the imposition of the federal carbon government tax coming — and if my understanding from the information that we have been provided by the department is incorrect, I welcome the Premier to please correct my understanding — I understand that there is an exemption in place for the federal carbon tax for farmers. Under the carbon tax, could the Premier clarify who is exempt and how they go about avoiding paying those carbon tax costs? As the Premier knows, most of the farming in the Yukon is within my riding of Lake Laberge. I know that constituents of mine who may be eligible for an exemption for some of the carbon tax costs would be interested in understanding how to go about doing this. Is this only an exemption pertaining to the fuel they purchase? What is the process for them to avoid paying costs that they may be eligible for an exemption on?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, the Government of Yukon has been in negotiations with Canada since 2016 to ensure that Canada recognizes the unique circumstances of the north. These negotiations have resulted in targeted relief from the federal carbon levy on all aviation fuel in the north for diesel and electricity generation in remote areas. The member opposite is correct in that it not only for agriculture — Canada is providing a full exemption for agriculture — but also for commercial fishing and relief for commercial operations of greenhouses as well.

As far as the process goes — again, Yukon is not going to be paying into the carbon pricing levy until halfway through this year. Farmers and commercial fishermen, of course, being exempt — they will be applying to the Minister of National Revenue for a permit at that time.

I believe this answers the member's question when it comes specifically to the agriculture industry, which absolutely is mostly in the member opposite's riding.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the answer and I would note — if the Premier could just elaborate on whether this is an area where they know what the process is going to be. Is this information currently available from the federal government about how someone applies to ensure they're receiving the exemption they need? In practical terms — and I'm not trying to trip the Premier up on details; I'm just asking for a farmer of any type in my riding who goes to purchase fuel — how will that work if they're exempt for the portion used on the farm from the carbon tax? So this is what my understanding is — please correct me if I'm wrong — how do they go about actually getting that exemption if they go to the pumps, since the rate would include carbon taxation?

I would appreciate any clarification that Premier is able to provide on that, because people in my riding are wondering and would appreciate information about how they go about actually getting an exemption they may be eligible for.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Again, when we talk about specific exemptions from Canada, those are under the purview of the Canadian government. We don't set those parameters, but what I will endeavour to do is to work with the member opposite to provide information as to the departments responsible, allowing these farmers in the agriculture community in the Yukon to understand exactly how to communicate with the federal government for their exemption.

**Mr. Cathers:** I will look forward to receiving that information.

Moving on to another area related to that — within the Yukon, there is a portion of the Yukon's own taxation on fuel related to road tax and there are certain areas where fuel oil purchased and subsequently used for the purposes — I am just reading from the Department of Finance's website, so if there is anything additional to what I am seeing here, I invite the Premier to add it — but according to the department website, untaxed fuel and fuel oil purchased and subsequently used for the following purposes is exempt of tax: cooking, cleaning fluid or solvents, heating and processing, lubricants, laying or sprinkling on roads or streets, pharmaceutical or medical purposes, and space heating of buildings. There are also exemptions for companies that are using fuel for a number of listed purposes, so they are able then to get a rebate from the government — unless that has changed recently — for the portion of the taxation that is supposed to be for highway purposes that is not being used on highways for eligible uses.

My question in that area is: I have heard some concerns from businesses that there have apparently been some changes to the application process and the information that is provided. I would just appreciate it if the Premier could elaborate on what may have changed in that area with regard to the information that Finance is asking for from small businesses and how they apply, because this is an issue that has been brought up to me from small businesses. It is an area where the people who raised it with me were expressing some frustration, as they felt it was getting more difficult to apply for this exemption.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am going to have to ask for some clarity. The member opposite ended with exemptions, but was talking specifically during the whole question about rebates — again, exemptions being more on the part of the federal government and rebates being more on the part of our government as far as giving that money back to Yukoners.

I am not aware of a change of policy that the member opposite is speaking about, so if he could be more specific about a particular company or a particular policy that somehow changed, then I can help to answer the member opposite's question.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the Premier's answer in that area. Just to clarify, in case I wasn't clear in how I framed it, the issue at hand is the tax that the Yukon government itself charges on fuel. There are a number of listed industries — and I am just going to attempt to find that on my phone while I am explaining it here — that sets out — I believe the list is right

in legislation, but it could be in regulations — that certain types of business were able to apply for the Yukon tax on fuel back if they had paid it, and that related to that section.

