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HANSARD

Wednesday, March 27, 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

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

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Yukon Liberal Party

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, March 27, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of a change made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 260, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, has been removed from the Order Paper as the action requested in the motion has been completed in whole or in part.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, we have a number of individuals who are here for our tribute today.

I would ask my colleagues in the Assembly to welcome individuals from both the department and friends and family from our community. I would like to welcome Becky Reams, who is here with us today, and also Toby and Jesse Reams. I would ask my colleagues too to help me if I forget anyone. I know that Gordon and Cindy Sundby and Debbie Savage are here, as well as many people from the Yukon Development Corporation who sat on the Yukon Development Corporation Board with Mr. Dan Reams.

I know that Skyler Hougen is here today. I think I saw Collin Young, Jackie Bazett, Kari Johnston, Michael Lauer and Darren Kates as well. Then, from Yukon Development Corporation, we have the president and staff: Justin Ferbey, Geoff Woodhouse, Michael Prochazka and Lori Lemieux. I also just saw people from Energy, Mines and Resources who also worked very closely with Dan: Shane Andre and Ryan Hennessey. I apologize if I have missed anyone, and I look forward to sharing a tribute with you in a couple of minutes.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In remembrance of Dan Reams

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am honoured to rise on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Dan Reams. Dan was born on June 8, 1957, in Colville, Washington to Roger and Willa Reams. While still a young lad, his family moved to British Columbia. In 1973, when Dan was in his teens, in response to a call to the wild, his father moved the family to

the Yukon. Dan worked with his father that summer, logging in Haines Junction and Pelly Crossing. After graduating from F.H. Collins, Dan followed his family to Watson Lake, where he joined the family logging business, married Becky and raised three children: Toby, Jesse and Joy.

He started his contracting and biomass businesses and was an active member of the community throughout his life.

Dan inherited his love of the outdoors from his father and spent much of his leisure time hunting, quadding and sledding with his family. Participating in these activities brought Dan a great deal of pleasure, as did spending time with his granddaughters, Mikelia and Eliana.

Dan was a master log-builder and operated his own construction company, The North Contracting Ltd., for more than 30 years. In partnership with his son Jesse, Dan also established and operated Biomass North Ltd. with the goal of reducing Yukon's dependency on fossil fuels for heat and electricity generation by using locally sourced renewable fuels while strengthening the socio-economic fabric of our communities through job creation and the development of a sustainable local biomass industry. Anyone who knew Dan knows that the goals of his company reflected his beliefs in the contribution that Yukon forests could make to the energy needs and the economy of the Yukon.

At the time of his passing, Dan was a member of the board of directors for the Yukon Development Corporation. Dan served in this capacity for more than five years. He was our very own "Mr. Biomass of the North" and worked tirelessly to advance the biomass industry in the territory. During his time on the board, Dan was a key proponent of clean, green renewable energy and an advocate for strengthening the economy to benefit all Yukoners. He brought his knowledge and skills to bear in all board discussions, and the board was grateful for Dan's thoughtful contributions, strong work ethic and dedication.

Dan was also a member of the board of directors for the Yukon Wood Products Association. Dan has left a memorable legacy and will be greatly missed by his family, his friends, his community, his fellow board members, as well as many others who were lucky enough to have known him.

Applause

Ms. McLeod: I want to welcome the members of Dan's family and some of his many friends to the Legislature today.

Dan was, and continues to be, a well-respected member of the Watson Lake community. It is my honour on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to be able to say a few words to his family and friends and to all Yukoners about Dan's contributions to Yukon's future, particularly in the field of biomass.

I had the opportunity on numerous occasions to have conversations with Dan on a variety of topics. He always gave me some great things to think about for our community. He was happy to share his knowledge about some of what he saw in other parts of the world and how we could apply that right here at home. He was an active member of the business community and he was fair. He provided excellent work

through his contracting company. The mayor describes Dan as quiet, steady and a positive force within the Watson Lake community, and we agree.

I was passing through the Frankfurt airport a few years ago. Some of you may be familiar with that airport, but it's a massive collection of people from all over the world. I turned around, and there was Dan. What a moment. It was a little disorienting and a real reminder that this is a small world, after all.

I want to give a message to Becky. I want to thank her for sharing Dan with us — with all of us — and to let her know that yes, he will be sorely missed.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I stand today to celebrate a life well-lived.

I'm lucky that I got to know Dan Reams through his sons, Jesse and Toby. Jesse was the first to move to Whitehorse. After first meeting his dad, I was only able to bring myself to call him Mr. Reams. It's important to note that I was well into my 20s by this point. Dan was such a stoic guy. He would watch what was happening and only add to the conversation if he thought it was important, and that instantly put him into the "mister" class for me.

When Toby moved to town, I got to know the Reams a lot better. Becky has an open and inviting smile; she is someone who makes you feel comfortable right off the start.

Now Dan — remember that I was still calling him "Mr. Reams" — was more of the strong, silent type. When his folks were in town, Toby and I would often get shuttles up the mountain with his dad to ride our bikes down. This may be unbelievable for some, but I was so intimidated by Dan that I often didn't say a word the entire ride up the mountain. It wasn't until the end of the first summer after many shuttles up that he looked at me just before I hopped out of the truck, and he gave me his million-dollar smile and said something similar to, "Don't you think it's time for you to call me Dan, Kate?" Then he winked, and it would be impossible to find him intimidating after that wink, so from that point on, I called him Dan.

I was to learn in a professional sense that Dan always held true to what he thought was the right thing to do, based on research, his own personal experience and looking out toward the world at large.

I remember being at a Utilities Board hearing, way back when the natural gas plant was first being discussed, and many people had already spoken against moving ahead with natural gas when Dan moved up to the microphone. In his quiet, measured and assured way, he talked about his own experience living off-grid in Watson Lake. He talked about his responsibility to his family and to the future. He said that if natural gas was going to be a cleaner alternative, then he supported it if it was the right thing to do. His was the only voice that day that spoke out in support. The reason I bring this up is because he held so true to what he believed was right, and that was the perfect example.

I was happy when he was appointed to the Yukon Development Corporation Board because I knew that he

would always look at the big picture — the big picture for the Yukon and his family — and he always did. A perfect example of his commitment to the future was the founding of Biomass North with his son Jesse and his wife, Becky. The belief that energy could and should be generated through the use of biomass to reduce Yukon's dependency on fossil fuels for heat and electricity generation and the belief that you could build up communities through job creation just made sense to them, and it still does.

Although he passed away before many of his visions and dreams for Yukon's biomass industry could be fulfilled, I still have hopes that they will.

Dan and Becky's children and their grandchildren are a testament to the love that they shared. His children have grown to be intelligent, responsible and thoughtful adults. His granddaughters will always know that they were deeply loved by their grandpa.

Dan lived his life looking for the good in people around him. He was unassuming, he was kind, and he led by example. Although he may have grown up and lived in a small town, he had big world ideas, and he was never afraid to share them with you. He faced his illness like he faced his life and all his life's challenges — with a deep sense of faith and his family by his side.

We extend our deepest sympathies, because I can't imagine what it feels like. Just like the minister said, I think we'll remember Dan Reams as Mr. Biomass of the North.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling a legislative return that relates to a matter outstanding from the discussion that we had in relation to Bill No. 208, Vote 3, regarding the French first language secondary school.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling a legislative return responding to questions from the Member for Whitehorse Centre on March 25, 2019.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to use its 2019-20 capital budget to improve Burma Road.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to make any necessary policy, regulatory or legislative changes to allow for the creation of a Whistle Bend school council to advise and be consulted on the design, planning and construction of the new Whistle Bend school.

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

THAT this House opposes plans outlined in a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon schools

Hon. Ms. McPhee: In 2019-20, there is over \$30 million in capital funding to ensure that our schools continue to meet the current and future needs of our education system. This funding will go toward modernizing, maintaining and building Yukon schools.

I am very pleased that this funding includes \$1.6 million to plan for a new elementary school in the Whistle Bend neighbourhood. This funding will support planning and design work to determine the school's size and the space required for modern learning spaces. We expect construction on the new elementary school to begin in 2021. By 2023-24, we anticipate having the new school completed and ready for students.

This school will be the first elementary school built in Whitehorse in 27 years. The last English elementary school built in Whitehorse was Elijah Smith Elementary in 1992. The last kindergarten-to-grade-12 school built in Whitehorse was École Émilie Tremblay in 1996 for French first language students.

In recent years, our economy has been strong. Our population has been growing, and student enrolment in the Yukon continues to grow, especially in Whitehorse. This is all good news for our territory, but we need to do the work now to respond to this trend.

We have five Whitehorse elementary schools that are aging and need seismic mitigation and require renovation or replacement. In the future, we will need additional capacity in Whitehorse in order to address these priority schools and ensure that we minimize disruption to student learning.

This new elementary school will provide our community with the capacity and flexibility we need in order to replace or renovate other school buildings and ensure our school buildings remain safe and available for the long term. The new elementary school will also be in the growing neighbourhood of Whistle Bend, where many young families are choosing to live. It will serve students in this neighbourhood and nearby areas.

