



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Monday, March 25, 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

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Monday, March 25, 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. Ms. McPhee:** I will ask my colleagues to welcome to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon Kelly McGill — a dear friend of mine who happens to be a former social worker, now a practising lawyer, but I'm told that her heart is still in social work — and Andrew Hyde, our Yukon Sheriff, who is also a former social worker. Welcome, and thank you for being here today.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would ask the Legislative Assembly today to help me welcome a number of individuals who are here today. They are here for a tribute that we will do in a couple of minutes. They are here to support my constituent Mr. Dave Mossop. First of all, we have Dave and his wife Grace Mossop.

Also, the Deputy Minister of Environment John Bailey is here today in support. I think I have everybody here: Diane Gunter and Kate Andre from Policy, Planning and Aboriginal Relations Staff; Kathi Egli and Angela Milani from Fish and Wildlife branch; Bronwyn Hancock from Yukon College — soon to be Yukon university; Juergen Korn, a friend of the family; Jennifer Staniforth from Environment; as well as Dan Lindsey, Kelly Cooper, Claire Lindsey and Helen Slama.

I apologize if I have missed anybody, but thanks for being here today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** I ask all members to join me in welcoming a friend of mine here today: Ms. Kristy Burgess.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I will ask everyone to help me in welcoming Kelly Cooper, Lesley Carberry, Deputy Minister of Environment John Bailey and Juergen Korn from Yukon Housing Corporation. Welcome.

*Applause.*

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

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Dave Mossop

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal Party and the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Dave Mossop — long-time teacher, advocate for a healthy environment, constituent of mine and former co-worker with whom I had an opportunity to do some board work with as well.

Over the course of his extensive career, Dave spent 25 years as a biologist with the Government of Yukon. He taught and conducted research at Yukon College and received the 2008 Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Award.

Most recently, Dave received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Museum of Nature. He is the first Yukoner to receive this prestigious award. The award celebrated Dave's four decades of leadership in species discovery and conservation.

He has dedicated his life to research, nature conservation, education and advocacy. He is a leader of national and international efforts to protect endangered species. The conservation of the peregrine falcon — with which Dave was involved from the start — is perhaps the most notable example.

In 1978, the peregrine falcon was listed as endangered with only one breeding pair in southern Yukon. Dave helped to start a captive breeding program at the Yukon Game Farm, now the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. The young falcons were successfully bred and returned to the wild. Now there are over 200 breeding pairs of peregrine falcons in southern Yukon, and the population of peregrines appears to have stabilized across Canada. This is just one of the many amazing stories about Dave's research, conservation efforts and inspiring dedication to science.

Dave's legacy is undeniable. He helped to start the incredibly popular wildlife-viewing program, which continues to this day. He helped to start Swan Haven and the Dempster Interpretive Centre, now the Tombstone Interpretive Centre. In fact, honeymoon pit along the Dempster Highway is also named because Dave and his wife, Grace, spent their honeymoon there in the 1970s so Dave could continue to study his beloved ptarmigans.

He was a founding member of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve. He was one of Yukon's first members on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. He also helped to start the Biodiversity Forum, which was held for the 20<sup>th</sup> year this March. Dave continues to contribute to science and conservation in Yukon.

He is currently a board member for the Yukon Conservation Society, and he shares his passion for nature, especially birds, as an advisor and mentor for biodiversity research and educational outreach. His body of works form an important aspect of the scientific world in Yukon. Also, I believe — Yukon College moving to Yukon university — he is professor emeritus as well.

I appreciated my time. I always appreciated your guidance. Sometimes, in my early years, maybe I was a bit

scared getting to know you, but I always listened to what you told me and tried to put it to work.

Thank you for all that you do and how you continue to inspire Yukoners to take an interest in science and the natural world around us.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I am proud to stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to celebrate the remarkable career and achievements of Dave Mossop, while grateful that, as a kid growing up in the prairies with a love of all things feathered, his imagination was captured by the mighty ptarmigan, because it is through his love and curiosity of birds that his focus was drawn north.

Anyone who has ever been lucky enough to talk with Dave about the world around us knows that, in him, they found an enthusiastic and dedicated champion. It seems like a natural fit that he would be the first-ever Yukoner to win the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Museum of Nature.

To be clear, he still has work to do, projects on the go and stuff to collect, so he still has things to accomplish in his lifetime. So maybe we could just consider this his “up to this moment in time” achievement award.

With all that he has done and continues to do, it is hard to pinpoint what might be the naturally moulted feather in his cap of work to date, but being the driver behind conservation efforts that saw the peregrine falcon removed from Canada’s endangered species list seems like a worthy achievement all on its own.

But there is more — decades more. Life-changing moments for folks around him — from his 25-year career as a Yukon government biologist and 20 years as a professor at Yukon College, he has influenced people around him for decades. Encouraging people to get up close and personal with the world that we live in — from getting down on your hands and knees to climbing up trees — his enthusiasm for the natural world knows no bounds.

I was fascinated to learn about projects that he and a botanist have been working on: the creation of Yukon’s very own natural history museum, acknowledging the speed at which the natural world around us is changing due to things like climate change. The collection and cataloguing of information make this project even more important.

You can see that what he does and how he does it has never been just a job. It’s his passion, his curiosity and his love for the natural world that keeps him learning and sharing his knowledge with others, and for that, we’re grateful. Congratulations.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of National Social Work Month**

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to National Social Work Month.

National Social Work Month is held each year in recognition of the contributions of social workers to our

society. Though social workers play a vital role in our communities, the work they do is not often visible. Social workers are employed in our hospitals, community health centres, mental wellness and substance-use clinics, schools, continuing care homes and correctional facilities.

They are employed in early learning and child care services with Family and Children’s Services and with transitional support services. Social workers are employed by non-governmental organizations throughout the territory.

These dedicated people often provide valuable support to Yukoners of all ages and different circumstances, from supporting early childhood development to offering protection to all levels of seniors. They help people improve outcomes in their lives, connecting them with services and supports they need to lead healthier, happier and more independent lives.

In Canada, the national voice of the profession is the Canadian Association of Social Workers. This year, it selected the theme for National Social Work Month, “Real people. Real impact.” The message behind this theme is twofold. It asks us to recognize that social workers are ordinary but committed people constantly striving to have an extraordinary impact on people and their communities. It also asks us to recognize and to celebrate the impacts made by the people and communities with whom social workers have the honour to work and walk alongside.

This is a powerful and important message. Social workers do indeed provide much-needed support to those who need it, but we need to remember that the people in need of support are individuals with complex issues who are the real experts in their own journey toward a better life. The social worker’s role is to help people realize and develop their own inner strength and abilities. Social workers are advocates, speaking up for people whose own voices might not otherwise be heard. For this to succeed as a community, we all need to respect the dignity of and work with the people who are in need of help. We need to speak out when we see injustices, and in doing so, play a role in making Yukon a better place for all of us.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Kelly Cooper, winner of the 2019 distinguished service award presented last week by the Canadian Association of Social Workers in northern Canada. It was a pleasure to be at the ceremony where she received her award last week and to hear about the hard work and dedication she has brought to her profession over the years. For the last 15 years, Kelly has managed a team of social workers with our seniors’ services and adult protection unit — a team that describes her as effective, excellent, supportive, ethical and engaged.

Thank you, Kelly, for your ongoing work in supporting Yukon’s aging population. Your work is much appreciated by me and all my colleagues in this Legislature.

I would like also to note that the students in the social work program at Yukon College are hosting a special film screening this evening at 6:00 at the public library. I encourage everyone to attend. They’re presenting the film *We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice*. It’s a documentary film. The film looks at First Nation activist Cindy Blackstock and her lengthy court case against the federal Government of

Canada for underfunding social services to children living on First Nation reserves.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and mahsi' cho to all of the social workers in Yukon for dedicating their lives to make Yukon a better place. Mahsi' cho.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize National Social Work Month. This month, we take the time to celebrate the achievements of those in the profession and reflect on the challenges they face on a daily basis.

It is no doubt very gratifying and also selfless work that they do. It's true that it takes a special type of person to be a social worker — dedicated, committed, perceptive, attentive and purposeful. That's just a handful of qualities that come to mind when we are talking about social workers.

Social workers have an extraordinary impact on our communities and the people within them. They work to identify people and communities in need of assistance. They work to assess clients' needs and situations to determine what resources they need to succeed. They help families and individuals adjust to changes in their lives and help to improve their well-being.

Social workers respond to crisis situations involving vulnerable children. They follow up with families to ensure their situations are improving and that the programs and services being accessed are sufficient for their clients' needs.

I would like to give special thanks to social workers who stepped up to provide a broad range of services to the Town of Watson Lake and its citizens in response to a number of tragedies in recent years.

Thank you to all of those involved in social work across the Yukon. Your work is critical to the well-being of our communities, and is really and truly appreciated.

*Applause*

**Ms. Hanson:** I am pleased to join in paying tribute to Social Work Month and social workers on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, social work is an evolving profession — one that has changed radically from the early days of the wealthy in society performing charitable works to aid the deserving poor, to today's expectations that a social worker has a deep understanding of systemic aspects of the social, economic, historic and emotional circumstances that may affect us all at one point or another in our lives and that affect us in different ways, often in response to circumstances beyond our control. It's pretty daunting.

While there is no one definition of "social work" that captures the diversity of roles that today's social workers play in our community, social workers are a part of the few in our community who care enough about the social injustices committed every day, behind closed doors or out in the open, to act because they care enough to believe they can make the world a better place. They understand from their heart what

Dr. Seuss's Lorax meant when he said, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

While some social workers focus on community organization and community development and others in the social policy arena, most of us most of the time think of a social worker as someone who works directly with individuals and/or families. A social worker may be a child and family social worker, a clinical social worker, a health care social worker or a mental health and substance abuse social worker or any of the other specialities that have arisen in response to the ever-changing challenges in our society.

On a daily basis, social workers perform a myriad of tasks relating to counselling, administrative duties, interviewing clients and potential clients, meeting with lawyers and more. They may work for government or a non-governmental organization, a hospital, a jail, an educational institution — to name just some of the places you may find a social worker. Heck, there is even at least one former social worker standing here today giving this tribute. Through it all, social workers are guided by a code of ethics and core principles that can, and do, add to the burden of being part of a caring profession.

Social workers dare to speak when there is injustice. They dare to challenge the powerful and the intimidating. They might sometimes fail to protect the innocent and vulnerable, but they refuse to stay silent. Advocacy takes many shapes when it comes to social work. It can be on a personal level: advocating for a victim of abuse or neglect in an institutional setting or in a domestic violence situation, for example.

Social workers can be legal advocates for children in abusive homes or individuals in recovery from addiction, and public advocacy includes providing a voice and raising awareness for their clients, or as we have most recently seen here in Whitehorse, specific issues related to social service delivery.

As we tribute social work today, we pay special tribute to those social workers here in Yukon who have borne the emotional, financial and professional costs of advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, social work — like in the nursing field, another profession charged with caring for others — was slow to recognize the cost of caring for others — that it carries significant implications for the abilities of the caring professional to be effective to avoid burnout. Having been part of the social work world for over 10 years, I am deeply aware of how difficult it has been for social workers to recognize the importance of self-care and to seek the support found in organization — sometimes in unionization — to provide basic protection for themselves as service providers — protections that, in turn, protect those they serve.

It saddens — actually, it angers me — that in 2019, there are still some in positions of power who believe that those who provide essential, life-enhancing and sometimes life-saving services should be treated as though they are providing optional acts of charity, not essential professional services — services that make a significant and positive impact, not just in the social indices of individual and community well-being, but in our economic indices of well-being as well.

As we pay tribute to social work and social workers today, we recall that, just as Rosa Parks did not set out to be a civil rights icon when she sat on that bus, social workers in 2019 are challenged individually and as a profession to uphold their guiding principles, to never be fearful about what they are doing when it is right. When you root it in the core values and principles that led you to choose to be a social worker, you are making progress on the road less travelled, and we thank social workers for having the courage to lead us on that road.

*Applause*

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

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I have two legislative returns for tabling.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports construction of a new school in Whistle Bend.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to develop “slow down, move over” legislation similar to what is in place in British Columbia, which would require motorists to slow down and move over for all vehicles stopped alongside the road that have flashing red, blue or yellow lights.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to show leadership and end the uncertainty regarding the future of Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services by making it clear what steps the government will take to see these important services resumed.

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

THAT this House urges the Premier to explain why his press release about the federal budget issued on March 21, 2019, says that the increase in federal transfers for the 2019-20 fiscal year was only \$50 million, when documents provided by Finance officials on March 7, 2019, show the actual number is \$53.4 million and the Premier himself confirmed during debate on the afternoon of March 21, 2019,

that the actual increase is \$53.4 million, as shown in the transcript on page 4023.

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

Is there a statement by a minister?

This then brings us to Question Period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### Question re: Highway safety

**Mr. Hassard:** The Official Opposition has been asking the Liberal government to take action to improve highway safety for the last two and a half years. Last week, the minister finally stood in this House to announce his plan to improve highway safety. The problem is he didn't actually announce any actions he was going to take. Instead, he told us he will make a Facebook post and launch a survey. That just doesn't cut it. There are issues that we have raised for over two and a half years that do not require any legislative change that the minister could take action on today if only road safety was a priority for him.