The small businesses that raised the concern with me had not unfortunately been very specific about the details of what they felt had changed, but they did express some frustration that they felt it was getting — that government was asking for more information in that area or making it harder to apply. I know this is a bit of a detailed area and that the Premier may not have that information at his fingertips. If he's able to provide it to me later, that would be fine as well.

The concern again was just raised by a Yukon small business that they felt it was getting more difficult to apply for a rebate of tax that they paid that they were eligible to get back. They didn't understand why — or quite frankly, they didn't do a very detailed job of explaining it to me. I'm just asking: Has it changed? How has it changed?

If the Premier doesn't have that information at his fingertips, I would be happy to accept an undertaking to get back to me with that information.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I assume what the member opposite is talking about is the establishment of the fuel resellers association of Yukon, or FRAY. The Department of Finance and FRAY — I will use the term FRAY, as opposed to fuel resellers association of Yukon. It just saves time. We agreed to form a technical working group to address the industry's concerns — I believe that's what the member opposite is alluding to here — with an aim to increase efficiency in the monthly reporting, because there was in the past some real concerns there.

We are committed to working with the industry, and we will continue to build that strong relationship and try to promote more efficient, timely and accurate reporting of fuel requirements. These folks are doing our work for us, and we need to have a positive relationship for them.

The Department of Finance, our Tax Administration branch, will provide secretarial support to the working group and to the association as we try to fix these issues, while FRAY is responsible for any advocacy activities on behalf of their membership, particularly. That advocacy has happened already in the past. As the member opposite knows, we're unable to speak to the issues affecting individual resellers specifically due to privacy reasons, but my staff and I did meet with FRAY to discuss their concerns. I believe the meeting we had — the preliminary meeting before we started engaging in working groups or whatever — was April 25, 2018. The ADM of Financial Operations and Revenue Services committed to working with FRAY at that time, and the Department of Finance has been working with them since.

We reached out and facilitated a meeting with FRAY and with Yukon's central revenue agency, the executive assistant, to initiate contact with CRA to discuss matters around the administration of existing excise tax acts.

Suffice it to say, if the member opposite wants to connect me to a particular organization or individual who is still having some frustrations and who is not plugged into the working group and plugged into the work that we're doing

with the association, I would be only too happy to work with the member opposite to make sure that this particular individual or business or seller has the answers to his specific questions.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the information provided by the Premier. It was related — though not directly — to the question that had come to me from a Yukon small business owner.

I would just note — I am actually just going to leave this here and ask the Premier if he could look into the matter further and get back to me with more information later. It related to an eligible small business under the categories spelled out in — I believe it's the *Fuel Oil Tax Act*. That is that there are exemptions from the road tax for fishing, logging, hunting or outfitting, trapping, mining — including mining exploration and development — farming, tourism and operating and maintaining a sawmill. It wasn't part of the FRAY group that was mentioned, but a comment from an individual business that, in dealing with applying to Finance for fuel that they had purchased that already had the tax added in, and the form where they can submit and get a rebate for that portion they paid — there was something about the process that they had found more difficult, but I am just going to leave it here and ask the Premier if he could commit to getting back to me with more information about any changes made for individual clients and small businesses applying to the Department of Finance for return of the government fuel tax that has been paid. If he could get back to me with either a legislative return or a letter at a later date, I would appreciate that.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will tell you what I will do: If the member opposite wants to take this offline, he can give me the information about that particular individual and I will be happy to help out, absolutely.

**Mr. Cathers:** I will follow up with the Premier then either in person or via letter regarding that just to clarify what the question and concern was, since I think that, in my attempting to describe it, I am obviously not describing it clearly so that the Premier can understand quite what I am asking for. I will resume with that, as he suggested, outside the Assembly at a different time.