The *Education Act* requires that all schools must have an assigned attendance area. As part of the planning process for

this new school, we will work with nearby school communities to determine an attendance area and look at how that may affect students. We will also review all current Whitehorse attendance areas for long-term planning to ensure that we are effectively using the available learning spaces in Whitehorse schools.

As this work begins, we will meet with Whitehorse school communities at their school council meetings to ensure their voices and expertise are taken into account. We will have these conversations before we make any decisions on attendance areas. There is a lot of work ahead of us to develop and build a new school. This is an exciting time for Whistle Bend residents and for all Whitehorse school communities as we modernize learning spaces for Yukon students.

I look forward to working with all schools, administrators and educators to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of their school communities as we prepare for and carry out this work.

Mr. Kent: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to respond to this ministerial statement.

We support the construction of a new school in Whistle Bend. It's the fastest growing subdivision in Whitehorse, and the Electoral District Boundaries Commission estimated its population of eligible voters to reach 2,634 people by 2026. This of course was one of the key reasons they recommended Whistle Bend get its own MLA. While Whistle Bend isn't getting its own MLA, we're happy it's getting its own school. A new elementary school in this neighbourhood will be a welcome addition.

The statement does, however, leave us with some questions for the minister that I hope she will be able to address in her response here today. First and foremost is with respect to the school revitalization plan or what has evolved into a 10-year capital plan for schools — we would have hoped, given the ever-changing capital concept, that this would have been completed prior to this decision being made.

Last year, Christ the King Elementary School and Holy Family School were at the top of the list for replacement. This year, they're nowhere to be found. The only certainty this provides school communities and contractors is that you can't trust the Liberal capital plans.

While we have raised concerns about the attendance area review for schools in the vicinity of the new construction, a new aspect of this statement is that all Whitehorse attendance areas will be reviewed. This will certainly be of concern to many residents in Whitehorse and particularly to my constituents in Copperbelt South who are currently in the Golden Horn Elementary School attendance area.

The minister says there will be meetings with school councils before any changes are made. Hopefully this consultation isn't like some of the others that we have witnessed lately where the decision has already been made in advance and the evidence is adjusted accordingly. Meetings should also be formatted in a way that the minister is present and takes questions from the crowd, rather than the open-

house format that we've also seen recently. Along with many other Whitehorse-area MLAs, I will be letting my constituents know of these potential changes so they can let the minister know as soon as possible what their preferences are.

With respect to the design budget of \$1.6 million allotted for this year, we've asked in recent weeks how this aligns with the generic scalable school design that the minister announced last year and said would save \$7 million over 10 years in design costs. I am hoping that the minister can tell us how she arrived at those numbers. We would also like to know how much has been spent on the design so far, what is planned to be spent this year and when the project will be completed.

With respect to the school being a flex space as other Whitehorse-area schools are renovated or replaced, we have some questions on this plan as well. What will this mean for the Whistle Bend school as this work is undertaken? Will it become a dual-track French immersion school as Selkirk Elementary is replaced? Will it become a dual-track Catholic school as Christ the King Elementary School is replaced?

What will the traffic into the subdivision look like? Many residents are already concerned about this. This might be a case of shifting city traffic congestion from Riverdale to Whistle Bend.

Currently, on the Whistle Bend Community Association Facebook page, a subcommittee is being put together to assist in planning and design work for this new school. As we mentioned in the motion that I tabled earlier today, we are calling on the minister to hold a school council election as soon as possible for this school so that an elected body can represent the school community during this important phase.

If there are policy, regulatory or legislative changes to make this possible, then the minister should make those so that a Whistle Bend school council can become a reality now and provide input on the design and construction of the school.

Ms. White: We thank the minister for her statement.

I remember, last fall, receiving an invitation from my friend Brian Laird to attend a group photo shoot in Whistle Bend, encouraging the Yukon government to build a school in the subdivision sooner rather than later. I would like to offer our congratulations to him and the other residents who lobbied government in support of a school. We are certainly seeing the need in Whistle Bend for school construction with the growing number of families and young children and ongoing anticipated growth, but this isn't new.

We heard this announcement made in both the Premier's Budget Address and again in response to the budget by the Minister of Education.

It is worth reminding people that this was not in last year's five-year capital plan, but certainly other schools were mentioned, including Kluane Lake School, which gets a modest amount of \$50,000 this year. Christ the King Elementary School replacement, starting in 2021, is not anywhere in this year's five-year capital plan. At Holy Family School, it is the same story. It was in last year's five-year capital plan, but nowhere in this year's five-year capital plan.

We have been told that this government wants to remain fluid, but having projects just fall off the board and new ones appear without explanation in the government's five-year capital plan begs the question: Is Yukon government's five-year capital plan really just a yearly plan packaged as a multi-year plan?

What would be great to see is a real capital plan that addresses schools throughout the Yukon. For example, what is the maintenance schedule for larger projects on or in schools throughout the Yukon? What about a renovation schedule? Mr. Speaker, where is the new school design plan that we heard so much about last year? How can school councils plan for the future when projects are dropped and added year to year without any explanation?

In the minister's own words in this statement — and I quote: "We have five Whitehorse elementary schools that are aging and need seismic mitigation and require renovation or replacement." What we didn't hear was the long-term plan to address those issues. So again, I ask: Where is the plan?

We would like to offer our congratulations to the Whistle Bend community on the announcement of a new school, and we look forward to more information.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the suggestions from my colleagues in the opposition and the Third Party. I also appreciate their confidence in me and our government going forward with respect to implementing many of those suggestions.

I also note that the Member for Copperbelt South notes that I should be able to answer quite a few questions in four minutes. I will not be able to do that today. Our Liberal government is ensuring that Yukon schools meet the current and future needs of the territory's education system, again, with over \$30 million in capital funding for school projects in the 2019-20 budget.

As I said, the funding includes money for the beginning of the work on Whistle Bend school. A new school will provide additional capacity and flexibility in Whitehorse where student enrolment, as we know, continues to grow. It will also be a key step in long-term planning to renovate or replace priority schools that are aging and need seismic work, including Takhini Elementary School and Whitehorse Elementary School — the two oldest in the city. Planning for the new school will continue. We will continue to work with the affected school communities to review Whitehorse attendance areas.

I have to note that I think the member opposite was mistaken in that this is the first he has heard of all Whitehorse attendance areas being addressed. Clearly, that's what is being asked for by many of the school communities. That work should be done in its entirety and certainly is done from time to time. This will allow us to review attendance areas and student placements to ensure the effective use of the available learning spaces in this city. This is the responsible thing to do in order to address the growing student population in our capital and ensure our education system is effectively meeting the needs of Yukon students.

This new elementary school in Whistle Bend is just one part of our long-term planning for modernizing, maintaining and building Yukon schools. It is a part that is newer this year based on the fact that an assessment over the last year has reviewed the school requirements, capacity and enrolment changes. In fact, replacing one of our current schools would not provide additional spaces. This new school, of course, will.

Additional projects planned for the coming year include continuing to work on the French first language secondary school, remediation work at the Ross River School, planning for the relocation of Kluane Lake School to Burwash Landing, a new portable for Golden Horn Elementary and upgrades to the Robert Service School portables.

There will also be work across all Yukon schools, including modernizing technology, replacing playground equipment and continuing to work with all school communities on regular maintenance through the capital repair and maintenance process.

I know that, historically, there has not been planning here in the territory with respect to Whitehorse schools in particular and that this has produced challenges for the department and for this government going forward, but we are doing that work now. It is important work that affects all Yukoners.

We are focused, Mr. Speaker, on reconciliation with Yukon First Nations. We are rebuilding relationships with Yukon's francophone community. We are rebuilding the relationship with Yukon's contracting community. We are working cooperatively with our school communities in order to make sure that we provide the best infrastructure possible for Yukon students.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Health and social services programs and services review

Ms. McLeod: An example of this government's inability to make a decision is the comprehensive health review. Anytime that the Liberals are asked to fix something, they shrug and kick the can down the road by saying, "Let's wait for the review."

The timeline for the review continues to change. On October 4, 2018, the Minister of Health and Social Services told the Legislature — and I quote: "The review will be completed by the fall of 2019..." On October 30, she said — and I quote: "At the end of October, we will have a comprehensive final report and an implementation plan." In a November 6 press release from the minister, it changed to — and I quote: "A final report is expected to be developed by late 2019." Then, on March 16, the minister changed the deadline again, saying that the review will be completed by the end of 2019.

In the course of five months, the minister has delayed the deadline for the health review from the fall of 2019 to the end of 2019.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us the reason for these delays?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Yukon Financial Advisory Panel made some recommendations with respect to an independent process. The comprehensive health review is established to allow for that process to evolve, and we are working with the timelines and allowing the comprehensive health review independent expert panel to lead its process. If they so choose, we will work with them on extensions, timelines or supports that they require. We have committed to do that in good faith.

So they will undertake the review of programs and services. We will look at focusing on factors that drive costs around quality and outcomes. That will take time, Mr. Speaker. We will give them the time that they require, and we will continue to work with them in good faith.

Ms. McLeod: As I have highlighted, the minister has delayed the deadline for the comprehensive health review several times. Originally, she told us that it would be done by the fall of 2019, then the end of October 2019, then late 2019, and now she says that it won't be done until the end of 2019.