For example, in 2017, we asked the minister to add a turning lane to the busy section of the Alaska Highway in front of Porter Creek Super A. The minister has taken no action on that request. Since he is now coming around to the idea of improving road safety, will he support this request now?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am happy to address this topic on the floor of the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. It is something that we have talked about a lot, and I welcome it because road and traffic safety is an issue that we should all take seriously.

My colleague the Minister of Justice and I have taken a lot of action on safety in recent days, months and indeed years. We have doubled the fines for speeding in the territory. We have taken action to double the fines for people who show disregard for school buses when they are stopped by the side of the road. We have done many road improvements. I think the member is forgetting the fact that we just improved the south Klondike Highway intersection, a project that went ahead and actually has received an awful lot of comments. I have gone with the Member for Copperbelt South on a drive with him in sort of a non-partisan tour of his riding and some of the necessary road improvements that need to go on in his area. I appreciate that. I have spoken to my colleagues on this side of the House about road sign improvements, and of course the member opposite has brought up the issues in Porter Creek. All those will be addressed in a planned manner.

We are doing high-traffic, high-problem areas first, and I will certainly address this more in future questions.

**Mr. Hassard:** Once again, it appears that this government is incapable of making decisions and taking actions. Some may say “paralysis by analysis”. In May 2018, I wrote to the minister asking him to consider “slow down, move over” legislation. This legislation would protect RCMP, emergency workers and others by making it a requirement to slow down and move over when an official vehicle with flashing lights is pulled over on the side of the highway.

This request came directly to us from people working in the profession, and we relayed it to the minister on their behalf. In his response, the minister said no.

Instead, he will maybe consider it in some future legislative changes that Yukoners may or may not see on the eve of the election. If he takes this seriously, the minister can commit today to take action to protect RCMP and emergency workers who are pulled over on the side of the road.

So will the minister agree to bring forward “slow down, move over” legislation before the end of this year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I think the proposal the member opposite has brought forward certainly has merit. I think it is incumbent on all of us to drive better in the territory. I think when people see emergency equipment on the side of the road, it’s incumbent on them to slow down and move over. I think that makes a lot of sense, and I’m more than happy to entertain such rules within the *Motor Vehicles Act* — which we are starting to rewrite, Mr. Speaker.

You might remember that the *Motor Vehicles Act* dates back to 1977; it’s a very old piece of legislation. It’s shop-worn; it doesn’t reflect today’s society. This government, after years — decades — of neglect, decided to step up and do the hard work to get this act rewritten. It is something that we committed to, and it’s something we are going to deliver on. As a result, we have had lots of feedback from municipalities and from police officers in several places. We’ve had citizens reaching out and telling us what they would like to see in this new piece of legislation we’re going to be drafting that will be modern and will address all of the concerns that this territory has about driving. They are many that need addressing, so we will do that.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, if I could just remind this government that they campaigned on the idea that they would take good ideas from all sides of this Legislature, and this is something that can be done now. We don’t have to wait for two years down the road.

The opposition has written to the minister to suggest improvements to highway safety, such as turning lanes and crosswalks on busier dangerous sections of the highway and improving line painting and street lights on the Robert Campbell Highway. The minister has taken no action on any of these suggestions. These suggestions can be done without legislative changes, like I said, so there is no reason to delay taking action on them.

So instead of prioritizing these investments — like the Liberals spending an extra \$255,000 on the size of the Cabinet office — can the minister tell us why he has not prioritized these highway safety initiatives, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I’m not sure — perhaps the microphones aren’t picking up my voice. I’ll try harder. I said we are prioritizing the work that needs to be done on the highway, contrary to what the Leader of the Official Opposition is inserting into the mics on his side.

We are prioritizing. We are doing the work in a planned fashion, Mr. Speaker. To start that work, this year we are doing the Range Road improvements. We have already tackled the south Klondike Highway intersection, which was

badly in need of work. We did that work. The reviews on that work are very positive, Mr. Speaker.

Now we’re working on Range Road and we’re out to consultation. We’ve had open houses. And the goal there, Mr. Speaker, is to improve pedestrian, cyclist and traffic safety on the south end of Range Road. We’re doing that because all the traffic reports we have say that this is the busiest stretch of highway in northern Canada, and there is a lot of stuff going on there. We have subdivision development, commercial development and a new municipal building going into that region. So we are doing the hard work to make sure that the stretch of highway from Two Mile Hill through Robert Service Way is safe and efficient for all motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

#### **Question re: Mineral staking**

**Ms. McLeod:** According to the Yukon Geological Survey, the number of new claims staked in 2018 dropped by 50 percent compared to 2017. Further, the number of claims in good standing in 2018 has dropped by 2,000 compared to 2017. The number of new claims staked and the number of claims in good standing are important indicators of a healthy mining sector.

What policies or actions has the Premier taken to address the issue of declining staking numbers?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Yes, I would say that the number of claims staked is definitely one indicator. I would say that the money spent on the claims after they have been staked would be another.

When you take a look at some of the previous staking numbers — and you go back to, say, 2016 and look at the exploration work coming in at just over \$90 million and then fast-forward to last year, when you’re almost looking at double and then again a 50-percent increase. It’s nice to see that people are identifying a resource but then actually spending money to prove it out. I think that’s key. I think that’s probably one of the reasons that the Fraser Institute this year had looked at the Yukon as one of the top 10 jurisdictions in the world out of 82 different countries that were identified. I think that’s probably why the same report looked at the Yukon as the number three area for investment or investment security.

I think all of those are different indicators. I think you always have to go out and continue within that ecosystem to stake and look for new ground, but I think it also has to do with what you are doing with the ground that has already been staked.

**Ms. McLeod:** I did not hear an answer from the minister or the Premier on what actions they have taken.

According to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, close to 50 percent of the Yukon is currently off-limits to new staking. While some of this land is withdrawn permanently, some is under a temporary ban. One of those areas under temporary ban is the traditional territory of the Ross River Dena Council.

Can the Premier give us a progress report on removing some or all of this area from the staking ban? When was the

last meeting with the Ross River Dena Council to discuss this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** First, I think, just to be respectful — question one is essentially: What are we continuing to do? We continue to support our mining sector to go out and to raise capital in a competitive market. We continue to attend and play a role in meeting with companies and financiers and others, whether it be in Vancouver or Toronto.

We continue to do that work. We continue to look at new, innovative ways to share the Yukon story in a digital world — many, many things. We can continue to share those throughout the session.

We have to remember — it's not way back in history; it's a short history — that it really has to do with a series of different legal battles that our friends across the way were embroiled in. It has to do with the legal battles with Ross River; it has to do with the Peel; it has to do with a number of different situations that occurred that, in many cases, ended portions of that staking.

I have had discussions with Kaska leadership numerous times just in the last couple of weeks and with the development corporations that work with Ross River, as well. But it's not just about saying: "Hey, can we get in the backyard and stake?" It's about asking: "What are your social needs, and how can we support you?" That's the right way to build partnerships.

**Ms. McLeod:** I think Yukoners are getting a little tired of the blame game. What we're looking for are answers on the temporary ban so that we can tell the prospectors who contact us when this land may be available for staking, and hopefully we will see staking activity in these areas as a result.

When did the Premier last talk to the Yukon Prospectors Association to discuss the staking bans?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do appreciate the Premier's trust in letting me have most of the dialogue and conversation with the Yukon Prospectors Association as the minister in charge of mines. It's normally the work that I do. That's either at the Geoscience Forum, or from time to time throughout the year, we meet at the Yukon Chamber of Mines and I meet with the executive.

Sure, smart politics — it's the blame game. It's also about the facts.

The next time that somebody calls our friends across the way, they should say, "Look, when you go to court with somebody, the wounds don't heal in 24 months. You have to build trust back." That's what we're seeing across the way. We're going to do that work. We can be told that it's the blame game, but when you take on a bilateral legal challenge and battle, it takes awhile to build it back. We are going to continue to support the mining operations happening there. We're going to continue to look where we can build capacity, both with Liard First Nation and with the Ross River Dena Council, and we're going to continue to do the good work that we're doing in Faro. We'll build the trust, and over time, we'll have systems in place that open up some of those areas that were closed under my friends from across the way.

#### Question re: American Sign Language program

**Ms. Hanson:** In March 2018, the government announced permanent funding for the American Sign Language program. The NDP joined in acknowledging this as great news. The American Sign Language program provides interpretation services to Yukon's deaf and hard-of-hearing community to access a range of services and programs throughout government.

Can the minister share with this House how many times this program has been used over the past year by individuals from the deaf community?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I will get the member opposite the precise numbers. I can say on the floor of the Legislature this afternoon that the program was very popular, and the decision to fund the program permanently was very well-received.

It is a very important service for members of our deaf community, but it is beyond that, Mr. Speaker. It is a very important service that we are offering to all Yukoners because, by having it, we have brought a whole new perspective into our public discourse through the deaf community and their ability to participate more deeply and more meaningfully in our public discourse. It has brought a whole new perspective to our society, and I think that has been very valuable.

**Ms. Hanson:** The fact is that no one is currently providing the service. The position of American Sign Language interpreter is vacant. For an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, being able to communicate with a health care professional, a social worker, a lawyer or any other government service worker is critical. Having to communicate without the assistance of an ASL interpreter can be an exercise in frustration for both the individual who is hearing-impaired and for the person trying to provide services. Without these services, individuals are left trying to piecemeal together services themselves or to get no service at all.

Can the minister tell us how long this position has been vacant?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** We are not in the habit of discussing HR matters on the floor of the House, but as I have said, this is a very important position and, as the member opposite has indicated, the American Sign Language interpreter has left the employ of the Yukon government. We were all very sad to see that happen. We are currently recruiting for a new permanent American Sign Language interpreter. The job advertisement for that position is posted on the Yukon government's employment website.

The member opposite, however, is wrong, and I want to correct the record. In her preamble, I think the Leader of the Third Party suggested that we have nobody providing that service. That is not correct, Mr. Speaker. While the competition proceeds, the Public Service Commission has contracted a short-term American Sign Language interpreter who began on March 18, so we are providing that service and we will continue to do it. We know how important it is, and so we do have somebody in place to provide those services to the deaf community.

The short-term ASL interpreter has been introduced to the deaf community at a program advisory committee meeting on March 18. That service is continuing, and as soon as we get a new person hired, we will continue it full time.

**Ms. Hanson:** It is true that this position has been vacant since December. It is March, and recruitment has just now started. Given the time to review, interview, hire and possibly move an individual here, this is a long time for Yukoners to not have access to this essential service — contract or not — because we have heard from individuals looking for ASL interpretive support, and they were provided services that they said were cobbled together and were inadequate.

If the contract services are not available when somebody needs them on call — and I will ask the minister to confirm that they are — a quick look at the Internet —

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

**Ms. Hanson:** — and if the Premier wants to answer on behalf of the minister, he can, but I am asking the minister responsible — am I not, Mr. Speaker?

A quick look at the Internet shows that there is an online app for interpretive services that can be downloaded onto a phone, an iPad or computer.

Without an ASL interpreter readily available, what has this minister done to confirm whether these remote services fill the gap for the deaf community while waiting for a new full-time interpreter to be hired?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It is difficult when you base your questions before Question Period on a hypothesis that doesn't bear out. As I have said — I sympathize with the Leader of the Third Party — I have provided the service as of March 18. The new short-term, on-call interpreter has been put in place. The service that the member opposite has indicated is very important — and I fully agree with her that it is a very important service that we are providing — that we decided to fund permanently because its importance is continuing. HR matters when you have one position in place. One person is serving an entire community here, and they will do the very best job they can for the community. They will do that.

That service is being offered to the community as it was before — we had one person before; we have one person now. We will hire a full-time American Sign Language interpreter to keep the program going over the coming years — one of the first governments in the country to provide such a service, and I am proud of that. I am very proud of that work and I know how important it is. I am glad I have the support of the Leader of the Third Party on this very important initiative we undertook, funded and supported and will continue to support in the future.

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

**Ms. White:** Last week, we asked the Minister of Health and Social Services how much the Yukon would save on a yearly basis if we avoided the 60 percent of avoidable emergency room visits highlighted in the 2018 Government of Yukon performance plan. The minister acknowledged that the emergency department is a significant cost-driver for Yukon's

health care system, yet she could not identify even a ballpark amount that these unnecessary visits cost.

A 2014 report found that the national average for avoidable emergency room visits was 20 percent, a full 40 percent lower than the Yukon's rate. So again, what is the cost of Yukon's avoidable emergency room visits?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Great question. The work that is to look at some of the cost-drivers associated with the services provided by Health and Social Services is being conducted as we speak. We are working with the hospital. We are working with emergency services, and we are looking at efficiencies. We will look at addressing this under the comprehensive health review. We will get the information and make that readily available to Yukoners as the results become available to us.

**Ms. White:** The Government of Yukon performance plan highlights that 60 percent of emergency room visits are avoidable, yet it offers no strategies for reducing that unnecessary burden on our health system. After we raised these concerns in the Legislative Assembly, a department official said that the issue is more about ensuring patients receive the best possible care, rather than just saving money. Yukoners are not going to the emergency room for the best possible care. They are going as a last resort because family physicians are in short supply and nurse practitioners are not being utilized.