I don't have any other questions at this point in the area of the Department of Finance. I do appreciate the information provided by officials earlier in briefing. With that, I will hand it over to the Third Party Finance critic for their questions.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't want to belabour a point here, but I am not really sure which policy the member opposite is speaking about unless I have that information from him specifically. Again, I will look into it. If there has been a change, I will commit as well that, if there was a change in a policy based upon the conversation that we do have, I will provide that information to the Assembly. But without knowing which policy we are talking about, it is hard to answer the question.

Again, if the member opposite can share with me the information that he has, I am definitely happy to work with him — directly if he so chooses that I work with him directly

as opposed to the company, or if he wants to get us directly connected — happy to help.

**Mr. Cathers:** I thank the Premier for that response, and I will provide him additional information regarding this specific concern.

**Ms. Hanson:** I just want, at the outset, to reiterate the thanks to the officials who did the briefing for the Department of Finance. It was thorough and very helpful in terms of setting the context and reconfirming the comments made by the minister.

Just going through the notes that I made during that briefing, though — the Minister of Finance may find this boring; I'm going to come back to one of the comments made and that I made a note of myself — that as part of the department's capital budget, they're looking at — they talked about setting up the corporate budgeting system that the Minister of Finance referenced and indicated that it would be operational for the next fiscal year — 2020-21.

I wanted to confirm that they were working with ECO and the Public Service Commission on this, which then lends itself to the more corporate indicators kind of thing, and so I just wanted to confirm that my understanding was correct when I see that I wrote a note that said, "This corporate budgeting system will bring in performance indicators."

So will the budget that is tabled in 2020-21 — next fiscal year — contain performance indicators?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, it definitely has the capability. As far as when it's going to be implemented, it may not be ready for 2020-21, but that's the goal. To answer the member opposite's original question, as far as working with the Executive Council Office and Public Service Commission, yes, there is a coordinated effort therein.

I would love to be able to say that it will be all up and up running right away, but there are concerns therein, but we're hopeful to get it up and running in the very near future.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for that. We'll retain hope that it will be operational in 2020-21.

I would like to return to the cannabis file and the revenue associated with that. The minister had indicated that we have gone through the partial year and now we're at \$620,000 expected revenue. Can the minister tell us what value of sales that represents and the number of grams of cannabis?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do have some information here: Between October 17, 2018, and December 31, 2018, the Yukon Liquor Corporation sold just under 70,000 grams of dried flower and 56,414 millilitres of oil, which amounted to sales of approximately just over a million dollars for in-store and also \$30,000 for online sales — and that's sales not including GST.

Working with the other departments to ensure that cannabis-related information and health messaging is what we're looking at right now to make sure that the store is running smoothly and that we have a thorough and thought-out process as far as training for servers — that type of thing.

This is the information that I have right now from October to December 31, but the sales to date, all inclusive, would be \$1,875,000. That is the in-store and online total. I

am not sure if that includes GST or not. I will endeavour to get back to see if that number includes GST.

**Ms. Hanson:** That's a pretty good rate of return in terms of a sin tax — \$620,000 on \$1.8 million sales.

With respect to the carbon rebate, there are government operations that generate the use of fuel and others, so a percentage of that has been imputed to be the government carbon price.

What I'm looking to get is: What percentage of the rebate is the government carbon price payment? If the government had to pay a carbon price, what would that payment be? What percentage of it?

I'm trying to get a sense of the value of the rebate that we're foregoing because we're not actually calculating. We're rolling into the overall carbon price or carbon mechanism — whatever you want to call it — the value of government operations here — as we understand it from the briefing that we had with respect to the carbon implementation rebate act.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** If we look at First Nation governments, municipal governments and the territorial government, First Nation governments are estimated to pay about 0.5 percent of the total carbon levy and will receive one percent of the revenues; municipal governments are estimated to pay about 2.5 percent of the total carbon levy and will receive back three percent of those revenues, and the territorial government's contribution would be 9.6 percent.

**Ms. Hanson:** It was my understanding that the Yukon government is foregoing any rebate, and so I guess my question is: What is the rationale for doing so, and where would that money go? It is being paid, so where is it going?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Our commitment to Yukoners was to return all of the money collected to Yukoners and Yukon businesses. That money will be going into that general coffer. When we say that we're giving back one percent to First Nations and they are already paying in 0.5, that money has to come from somewhere. For the percentages that we're talking about as far as the rebates, our 9.6 percent has been included in those totals and will then be rebated back to individual households — but also parts of the amounts for businesses as well. That 9.6 goes into that — I guess I would use the words "general coffer"— and then be returned to Yukoners and Yukon businesses.