The problem here is that anytime someone asks for improvements to health care, the Liberals say that we have to wait until the end of the review.

For example, medical travel rates need an increase. Even though taxation and carbon taxes are going to increase medical travel costs even further, the reimbursement rates are not increasing. Yet at the same time that they refuse to increase medical travel, the Liberals have found money to give their Premier a raise.

Will the minister please stop dragging her heels and immediately increase medical travel instead of waiting for the end of this increasingly delayed review?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I find the line of questioning quite interesting, given that the opposition members had a significant amount of time in which to make significant improvements to better align with collaborative care for Yukoners, specifically looking at health and health requirements for Yukon communities — which was, sad to say, that we have not seen a whole lot of improvements since the 2008 and 2014 reports. It's not anytime that anyone asks us for improvement. We are listening to Yukoners, we are taking the time that's required, and we are doing our work. Yukoners will see positive improvements as we continue to work with our communities toward a healthier Yukon.

I have gone through the notes previously to highlight all of the great work that the department is doing, and I'm very proud of that. We have opened up mental wellness hubs across the Yukon. In fact, we opened one in Watson Lake to provide supports to the residents there. We have worked with the Housing Corporation to increase additional resources in Watson Lake for housing. We have worked with a number of our community day programming. In fact, we have partnered with the Hospital Corporation to ensure that we have better collaborative care in Watson Lake.

There are a number of things we are doing in the Yukon, and I'm awfully proud of that work.

With respect to not doing anything and not hearing Yukoners — we are, and I'm awfully proud of that.

Ms. McLeod: As I have stated, the minister told us that the original due date for the health review was by fall 2019. Then she said that we would have the final report and implementation plan by October. Then she told us it was delayed until late 2019. Now she is telling us that it is delayed again until the end of 2019.

Will the minister recommit to having the report and implementation plan ready by October like she promised us last year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I will promise is that we will work in good faith with the independent expert panel to ensure that they have the resources they require and that they are given the time required to do the work. It takes some time, as the member opposite knows. Improvements for marginalized Yukoners in Whitehorse were taken — and across the Yukon. We have some challenges, and we know that we have a lot of work ahead of us. We will ensure that we do the best we can to provide services and supports for Yukoners.

I'm awfully pleased with that and the progress that we are working toward. We just recently announced additional supports to Blood Ties Four Directions, for example. We provided enhanced services at the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We are doing a lot of good work.

Question re: Comprehensive departmental review

Ms. Van Bibber: On page 94 of the Liberal government's Financial Advisory Panel's report, it recommends that the government undertake a comprehensive review of all departments and programs. On October 4, 2018, the Premier was asked about this recommendation and whether or not there would be more comprehensive reviews beyond the one at Health and Social Services.

In response he said — and I quote: "In a nutshell, yes, we are going to continue past Health and Social Services when we do comprehensive reviews." He then went on to say: "We are not stopping at Health and Social Services."

Can the Premier tell us when comprehensive reviews for other departments will be announced? What is the next department that will have a comprehensive review?

Hon. Mr. Silver: In response to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel's final report, the government is undertaking the following actions: We are undertaking the work to find efficiencies in government operations; we are exploring opportunities to get out of the business of doing business wherever possible; we will undertake a comprehensive health review, and that work is ongoing as we speak; and we will consider a principle-based approach to how much we have charged Yukoners for delivering those goods and services.

Yukoners clearly stated that they wanted a government to find cost-savings before it looked at generating additional revenues or reducing services. This is the main focus that is before us now that we are considering — it is to make sure that we return to a sustainable financial situation. Our purpose is undertaking the work and to use public monies more responsibly. This is the work that we are undergoing now. We

are working with the Department of Health and Social Services on their review. We will continue that process afterward, but again, Mr. Speaker, we have plenty of work in front of us as we speak as far as making sure that we are budgeting properly and trying to get this fiscal ship turned around.

Ms. Van Bibber: The comprehensive review for Health and Social Services includes an independent panel and of course the internal tiger team within the department conducting the review. As mentioned in October, the Premier told us that there would be comprehensive reviews of other departments.

Can the Premier tell us if these comprehensive reviews will include independent panels and internal tiger teams as well?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What I can say is we are currently working on that comprehensive health review as we speak now. Of course, the goal of the health care review is to take a solid look at what we are doing now, how we are doing it and making sure that we can do better — to make sure that Yukoners continue to receive the services that they have come to know and love.

It's not about cutting costs, Mr. Speaker; it's about enhancing what we do while managing those growing costs. It's about investing our dollars wisely and ensuring our programs and services are meeting the needs of Yukoners as we go.

As part of that review, the Department of Health and Social Services has completed a thorough review of the programs and services that it offers and has begun to implement some of these early administrative changes that will ultimately provide better services.

Mr. Speaker, what we can commit to in the Legislative Assembly is to use the model that we're going through with the comprehensive health review to expand past that one department with a whole-of-government look.

Ms. Van Bibber: Can the Premier tell us if the findings from the comprehensive reviews of other departments will be made public and if so, when will they be made public?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe the minister has dealt with this question a few times before. What I can say as well is that the comprehensive review and its independent expert panel will begin those stakeholder meetings very shortly. The public will also have an opportunity to provide their thoughts, both online and also in community meetings.

Mr. Speaker, it's essential that the users of these services — everyday Yukoners — are part of the process to identify solutions and to enhance the overall performance of our Health and Social Services system. That's what we committed to doing, and that's what we will do.

Question re: Solid-waste management

Ms. White: The Yukon solid-waste management system is in need of an overhaul. When the Minister of Community Services accepted the recommendations of the ministerial committee on solid waste last year, we were hopeful that this government would follow up with action.

One of the main issues raised in the report was the high rates of Whitehorse residents driving out to peripheral transfer stations to dump their waste for free, rather than having to pay tipping fees at the Whitehorse facility. This has put serious strain on the resources and capabilities of regional transfer stations around Whitehorse.

One of the recommendations in the report was to implement a user-fee pilot project to alleviate the pressure on the transfer stations on the Whitehorse periphery. The plan outlines that consultation was to happen in 2018 and implementation in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on what consultation was taken with stakeholders from the Whitehorse periphery?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. Solid waste is an important issue for the whole of the Yukon, and I will provide a little bit of an update.

One of the things that I did was to volunteer this past summer in each of the Southern Lakes solid-waste facilities for a day to talk to Yukoners and residents and to see how those solid-waste facilities were operating. I will make the offer to go to the Member of Lake Laberge's solid-waste facility this coming summer and do the same thing.

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee met and discussed the proposal for regionalization, and they asked me to amend it somewhat. They said that they thought it should be done for the whole of the territory at a go, so we are working on that right now. I sat down and met with the Association of Yukon Communities several weekends ago for their quarterly meeting, and we had an update both from municipalities and from us as a government. I will be happy to get into it a little further as we get into supplementary questions.

Ms. White: We would love an updated copy of those recommendations that the minister mentioned.

In the report, the committee recommended that this government run a user-fee pilot project in the Whitehorse periphery to better understand the challenges of implementing user fees across Yukon. We have heard time and time again that user fees are the only way to end the practice of Whitehorse residents driving waste to Mount Lorne or Marsh Lake, only for it to be packed up and shipped back to Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, will this government meet the 2019 deadline to implement a user-fee pilot project in the Whitehorse periphery that they committed to when the minister accepted the recommendations of the ministerial committee on solid waste?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is a good question — thank you — although I thought I just said — what I'm trying to say here and explain — is that we're not looking to do a pilot project; we're looking to do a territory-wide project.

That has been the request from the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and from sitting down and talking with municipalities. The realization is that this is a problem. Wherever we have a system where you can drive some waste a little distance and dump it for free, there will be these leaks

all over the system, so the request from municipalities and from the Solid Waste Advisory Committee has been that we do it territory-wide. That way, it's comprehensive, fair for all Yukoners, serves all Yukoners and is accountable to all Yukoners.

What the member also asked is if I can commit to achieving that this year. What I can say is that we are working together with our partners to try to achieve that this year. I'm afraid there are a lot of variables in the air at all times. What I will say is that we're working hard to achieve it this year, and I will keep the members informed.

Ms. White: The information that opposition parties and the public can access goes back to the report that says that there was going to be consultation in 2018 and the implementation of a pilot project in 2019. If there have been changes, we would love to see a copy of it.

A key theme in waste diversion in Yukon is that the onus is on the individual to divert waste from the landfill. In British Columbia, this responsibility is extended to the producers of material that ends up in landfills and transfer stations under a program known as "extended producer responsibility", or EPR. This means that the producer is responsible for collecting the waste that they produce from transfer stations at their own cost. The committee recommended in 2018 that the minister undertake an investigation and report on the feasibility of a Yukon EPR program.

Will the minister release the report on EPR feasibility that he committed to undertaking when he accepted the recommendations of the solid waste management committee?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I'm happy to release those reports. There's nothing to be gained from holding them close. I want all Yukoners to see what work was done.

The group has been meeting with folks out of British Columbia on the extended producer responsibility pilot.

One of the challenges for a place like the Yukon is that we're very far away from large, urban centres, and so there is a little bit of a challenge to getting to extended producer responsibility. That's why we're looking to work in partnership with other groups.