We have known about the high rates of avoidable emergency department visits for many years — most recently highlighted in the 2014 Whitehorse General Hospital expansion project needs assessment. What steps has this government been taking to address this ongoing issue prior to the commencement of the health review to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** We have done a lot, and I'm awfully proud of the work of Health and Social Services to look at providing collaborative care supports to Yukoners. We have created our mental wellness hubs to provide services in our communities. We have worked with the hospitals or health centres to ensure that we have primary health care, which is a foundation of our health care systems. The access to that service is very important. The importance of family physicians and understanding how many Yukoners, particularly in Whitehorse, cannot find a family doctor — all of those matters that are before us are vitally important, and we are working with our partners, including the Yukon Medical Association, on strategies to ensure better access to family physicians. This includes recruitment and matching patients with family physicians who have room in their practices. We are also working with our partners on exploring new delivery models that will focus on collaborative care. Collaborative care is inter-disciplinary and team-based. It provides improved access to continuity of patients' care and needs. That is comprehensive of the Yukon. We are working with our partners to ensure that we reduce the amount of emergency room visits. We are working, again, with our partners in clearly trying to look at preventive measures by providing central supports to Yukoners.

**Ms. White:** The minister has repeatedly acted as though the health review is a silver bullet that will solve all of these problems, yet the problems I've highlighted continue to cause stress to Yukoners.

Yukon government chose to build the \$75-million new hospital expansion instead of working to reduce the number of unnecessary visits to the emergency department. This government has not done enough to divert emergency room visits to community-based primary health services. We haven't seen a plan from this government, even though these numbers have continued to rise over the last two years.

If this government could even eliminate half of the avoidable emergency room visits, it would mean nearly 12,000 less visits a year.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government waiting for the health review when the causes of Yukon's avoidable emergency room visits have been identified and solutions have already been proposed?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that I'm awfully proud of the work of the Health and Social Services staff and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, ensuring that Yukoners lead healthier and happier lives by providing the services where they reside in rural Yukon communities or wherever they access services.

Every door has to be the right door. Elimination of emergency visits certainly is critical. We want to ensure that the foundation of our health care system better aligns with the service needs. The importance of the supports — the comprehensive review — is not the be all and end all. It never was and it never will be.

What we have said we would do is look at the broad spectrum of health across Yukon. We would work with our partners to really hone in on what is required in rural Yukon communities. What types of supports are required?

We have done some really exciting things: We have 10 full-time home and community care positions hired; we have the re-enablement and respite program at the Thomson Centre, which eliminates hospital visits; we've opened up the mental wellness hubs; we have, of course, opened up and provided supports for recreational facilities in our communities that provides more healthy living; we've provided supports to land-based programming and supports to our communities. We're doing many things that support Yukoners to live healthier lives.

#### **Question re: Kluane Lake School**

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, last year's budget allocated \$50,000 to plan for the relocation of the Kluane Lake School from its current location in Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing. On March 20, 2018, I asked the Minister of Education how much money would be earmarked for the project in this year's budget.

In response, the minister said — and I quote: "My recollection — although I am sure friends will correct me if I am wrong — is that there is \$500,000 in next year's budget for the continuation and construction of that project."

We're looking at this year's budget, and there's actually only \$50,000 for this project. That's \$450,000 less than the minister said there would be. Can the minister explain why her government has reduced the funding for this project so significantly?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The Kluane Lake School planning phase was not completed last year, and as a result, the \$50,000 that was in last year's budget has been moved forward to this year's budget so that we can continue to work with the community of Kluane First Nation and the community of Burwash Landing for the purpose of having the Kluane Lake School moved. It is a project that we are very excited about, knowing full well that the original request from the Kluane First Nation to move that school came in 1917 — so some 102 years ago. I wish it was a lot less than that —

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

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Sorry, 1817 — no, 1917, I said. Sorry; I said that. I wish it was a lot less than that. We will be working with the community to go forward this year so that the Kluane Lake School can be and serve the students of that community where it should be.

**Mr. Istchenko:** As I said, the minister originally told us this year's budget for Kluane Lake School would be \$500,000. It turns out that she was off by one zero because now it's \$50,000. I'm pretty sure if there was a zero missing from the minister's paycheque, she probably wouldn't be too pleased. I can tell you also that the residents are very excited. But moving on to the relocation of the school, a line item of only \$50,000 has now been in several budgets. Can the minister actually tell us when the construction is going to start and the timelines for completion?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Mr. Speaker, no, I can't, because we are working with the community. This is a project that they have sought for over 100 years. It is the first conversation that I have had with the Kluane First Nation about the importance of this. As a matter of fact, when the Minister of Community Services and I went to have this conversation with the Kluane First Nation, it was 100 years to the day from when the letter had been written by their then-chief.

I know the day — it was October 20, 2017, that we have been having conversations with them. It is critical that they have a deciding role and a consultation that is meaningful to them and that we manage to provide the school that this community needs and wants. That work will continue this year. It has nothing to do with zeros or paycheques or anything else. I am clearly saying that this is a project that's a priority for us and for the Kluane First Nation.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I see that the minister again has certainly failed to mention the community of Destruction Bay regarding the move of the Kluane Lake School from Destruction Bay to Burwash. Last year, I asked the minister if she had a chance yet to meet with the community of Destruction Bay to discuss plans for the old school. At that time, she did not actually answer the question. Now I'm wondering if she could today.

Has the minister met with the community of Destruction Bay to discuss what the plans for the old school will be?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I have personally not met with the community of Destruction Bay. Clearly this is part of the plan moving forward with respect to locating the school at a new location, making sure that the needs of that school are met at the new location and then working with the community to determine what might occur with the other building.

I can also indicate that, with a one-government approach, it will be something that I will be speaking about with my colleagues and clearly with the community of Destruction Bay to determine what is in the best interests of both of those communities.

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

### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** Prior to proceeding with the business before the Committee, the Chair will deliver a ruling on a point of order raised on Thursday, March 21 by Mr. Streicker concerning remarks made by Mr. Cathers during general debate on Bill No. 210, *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

At page 4018 of the Blues for that day, Mr. Cathers said that the government's public engagement survey system allowed surveys to be submitted multiple times. He stated, "... 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."

Standing on a point of order, Mr. Streicker said that he thought he heard Mr. Cathers "... suggest that members of this government were filling out surveys multiple times." Mr. Streicker stated that he knew this to be incorrect.

The Chair finds that there is no point of order. In the Chair's opinion, Mr. Cathers' remarks were intended to point out what he perceived to be a flaw in the survey system as opposed to an accusation of unethical behaviour by the Premier or other members of Cabinet.

The Chair thanks Mr. Streicker and Mr. Cathers for their submissions on the point of order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 55, Department of Highways and

Public Works, in Bill No. 210, *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:** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

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

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

### Department of Highways and Public Works — continued

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I will continue as my two officials — Mr. Murchison and Mr. Pitfield — take their chairs this afternoon. Welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for coming.

When last we met, which I believe was Thursday afternoon, we were talking about the Highways and Public Works budget. For those who missed it, I will go back over some of the things I was talking about before. We are talking about 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 of buildings. Standardization will increase efficiency, while providing us with a baseline to continuously improve our management of those spaces.

Efficiencies, Mr. Chair, 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, we are upgrading our IT in the hospital to a system that will help integrate health records and support collaborative care. This again will improve efficiency of the health care system, reduce red tape and ensure that clinicians have access to the information they need to provide the best possible care to Yukoners now and well into the future. This system will also give Yukoners tools to better manage their own personal health through the patient health portal.

Our department is also using technology to reduce the territory's carbon footprint. Over the next four to five years, in partnership with the Government of Canada, we will be improving energy efficiency in dozens of government buildings throughout the Yukon. This year here in Whitehorse, for instance, we are doing lighting upgrades at Vanier Catholic Secondary School, Elijah Smith Elementary School and the technical education wing at F.H. Collins Secondary School, replacing the existing lights with LEDs. Not only do these lights use 75 percent less electricity than traditional fluorescent tubes, their lifespan is three times

longer. They also don't contain toxic chemicals such as mercury and other heavy metals.

Down the hall in the old library, we have another example of innovation and action. During our planning work to temporarily move the Public Service Commission, we determined that it would be prohibitively expensive to install traditional phone lines for such brief use. Instead, we decided to use the opportunity to initiate a pilot program for Voice over Internet Protocol technology. VoIP, as it's more commonly called, allows users to make calls using broadband Internet rather than a conventional or analogue phone system. The benefits of this system are undeniable. It's flexible, it's portable and it's multifunctional — all of which, when combined with other strategic investments currently underway, will change how government services are delivered to our citizens.

I had the opportunity to tour the old library in the last two months. The staff there were elated with the Voice over IP technology. It has improved the way in which they deliver service to their clients, it has given them more flexibility and it has allowed them to track and maintain their calls way better than any of the antiquated technology that we are still using in this government. Further, it is saving taxpayers' money, as this technology is a lot less expensive than conventional phone services. Eventually the government hopes to deploy Voice over IP technology across government.

The final initiative that I would like to discuss before moving on can also be found here in the main administration building. Downstairs in the government mailroom, you can find a new parcel- and mail-sorting system called OneSort. In December when I was touring the department, I had the folks in the mailroom take me through how this system works, and it is a simple thing, but it is absolutely transformative. I know it has transformed the mailroom's workplace, and it was quite exciting for such a simple thing. The piece of equipment itself is unassuming in appearance, as I have just said. It consists of a monitor, a keyboard, a scale, a small printer, a camera and a database of addresses.

The time-savings being realized as a result, however, are nothing short of staggering. A parcel that, between weighing, measuring and typing an address label, took six minutes to process now takes 30 seconds. If the time-savings wasn't impressive enough, consider the fact that the folks in the mailroom process roughly 9,800 packages every year. That is how many are sent out of the mailroom. So 9,800 packages at six minutes a piece are now being processed in 30 seconds a piece — just amazing.

Yukon is the second jurisdiction in the country to adopt this technology. It's so innovative that even Canada Post had asked for a demonstration.

These are the ways we are transforming the Yukon government into a modern corporation — modern government — to deliver services better and more efficiently. This one piece of technology is saving hundreds of hours of staff time, and that's real savings for Yukon people. While fibre optics isn't a new technology, it is a necessary technology. Access to the Internet is no longer a luxury. In fact, our federal

government has pledged to make sure that every community has access to broadband.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, it's a necessity for a strong economy, for quality health care, for quality education and for dependable air travel. Yukon currently depends on a single fibre optic line, and when that line goes down, the territory is largely cut off from the digital world. We've seen that in the business community here in town. When that happens, we can't access our banks. The lost-opportunity costs for people going in and getting coffees is tremendous, in addition to many, many other inconveniences when that system goes down.

In partnership with the Government of Canada and Northwestel, we will build a fibre optic line along the Dempster Highway from Dawson City to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. The line will connect Yukon to the existing Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link, and in doing so, will complete a continuous 4,000-kilometre network. As a result, communities along this loop as well — as other northern communities that tie in remotely — will have access to a secondary network in the event of a service disruption. The Dempster fibre project will enhance the participation of Yukoners and northerners more broadly in the digital economy and enhance access to government services.

I would like to end today by talking about transportation. Our road system is essential for connecting Yukoners to one another and supporting economic growth. We're making investments to keep these vital links safe and open for business — a responsibility we take very seriously.

Here in Whitehorse, for instance, we're partnering with the federal government on a series of projects along the Alaska Highway, including extending Range Road south of its current location, creating a new intersection onto the highway and closing the existing Range Road entrance to the highway at Sumanik Drive. Taken together, these improvements will result in safer, more efficient traffic flow along the busiest stretch of the Alaska Highway — indeed the busiest stretch of highway anywhere in northern Canada.

To the south in Carcross, we're replacing the Nares River bridge with a structure that can meet the current and future traffic demands. Construction began last February and is slated to be finished later this fall. In addition to meeting the region's transportation needs, the new bridge is providing economic opportunities in the area. For the first time on an infrastructure project, the government procurement process included a First Nation participation plan intended to address employment and training for Carcross and Tagish residents and businesses.

We're also moving forward with our roadside safety program. Over the next six years, for instance, we're going to carry out extensive vegetation control along just over 4,100 kilometres of highways in the territory. This initiative is going to enhance safety by improving sightlines and increasing visibility. This will allow drivers to more easily see approaching wildlife and other vehicles coming along the highway. It's also going to help to maintain our highway

system by improving drainage and preventing structural damage from things such as tree roots.

We are also building on the Yukon's intelligent transportation system — a network of sensors, public messaging technologies and communications and computing infrastructure. We're installing wind advisory sensors and signs along the Dempster Highway near hurricane alley and border hill. This technology will enable commercial truck traffic to better access safety considerations.

Further to that, we are continuing to advance our understanding of sinkhole formations along the Dempster Highway and monitor known sinkhole locations to provide early warning to our maintenance staff.

In terms of aviation, we're building on the key investments that we made in last year's budget. Just in time for the Christmas rush last year, for instance, four new sweepers arrived at Eric Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. They can clear 38 percent more area than the older models that they replaced. What used to take three hours to clear the main runway can now be done in just over an hour — another efficiency that this government has implemented to make sure we have the tools in place to let the staff do their jobs better and quicker, providing more services to Yukoners.