**Ms. Hanson:** I understand the financial transaction there. We will return to this when we come to the debate on the actual legislation in terms of how that exercise will work toward changing behaviours.

I had a couple of other questions.

I was trying to get some sense — when we were talking about indices earlier. Could the minister tell us the percentage of Yukon-generated revenue that we generate ourselves? It represents what percentage of Yukon's GDP? So the revenue that we generate as Yukon — what percentage of the GDP of the Yukon does that represent?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I just ask for a clarifier for that statement. When the member opposite asks about generated revenue, is she speaking about own-source revenue or complete revenues, including federal transfers?

**Ms. Hanson:** I am definitely not speaking of federal transfers. I am speaking of revenues that we, as a government — efforts made by Yukon government. If you want to refer to it as own-source revenue, then yes — of GDP, not of the percentage. I know what the comparison is in terms of how much we generate versus what we get from the federal government, but I am looking at it as a percentage of our GDP.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We have the same information that the member opposite has, which is the percentage of total revenues. We could do a quick calculation of the GDP number in total and divide that by the number of own-source revenue, but we don't have that number readily available. We will give that number to the member opposite when we get that calculation.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for that.

Along the same vein, if we looked at Yukon government expenditures, what does that translate into in terms of a percentage of Yukon's GDP? What are our expenditures — Yukon government expenditures — as a percentage of the GDP?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We don't have comparisons to GDP for expenditures or revenues right now at our fingertips, but we will get that information.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate on the Department of Finance?

Seeing none, we will proceed with line-by-line debate.

**On Corporate Services**

**On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures**

*On Deputy Minister's Office*

**Ms. Hanson:** I just want to ask a question. My understanding is that in the additional staffing here is a senior advisor to the deputy minister. I raise this question because I think what I have seen happening in various departments is that we have this new function that seems to have sprung up, which is senior advisor to deputy ministers, so I will ask about this with each department. It is my understanding that one of the positions in that office is a new position of a senior advisor to the deputy minister.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The answer is yes, but we are only funding it for a term currently. As you know, there have been new hires in the Finance offices, so in that transition, we have a term position for exactly that purpose.

**Ms. Hanson:** Just for clarity purposes, what is the definition or what is the time length of a term in this kind of a context?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** This budgetary fiscal year.

*Deputy Minister's Office in the amount of \$433,000 agreed to*

*On Directorate*

*Directorate in the amount of \$1,116,000 agreed to*

**Corporate Services Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,549,000 agreed to**

**On Capital Expenditures**

*On Office Furniture and Equipment*

**Mr. Cathers:** I just note that this is up from 2017-18. This line item was \$36,000. It is now up to \$140,000.

Is this a new level of annual spending or is this related to changes that occurred in the Department of Finance organization, including hiring staff?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, those monies are associated with the move upstairs in the building for Finance, and actually they're probably not going to get spent this year. We thought we would account for it now, but again it would be the latter of what the member opposite said. This is a one-time move to accommodate, but whether or not we get that money spent this year is still debatable. I would say probably not.

**Chair:** Is there any further debate on the amount for office furniture and equipment?

*Office and Furniture and Equipment in the amount of \$140,000 agreed to*

*On Information Technology Equipment and Systems*

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, I would just again note that this is a line item similar to the one that we were dealing with above in comparing it to the expenditures for 2017-18. It is a significant increase. It looks like the forecast for the fiscal year we're just finishing is almost \$1.2 million in this area. The actual amounts listed for 2017-18 were \$284,000, and it's booked as \$971,000 this fiscal year.