The member is asking for an update on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee report. They didn't physically update it. I apologize that they haven't done so. We can work on that.

I went back to them after meeting here in the Legislature to ask this very question. They said no — just keep working on the solutions, please. This is what we have been doing.

What I have done is that I've toured all municipalities and all communities, and in almost every one, my recollection is that we talk about solid waste. In fact, it's often the largest conversation. I have been letting them know about this in every community, and I will continue to do so.

I apologize that I don't have an updated report to table, but I will try to keep the members informed as those things change and progress.

Question re: Government support for non-governmental organizations

Ms. McLeod: I have some questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding funding for health NGOs.

As we know, the comprehensive health review stems from the Financial Advisory Panel recommendations. I note that the draft report from the Financial Advisory Panel from September 2017 does not mention reviewing NGO funding; however, the final report from November 2017 does.

Can the minister tell us if, in between the draft report and the final report, anyone from the government gave input or feedback to the Financial Advisory Panel indicating that they would like see a review of NGOs included in the final report?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I think we're talking about efficiencies, generally speaking. We are talking about all of health, and NGOs are a part of health, but NGOs are part of all of government. We try to work as efficiently as we can with our partners.

We know that the majority of NGOs that I'm responsible for as the Minister of Health and Social Services will receive a cost-of-living adjustment. We are currently working with those who have come forward with some new initiatives, and we will come to a mutual agreement very shortly. We will continue to do that in good faith.

Ms. McLeod: I did not get an answer to the question. According to the Financial Advisory Panel, they did receive feedback on how NGOs can actually save government money and can be more efficient. For example, one comment that the FAP received reads — and I quote: "... many instances of NGOs delivering programming and finding out government was moving to replicate those programs or services at a higher cost..."

Can the minister tell us if the comprehensive health review will also be examining whether or not the government could save money by actually expanding supports for NGOs, or will it only be looking for ways to reduce funding for NGOs?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, just earlier today when talking about the comprehensive health review, I said that it's not about cutting costs. It is about enhancing what we do and about managing growing costs. Clearly that message is not being sent over to the members opposite.

The member opposite is also insinuating that some kind of interference was happening with an independent panel. That independent panel produced their papers, they then appeared here as witnesses and took questions, but that was it. They don't still sit as a panel; they are all individuals in their own fields, all the way across Canada and also locally here. To insinuate that there was anything else happening there is an interesting line of questioning here in the Legislative Assembly.

Again, the independent panel produced their papers, they were available for questions in the Legislative Assembly, and that was the end of the panel.

Ms. McLeod: Curiouser and curiouser — after being pressured by the opposition and embarrassed in the media for

freezing the funding of several health NGOs, the minister went into damage control and said that she would offer some of them cost-of-living increases. As some of these organizations have already had their funding frozen since 2017-18, there are actually two years of inflation to adjust for.

Will the cost-of-living increases that the minister referred to account for both years of frozen funding or just one year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to talk a little bit about the relationship that Health and Social Services has with NGOs. Clearly they are our key partners in getting value for money and better matching services with needs. I think the Member for Whitehorse Centre had mentioned that there are a lot of NGOs out there that provide very essential and key services to our community, and we want to build that relationship and to commend them for doing such great work on our behalf.

The objective is not to cut funding and not to interfere in a process. We are allowing the comprehensive process to evolve.

We are looking at our NGO groups that have come forward and are doing really great work, but also that have come forward with some key pillars that they want to pursue — Blood Ties Four Directions, for example. We have worked with them on the housing project. We have worked with them on purchasing a new outreach van. We have worked with them on receiving more funding for more day programming and outreach harm reduction programming.

We have done work and we have enhanced programming. It is not about slashing programs. This is about supporting the essential program support providers in our community, and we will do that for sure.

Question re: Alcohol and drug services

Ms. McLeod: Last April, the minister told us there was no wait-list for detox services at the Sarah Steele Building. It was later revealed by the *Yukon News* that the reason there was no wait-list was simply because officials don't maintain one. For example, staff does not take down phone numbers of people looking for detox who are turned away. I say "turned away" because people were getting sent away despite the minister's claims that there was no wait-list.

Can the minister tell us if the department now maintains a wait-list for detox beds, and if so, how long is the current wait-list for alcohol and drug services at the Sarah Steele Building for detox services?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to supports that are provided to the mental wellness support unit, we provide comprehensive supports to those who come into the Sarah Steele facility. With regard to where and how we provide supports, I do believe that we have a better program — a more enhanced program — that is comprehensive of the well-being of individuals who enter that facility.

I do not have in front of me the wait-list and the numbers, but I would be happy to provide that. It fluctuates from month to month, as the member opposite knows. We have programming for women; we have programming for men. Plus, we provide additional services and supports to the

Jackson Lake program. We had resources in our budget last year of \$600,000 to provide pre- and post-care programming supports for our community.

We will continue to do that good work with our partners, and the objective is preventive measures, preventive care and collaborative care for Yukoners who come to the Health and Social Services department seeking support.

Ms. McLeod: I look forward to receiving that information that the minister committed to.

Last April, the Department of Health and Social Services told the *Yukon News* that on more than 30 occasions in March 2018, they had to turn someone away from a detox bed — in most cases, because the beds were full. Can the minister tell us how many times they have had to turn someone away since the beginning of 2019 due to a shortage of beds for detox?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Let us bear in mind that we have some new initiatives in the City of Whitehorse. Historically, we did not have that. Things have changed and evolved since 2018. In 2019, we have a new relationship with the Whitehorse emergency shelter. We now have full maximum capacity to take on any person who comes to those facilities. We provide shelter. We provide long-term transitional supports for up to 12 months. We work with our housing navigators, and we work with the emergency services department. As well, we work with the RCMP to try to divert pressures where pressures are seen.

If it is not an emergency, the service providers know exactly where to reach out into the community. We have not had that historically, so it's about bridging those gaps. I would say that the departments and the partners have done an exceptional job.

Ms. McLeod: So the minister, in response to questions about the detox wait-list, told reporters — and I will quote: “So that's why I am saying that if there's more beds required then in time we will determine that.”

Can the minister tell us if she has done any analysis to determine whether or not more beds are required for detox at Sarah Steele?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would say that is a very narrow view to take. I think we need to look at all of the programs that are provided in our community so that we can provide the necessary and essential emergency services and supports. Given that the Sarah Steele facility historically was only there specifically for detoxification and the 28-day program, we have now enhanced that to provide mental wellness supports. We have opened up mental wellness hubs in the communities. We have done everything we possibly can to reach far into our rural Yukon communities — something we have never done before.

We have provided supports to our partners in our communities. We have tried to provide supports to mental wellness hubs. We are always open to suggestions and recommendations on ways that we can improve the services that we essentially provide for Yukoners.

My department and my staff, who do this really great work — I want to commend them for that because they have a vision. They have a vision for a better Yukon — for all

citizens of Yukon — no matter where they are, no matter the circumstance in their life, so I am awfully pleased with that.

Question re: Affordable housing

Ms. Van Bibber: With this year's budget, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation announced that she is going to spend \$18 million on a mixed-income housing project. According to her remarks in the House on March 14, 2019, she said — and I quote: “We have earmarked a total of \$18 million for this project, which includes planning, design and construction of the new building beginning in the spring of 2020.” According to the minister's press release, of that \$18 million, only \$300,000 is budgeted this year for the planning and design work.

With construction set to begin in spring 2020, but with next year's budget not likely to pass until the end of next April, what is the government's plan for getting that tender out to ensure that there are shovels in the ground in a timely manner next spring?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would say that the Yukon Housing Corporation is working on a number of projects, and we are doing our best to provide opportunities for Yukoners. There are a number of projects that are in the queue to go out for planning and development across the Yukon, and that will evolve as we go into the season. I will leave that to the department to announce to Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: In the minister's remarks, she states that the mixed-income housing project will provide up to 48 units — the key qualifying words being “up to”. By using those words, the minister is essentially saying that it could be 40 units or maybe even 20 units. Mr. Speaker, it sort of reminds you of when you go to a store and see a sign that says “up to 50 percent off”, and you go in thinking everything is on sale, but quickly find out that it is a sales technique.

Could the minister clarify if there will actually be 48 units? If not, is there a minimum number of units that the government will commit to building?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would say that this is the first time in the Yukon that we have actually looked at a mixed-housing project of this magnitude. That's really great. It's great because it's an opportunity for us to look at a better way of providing housing and addressing the housing shortages that we have in the Yukon. We budgeted a total of \$18.3 million toward this project, and it will be designed and, of course, be supported by the Yukon Housing Corporation. I look forward to that project.

Ms. Van Bibber: Regarding the mixed-income housing project, it sounds like the Yukon Housing Corporation is creating a large, new housing complex that could compete with the private sector.

Could the minister clarify a bit more on what the business model of a new mixed-income project will be? If it will be competing with private sector landlords, can she explain how it is consistent with the government's commitment to not grow government and to get out of the business of doing business?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can guarantee to Yukoners that we will not go back to what happened historically with projects that the Yukon Housing Corporation, I guess, endeavoured to pursue with the leadership of the Member for Lake Laberge.

We are open to partnering with all Yukoners. The objective is to ensure that we have an opportunity to provide mixed-market housing and to ensure that we meet the demand, whether it would be affordable, social or seniors housing or market housing.