Just last week, a new snow blower arrived as well. It replaces a piece of equipment that Transport Canada gave the Yukon government 25 years ago. That hand-me-down blower could move 2,500 tonnes of snow per hour; the new one can move three times that amount.

We also replaced a passenger boarding bridge, one that was built in 1984. To put that in context, that's the very same year that the Edmonton Oilers won the first of their five Stanley Cups.

We also procured new equipment that allows improved service to Watson Lake, Dawson City and Mayo.

But enough about last year — this year, we're upgrading the airport's passenger baggage system at Eric Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. This much-needed update will ensure that modern equipment is available to process, screen and efficiently move passenger bags to and from airplanes.

Further to that, we're paving the runway at Dawson City Airport, a move that will help to boost tourism and support further economic development in the territory and in the Klondike region.

Last week, I also informed this House of the work being done at the Mayo aerodrome to bring it up to the standards required to be a certified airport.

I could go on and on, Mr. Chair,

**Chair:** You can, for one minute.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Well, then, I won't.

Suffice it to say, Mr. Chair, that our government is making progress on our commitments to Yukoners. We're making progress on supporting a diverse, robust economy that provides good-paying jobs. We're making progress on building healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities through strategic investments. We're making progress on pursuing a

people-centred approach to wellness that helps all Yukoners to thrive.

Each day, with every decision we make and with every initiative we undertake, we're helping to build a stronger Yukon that works better for all of us.

**Mr. Hassard:** I too would just like to begin by thanking Mr. Murchison and Mr. Pitfield for being here today to assist the minister in helping us to get some top-notch answers.

Mr. Chair, I will start today with BST. We see that there's a decrease in the budget this year for BST, so I'm just curious if the minister could tell us how many kilometres were done in the last couple of years and how that's going to compare to this year, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the members opposite for their patience. Our highway system consists of a total of 4,828 kilometres of maintained road surface, with 337 kilometres of asphalt, 2,000 kilometres of BST — or chipseal — and 2,452 kilometres of gravel. There are also seven kilometres of bridge and ferry crossings. On average, we resurface about 130 kilometres of BST every year and about 10 kilometres of asphalt every year.

This year, we are spending \$2.8 million on BST aggregate production, and that will be applied across Yukon highways. As I said, we do about 130 kilometres every year.

**Mr. Hassard:** The minister told us how much he is spending on crushing aggregate for the BST, but how many kilometres of BST will we actually see this year?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The officials here in the department are getting back to Transportation Maintenance to find what we expect to use this year — how much BST we expect to lay — but as I said in my earlier answer, it's roughly 130 kilometres a year, and we don't expect to be far off that mark this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** We were told at the departmental briefing that there was a decrease of approximately \$2.5 million and that decrease was in BST, culvert maintenance and maintenance brushing. I guess that's for the minister to say that it's not going to be a lot different. Does that mean that the major portion of this \$2.5-million decrease in spending will be largely in culvert maintenance and brushing?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The member, in his preamble, talked about brushing. In fact, this year, we're actually doing much more on brushing and road safety. We are spending up to about \$3 million to improve our highway right of ways to implement a standardization of our highway system — to standardize our highway system across the territory — and actually put in standards that we will follow, so you will know to what standard we are maintaining the Robert Campbell Highway and to what standard we are maintaining the Yukon highway, through Whitehorse and outside of Whitehorse. Also, all of our roads will have a consistent level of maintenance, and that starts this year, including four-line painting. We are going to be putting reflectors and road markings on our roads. There are going to be safety barrier

improvements and a lot more work in the highway right of way to make sure it's a lot cleaner and clearer.

I will have more to say about that in the coming weeks, but I will say that project is about \$3 million, as I said. The reduction in our operation and maintenance is going to be reflected in new capital spending.

To your point about the maintenance of the road, I think the Yukon public will see a great improvement in the way the roads look and feel in the coming years.

**Mr. Hassard:** I don't think that the minister — I don't know if he didn't understand where I was coming from or I didn't understand where he was coming from. In the briefing, we were told that there is a decrease in BST, culvert maintenance and brushing.

My question was: If the BST is staying the same, is the major portion of this decrease going to culvert maintenance and brushing? Then the minister stood up and said that there's actually an increase in brushing, so I guess maybe he could see where the confusion might arise.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have the number here that I think the member opposite was looking for. We have reduced our bituminous surface treatment program by \$800,000 this year. That results in a loss of about 10 to 15 kilometres, depending on the region, so we will be down from 130 kilometres to 115 to 120 kilometres. That is how much BST we will be laying down this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that answer from the minister. Can the minister tell us how he anticipates the looming carbon tax on the price of oil for the BST, and if he feels that will affect how much BST is laid in future years?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As far as the price of carbon, the price of oil will be going up a couple of cents a litre. I don't know how many litres go into your typical yard of asphalt. I am sure that there will be some impact, but the Department of Highways and Public Works will be absorbing any minor increase in our budget this year. All of that money is going back to the government anyway, so we will absorb that cost. By the end of this year, we will see what sort of cost that is, but we don't expect it to be very high. As I said, I don't know how many litres of oil go into your typical yard of BST, but it won't be that significant — to our mind.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm curious how the minister can say that he doesn't think that it is going to make a very significant increase if he doesn't actually know how many litres they use. I think that the officials would have a pretty good idea of how many litres are used every year. They would have a pretty good idea of how many litres are used per kilometre or square metre or however you want to measure it.

Would the minister be able to provide us with some numbers in that regard?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** If I could impose on my colleague across the way to please repeat the nut of that question.

**Mr. Hassard:** As I was explaining so that the minister would understand — I'm not sure how he can say that it is not going to be a significant cost if he doesn't know how many litres the government uses per year. I am quite confident that the department knows exactly how many litres go into a

kilometre and how many litres they used in the 130 kilometres for the last number of years. I was curious if the minister would be able to get that number from the department so that he could provide it to us.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The member opposite knows full well that it is a very technical question. The department has said that they will delve into that highly technical response as to how many litres of oil go into each kilometre of bituminous surface treatment and then work out sort of a rough estimate, and I will report back to the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think it is important for the minister to remember that this is why we have these debates. This is where we ask those technical questions, and so we would hope that he would be able to provide that information.

So I guess, Mr. Chair, I would have to ask the minister — in his previous statement, is he confirming to the Legislature today that there has been no analysis done on the impacts of the carbon tax in relation to operations and maintenance for the government?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** No, Mr. Chair, to be frank, that is not what I was telling the member opposite — that we don't have an idea of how much the effect of the carbon tax on the Yukon government will be. What I was saying is that we don't have an idea of what the cost of the carbon tax — the cost of a couple of cents a litre — has on the cost of bituminous surface treatment.

We do have estimates, I'm sure, on the cost of the carbon tax on the Yukon government. We are, in Highways and Public Works, more concerned about the rising price of fuel generally than we are with the known commodity of the carbon price.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think that if the minister is spending taxpayers' money, he should be concerned about all of it — not more concerned about one part than the other.

When the minister did the analysis — or, as he says, the government has done an analysis on the cost of carbon tax and how it will affect operation and maintenance — how did he arrive or how did the department arrive at the number that they have chosen if they didn't also include the effects of the carbon tax on the oil for the BST?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm sorry — I'm going to disagree a little bit with my good colleague on the opposite bench. I do take the spending of public money very seriously, which is one of the reasons why we're working very hard to maintain services and to keep the government running with less money.

We know that members opposite spent \$1.50 for every dollar they collected, and that was unsustainable. We saw growth in O&M budgets of 12 percent, 10 percent and 14 percent, and that's not sustainable. We have curbed that spending, and I believe that Highways and Public Works is down to a 1.9-percent increase in O&M. I can get that exact figure, but that's roughly it. We are not increasing at the exponential rates that we've seen in the past. We're trying to slow that growth while maintaining services, road, bridges, highways, airports and all of the good works. Because of that, we're going to see a little bit less — like 10 kilometres less on BST this year — but we'll get better brushing and other

things. We are within the constraints that we have to provide services responsibly and well to the people of the territory.

Based on the consumption estimates for the Yukon government buildings, vehicles and equipment and by applying the \$20 per tonne rate set out on Finance Canada's website, the impact of the carbon tax in the fiscal year 2019-20, nine of 12 months, is forecast to increase expenditures by \$600,000. That sum will be managed within the departments' budgets.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just to be clear, \$600,000 directly related to the carbon tax — that is what the increase will be on operations and maintenance for the Department of Highways and Public Works?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** No, the \$600,000 figure that I just told the member opposite about is the total cost on the Government of Yukon's more than \$1-billion budget.

Out of the \$1.2-billion budget, we will absorb the \$600,000 the carbon tax is going to cost this government this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** I will go back a couple steps to the question I asked that I haven't received a response to. With regard to the carbon tax and the budget at Highways and Public Works — operations and maintenance — I asked: How did the department or the minister determine a number through his analysis if they don't know the number in regard to the oil for the BST? I guess maybe a simpler question would be: What implications does the carbon tax have on the operation and maintenance budget for Highways and Public Works?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Highways and Public Works knows its aggregate fuel purchase, so it knows the carbon pricing impact. The question that the member opposite asked was about how much oil per kilometre of bitumen, and we are getting that answer from the department. I will report back to the House and to the member opposite for that very precise question.

I have said that on a \$1.5-billion budget, the cost of the carbon tax in 2019 — nine of 12 months — is forecast to be about \$600,000, and we are going to absorb that cost. That's all of government. Highways and Public Works has about one-fifth of that budget. One-fifth of \$600,000 is just a little bit over \$100,000, I would think, or \$112,000 — something like that. That is a ballpark, just based on the numbers. We can get you a more precise estimate, I suppose.

The point to be made though is that the Government of Yukon knows what the cost of the carbon tax is going to be in the coming years. It is all mapped out. What we do not know is the wild fluctuations in fuel oil — it always goes up and down, and it always varies depending on what's happening in Saudi Arabia with the economy and with what's happening in China. It is wildly fluctuating, and we deal with those fluctuations all the time. The one known is the price of the carbon tax. We can actually budget for that, so we have no worries about budgeting for that known commodity going forward.

It is all mapped out, and that is the one known when it comes to fuel. The unknown is what happens when there's

some lack of stability in the Middle East or in China or in South Korea or North Korea. Those things have huge impacts on fuel oil, and we don't know what those are. We have managed for years with those wildly fluctuating fuel prices, which can jump cents. You know, I remember a time in the territory where fuel was \$1.50 a litre. It is no longer that high anymore; thankfully, it is now down quite lower than that. We will deal with those wild, unknown fluctuations as they crop up.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Chair, if I could just get the minister to ensure that his officials aren't getting the number for how many litres per kilometre of oil for BST, because that certainly isn't a question that I asked. It was just something that I said I'm sure the department has. I was curious as to how many litres per year the government was going to be purchasing.

The minister said that the \$600,000 total cost to government would be absorbed by government. So some quick math would say that, at \$50 per tonne, it's going to be roughly \$1.5 million, so will the government be absorbing that as well, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** We're talking about carbon tax, and it's currently — as I said, the estimate for all of the Yukon government is \$600,000 a year. I don't believe the member opposite's numbers are quite correct, but really today we're just debating this budget. We'll see what happens in the future. We know what the price of carbon will be in the future and we will work with that. What we have guaranteed or pledged to citizens of the territory is that we will rebate individuals, businesses, municipalities and First Nations. All of the money is collected through the carbon tax in the territory to those groups, and we're not going to grow government.

We all pay this price; it's what we do with it, and we've pledged to give it all back to individuals, businesses, municipalities and First Nations. We're not going to rebate ourselves, so that money is going to go back into the community to help soften the blow and make sure that people get money back from the price they're paying on carbon in the territory.

**Mr. Hassard:** In a previous response, the minister told the House that it was well-mapped-out how the carbon tax would work over the next few years, so my question was: When it reaches \$50 a tonne, will the government be absorbing that roughly \$1.5 million? Maybe my math is off.

Then the minister stood up and said we could only talk about today because he wasn't necessarily sure about future years. I guess, once again, it might leave listeners a little bit confused as to, if it is well-mapped-out, why we would not have that information today.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I want to remind the member opposite that there is a national review scheduled of the carbon-pricing mechanism. As of about 2021, we will participate and do our own review, or participate in that review when it is done. We will figure out how everything is working at that time. That is a little way in the future.

I don't think that idle speculation is really warranted. We don't know what is happening. What we do know is that the federal government has mapped out the price of carbon into the future. They are going to hold a review of this to see how things are going in around 2021. We will participate in that review and we will see what is happening.

Right now, this year, we do know that the price of carbon is going to cost the Yukon government an estimated \$600,000 a year on a \$1.5-billion budget, and we will be absorbing that cost in our departmental budgets across government, and we will be refunding all of the money collected in the territory to businesses, individuals, municipalities and First Nations. That is the commitment and that is what we are going to do. As far as taking a slice of it ourselves — we are not — we are handing it all back.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am not asking for idle speculation. The minister told us it is well-mapped-out. Now he is talking about a review in 2021, which is the first I have ever heard of that. We know that by 2021, the price will be \$50 a tonne. That has been reported for a long time now.

My question is very simple: Will the government be absorbing all of the costs — and I won't use a number so that we don't have to argue about math — for government when it becomes \$50 a tonne?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I suggest that the member opposite's math is incorrect. I ask him to have another look at his numbers. The second thing is that \$50 a tonne won't actually manifest itself until 2022-23 — years after the date the member opposite was referring to.