Can the Premier just explain what the reason is for that significant change when compared especially to the 2017-18 fiscal year and whether the increased amount for this line item is expected to be a new norm or whether it's related to some of the organizational changes that have been made?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would say that there's basically a breakdown of three items here. The one that would probably be an ongoing expense would be \$156,000 for the financial management information system. That's maintenance and support, so that would be an ongoing expense; however, there is a modernization piece here for exactly \$150,000 for corporate financial systems and also \$665,000 for corporate budgeting systems and personnel expenses. Those two expenses are basically once these systems are up and running — then that is just one time.

*Information Technology Equipment and Systems in the amount of \$971,000 agreed to*

*Corporate Services Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,111,000 agreed to*

*Corporate Services Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,660,000 agreed to*

*On Financial Operations and Revenue Services*

*On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures*

*On Program Management*

*Program Management in the amount of \$353,000 agreed*

to

*On Financial Operations*

*Financial Operations in the amount of \$1,922,000 agreed*

to

*On Financial Management Information Systems*

*Financial Management Information Systems in the amount of \$660,000 agreed to*

*On Tax Administration*

*Tax Administration in the amount of \$649,000 agreed to*

*On Banking, Investments and Debt Services*

*Banking, Investments and Debt Services in the amount of \$1,286,000 agreed to*

*Financial Operations and Revenue Services Operations and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$4,870,000 agreed to*

*On Capital Expenditures*

*On Prior Years' Projects*

*Prior Years' Projects in the amount of nil cleared*

*Financial Operations and Revenue Services Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil agreed to*

*Financial Operations and Revenue Services Total Expenditures in the amount of \$4,870,000 agreed to*

*On Economics, Fiscal Policy, and Statistics*

*On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures*

*On Program Management*

*Program Management in the amount of \$308,000 agreed*

to

*On Bureau of Statistics*

*Bureau of Statistics in the amount of \$1,291,000 agreed*

to

*On Economic Research and Analysis*

*Economic Research and Analysis in the amount of \$594,000 agreed to*

*On Fiscal Relations*

*Fiscal Relations in the amount of \$330,000 agreed to*

*On Tax and Fiscal Policy*

*Tax and Fiscal Policy in the amount of \$267,000 agreed*

to

*Economics, Fiscal Policy, and Statistics Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,790,000 agreed to*

*Economics, Fiscal Policy, and Statistics Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,790,000 agreed to*

*On Management Board Secretariat*

*On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures*

*On Management Board Secretariat*

*Management Board Secretariat in the amount of*

*\$1,936,000 agreed to*

*On Program Evaluation*

**Ms. Hanson:** I just note that the Program Evaluation line item has gone from zero in 2017-18 to \$315,000 to \$406,000. Could the minister just delineate what the expenditures have been for and are forecast for this year?

As a supplementary, are these contract costs? How is this being carried out?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That number is all staff.

**Ms. Hanson:** That was the second part of the question — was contract or staff — but then I asked about the growth from zero to \$315,000 to \$406,000 and what it comprised.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Program evaluation was part of that reorganization. We just got the hires in place for this year, so that is why there wouldn't have been any expenses last year.

*Program Evaluation in the amount of \$406,000 agreed to*

*Management Board Secretariat Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$2,342,000 agreed to*

**Management Board Secretariat Total Expenditures in the amount of \$2,342,000 agreed to**

**On Office of the Comptroller**

**On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures**

*On Financial Accounting*

*Financial Accounting in the amount of \$643,000 agreed to*

*On Policy and Compliance*

*Policy and Compliance in the amount of \$330,000 agreed to*

**Office of the Comptroller Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$973,000 agreed to**

**Office of the Comptroller Total Expenditures in the amount of \$973,000 agreed to**

**On Workers' Compensation Supplementary Benefits**

**On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures**

*On Supplementary Pensions*

*Supplementary Pensions in the amount of \$295,000 agreed to*

**Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$295,000 agreed to**

**Workers' Compensation Supplementary Benefits Total Expenditures in the amount of \$295,000 agreed to**

*On Revenues*

*Revenues cleared*

*On Government Transfers*

*Government Transfers cleared*

*On Changes in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization*

*Changes in Tangible Capital Assets and Amortization cleared*

*On Restricted Fund Carbon Price Rebate*

*Restricted Fund Carbon Price Rebate cleared*

**Department of Finance agreed to**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Chair, I can indicate that the next department to be called is Highways and Public Works. If there were a five-minute break, we could manage to bring them in. I will leave that decision to you, and if not, I will move the appropriate motion.