This is a project that I am awfully proud of. I am hoping that Yukoners will engage with us and participate in that because — who knows? It may be an opportunity for us to look at this as a means in which to address pressures in other Yukon communities. I am so proud of the project.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Copperbelt South, on a point of order.

Mr. Kent: I am referring to the Standing Orders “Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Devices in the Chamber”. Specific Rule 1(c) is: “Members may use electronic devices in the Chamber at all times, with the following exceptions... During the Oral Question Period.”

While it’s difficult for us to tell from this side of the House, it does appear that the Member for Porter Creek Centre has been using his laptop during Question Period. I just ask that you remind all members about those guidelines and endeavour to enforce that specific guideline going forward.

Speaker’s ruling

Speaker: I would refer all members to “Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Devices in the Chamber”, adopted on October 29, 2012.

The Member for Copperbelt South, of course, is correct that electronic devices are permitted to be used but for the various exceptions, which are Specific Rule 1(a) through (f). It is difficult for the Chair to police the use of electronic devices, but in the ordinary, common-sense application of this rule, it likely means that, during Question Period, screens are down and your screens are not active. That is the easiest, so that they’re not being used for any purpose whatsoever. I thank the Member for Copperbelt South for his intervention.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Hanson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the House to join me in welcoming a couple of constituents to the Legislature today. Iris Cormier, it’s really lovely to see you, and Chris Bartsch, both of whom live in downtown Whitehorse; also Frank Turner, who needs no introduction to this Legislative Assembly. I call him the only social working

Yukon Quest winner that I’m aware of. Oh, my goodness, there’s yet another downtown resident, Tim.

Applause

Mr. Gallina: There are a number of visitors who are joining us here today. I would like to recognize Rob Cumming: friend, neighbour and constituent of Porter Creek Centre. Welcome, Rob.

Applause

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 429

Clerk: Motion No. 429, standing in the name of Ms. Hanson.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to direct the Yukon Housing Corporation to address critical safety and security issues at Greenwood Manor, 2017 Alexander Street, 1190 Front Street, Closeleigh Manor and 22 Waterfront Place by:

- (1) consulting with the residents of the above-mentioned senior citizens apartment buildings; and
- (2) conducting security risk assessments in conjunction with the RCMP regarding safety and security issues associated with access to the above-mentioned buildings and internal security matters.

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, I want to start this discussion this afternoon by saying clearly at the outset that the intent of this motion is to try to stimulate a positive and solutions-focused discussion on issues that I know that the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and I share with respect to concerns about safety and security issues at Greenwood Manor, Alexander Street, Front Street, Closeleigh Manor and 22 Waterfront.

As Member for Whitehorse Centre of this Legislative Assembly, I do have the privilege of serving a wide cross-section of citizens across the demographic spectrum. When I was first elected in 2010, Closeleigh Manor and Greenwood were the primary senior apartment buildings owned by Yukon Housing Corporation in downtown Whitehorse. Since that time, 22 Waterfront, followed by Front Street and Alexander Street, have been added to the Yukon Housing Corporation roster of geared-to-income rental accommodations for seniors in the centre of Whitehorse.

Over the past eight-plus years as MLA, I have visited with and fielded concerns from residents in all of these buildings, and over the years, it has struck me that the old adage of “a house is not a home” applies to these apartment buildings — and often, in spades.

Making the transition to living in an apartment after perhaps having had your own home, or not having a home at all, can be difficult. Each apartment in each of these buildings is someone's home. I believe that we all respect that. I believe that Yukon Housing Corporation staff believe and work to respect that as well.

However, there are unique dynamics at play when we look at the diversity of backgrounds of the tenants at any one of the five apartment buildings that we are discussing today. The only common factor is that the tenants are, for the most part, 65 years or older. I say "for the most part" because there are a few instances where younger folks with medical disabilities may be able to live at these residences, at these apartments, if they are age 55 or over.

That being said, other than age, most residents or tenants have come to live here with their life history and their often-reduced belongings. Any community links that they had prior to moving in are either severed or reduced by the fact that they now live elsewhere, sometimes at quite a distance from their family and friends and their support network that was there and that they have had for years.

What becomes so clear is that, when someone moves into a new environment, the walls of the unit become their new world. There is a lot of isolation, and sometimes there is fear. It's hard to reach out to make connections and new relationships with people at the best of times. For many older people, this is exacerbated. I'm one of those older people. I live in a unit; I live in an apartment. I see this every day, and sometimes I experience it. Community is not something that happens simply because you live adjacent to another.

We have folks living in the same building — some more able, some more willing to engage and others, less so. With the benefit of almost a decade of being part of a cycle of conversations about making the lived experience of residents at Yukon Housing Corporation's apartments more positive and life-affirming, it strikes me that there are some basics that contribute to the current sense that things need to be improved and that things can be improved.

This is not to make any blanket negative or alarmist statements. Some good things have happened and are happening. This is simply to encourage an openness to considering how the lives of the people served by Yukon Housing Corporation can be enhanced.

As I was thinking about getting ready for this discussion this afternoon, I was only going to include one seniors apartment in this motion because most recently, there have been some serious concerns there, but as I said, there are so many of my Whitehorse Centre constituents who live in these apartment buildings. What I see happening is, as I identified at the outset, that the thread that seems to be common is a lack of connectivity and a lack of support.

I want to reiterate that these are people's homes. They are the homes of seniors and elders, and just like all of us expect, there are certain things we expect in our home. Our homes should be safe; our homes should be secure. When we move into an environment that's strange to us, it would be nice to

think there would be some way of having conversation or connection facilitated.

One of the challenges that I have heard repeatedly over the years is the lack of real communication. I mean "communication" in the sense of engaged conversation and understanding of what has been said and an understanding of what has motivated someone to make contact with the Yukon Housing Corporation about an issue. Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that what is really at play here is that oftentimes people are grateful that they got into a Yukon Housing Corporation unit, and they are reluctant to raise issues for fear that it may mean somebody will say that this person is a troublemaker and is causing too much irritation. They fear that they may lose that previous accommodation. That has to be dispelled if we are going to create a better sense of community in these five vitally important apartment buildings that house so many wonderful people in downtown Whitehorse.

When I talk about communication, I want to talk about ideas of improving regularly scheduled communication between residents and the corporation. Right now, my impression is that when somebody has the courage to raise a concern, the response is that there is a meeting, but that doesn't help, quite frankly. If you don't have trust or if you don't know who your neighbours are, then it's very difficult for you to feel comfortable coming to a meeting because maybe you will be the one who will be considered to be the one who is raising the issue and putting your head above the parapet.

I often have family members raising concerns on behalf of their older relatives who are living in these apartment buildings. They will call and express concern because their parent, their aunt or another relative has shared with them their concerns, and they're scared to talk about them because they don't know who in the building they can talk to. They don't know who in Yukon Housing Corporation they can talk to.

It's a challenge. One of the things that we need to be thinking about is: When there are families out there, how do we get them engaged and what role can we find for families in making it easier to resolve some of the issues in some of these buildings?

I thought I would review some of the issues that have come up, because sometimes we are in our own worlds and our own bubbles, and we're not aware of some of the realities that people face on a day-to-day basis.

I appreciate the responses, for the most part, that the minister and her officials have provided — most often, in a fairly timely way — to issues that I have identified. I think it's worth repeating that these are not isolated cases and, in some cases, have continued to occur. This is why I raised and said at the outset that I am looking for positive ways that we can resolve some of these issues. I think there are some, and I think that we can have that conversation here.

I raise the concerns about having a general understanding and a method at the outset, repeated over time, for all residents of the seniors apartments in downtown Whitehorse that are owned by Yukon Housing Corporation to have very

clear processes and communication about emergency and fire safety procedures. I have witnessed fire alarms going off and seniors not vacating the building. That is a concern to me, Mr. Speaker. It should be a concern to us all. If you have ever lived in an apartment building or a condo, Mr. Speaker, you know that there are general rules and general processes set in place to make sure that you know where to go and how to get out of the building. We have procedures and protocols in place so that when we know that there are seniors on third floors of some of these buildings who are mobility challenged — that it is really clear to everybody how they are going to be getting out of that building when the elevator is shut down.

I have raised the concern that, in a number of the buildings, there have been — and there still is in one or two — no identified muster points so that when you have an emergency drill or a real fire you know where to gather — you know where to be and where to head to when you get out of that door — no practice fire drills.

At one point, it was suggested to us that we didn't want to alarm seniors by doing fire drills. Quite frankly, that shocks me, and it did shock the fire department as well. We need to ensure — I mean seniors — just because we are older, that does not mean that we don't have the capacity to respond. We do need to make sure that all people in those buildings are very clear in those procedures. That includes having some form of fire drills — again, practical emergency procedures that one would expect to be in place.

We have asked, and we want to make sure that all residents are clear about what happens should there be an emergency in the middle of the night. What are the plans, how is that communicated and to whom?