The next thing is, yes, the government does know how that will ascend. We know that the price of gasoline and diesel will move up in a methodical, planned approach that we can budget for, not like the widely varying fuel prices we have had to deal with and we will still have to deal with in the future. We will contend with the unknowns, and we will deal with the knowns as well.

The last thing is that the review that we were just referring to was actually agreed to during the pan-Canadian framework in 2016. We were not even the government then, but we do know that was agreed to and that is when it was agreed to. I'm sorry that this is coming as a surprise to the members opposite, but it was in 2016, before this government came to office. I'm sorry, I'm getting a nod from the Premier — it was during this thing — I apologize. The review did happen while we were in office, and that's what the federal government has pledged to. That's when it's coming up — in 2021.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's quite apparent that the minister doesn't appear to really know what he's talking about here, so I will just change course a little bit.

Does the minister have any idea what projects will not be done — or what project might have been done this year that won't be done now — to absorb that \$600,000 cost, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I just got this information that I'm going to pass on to the member opposite. The government

uses about four million litres of BST oil a year, and there is no carbon tax associated with the BST oil.

**Mr. Hassard:** I thank the minister for that.

Let's move to another great topic — brushing. The minister previously talked a little bit about brushing and how there would be some \$3 million worth of brushing. In the briefing, we were told that there would be \$2.7 million for line painting, brushing and placing of Jersey barriers.

Could the minister give us a bit of a breakdown on how much will be brushing, how much will be line painting and how much for placing of Jersey barriers?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** We are investing \$2.76 million in roadside safety improvements this year. It will focus on a few key areas: brushing, barriers, land delineation, line painting, clear-zone safety and roadside grading. The budget will be used to investigate safety concerns and deliver small-scale projects that respond to a specific safety highway operations or maintenance problem. Work may include spot community lighting enhancement or repairs requiring engineering design and supervision and that usually arise on short notice, requiring short-term response.

There will be three tenders going out next week on brushing. I will note that the brushing contract traditionally has been about \$900,000 a year — the brushing budget. For small spot-brushing along the highway, that budget will be maintained. There will be other larger contracts let that will be on larger stretches of highway, but we are going to retain a portion of this to make sure that the local contractors who have come to rely on brushing contracts will continue to have that work.

**Mr. Hassard:** I believe that what the minister said was \$900,000, but then there would be some larger contracts on top of that. Could the minister provide us with an idea of what those larger contracts may amount to? Is this \$1 million or \$5 million?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As I have indicated, we have three contracts that are going to be tendered in the very foreseeable future. It could be as early as this week — certainly by next week. They will be fairly substantial brush-clearing contracts. They will fall within this budget. We don't really want to get too specific because the tender process is resolving right now, but we expect the budgets to be certainly more than \$1 million for these three contracts — perhaps \$1 million to \$2 million — and we'll see where the tenders come in.

**Mr. Hassard:** So the minister said \$1 million to \$2 million. If it is for \$2 million and they already have \$900,000 for the smaller projects, how does that equate to \$2.7 million for line painting, brushing, Jersey barriers, et cetera?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The member opposite is correct. It is \$2.76 million for the program. We're currently tendering those things. We'll see how much value for money we get through our public tendering process. The components for the project, as I have indicated, are brush-clearing, line painting and a number of other improvements. We'll see how that goes.

**Mr. Hassard:** With the brushing that has been taking place over the course of the winter — since Christmas, I guess — can the minister provide us with an idea of how much per hectare this winter brushing has been costing the government?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can report that we spent about \$1.9 million doing brush-clearing over the winter months. That was third-party hourly work. It hasn't wrapped up yet, so as soon as it has, we will do an assessment about how effective it was. This is a fairly new initiative for the government to work this way over the winter. Once it is done, we will gather all of the information that we have from the project this winter, assess how effective it was and then make decisions about going forward in the future.

**Mr. Hassard:** The minister stated that this was all third-party work — this brush-mowing that took place. Can the minister confirm that everyone doing the brush-mowing was — it was equipment that was listed on the third-party rental agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have conferred with my colleagues here. The vast majority of the work done this winter was third-party work. There were a few instances where the equipment wasn't available and so we did some direct awards, but that was very rare — less so. Most of the work came through the third-party list and was awarded that way.

Where equipment didn't exist or wasn't available, we went to a direct award.

**Mr. Hassard:** I take it from the minister's response that the third-party list was exhausted before moving forward with equipment that was hired that wasn't on the third-party list, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** In January, the original of the 2018 third-party book expired. We are compiling a 2019 book, which is now in place. In the interim, we did award a few direct contracts in the lag between the 2018 book and the 2019 book's establishment.

**Mr. Hassard:** In this sum of brushing, line painting and Jersey barriers, can the minister let us know how the areas were prioritized? I know that a \$1-million contract just went out for the construction of Jersey barriers, so how did the government determine what areas would receive those new Jersey barriers, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The concrete barriers the member opposite is referring to were bought this year. They will be put in place in the coming year. As part of our work, we are doing a barrier assessment to find places of high risk. You, yourself, Mr. Chair, brought some of those concerns to my attention. There were others, as well, and we're going to be looking at the state of our roads across the territory and at the places that require concrete barriers, and we'll be doing risk assessments and placing them in places where they are required.

**Mr. Hassard:** It was my understanding that there was a study already done and that's why certain areas such as Watson Lake were told that they weren't necessary. Mr. Chair, would the minister be able to provide us a copy of the study that he's talking about when it's completed?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** We have done a number of studies and site visits and that type of thing to assess the need for barriers across the territory. We are now in the process of collating that information — finding out where the greatest need is — and then we will be putting the concrete barriers in place. There are a limited number. We got as many as we could, and we will place them at what is deemed by the experts as the most dangerous locations and work from there. Hopefully in the future we will roll this out even further.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the minister be able to let us know in the Legislature today about the placement of those concrete Jersey barriers? Will that be something that will be tendered out, or will that be done in-house by highway maintenance crews?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am informed that the plan is to tender the majority of the jobs. If there is a simple placement that needs to be done, then perhaps highway maintenance staff could execute and actually do some of the easier work, but the majority of these barriers will be placed through public tender.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate the answer from the minister.

We were told in the briefing that the Faro mine road — the road from the townsite up to the mine site — maintenance budget was being cut by \$60,000 this year. What was the budget last year, and what was the reasoning for decreasing the budget by such a large amount?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** We are endeavouring to get those precise numbers for the member opposite.

I can confirm that there is no significant work planned for the Faro mine road this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly understand why there probably isn't any significant work planned for the Faro mine road. We asked in the briefing why there is the \$60,000 decrease and what the budget was last year. I was hoping that the minister would have had time to receive that information. Seeing as how the officials are here today, I was hoping that we could have a little more information on that, Mr. Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** This year's budget — we are working to curb the cost of government. This operation and maintenance budget reflects a decrease of about \$2.5 million. One of the things — when you shrink a budget, you make decisions. One of the decisions that we've made is to stop maintenance on the Faro mine road. That's saving \$60,000. When you start to curb the cost of government, that's one of the things that falls by the wayside. That's where we're at, as I said.

Where we are contributing to this thing — it has dropped by \$60,000. Of course, we are always continuing to look at new ways of doing things. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is working on the decommissioning of the Faro mine, and we will be looking to them to contribute to this — to see if we can get some funding — but at the moment, that's the status of the Faro mine road.

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm pretty sure that will be cold comfort to my constituents who drive that road twice a day. I'm sure the minister will probably get a letter or two from them.

Since we're talking about my riding, I will continue. The minister has talked in this Legislature before about the paving that was going to take place between Faro and Ross River. I don't see anything in the budget again this year for paving from Faro to Ross River, so maybe the minister could give us an update on that, Mr. Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** This year, we are continuing with the planning, design and permitting of that stretch of road between Faro and Ross River. We are also stockpiling BST aggregate in preparation for that work, so we are laying the foundation for proceeding with that work on the Robert Campbell Highway between Faro and Ross River.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just to confirm what the minister said — he is preparing for moving forward on paving of the road between Faro and Ross River?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** That is correct. We are doing the necessary planning, preparing and stockpiling of BST aggregate to do that work in the future.

**Mr. Hassard:** Over the next two years, there is \$1 million to \$5 million earmarked for Bearfeed and Drury Creek bridges. Does the minister anticipate these to be done together? Would they be separate contracts? Is it a one-year or a two-year project?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** They are one-year projects — basically deck rehabilitation and strengthening of the bridges. We are still in the process of deciding whether it will be one contract or two, but certainly collectively, it is not large. Separated, it is not very large. It is smaller, so we will work out whether it is one contract or two. It is basically deck rehabilitation and strengthening, and it is about a one-year contract.

**Mr. Hassard:** I have another question on bridges. In the budget, it talks about the replacement of Big Creek bridge. Would the minister be able to provide us with some insight as to which Big Creek bridge that is — its whereabouts and which highway it would be on?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am told it is a three-truss bridge that we are currently in the process of designing and working on the eventual replacement of that bridge. We will probably require a realignment of the highway because it's a dangerous curve coming onto that bridge. We're doing the work to make sure that we can proceed with the actual replacement of that bridge, but we haven't actually decided when that job will be coming down the pike.

**Mr. Hassard:** The question was actually what highway that bridge was on because I wasn't sure — it said under \$1 million or whatever. I didn't think that it was the replacement of the Big Creek bridge between Rancheria and Watson Lake, but if it's for planning of the replacement of the Big Creek bridge, then maybe it is that bridge — if he can confirm that.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It is that bridge. It's the Big Creek bridge at kilometre 1042 of the Alaska Highway, approximately 60 kilometres west of Watson Lake. It's the plan to replace that. Once we have the funding in place, we will proceed with that.

**Mr. Hassard:** Which direction do we want to go next? Procurement Advisory Panel — we know that the minister has stated in the House that all of the recommendations from the advisory panel have been implemented, so I'm curious if the minister could just give us a rundown of what they were, which ones have been implemented and when they were implemented.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Over the past two years, we have made procurement improvements that address each and every recommendation of the Procurement Advisory Panel. We created the new Procurement Business Committee that gives us a wider perspective on procurement issues that matter to vendors — things like defining a Yukon business, improving selection criteria for the regional economic development exceptions and revising the bid challenge process.

The committee that we struck includes all First Nation development corporations as well as a half-dozen industry associations and chambers of commerce. We meet regularly with the businesses and industry associations and host well-attended annual events to connect staff with vendors. There were 155 vendors that attended the reverse trade shows, and 125 people were registered for the industry conference on a regular basis.

We now meet regularly with various industry sectors to consult and share information. We added standard clauses in our value-driven procurements that give points for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge. Since June 1, we have tendered 189 value-driven procurements with these mandatory clauses.

A request for proposals for the new e-procurement system will be posted soon and will be implemented this year. This modern system will make tendering and evaluation more efficient by eliminating the current paper-based process. We are investing in ongoing skill development, with more than 150 government employees enrolled in professional procurement certification programs.

We have also developed a new modern procurement policy that includes a placeholder for the First Nation procurement policy, which is ongoing. I have spoken about that in the House many times. The new First Nation procurement policy uses the room that we have in the trade agreements, creates greater consistency in our procurements, increases the focus on tender forecasting and addresses vendor concerns about addenda, the bid depository and the definition of a Yukon business. We are currently engaged with First Nation governments, working hard on the brand new First Nation procurement policy that I mentioned earlier.

The restructured Bid Challenge Committee, which deals with dispute resolution, now consists solely of private sector members and is more independent from government. We are sharing more information about past bid challenges with industry through the Procurement Business Committee to seek feedback for continuously improving procurements.

The Procurement Advisory Panel, I might remind members, made 11 recommendations under three themes: increasing opportunities for Yukon vendor participation,

reducing barriers to participation and increasing dialogue and building a more collaborative culture around procurement.

In 2018, we tendered nearly 60 seasonally dependent projects of varying sizes by March 31, 2018. We will have information on how we are doing this year very shortly, but it is going quite well.

We are also the first Canadian jurisdiction to use all 10 regional economic development exceptions in 2017-18 and are revising the criteria for selecting projects, and we will meet that target of 10, I believe, this year as well.

We're adding the First Nation participation and northern knowledge experience; I have already spoken about that. We have the Procurement Business Committee, which I have spoken about. We've pilot-tested models and processes like an informal dispute resolution model on capital development projects and a vendor performance review program across five departments and 12 projects.

We're drafting and implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> century procurement policy. It's coming into effect on April 1. We're increasing internal audits of procurement processes, and there is a benchmarking report, for example. We're providing training and new guides for staff on evaluation of value-driven procurements, direct awards and invitational tenders as well as releasing information guidelines for procurement processes. We're changing the makeup of the Bid Challenge Committee, as I said, so that it's now composed solely of private sector members to be more independent from government, and we're sharing the Bid Challenge Committee's recommendations with the business community.

We have done an awful lot toward addressing the Procurement Advisory Panel's three themes of increasing opportunities for Yukon vendor participation: reducing barriers to participation, increasing dialogue and building a more collaborative culture around procurement.