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to recess for five minutes?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

*Recess*

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

#### **Department of Highways and Public Works**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 55, Department of Highways and Public Works, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have the privilege today to speak in support of the main estimates for the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our government came to office with a commitment to make life better for Yukoners. Although we still have some distance to go, I'm proud of how far we have come.

Yukon's economy is on track to go faster than almost any other province or territory over the next few years. We have hit an all-time-low annual unemployment rate — not only here in Yukon, but in all of Canada.

In keeping with our commitment to foster reconciliation through strong government-to-government relations, we're working with First Nations to ensure that economic growth in the territory is more inclusive. We're also working with municipalities, and we're working with communities as well, Mr. Chair.

All Yukoners, regardless of who they are or where they live, deserve an opportunity to build their dreams. Today, I'm going to highlight some of the ways in which Highways and Public Works is moving our territory forward.

While perhaps descriptive, I don't think that our department's name gets to the heart of what we actually do. Yukon's highways and roads aren't just strips of asphalt, BST and gravel. They are the links that bind our communities together. They are what we drive on to get home safely to families. They are what connect us to our friends and our neighbours, and they are what we use to get our goods and resources to market.

Similarly, procurement isn't just about buying and selling goods and services. It's about providing value to taxpayers and supporting economic growth in our communities.

Property management is more than ensuring that the lights turn on and the plumbing works in government-owned and leased buildings. It's about providing affordable, comfortable and appropriate accommodation to help our departments and publicly funded agencies meet their objectives.

ICT isn't just about ensuring that the government's information resources are well-managed. It's about deploying technology to make government more efficient and more accessible. I will have more to say about that in minute.

At its heart, Highways and Public Works is about treating citizens' money with respect. It's about embracing innovative technologies to make government work better and reduce bother and red tape, and of course, connecting and building our communities to strengthen our economy.

I would like to take a moment to highlight initiatives that demonstrate our department's commitment on these fronts. First is value for money. Our government knows how hard Yukoners are working to get ahead. We appreciate the sacrifices that they're making to secure a brighter future for their families. Government must never make the mistake of seeing citizens' money as its own.

As elected officials, we are entrusted to spend these dollars as wisely as possible for the greatest possible benefit. This isn't a responsibility we take lightly, and that is why we are modernizing the government's procurement process. Over the past two years, we have made improvements that address each and every recommendation of the Procurement Advisory



Panel. We have also created a new procurement business committee that gives us wider perspective on procurement issues that matter to vendors. I am talking about things such as defining a Yukon business, improving selection criteria for regional economic development exceptions and revising the bid-challenge process.

Soon we will be taking the next step: a new e-procurement system. This will improve efficiency and improve the bidding process for Yukoners. Later this spring, we will be posting a request for proposals, and we will be implementing the new system before the end of the year. It will reflect the best features of the current tender management system, along with more robust data analysis capabilities, increased accessibility for bidders and improved cost management through strategic sourcing. Once up and running, the new system will result in greater efficiency and consistency through every stage of the procurement process.

Our government is also creating a new building portfolio plan for the buildings we own and the spaces we lease. The process involves preparing standards and guidelines that will allow us to better govern and manage our vast portfolio.

Efficiencies are often linked to technological innovation. Our government is looking to new technologies to address both long-standing and emerging challenges.

In partnership with Health and Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, we are upgrading Yukon's aging hospital information system, Meditech, to the latest version. The new Meditech system will create a common and integrated system for health records and support collaborative care. It will improve the efficiency of the health system and ensure that clinicians have access to the information that they need to provide the best possible care to Yukoners now and well into the future.

The new Meditech system will also give Yukoners tools to better manage their personal health through a patient health portal. Our department is also using technology to reduce the territory's carbon footprint, and with that teaser, Mr. Chair, I'm going to move that you report progress.

**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.

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### Chair's report

**Mr. Hutton:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

### The following legislative return was tabled March 21, 2019:

34-2-191

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Bill No. 210, *First Appropriation Act 2019-20* — Yukoners with income below \$30,000 (Streicker)