If a fire was to occur in the middle of the night in the middle of winter — and these are questions that are asked of me, so I am not making these up. That is what I said at the outset. These are not alarmist. These are the practical concerns of residents who move into a building. When you are living in your own home, that is one thing, but when you move into a building with people you may or may not know, you are faced with these questions: When I get out of the building in the middle of the night, where am I going to go? Who will ensure that residents on the top floor, if they are mobility challenged, can get down when those elevators are not working? Who provides the instructions to new tenants on fire or other emergencies, and how regularly is that updated? Do we have in place a regular updating of all of those procedures so that we know, on a quarterly basis, somebody from the Yukon Housing Corporation is meeting with residents of those apartment buildings?

We have had a long history of difficulty in this town in getting proper servicing for elevators, and the Yukon Housing Corporation is not immune to that. I have given up counting the number of times that Closeleigh Manor, in particular, has faced the challenge of having their elevators not functioning for long periods of time. I have had families express their concerns that their elders and their mothers — in one case, somebody broke their ankle going up to the fourth floor carrying groceries because the elevator was out for two or

three weeks. That person ended up hospitalized and eventually had to move out.

When people have to go up and down three flights of stairs when they are in their 80s and 90s — now some people are really fit and can do that, but some people are not. For questions about interim access to supports to get up and down those stairs when we know that we are going to have a prolonged outage of elevators — how is that communicated and when?

The biggest area of concern is probably the most difficult and probably the most sensitive. It is the issue of personal safety. As I said, a lot of times, the families of people moving into the Yukon Housing Corporation apartments — because there is a ranked priority, people may find themselves having the opportunity to — some would say “opportunity”, and some would say “the last chance” to get a place — come and live in Whitehorse. For some families, that is great; for some others, it is not so great. What happens too frequently is there are lots of incidents of people who are, quite frankly, unwelcome visitors in the building. I will come to that in a moment when I talk about some of the issues that I think we can work on together in terms of trying to resolve common security issues.

What we have in all of the downtown Yukon Housing Corporation apartment buildings are repeated incidents of people — people who are not residents of the building, but have somehow found their way in the building — harassing the tenants. Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that these tenants, for the most part, are senior citizens or have some physical disability. These people get into the building at all hours of the day or night — people who are passed out in the building, in front of the elevator or in the hallways or in the stairwells. The security and sense of well-being in your own home is threatened. All of us would feel uncomfortable with that. When it's repeated and when you feel that it's not safe for you to go down the elevator, that's not acceptable.

When we have mailboxes broken into and mail stolen — yes, that's a criminal matter, but it's also a personal security matter, and there are ways of addressing that.

We have doors that are broken open and jimmed open so that they can't be shut. We have non-residents who have keys to the building and access the building.

Now there are very clear rules, and I appreciate that the Yukon Housing Corporation puts out its handbook for tenants. It's very thorough; it's very comprehensive. It talks about the rights and responsibilities of tenants in there. It does say that there can be guests — you can have a guest staying with you for up to two weeks — but there are also conditions about that, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of things that with better communication and more effective and more regular communication — and lines of communication being so clearly established — I think we could obviate some of the negative things that have occurred.

Mr. Speaker, there have been break-ins in some of these apartments. When each of these buildings is opened — except for Greenwood and Closeleigh because they have been around a long time — at Greenwood, there are areas there where

people have donated their own furniture to some of the common areas. There's a special sense of ownership and liking the homey feel. The other buildings, when they were opened, had the common area on the second floor at Waterfront Place and on the main floor at Front Street and Alexander Street, and had furniture. They had furnishings, so it was to encourage people to gather and to try to facilitate that sense that there are common areas that you can meet. I can say, Mr. Speaker, that if you go there now, you're going to say, "Where is it? What happened?" That furniture is gone. In the case of Greenwood, there have been instances where some of that homey atmosphere has been damaged by people slicing open furniture — furniture that residents themselves put there. Again, it cuts to the heart of the lack of security and the lack of feeling of, "This is my home; I want to be here and I feel comfortable being here."

We have had furniture from ground-floor patios taken. The Alexander Street apartment building has been prone in the last short while to an unfair and much more intense series of incidents with respect to damage to cars, people passing out in the doorways and a lot of drinking occurring in the alleyway. These are people not necessarily accessing the building, but the security of the residents is severely impacted.

One of the things is that, if you live in an apartment, you would expect there to be some form of security monitoring. Until recently, the camera that was at Greenwood apparently wasn't turned on. It's my understanding that the camera is turned on, but I'm not sure who or what does any surveillance of the footage that's there. When you have people urinating in the elevators, that makes a challenge. It is a public health and safety issue, but it's also a challenge. Again, this is your home.

With the way that the entryways are set up — where people can stand at the front entryway and just sort of keep pushing buzzers all night until somebody gets so tired and lets them into the building — that's a security issue.

In some cases, we have had people express being really worried about senior and elder abuse that may be occurring in the buildings. I can identify at least three different buildings where I'm aware of that and I have raised this issue — or people being bullied into letting people come into their units and then being taken advantage of. These are security issues, Mr. Chair.

That's the security inside the building. There are some external security issues, and that has to do with how we design the facilities. The folks at 22 Waterfront Place — you walk out of that building and there is no sidewalk. If you are in a wheelchair, on a motorized scooter or using a walker, you are out in the traffic right now and you cannot get anywhere by sidewalk. There is two-way traffic all around you. You cannot access the Millennium Trail; you cannot access a bus stop on Quartz Road. So we have a very dangerous siting of that place with respect to ambulant residents there — anybody who is able to get out of the building. Unless you have a car or somebody picking you up, you are in a very precarious position.

That's an external security issue. I will be sending the minister some photos. She might have some ideas or her people might have some ideas about how that might be addressed. My focus today is primarily on the internal community building aspects of the Yukon Housing Corporation apartments downtown.

I also think that we need to focus on how we — and when I say "we", I'm focusing on the aspect that I am a member of this Legislative Assembly and am speaking as someone who is working with this government — ensure that, when we talk about a whole-of-government approach, we can actually pull those resources together when and where they're appropriate so that we find more appropriate and sensitive responses to people when they actually finally get up the courage or are so frustrated that they reach out and say, "We need some help here."

When there are issues — what I've outlined — I was going to say "extreme", but unfortunately they are pretty regular instances when you have these security breaches inside buildings that can be threatening and cause harm. The response to date from the Yukon Housing Corporation liaison is to call the RCMP. Well, yes, I will call the RCMP because that's what you do when there's criminal activity, but then what? What is my landlord doing to help me understand better how we can prevent this from happening? What is my landlord doing to prevent that from ever happening in my home? That's an important question. Because Yukon Housing Corporation is part of a bigger web here — it is part of the Yukon government — it does have access and can pull in other resources.

In the package — or when you go to the website for the Yukon Housing Corporation — it does reference the Yukon residential tenancies office and does talk about some of the resources there. It does say that if there is violence or a domestic violence issue, you can call Victim Services. But wouldn't it be interesting, given that Yukon Housing Corporation has to, as one of its mandates in terms of housing and the Yukon Housing Corporation — with many, many seniors both in downtown Whitehorse and throughout the Yukon — develop the kind of ability to work collaboratively with the Victim Services branch, with Adult Services and social workers and to make them part of the team?

What can be done to enhance the kind of security services that are currently in place? Once a night, security comes by — at least that's my understanding of the scenario. I'm not sure what they actually do. Do they walk on every floor? Do they check? Is there video surveillance that they're able to check to see what has been going on in the building? How is that communicated to the residents?

I had mentioned annual fire drills. We were told that they were just too disruptive for seniors and they don't happen. I think that is beyond disbelief, and I think it requires an active engagement by Yukon Housing Corporation with the City of Whitehorse Fire Department and with senior residents in these buildings.

My understanding is that each building does have fire alarm systems and fire extinguishers and maps to exits,

because that's what the Whitehorse Fire Department ensures are in place. That's their job.

There are a number of areas where I think we can be and should be trying to improve the sense of well-being and the sense of enjoyment of people who live in these buildings. They are beautiful buildings, for the most part. The buildings are beautiful, but as I said, that doesn't make it a home. How do we work together to make sure that quality of life is improved?

Not so long ago, in apartment buildings in this town — and I think there are still one or two private sector apartment buildings that have them — there were what you used to call “supers”. You called them a “superintendent” or a “resident manager” or whatever, but it's usually somebody who is a point of contact, who lives in that apartment building, who may have paid — maybe still does — lower rent. The objective is that there is somebody in that building who the people who live there can go to as the intermediary between them and the landlord.

Maybe it's time that we have somebody like that in the five buildings in downtown Whitehorse — because, as I say, we have a really wide array of people coming from many different backgrounds, and it's really hard sometimes to get a common understanding. But once people start breaking down those barriers and people actually talk with each other, that might work.

The superintendent is that neutral person. He or she may have some of the basic skills of helping to change the lightbulb or whatever, but they listen. They are the eyes and ears.

I know that in all of the buildings downtown, there are a number of those folks who, over the years — some have passed — have informally played that role. They faced their challenges breaking through some of the systems pieces.

Maybe it's worth exploring. I don't know, but I'm looking for solutions. Making things really bureaucratic and making it so you have to phone somebody in Yukon Housing between certain times and maybe hoping that they are going to call you back doesn't necessarily resolve the issue. It's relationships. That is what we have to focus on here.