As I said, Mr. Chair, despite all of this really marvelous work — some of it groundbreaking in the nation — we're not done. We're still working on making things better. We will continue to do that, because having done all this good work, we know that there are still improvements to be made. Procurement, as an area, changes routinely on a fairly regular basis as court cases define how it's done or as new trade agreements come into place, so we're going to continue to monitor things, listen to our business community, talk to people, find out how things are going, implement, assess, adapt and keep going forward. That's the approach I have tasked the department to do. They're doing it really, really well. I'm very pleased with the work they've done on this file.

**Mr. Hassard:** So the minister talked a couple times about the bid challenge process and the revisions that were taking place. Just to clarify, he said that the Bid Challenge Committee was currently consulting with the public or with contractors about the recommendations that they were putting forward — is that correct? So does that mean that the bid challenge review is not complete, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The Procurement Advisory Panel is the First Nation development corporations, business communities, chambers of commerce — they're who we've

been talking with on a regular basis. We put that committee in place at the request of the business community to open up channels of communication, which is what the Procurement Advisory Panel asked us to do. So within the first two years of our mandate, we put action on these things.

One of the things to do was the bid challenge process. We took action on the bid challenge process by changing the committee structure and making sure it was independent from government, so we have fewer government reps — no government reps, as a matter of fact — on the committee. It is all private industry in charge of the bid challenge process. That's a change. It's not all of the work.

We are now going forward to take a look at the bid challenge process in more detail. We will be moving ahead with a new bid challenge process in concert with the contractors, business communities, chambers of commerce and ourselves. The direction I am hoping to get to is a process that creates a reputational index, which assesses how government is doing evaluating and awarding tenders and also getting to a vendor performance process. We actually have a vendor performance pilot in process, and we will see how that works.

What I want to do is make sure that the vendors in the territory who are bidding on jobs get credit for work that is well done and that the ones who cut corners or don't deliver what they are asked to do are actually assessed on their work and that gets recorded. When you start to go down that type of path, you have to have a way of properly assessing the work being done properly — or not — and you have to have a way of verifying that it's a fair process and a way to appeal that process. There is an awful lot of work to be done in the next stages on that, but I think we are going to get to a place where businesses and the work of the departments themselves will be assessed on their performance so that we get to a much more transparent, open and accountable bid process. I am looking forward to that.

There is a long way to go. There is a lot of work there, but the department is already in the process of making that happen. I am optimistic that we will make substantial progress on that goal.

**Mr. Hassard:** Could the minister update this House on whether there are any current bid challenges going on? What, if any, kind of an update can he give us on those challenges?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** There is one bid challenge right now. We are still looking to see what has happened in the last few months.

**Mr. Hassard:** I have a question from the budget regarding the Dempster Highway. We see that this year in the budget there is only \$50,000 for the Dempster Highway. I am curious as to why the minister felt it was so important to take such a large sum of money out of the Dempster Highway.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The Dempster Highway budget includes highway erosion control and drainage improvements at Chapman Lake at kilometre 116. That's where the highway runs between Chapman Lake and the Blackstone River. There is a lot of ice present at that site.

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

**Point of order**

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

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Chair, would you direct the minister to speak into the mic because we can't hear anything on this side.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm sorry about that, Mr. Chair. Thank you for bringing that to my attention.

I will say again that the \$50,000 that we're spending on the Dempster Highway has to do with erosion control and drainage improvements. The budget includes site monitoring of Chapman Lake at kilometre 116. The Dempster Highway runs between Chapman Lake and Blackstone River. There is massive ice present at the site, and as the ice melts, landslides and road distortion appear. Sometime within the next eight years, the road will probably need to be relocated to help mitigate these hazards. The department has taken a look at traffic on the Dempster Highway.

As I said earlier, money is tight, Mr. Chair, and so we are making decisions to spend our money where the traffic is. There isn't a lot of Yukon traffic on the Dempster. We'll maintain the road, but as far as road improvements, we don't have the money this year to do a lot of work on the Dempster, so we've made that decision.

**Mr. Hassard:** Could the minister just tell us if that work at kilometre 116 — the erosion control — will be work that's tendered out?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I've been told that it's \$50,000. It's a fairly small project. We may be able to do it in-house. If we can, we won't be tendering; we'll do it in-house. If we have to tender it out, we will. At this point, we're assessing whether or not that's required. We have departmental staff who may be able to do that work.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess I just have to ask the minister why it would be in the capital budget if it may be done in-house.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** This is the line item. It is \$50,000. We are looking to see if we have the capacity to do it internally. If we don't, we will tender it and it will go in our capital. If not, we will have to absorb it into the O&M, but this is the line item that we have to identify the work being done.

**Mr. Hassard:** I don't think we got an answer to that question, so maybe I will ask this: How much other work in the capital budget does the minister anticipate to be done in-house?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have been informed that we have drilled the site. There will be a consultant hired who will assess the information that we receive from the drilling results. Staff working on capital projects within the Department of Highways and Public Works are sometimes paid through the capital budget. Sometimes that money comes from the capital budget.

The members opposite, I am sure, are somewhat aware of this from their time in government. That is what we are doing.

There will be capital money spent on this project to retain a consultant to make sure and to verify the data and plan our next steps.

**Mr. Hassard:** I was going to move on to the Alaska Highway intersection safety improvements, but I have one question that I want to ask before I forget. I should have asked when I was talking about Faro and Ross River. Could the minister provide us with an update on the status of the Chateau Jomini — if he has any updates as to where they are at in the removal of that building?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As far as Chateau Jomini is concerned, there are no plans at the moment to demolish it. I know this has been something that successive governments have grappled with. We are assessing. It is part of our overall portfolio plan, but we have no plans in the immediate future to demolish it. That's the answer.

**Mr. Hassard:** Back to the Alaska Highway intersection safety improvements — I mean, it's in the five-year capital concept and we know it's happening this year. Could he provide us with an idea of what projects will be taking place over the next four years?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As the member opposite knows, we have identified Range Road in our five-year capital plan as the first order of business as far as fixing the Alaska Highway between Two Mile Hill and Robert Service Way. We also have, in successive years, the Hillcrest area; year 3 is the Hillcrest area. That is Lodestar Lane to Salvation Army and beyond. Those are fairly complicated projects, as the member opposite will know. It is a constriction between the airport on one side and the Airport Chalet on the right-hand side as you are driving south.

You have all sorts of concerns for the Hillcrest community in that area for traffic control, crosswalks and that type of thing. So that's where we're going for the first three years. The Robert Service Way intersection is another one that we've identified as a need, and there's an awful lot of work to be done there with aligning the electrical and stuff. It's a fairly complicated job, so we'll be looking at that.

As money becomes available, we will be moving a lot of those projects into the hopper. Right now, we have: year 1 will be the Range Road area; the next year will be Hillcrest Drive; and year 3 will be finishing the Hillcrest area. After that, we'll be moving on to other projects as money becomes available and as we do the engineering to get those done.

**Mr. Hassard:** Can the minister confirm that there will be traffic lights and a crosswalk put in at the intersection for Hillcrest?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can confirm for the members opposite that planning is still underway for that — years 2 and 3 of the Alaska Highway project. We are going to be consulting with community associations, residents and road users throughout the city, but at the moment, the proposal is to put some signalization along the Alaska Highway in and around the Hillcrest area to facilitate pedestrian traffic and safety across highway.

**Mr. Hassard:** So can the minister confirm — is this work that's taking place and this planning part of this government implementing the Whitehorse corridor plan, or was there some other plan that the government did themselves, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As I said on the floor of the Legislative Assembly here, Mr. Chair, the Whitehorse corridor plan is dead. We are not proceeding with it, but I have always said that there is work that needs to be done along the highway, and we are proceeding with that work. These are necessary safety improvements for the residents of Hillcrest, Valleyview and highway users in one of the busiest stretches of road in northern Canada, and so that is the work that we are doing. It's part of the new plan that we have come out here — since Deputy Minister Pitfield took over the department.

**Mr. Hassard:** Could the minister give us some ideas about what's different about his plan from the original plan of a few years ago, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can give you a couple of things right off the hop. It's not \$300 million, Mr. Chair, and it also has a safety focus. We're focusing on safety and doing high-traffic, high-impact areas, making sure that the highway system through this very busy stretch of national highway is safe for users.

**Mr. Hassard:** If we could turn to the francophone school for a few minutes — of the \$3 million that was spent last year, can the minister provide us with an update on how that \$3 million was spent?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am informed that we have spent money in the last year getting the compliance team, doing a traffic study and on a lot of architectural services.

**Mr. Hassard:** That was all spent — that's the \$3 million, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Yes, Mr. Chair, that adds up to \$3 million. We are looking for more information. I will get more details.

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

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

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

**Mr. Hassard:** Continuing with the francophone school — I'm curious if the minister can inform the House if the federal government has put any more money toward this project. Has the total budget changed at all?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can confirm that the federal government did contribute to the project a total of \$7.5 million to support community spaces. That has not changed. That is still the number for the project from the federal government.

I also want to revisit for a second the architectural services that did the pre-planning and planning for this school. It currently stands not at \$3 million — as the member opposite

asserted and I sort of confirmed — this is actually coming in at about \$2.3 million. So just for the record, the cost so far for the francophone school for traffic studies, a whole bunch of planning, pre-planning and architectural services is about \$2.3 million this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** Can the minister tell the Legislature what the total budget is for the francophone school project?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can report that the contract for the design/build of the school for just over \$29 million was awarded to Ketz Construction, a local contractor.

**Mr. Hassard:** If I could go back to the Alaska Highway intersection safety improvements — the minister said that the difference in the plan was that it wasn't going to be — I forget how many million dollars he said it was. Can the minister provide the House with what he anticipates that it is going to cost?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The projected five-year cost as contained in our five-year capital plan is in the range of up to \$25 million, so it will be somewhere in there. That is the upward range of the improvements to intersection safety through Whitehorse — the Alaska Highway improvements — that we are proposing over the next five years.

**Mr. Hassard:** Before the break, the minister told the House that there was no carbon tax on emulsion or oil used for BST. Can the minister let us know if there is carbon tax pricing on the oil used for asphalt, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have been informed that they both come from the same supplier. We don't believe there is a difference between asphalt and BST. We will check into that for the member opposite, but we don't think there will be any difference. We think it is the same.

**Mr. Hassard:** Moving on to the Gateway project, we see in the budget \$8.6 million for this year. Can the minister inform the House as to what will be happening this year with that \$8.6 million? How much of that will be on engineering? Will any of it be spent on actual dirt-moving, et cetera?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** For this year, 2019-20, we are talking about geotechnical brushing, permitting and design work. That is basically what the money will be for this year — an estimated total of \$8.6 million.

**Mr. Hassard:** Could the minister provide the House with an update on how much money will be spent and how the project will proceed moving forward?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As the member opposite knows, we have a project called the Gateway project, but really, they are Gateway projects. There are several different projects scattered across the territory. They are all tied to mining companies. Goldcorp, Casino, Selwyn and all of those companies have a portion of the cost associated with their stretch of road. Without knowing if any of those projects go through the permitting process, it is very difficult to know what the total costs will be or what we spend.

I can tell the member opposite that the project this year is estimated to bring in about \$8.6 million worth of work to the territory, and we are working with our federal counterparts to deliver the rest of the hundreds of millions of dollars allocated under this project to fruition. We are working with our First

Nation partners. They are essential. They are an integral, essential and critical piece of this entire project. We have to have their approval. We have to have deals with them before any of this money can be spent, and we are working very diligently to build those relationships and those partnerships to enable these projects to proceed. That work is ongoing, and it is going well. We are optimistic that we will deliver the rest of these projects in due course.

**Mr. Hassard:** Can the minister provide us with some information as to whether the projects planned for this year have gone to YESAB, and where are the projects for the following years at in regard to the YESAA process?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can report that we have just finished geotechnical drilling on the Carmacks bypass.

The information that we've collected will be used to complete the preliminary design, and then it will go to YESAB and the Water Board. Those submissions to those two oversight committees will be presented in the coming months.

**Mr. Hassard:** Just to clarify — the information you're receiving now will go into the YESAB application?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** In January, we went to YESAB and got approval for the geotechnical — the drilling that we did. Now that has progressed and we have done that drilling, we're going to take that information and use it to design the rest of the project. Once that design work that we now have the information to further is done, we will go back to YESAB with that new information and the finished design and submit that before the board.

**Mr. Hassard:** Are all of the agreements in place for this bypass work to proceed?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The information I have received is that we do have the necessary signed agreement from the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation.

**Mr. Hassard:** That's great to hear. Can the minister give us an indication on what the timeline is for this work to be completed?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can report that the substantial work will begin next year, but this year, there will be work happening on this including maintenance, brushing and clearing on the Freegold Road. There will be work beginning this year, provided it gets through YESAA. We will have the substantial project work beginning next year.

**Mr. Hassard:** So just to clarify again — the minister anticipates the engineering and the brushing and clearing to take the full \$8.6 million?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** No, not at all. Mr. Chair, the work on the Carmacks bypass and Freegold Road are expected to be somewhere in the neighbourhood — the preliminary estimate is somewhere around \$3 million. We will see what the contracts come in at. The rest of the work has to do with other work throughout the territory on Yukon Gateway projects, and that includes preliminary work in the goldfields and Nahanni Range Road.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the minister be able to provide us with a little more information on how much will be spent on the goldfields as well as on the rest of the project?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As I said, Mr. Chair, this is all preliminary work. It's all sort of preliminary design work. We still have to have agreements with the First Nations in order to proceed with this work. My colleague the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources is handling those discussions, and I'm sure he has a lot more information about how those are going and where they're at.

I can tell you that Highways and Public Works has put \$8.6 million into the budget this year for Yukon Resource Gateway projects, and a lot of that is preliminary work, as I said — it is for geotechnical, brushing, permitting and design work in preparation for having the agreements in place. If we get those agreements in place, we will proceed with this work.

**Mr. Hassard:** In the previous question, the minister told us that the agreements were in place. Now he is saying the work will proceed if we get the agreements in place, so maybe he could update the House on, in fact, what agreements are in place and what agreements aren't in place? What work do we know is going forward and what work is possibly going forward, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** There is a lot of confusion being sown. I was very clear, Mr. Chair, and I will be very clear again. I have said that we have an agreement with the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to do the Carmacks bypass. I was very clear about that. I said the cost of that work is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$3 million and that work is proceeding right now. We have done the initial drilling; we are doing brushing; we are going to do some maintenance brushing and clearing on the Freegold Road this year, and we are working to get a submission before YESAB so we can do the major work next year — totally clear.

What the members opposite are conflating is the total budget at \$8.6 million, which includes some work on Nahanni Range and goldfields. We're still looking at the planning and the prep work for all that work. My colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, is working with the First Nations to get agreements with them for those that have an interest in the Nahanni Range and the goldfields. That work is continuing. Provided we get the deals in place — which we're optimistic we will — we will then proceed with the rest of the work, which will come to a total of \$8.6 million this year.

**Mr. Hassard:** Do I understand that the minister is saying that maintenance on the Freegold Road is in the capital budget with federal government money?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As the member opposite knows full well, the Yukon Gateway projects are funded — there is a tripartite agreement in place with some private money from individuals and from mining companies that have roads to their projects. We have money from Ottawa and money from the Yukon government.

Right now, what we're talking about is the Yukon government's portion of the Carmacks bypass and Freegold Road, and that does come with a federal contribution. So yes, the member opposite is correct: The Carmacks bypass is being funded under the Gateway project agreement, which includes federal contributions.

**Mr. Hassard:** With the rest of the \$8.6 million — the \$5.6 million roughly — for the Nahanni Range Road and the goldfield roads, how much is anticipated to be spent on Nahanni Range as opposed to how much is going to be spent on the goldfield roads? What agreements is the government still looking for?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I can say that we are going to be a little bit circumspect here because we're in the final stages of negotiations with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Liard First Nation on work in their traditional territories, so we're going to await the resolution of those negotiations. They are in late-stage negotiations right now, and I don't want to throw any wrinkles into those talks.

I'm going to just say that we are doing preliminary work on the Nahanni Range Road and goldfields in anticipation of a successful conclusion of these agreements. We will determine from those negotiations right now what the scope of work is. We budgeted \$8.6 million, and we'll see what happens at the conclusion of these two very important negotiations. We are currently in late-stage negotiations.

**Mr. Hassard:** Can the minister elaborate on what he considers to be preliminary work that would add up to \$5.6 million?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** What we are looking at doing is preliminary work design. There is some non-YESAB-assessable construction work that we are going to be doing. It is all preliminary stuff that we can do in advance of these negotiations being finalized. It is just very preliminary work and we will see what happens.

**Mr. Hassard:** It doesn't sound like the minister has a whole lot of a plan for \$5.6 million.

Before I turn the floor over to the Third Party to ask questions, I just have a couple of questions on grader stations. We see in the budget that there is money for housing at the Swift River grader station. I am wondering if the minister could give us an idea of what that money is for.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As, I'm sure, the member opposite full well knows, we are replacing the Carmacks grader station and the Teslin grader station, both of which are at the end of their lives.

We have Stewart Crossing highway maintenance housing going in. It will provide modular accommodation units and site utilities for highway maintenance workers.

In Swift River, we have a new water treatment plant for the new housing facilities in Swift River. The well was included in the scope of work for 2017-18, but water testing revealed that this site required the installation of a water treatment plant, so that is what is happening in Swift River.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the minister be able to provide an update to the House on when the old housing units will be removed from the Swift River grader station? Could he also confirm whether the removal of the old housing complex was or wasn't in the original tender for the new housing in Swift River?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** To the member opposite's questions about the demolition of the housing units at Swift River, we

do not believe that it was included in the original tender, but we are looking into it and will report back to him.

**Mr. Hassard:** The second part of that question is: Does the minister anticipate or have any ideas as to when the old housing unit will be removed?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** As we are currently checking whether or not the actual demolition was part of the original contract, I do not know when they will be demolished. If they were not a part of the original contract — which we suspect they weren't — then we will have to plan for the demolition and removal of those buildings. I do not have a timeline for that at the moment.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think this is my last question before I turn it over to the Third Party. I just want to confirm one thing. The minister spoke about the grader station housing complex in Stewart Crossing, but the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun talked about a new grader station in his budget speech. I just wanted to clarify that. I am assuming that it is not a new grader station; it's just new housing.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It was not a grader station. It was a highway maintenance camp, so that is what is going on.

**Ms. Hanson:** I welcome the officials here this afternoon for this discussion on Highways and Public Works. I want to go back — as we work our way from the front of the budget toward the back.

The minister made a couple of comments in response to the Leader of the Official Opposition with respect to procurement. I would like to go back to the procurement policy for a moment. The minister has been in receipt, as have I, of a series of queries from a concerned citizen and former senior public servant. It is good to know that public servants, once they retire, still have an active interest in matters in which they have been involved in the past.

The new procurement policy that is on the website says it's effective on April 1, 2019. In that new policy, there has been a change with respect to the scope and application of the policy.

I'm asking the minister to respond to the query so that we have on record a clarification as to why this change has been made.

In the scope and application section, it says that this new procurement policy applies to all contracts, but does not apply to — and then it enumerates a series of four key ones. The fourth one is the one that's under question, and it says this policy does not apply to the "Acquisition or rental of land, acquisition of existing buildings or acquisition or rental of other immovable property, or the rights thereon."

The reason I raise this question is because it was my understanding that Highways and Public Works effectively is the landlord and effectively is the owner of buildings. Perhaps the minister could explain what the intent of this change to the scope and application of the procurement policy is and what the effect of that clause 4 — so in section 1(4), Scope and Application, subsection (iv) — what is the intent and what is the effect of the addition of that clause?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the member opposite for her question this afternoon. This issue did come forward; you're

right. I have received the individual's letter and request, and we are currently caseworking it — so it is casework on the fly, but I will update the member right now to say that the old procurement policy that we're replacing on April 1 was silent on land. It didn't have anything on land, so we needed to be clear that land and buildings are not bought under the existing tendering system. They're handled in a different manner.

Land and buildings have a separate *General Administration Manual* policy. It's handled differently, but that distinction wasn't captured by the existing — the old — procurement policy. We are updating the GAM — the *General Administration Manual* — to cover real property to cover this omission. We will continue using the current tendering system for renting property, but we are working on fixing this *General Administration Manual* policy so it does take into account land and real property. There are gaps and omissions in the existing policy that we are now seeking to close, and this is one of the ways we're doing it.

**Ms. Hanson:** I will look forward to the written explanation of this and would request that the minister do provide the opposition, either by legislative return or otherwise, because as we have been copied in — not so much in the exchange, and this has gone on for over a month, so it is an issue.

I guess the question I would ask is: When do you expect the *General Administration Manual* to be updated with respect to this matter, and in the interim, what applies?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** At the moment, the existing GAM policy continues to work. We're looking to replace that by September — that's the timeline. Until that time, in the interim, any real property purchases or changes will go to Management Board on an individual basis to be approved by Cabinet or Management Board.

**Ms. Hanson:** We will look forward to seeing that explanation in writing. I know for sure that the individual in question will look forward to receiving that clarification.

The minister and other members of the government opposite have made numerous comments about the changes to the procurement policy, particularly in terms of its changes that implicate First Nations and the announcements that the new procurement policy effective April 1 has provisions with respect to First Nations, First Nation development corporations and businesses. It's an issue that we have raised many times over the last number of years.

I had indicated at the time the announcement was made that I was pleased to see this, because it goes beyond the intention, I thought, and beyond what's required under the final agreements under YACAs, but when I look at section 11 of the procurement policy effective April 1, 2019, I'm told that this is a placeholder for a First Nation procurement policy that will be developed in collaboration with First Nations to be embedded within this document.

My question is: When will that policy be embedded in this document?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** With this First Nation procurement policy, we are starting with an absolutely blank sheet of paper

and developing working relationships. I call them "synapses" between us and the First Nations.

I have reached out personally to the chiefs of all First Nations in the territory to ask them to participate in this process, and I have had very good uptake. I think we had eight First Nations represented at the latest meeting. When I was visiting at the CYFN leadership meeting recently, they were really happy with the turnout. They were very pleased with the engagement that we are seeing at that table. At that recent meeting, I spoke to chiefs about the procurement policy. We had a rousing hour-and-a-half-long conversation. It was deep and it was really good.

The point I am trying to make here, Mr. Chair, is that this is new. It is something that this government takes very seriously — our relationship with our First Nation partner governments in this territory — and we are working very hard to change the way that our institutions work together. This is very important. It is work that, as I said, is new. We are working out the rules and the processes of engagement in real time as we go through this process. I am very proud of the work that the department has done, and I am very proud of the work of the First Nations in coming forward and working with us on this policy.

We have had multiple engagements, multiple meetings and multiple consultations since my initial phone calls in December. The conversations that I said we are having with First Nations — we are getting great participation. We are actually having some really good discussions about how procurement will work with First Nations and about the problems that First Nations have with procurement and engaging with government on the buying of goods and services. We are working through their issues, and we are letting them know the issues that we have in issuing contracts and the rules of engagement under which the modern procurement policy operates, so it is going very well.

We are not going to rush this process. We are going to do the necessary work. We would have liked to have had it done by April 1, but going through the process, we realized that it was not a timeline that we could meet. It was too aggressive, so we are going to continue the conversations. We are going to continue these discussions about procurement. We are going to draft a policy with our First Nation partners that makes sense for them and for us. We will develop how we do that together.

As I said, this takes time. That said, the information I am getting from the table suggests that we are still shooting for some time at the end of the summer or fall. I am confident that we will come up with something together. We are not talking about years for this thing. We want to get it done as soon as possible so that First Nations can engage the government on the procurement file in a meaningful way that hasn't been seen in this territory's history.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for that. I think I heard him say that, by late summer or early fall, we may see a procurement and First Nation policy to replace the placeholder that's in section 11 of the procurement policy.

It may sound like I'm a little frustrated here. I expressed frustration with the previous government because of the lost economic opportunities for First Nation development corporations and Yukoners. As we look at who they employ, it's First Nation and non-First Nation citizens throughout this territory due to not having an aboriginal procurement policy. It's not brand new; the federal government has had in place an aboriginal procurement policy for a zillion years. There is information out there about how they have been applied in other parts of the country. To suggest that it's impossible to move forward with alacrity is a little shocking.

Like a few other things, we will come back to this in the fall, because I will be coming back to revisit some comments that the minister previously made with respect to commitments and what happens after six months. So we'll come back to that six months from now.

Maybe I'll ask the minister now about one that comes to mind sort of off the top of my head. When I was looking at his response to the Leader of the Official Opposition when he was asking questions about the Faro and Ross River road — and I believe I did ask some questions in the briefing.

Last year in budget debate, when we raised the question about the segment of road between Faro and Ross River — a question that has been raised many times by this party — the minister said, "We're studying it." My question is: What are we doing this year?

When I go on travel websites for people who are travelling in the Yukon, they currently say that to travel that 68- to 70-kilometre stretch of road takes an hour and 48 minutes. That is really good advertising for the territory.

Last week, the minister was quoted in the *Yukon News* after this item was raised in the Legislative Assembly. He did what is so common for this government — they don't answer the questions in here; they go outside and talk to reporters. He told the reporter that he would seek money in this year's budget to improve the road. That was in March 2018. He will be working with his colleagues over the course of the year to improve that road — to start construction.

He said to the *Yukon News* on March 13 that we had approximately a half-million dollars to plan the design of the road works; he also said in this House — that there would be a half-million dollars toward the design. He said they would start from Faro and start to move toward Ross River.

Mr. Chair, I can find no mention of that \$500,000 in last year's five-year capital plan and none, so far, in this year's capital plan. So can the minister explain what he has done, as minister, to fulfill those commitments that he made, both in this House and outside of it, in speaking to the public through the media?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am going to start by revisiting and finishing the First Nation procurement because the member opposite talked about alacrity and proceeding quickly. I spoke with First Nation chiefs in late December. We are now at the middle to end of March, and we have had meetings and huge progress.

I know that there are policies and whatnot across government and Government of Canada perhaps, but we are

working with our First Nation partners from really zero. We are doing this in-house here. What our First Nation partners asked for is that we be open-minded and start with a clean slate — start from zero and move forward.

Of course, there is all sorts of research and experience with the Department of Highways and Public Works and within the First Nations that we brought to bear on the drafting of this policy, but really, starting in this way and building the relationship necessary to succeed between December and the end of summer/early fall is certainly not slow. I would say it's actually fairly quick. It is a matter of months. It's not a matter of three months, but it is certainly within a matter of six to eight months, which is what we were hoping for. We will see how that goes. I think it is fast.