One of the concerns that I have raised is the whole issue of security monitoring. We know that downtown Whitehorse — we see it every day. The Minister of Justice announced significant new territorial-federal funding to deal with violent crime. Violent crime is a reality in downtown Whitehorse, and it comes in different forms.

One of the ideas that I would put out there — and I'm interested in hearing the views of members of this House — is installing surveillance cameras to cover the entrances, exits, common areas and any point in the building that would pose a risk. When installing surveillance cameras, we have to be aware that cameras are only as good as the people monitoring them. So if we are putting up faux or false surveillance systems and we have nobody monitoring them — or we don't keep any record or go back and look at them — then that is giving a false sense of security, which is worse than having none at all.

Without a regular review of surveillance feeds, as I said, these camera surveillance systems would give a false sense of security. I realize that I'm not talking about something that is a cost-neutral item, but I don't want to be on the watch when somebody dies in one of these units. I can tell you that it has come pretty damn close in a couple of these buildings. I would like to put that out there as a way of preventing it.

One of the other ones is access control. All of the Yukon Housing Corporation buildings in downtown Whitehorse have different forms of access. One of the challenges that I think we face is that it seems to be very easy for people to gain access to these buildings. I have tried to look at different ideas that people have for modern systems. One of the things that strikes me might be the simplest way — again, it is not cost-neutral, but think of the last time you travelled and you went into a hotel or you went into an Airbnb. Either they had keyed access or a key card.

If the Yukon Housing Corporation was to install an access control system, residents could be issued a card rather than a key. The advantage of that is that you know that card can simply be swiped to enter a building. The swipe can also create a digital log of who is coming and going as well as a real-time manifest of who is in the building at any given time. I have identified and outlined a whole series of concerns that have been raised with me and my office over the last 10 years about unregulated access — unwanted, harassing visitors and unwanted people passed out and sleeping in hallways, stairways and outside elevators. Perhaps providing this kind of access control may be a way of addressing it. If the card is lost, it is easily discontinued and a new one can be issued. There are many modern ways, from a technology point of view, of addressing some of the security concerns that we have identified.

In my motion, I speak to the importance of involving the RCMP. We do know that the RCMP respond if there is a call to any of these apartment buildings. They take it seriously, and we appreciate that very much, but it should not have to be left to an extreme emergency. What we need to do is to be able to address building a sense of community and maintaining and creating a sense of “My home is my safe place to go to, and I am secure in that home.” All residents of Yukon Housing Corporation's apartments downtown, by right of their being tenants, need to know that their landlord, the Yukon Housing Corporation, takes that seriously and will work with them to ensure that they are secure in all ways and will work to ensure that the line of communication is entirely open.

As I said at the outset, when I started as an MLA, there were two apartments downtown. There are five now and there may be more in the next while. I am not even counting 6906 over on 6th Avenue, which is another Yukon Housing Corporation apartment building that has a number of mixed-aged people with varying abilities and a number of seniors. I am not including that one.

We need to find ways of either morphing or changing some of the roles, expectations, the means of communications, modes of communication and the tones of communication

between liaison people with Yukon Housing Corporation and their primary employer — the tenants of those apartment buildings. I think it would go a very long way to making and creating an environment where people will want to participate in building meetings, will see them as something that is useful, will see them as somewhere that is a safe place to raise issues that are of concern and will see that over time, there will be changes. They will see that there is a response as opposed to the episodic responses to an issue or an emergency situation and then a meeting is held.

I know it is challenging for the corporation staff to be able to try to get these things up and running, but I would urge that this challenge be met with persistence and working at it. I can tell you that there are some amazing — well, most of the people. 99 percent of the people who live as tenants of Yukon Housing Corporation buildings in my riding of Whitehorse Centre are amazing. They have amazing life stories, and they want to be happy. When they are happy, the whole building has a different hum to it.

The motion today, as I said at the outset, was brought forward with a view to respecting the voices I have heard from the people who live in my riding of Whitehorse Centre and who have and continue to raise critical safety and security issues. At Greenwood Manor, Alexander Street, Front Street, Closeleigh Manor and Waterfront Place, they raised them with me. I raised them with the minister, and as I said at the outset, many times, there is a resolution, but I think we need to move beyond resolving emergency issues. We need to find a way of getting these apartment buildings, which are people's homes — creating an atmosphere of safety and security for everybody there and creating a better relationship between and among the Yukon Housing Corporation and the residents and, in turn, within the communities that are those apartments.

I am looking forward to support from members opposite and on this side of the House. I think that some of the measures that I have suggested in terms of addressing some of the security issues are part of what I would have termed "security risk assessments". We would hope that it would be a comprehensive security risk assessment, as I said earlier, in conjunction with the RCMP so that we can deal with these issues and get on with making life better for all of the residents of downtown Whitehorse and, in particular, for the residents of the named Yukon Housing Corporation apartments.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am pleased to rise today to respond to the motion put on the floor by the MLA for Whitehorse Centre. The motion that is on the floor for discussion is to address critical safety and security issues at a number of units owned by Yukon Housing Corporation. I want to just respond to that because clearly, as noted, everyone in this House is on the same page with respect to ensuring that our seniors and our elders are provided a safe place to live, that their homes are safe and that they feel safe whenever and wherever they reside in any one of our facilities, be it here or in our communities.

I want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this motion. The seniors are a priority for this government. Overall, the wellness and safety of all of our tenants, especially seniors, is a priority and something we take very seriously — something I take seriously, as I have members of my own family living in these facilities. I hear first-hand as well what they have experienced and what they are experiencing. So the concerns that are brought forward are ones that are taken very seriously.

The critical safety concerns at Greenwood Manor, 207 Alexander Street, 1190 Front Street, Closeleigh Manor and 22 Waterfront Place that the member raises are of importance and are certainly things that we need to address and consider as we have this debate today.

While I cannot speak to specific incidents — and I won't, because I don't speak to that — it is important to address increased concerns about safety and security that have been brought to our attention from tenants in these units and that they continue to feel unsafe in their own home environment. That is of concern.

Standard safety protocols at Yukon Housing Corporation buildings include locked secure entryways where tenants enter with a key system and regular nighttime security inspections. The Government of Yukon hires security services to do these inspections. The security staff and tenants report incidents that require attention to the Housing Corporation staff. Staff respond and assess any damage and organize repairs if necessary. Those are the standard procedures that the corporation goes through.

The Housing Corporation also regularly communicates with the tenants and as part of a regular security protocol, encourages tenants to call the RCMP directly if they feel that their safety is being jeopardized. I guess that's just standard practice as well.

Ideally, what we do want to look at are some long-term measures that would address the concerns in these units. The member opposite has raised a number of recommendations. We are certainly open to looking for innovative and creative solutions, and that will mean having more detailed discussions with all of the tenants in these units that they occupy.

In response to safety-related reports, 24/7 security personnel will be stationed in two specific buildings, as it has come to our attention from the tenants in these two facilities that we will enhance and increase security 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until we can come up with a plan or at least deter some of the folks who seem to be occupying these facilities. We're doing that with the support of the tenants.

The Housing Corporation will continue to monitor the situation very closely. We were working on this prior to this coming to the Legislative Assembly. The Housing Corporation, over the course of months, has been looking at finding solutions and working with the tenants. So 24-hour-a-day security is one immediate step that we are taking toward improving tenant safety. Our intent is to reduce the increase in frequency of visits and try to divert the individuals so they do not use the facilities in the way they are and to direct them to the other support services we have available in our city.

However, the staff of the corporation is also looking at some long-term, more sustainable solutions to keeping tenants safe and secure. We are looking at having a manager of sorts. The member opposite titled the role as “superintendent”. We are looking and have been considering this option for many months now, trying to look at some initiatives like that. We want to ensure that the tenants are safe and secure.

In collaboration and in discussions that are happening with the tenants in these facilities, we will continue to have ongoing dialogue. In Greenwood Manor, there was a meeting on February 14, and there was one on March 22 at 207 Alexander. The staff will meet with seniors at 600 College Drive on April 1, and we are currently in the process of setting up other meetings in some of our other facilities.

This lines up nicely with the conclusion of the “what we heard” document on aging-in-place submissions. We have heard quite a lot from our communities and from our senior citizens and aging population, and we commend them. I want to extend my appreciation for their input about providing programs and services that better align with their needs, recognizing that we also have aging facilities that need to be modernized and upgraded. We need to put the resources into ensuring that we have better security systems and better cameras in place — and looking at access as well. If the coded system is not working and the keyed system is not working, maybe we want to look at a fob of some sort.

The department is clearly looking and navigating a way forward with the residents in trying to find a better solution. Staff will have continued and consistent face-to-face communications with a lot of the tenants — also recognizing that access to a navigator or access to data is sometimes not always readily available. Not every senior has access to a computer.

More face time and different methods of communicating — I think we have learned a lot of lessons. The Yukon Housing Corporation has been involved in this business for a long time and is always open to recommendations and suggestions. I also want to say that they have done an exceptional job. I think that, despite what we hear sometimes in terms of the negative side of things, there are a lot of good things happening in terms of seniors accessing facilities that they wouldn't otherwise be able to access.

Putting forward more efforts and more initiatives to open up seniors housing units, building more units and making home first as a model — these are ways of keeping seniors in their own residence, if that is their choosing.