We disagree on time frames I suppose, a little bit, but I am pleased with the response from the First Nations and the work we are doing together to reshape the relationships between this government — the Government of Yukon and our First Nation partners across the territory. It is very important work. It is something that we take very seriously and we want to succeed.

This is a great segue to the road between Faro and Ross River. The other day, the member opposite on the floor of the House talked about the stark difference between the road to Faro and the road from Faro to Ross River, and I would agree with the member opposite and Leader of the Third Party wholeheartedly. It is a stark contrast. I have driven the road the member opposite has spoken about between Ross River and Faro, and this is one that I consider very important to continue with and to complete.

I am not hiding my personal feelings; this is what I would love to finish. We are continuing to advance this project, but the harsh reality is that, on behalf of the citizens of the territory, I am running almost 5,000 kilometres of road with a budget of somewhere around the neighbourhood of \$70 million. It is a very small budget for the amount of road that we maintain, so in doing that, the upgrades that we make every year have to be scrutinized by Cabinet and a budgeting process, and we make hard choices.

I am advocating and will continue to advocate for and try to advance this project. The department, the government and my colleagues all know that this is something that we would like to tackle. We have it in a five-year capital plan, so that means it has the approval of government. The problem is that we don't have the money this year to actually proceed with the BST work that's needed between Ross River and Faro. So we are going to continue to plan for this project, we're going to do the necessary geotechnical work, and when we do get the money — and if we do get money and if something falls through — we can actually advance this project and push it forward. That's some of the flexibility we have when you have a five-year capital plan — that you can get the permits and re-prioritize the projects year by year, advance the ones that are necessary to get done or that can get done when the money presents itself.

I am hopeful that we will continue to work toward the necessary work that I have spoken about — the road between

Ross River and Faro — so that the road is a better link between those two communities. In the meantime, we will continue to do the necessary work on maintaining and keeping that road as safe and usable as we possibly can. Last year — I think it was last year — we had a lot of rain on that road, which required a lot of maintenance, and we will continue to do that so the citizens of Ross River have a safe and efficient conduit between their community and Faro.

**Ms. Hanson:** I think it was an answer on procurement — what is slow is waiting until December 2018, two years after this government was elected on one of their campaign promises that was to improve procurement. To wait two years to get around to talking to First Nation governments about it and then say, “Oops — we can’t get it done” — that is slow, and I think most people would acknowledge that.

The minister says that in the capital plan, we can see something that identifies Ross River in the five-year capital plan — the Faro to Ross River segment. I don’t see it, Mr. Chair. I don’t see where, in last year’s budget, there’s any expenditure that indicates that anything was spent on the Ross River road.

Let’s shift over to a question that my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition asked — some questions in general about the Dempster Highway. He too expressed a bit of surprise at the \$50,000 expenditure being forecast this year for highway construction work on the Dempster Highway. At one point when the minister started talking about this, I heard that this was for signage on the Dempster, on hurricane alley, and then he talked about erosion control at kilometre 116 because there was a massive ice buildup there. Then he said that money is tight. We’re getting to hear that quite frequently from this minister and from this government — “spending where the traffic is”.

I have heard him say this. When I asked this before, he said that money had dropped significantly because the Dempster has very low traffic volume compared with other Yukon highways. I’m quoting the minister here — HPW prioritizes funding based on the usage of the road, as well as a socio-economic function that the road serves.

I hear from the government opposite a heck of a lot about a whole-of-government approach. I can pull up on the website here the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, and what do you think you see when you pull that up? What is the most iconic image that you have? Would it be the Tombstones? How are you going to get there when that road is washed out?

What about northern solidarity? The Northwest Territories is spending \$620,000 on the Dempster this year. That’s almost 12 times more for half the distance than what the Yukon government is going to spend. This is a road that is prone to having accidents — on the Dempster — particularly large transport trucks. We just saw another one today.

I think that Yukoners, if they were aware of this, would be asking: What is the priority? When and where do you take these traffic counts? What time of year? Where does the tourism aspect of this fit in? Are we not trying to entice tourists into this area of the Yukon? It certainly looks like it

from the tourism strategy. How is this a whole-of-government approach? How does that wash?

It’s my understanding that we’re anticipating an accumulative total of about \$80 million worth of investment for the fibre redundancy going up the Dempster. One would think that this is a socio-economic benefit and that it will require intensive highway usage. I guess there are a couple questions. What were the socio-economic factors that existed in 2017 and prior years when we were spending anywhere from \$2 million to \$3 million to \$2.5 million on the Dempster? When did those socio-economic factors change so dramatically that now we’re satisfied that \$50,000 a year is going to suffice? How will that be explained? I’m looking forward to the minister’s response on this.

Finally, with respect to the fibre optic construction, what, if any, impact does Highways and Public Works anticipate that the diverse fibre construction on the Dempster will have on the condition of the road? Does the government anticipate higher maintenance costs? Does government anticipate having to do reconstruction costs that are not currently captured in the five-year plan for highways?

We have a \$50,000 budget — historic investment of significantly more than that because we thought there was a socio-economic impact, if that’s what the minister bases government investments on. I’m looking for an explanation.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** So we are going to continue through the sideboard discussion on the First Nation procurement policy. Two years to implement all the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel — we did that. We have been speaking with the First Nations and delivering real benefits through the procurement policy. I will speak and remind the member opposite about Nares bridge, which was worked on and bestowed some real tangible benefits and set the tone for the approach that this government is going to take on procurement with First Nations. We were talking to the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, of course, right out of the gate to get them real benefits.

We have been talking with all First Nations for the first two years of our mandate, and we will continue to talk to them throughout our mandate and continue to deliver real benefits to the First Nations. You can’t look at one item and say “no progress”. There has been real progress made on a number of different files throughout our mandate, and we hope to add to those as we go forward.

The Dempster Highway — we are not spending a lot of money on the road this year in capital improvements, but we are actually spending \$1.9 million on the Klondike River bridge that is used there. That is a real spend on Dempster access. It all depends on how you cut it as far as roads. It is \$50,000 in terms of bridge work, and it is \$1.9 million total spend on the Dempster — it would be almost \$2 million. It depends on how you cut it. The line item is \$50,000. I have outlined what that is for. It is for remediation work about 100-odd kilometres up the road beyond Tombstone, but we are providing almost \$2 million to make sure that access across that bridge is improved and maintained.

That is what I can say about the Dempster.

**Ms. Hanson:** Curiouser and curiouser. We don't seem to break up bridges on other roads, but if that is what the minister wants to put on the record for now, that is fine.

I want to come back to a question that was raised and discussed at some length with respect to the Carmacks bypass. Can the minister confirm whether or not the completion of the bypass is contingent on a green light for the Casino project or will it proceed? I ask this because there has been a long history of the community of Carmacks seeking to have a bypass built. I'm hopeful that, given the breakout that was described earlier by the minister, there's \$3 million being spent now this year, as I understand it, to do a significant amount of work on that area beyond the engineering, the geotechnical, the brushing and the design work and that it's not contingent on a green light on the Casino project overall.

So can the minister confirm yes or no on that one?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Yes, the work on the Carmacks bypass is not contingent on Casino.

**Ms. Hanson:** I just want to come back again, because I know the minister likes to talk about this subject and because he talked about making decisions based on evidence — he talked about decisions that had clear socio-economic indicators that would be a sound basis for making decisions — to the Dawson airport. I'm going to ask the minister to produce for this House what new studies beyond — the minister's officials kindly referenced a chamber of commerce study that was done in 2016. I appreciate that, but I think that what I was looking for was an update on the comprehensive multi-party, multi-stakeholder review that was the 10-year plan that was done — the 2013-23 study.

There were a number of reasons for asking that because you will recall, Mr. Chair — and I am sure the minister probably has memorized by now — some of the issues and concerns that were raised in that study, which basically said there was no economic case to be made for paving that. That is what it said, and I know the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is looking quizzical about that. He can go back and read it himself.

We had questioned in May 2017 whether or not the minister's department had received assurances from Transport Canada that the Dawson City aerodrome would be able to continue to operate on its current terms and whether or not the paving of it would change those terms from VFR to IFR. The minister said — and I quote: "We have to get the right answers because I, as a public servant and as minister of the Crown responsible for the budget of Highways and Public Works, do not want to spend \$11 million, or whatever the sum is, paving a runway and then have it not do what we want it to do. We've seen that before on certain projects."

He went on to say — and I quote — because the minister would be pleased to know that we do pay attention to what he says: "I want the information nailed down before we make a commitment on the part of this government to take an action that commits us to a lot of money." I would hope so. He went on to say, "We want to make sure that, when we do that, we actually have the anticipated outcome. We want to know what the outcome is before we spend that money. That's part of

evidence-based decision-making. That sounds like a slogan, and it really isn't. It's actually sitting down and getting the information before making a decision and talking among ourselves as a caucus and a Cabinet to come to the right decision."

These combined statements appear to me as a commitment that Yukon would not go ahead unless it had assurances — the day that Transport Canada has changed its direction and that there is a demonstrable economic benefit to the expenditure of these funds.

I have asked the minister repeatedly to table that kind of evidence, to table any new studies. I'm asking again.

I take seriously the words he uttered in this House with respect to having evidence. He talks about having the conversations talking among ourselves as a caucus. He is talking today to the citizens of Yukon in response to the members of the opposition whose job it is to ask these questions. It is outside the bubble of the caucus, Mr. Chair. This is a conversation that needs to be held here.

On what basis is that money being spent this year to pave the Dawson City Airport?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Chair, I fully enjoy and respect the Leader of the Third Party and the questions that she brings to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I have frequently said — and will say again — that I respect the amount of time and effort she puts into her questions and the research she puts into her inquiries. I won't dismiss them or say that they're just off the cuff or just done for any reason other than sincere representation of her constituents downtown and for the people of the territory. I am happy to answer them.

As I understand what the questions are, there were a number of things in the question that I will attempt to unpack, and if I don't hit the mark, I am more than happy to provide the information at a future point or continue to answer questions on this issue.

We promised in our campaign material to pave the Dawson City runway prior to the last election, and we are going to fulfill that promise this year, this spring, when we go forward with construction of the runway and the paving of the runway. We started this process last year with the construction of a maintenance shed that will be used to house the equipment that will have to maintain the paved runway once it is built. The requirements for maintaining a paved runway are a little bit more involved than they are for the gravel runway.

The reason why we are going forward with this is really tourism. We have jets flying into Dawson City, bringing tourists to the community. My colleague the Minister of Tourism and Culture can talk at length about the importance of the jet service to Dawson and how they bring tourists to the Klondike.

The reality is that it will no longer be a possibility on a gravel runway. We either forgo the jet traffic or we pave it. We decided to pave it. We looked at all the studies that the member opposite has talked about, and we believe that it represents a strategic investment by our government and the future of the airport and Yukon aviation system as a whole. As the member opposite said, the Dawson City Chamber of

Commerce commissioned a study in 2016 which looked at the potential economic benefits to the region associated with paving the runway. We are currently undertaking technical assessments to better understand the opportunities and constraints on service at the Dawson City Airport and to explore what tools may be available to maximize the benefits of this investment to the aviation infrastructure in the Klondike Valley.

There has been no change in federal requirements for airport and aerodrome standards and practices, so the prevailing edition of the standards from the 2015-07 revisions still apply. Transport Canada, the federal agency that regulates civil aviation, was briefed on key parts of our draft functional plan. The plan was amended based on their feedback. Transport Canada advised that paving the existing runway will not trigger other upgrading due to regulatory requirements.

We are also in the process of starting the next phase of our planning for our aviation infrastructure. We're calling it "flight path". It is going to incorporate the Whitehorse 2040 document that the member opposite referenced. It's also going to use these other planning documents. We are going to go out to the public to see exactly what the public wants out of their aviation infrastructure and what improvements they want overall. That will also incorporate the new paving at Dawson, which is being done to make sure that we can continue to see the growth in tourism that we've seen in the Klondike. That in itself has economic benefits to the area, and that's what we support here in this government.

There is a lot more work to be done on this file — on airports and aerodromes throughout the territory in general, including the improvements we're making to Mayo at the behest of industry to service the mine that's coming up there in the near future. So we're investing heavily in our aviation infrastructure across the territory. This Dawson investment is just the latest that's going to be launched this spring, and it's quite exciting for anybody looking at the economic potential of the territory.

The last note is the Dawson City runway — the second busiest runway in the territory next to Whitehorse. It is in need of some tender loving care, and we're going to provide that this summer.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Chair, the minister mentioned earlier — and I'll come back to this because I'm not going to belabour the issue of the Dawson airport; it's clear he hasn't read the 2013-23 report; it's clear he is acting on a decision that was based on a campaign promise and not based on evidence. That is clear, Mr. Chair.

Seeing the time, I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Hanson that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Mr. Kent:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Kent 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. tomorrow.

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

#### **The following legislative returns were tabled March 25, 2019:**

34-2-192

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Istchenko related to general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 208, *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19* — domestic sheep and goat control order (Frost)

34-2-193

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 52, Department of Environment, in Bill No. 208, *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19* — domestic sheep and goat control order (Frost)