The meetings will gather input from the tenants in each one of these facilities, and we will put it into an informed document that might provide better guidance for us to enhance the well-being of our residents.

In addition to the meetings, the staff of the Yukon Housing Corporation have been engaging and will continue to engage with expert resources in the Department of Justice, our NGO groups and the RCMP to explore options for improving safety and security. Leveraging the experience, knowledge and expertise of the tenants and other community resources

will allow the development of long-term, sustainable and effective plans for tenant and building safety and security.

They are currently undertaking a privacy impact assessment to ensure that tenant privacy is not compromised by any future use of building security cameras. As I understand it, that may be an issue, so we want to make sure that we address that in the dialogue that will happen, making sure that we do our due diligence in engaging with our seniors.

Our government takes the health and well-being of our seniors very seriously. We have conducted a series of public engagements on aging in place across the Yukon. Yukon Housing Corporation participated in all of the sessions with the Department of Health and Social Services to hear first-hand from seniors — their concerns, their vision and their desire for a better Yukon, a better place to age. As we know, there is a lot of wisdom and a lot of knowledge out there and a lot of experience that we can gain from. Most recently, we held a “what we heard” forum in January in Whitehorse, and we had over 200 seniors participate.

Through the housing initiative fund, we are supporting the construction of 48 new affordable seniors housing units. Our government recognizes that adequate, available and affordable housing is a functional key in building and maintaining strong Yukon communities. It is a strong social determinant of an individual's health and wellness.

As we go ahead and look at new initiatives throughout the Yukon, we certainly want to look at what we can make improvements on as we build new facilities across the Yukon. We want to learn, of course, from some of these experiences and the great feedback that we're getting, recognizing that our seniors need to be safe and secure.

As noted, we are looking at options, and one of the options is a potential for mixed units or having a housing manager situated in the facility, so that is someone there on-site, all the time, as well as the increased security.

We are taking action to deal with the security concerns at Greenwood Manor, Alexander Street, 1190 Front Street and 22 Waterfront Place.

As a short-term action to directly address increasing safety- and security-related concerns at downtown seniors residences, we are looking at these as key locations and increasing enhanced security. That's just currently something that is essential and necessary, as noted by the member opposite. We have had some concerns brought to our attention as well, so this is not new information. Through a series of meetings, the staff of the Housing Corporation is engaging with the tenants in downtown seniors residences and are looking at their input. We are really looking forward to closely monitoring this. We are looking forward to working with our partners through the Department of Justice and the RCMP and ensuring that all of our tenants are safe — clearly they want and need to be heard. We are interested in hearing all the solutions. We will work toward ensuring their homes are safe.

Ms. Van Bibber: I would like to thank the Leader of the Third Party for bringing forward Motion No. 429. We are in full support of any initiative taken to address the safety and security issues, especially those aimed at seniors and disabled residents of Yukon Housing Corporation buildings.

We appreciate the fact that this motion covers each of those residences, as they, I'm sure, all have different security concerns. By completing security risk assessments at each, a variety of situations could be addressed. We are supportive of the request for consultation with residents, as one would assume they would hold the key information that would be helpful in mitigating any risks to security and safety. Sometimes it is hard to determine whether there are problems unless real conversations take place, and there is no better place to start than with the residents themselves. We urge the minister responsible to engage with these individuals to determine what types of security risks there are at each of the residences mentioned.

For buildings with a secure entry, it is presumed that only residents and those who are let in to see those residents are able to gain access, and we've since heard that this is not the case. If residents continue to feel unsafe, it is time for government to take action. Being situated in the downtown Whitehorse area, I can imagine that these residents might be faced with a variety of situations that leave them feeling unsettled and fearful for their personal safety. It sounds like it is in their yards as well.

We encourage the security risk assessments in conjunction with the RCMP, as suggested, as I am sure the RCMP is well aware of the types of situations each area of town may face and they might be able to provide input on how to mitigate risk.

We're also aware that there are a variety of issues regarding the well-being of Yukon seniors in these older Yukon Housing Corporation homes. Air quality and health safety issues, insect problems, elevator issues, and as the Leader of the Third Party mentioned, the list goes on. Some of these issues are addressed as they arise, and some of them I was only made aware of when Yukon Housing Corporation did their budget briefing.

We would like to see a reporting process initiated for residents with respect to security issues. It may be one time that a resident feels uncomfortable upon entering the building or sees something that they would like to report — and as the Leader of the Third Party mentioned, perhaps this would cause undue stress and label the resident as a troublemaker or complainer. So let's set up a reporting process so that residents feel they are being heard immediately.

We encourage the government to reflect on this motion very closely, support it and create an action plan immediately. With that, we will be supporting this motion, and I thank the Member for Whitehorse Centre once again for bringing it forward.

Ms. White: In speaking to the motion on the floor right now, there are some interesting things that I think bear bringing to mention.

The Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation talked about the security that exists — which is the on-call security that goes to the building once a night — as having been a long practice; it is not. It started because there were complaints in a Yukon Housing Corporation building about smoking. They were repeated complaints and they happened over and over and over again. It was through, I would suggest, maybe constant pressure from — in this case — the Yukon NDP that encouraged the creation of the security. Because one of the problems with the complaint process is that you would call to make a complaint, and then there was no one in Yukon Housing Corporation who could confirm that someone had indeed been smoking in their non-smoking unit, and then, therefore, it was an unfounded complaint, so it did not go anywhere.

We appreciate that the security has been in place for a number of years, but there are stunning — and not in a positive way — examples of how this just hasn't worked. It is not listed here, but 600 College Drive, of course, is in my riding. In the common area, there used to be a really large-screen television set. Between one day and the next, that large-screen television set was gone. No one knew what happened to it. Someone propped open the back door, and it literally walked out of the building.

My colleague has mentioned furniture, and I can say, based on the phone calls I have had with residents at the Alexander Street unit, furniture has walked out of that building; Waterfront — furniture has walked out of that building. I appreciate, when the minister was talking about making sure that it was secure, the issue is that — well, there are all sorts of issues.

At 600 College Drive, there is no display right now on the callbox — there wasn't two weeks ago — so you kind of had to guess as to whether or not you were dialling the right apartment and whether or not it would ring. There are times when that callbox doesn't work, and if you have a friend who lives on the third floor who has mobility issues and they have to get to the elevator to come down and open the door for you, you can understand that maybe someone is just going to prop the door open, but then the door is open.

We have seen things in response to windows being opened in common hallways, where Yukon Housing Corporation has taken off the handles. It doesn't seem like the most feasible way to address the issue.

It is valid when we talk about the communication between the Housing Corporation and residents, because it is not always — I think that — and I am also guilty of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I will say this now — sometimes we don't realize the tone in which we are approaching a situation.

I have seen a written communication before where a tone was probably not what we had intended or what had been intended. If you're communicating with multi-units — for example, within a seniors complex — and that tone hits all of them at the same time, that's when my phone starts to ring and we start having conversations about "How did this happen?"

I do appreciate that the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation highlighted some changes. One

of the questions we have is: When does that 24-hour security start? When will that happen?

We talked about the importance of seniors being able to access these apartments. Everybody views it as a supreme gift. I think that's the first thing I would say. I don't know a single senior within Yukon Housing Corporation who does not view it as a relief. It's a relief that they're finally there. But I can tell you that I know of two individual apartments in the seniors complex on Alexander Street who had rent geared to income. In one case, one couple purchased a mobile home in Northland Park because of what they had to live with in that downtown location. They were on the ground floor, and they said it felt like they were constantly under siege. It felt so bad that this couple who was in retirement — who were in their 70s — instead of staying in their rent-geared-to-income apartment, left that and purchased a mobile home in Northland Park.

In other situations, I have helped fill requests to move within buildings, from downtown to out of downtown. There are real challenges and there are real problems. When my colleague suggested they swipe a card, it's because it doesn't require a locksmith to copy them. It doesn't require that; it's not a key fob, so it's a cheaper alternative to that and easily replaced — but there are issues.

I look forward to knowing — maybe we'll be able to ask the minister off the floor when the security will start in those two downtown buildings. I suspect I know which ones they are — because this is a really important issue. If you think about the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* — it's interesting, because we haven't supported a Yukon Housing Corporation tenant yet to challenge that, but I imagine, at one point in time, it might actually happen.

Section 27 talks about the protection of a tenant's right to quiet enjoyment, and that's guaranteed. When you look at the Yukon Housing Corporation documents, it talks about quiet enjoyment and it talks about the landlord's responsibility to keep it safe, but it talks about the tenant's responsibility to keep it calm. It talks about those two, but the issue becomes about what happens at 2:00 in the morning. I will tell you all here that I am a person who appreciates my sleep, and I am resentful if my neighbours turn it up at 2:00 in the morning when I am asleep. I can't even imagine being in an apartment building and then being an older person — how do you deal with that? How do you even get the courage to go and knock on the door, to be like, "I need you to turn it down"? You don't, is the answer.

We have heard stories of — well, we have heard crazy stories. There's no sense in repeating them here, but we have heard stuff where you would be intimidated and we would all be intimidated to be living in that situation, but we're talking about people who I fondly refer to as grandparents. I always look at my grandma in terms of what would I want my grandma to live through or what would I want my grandma to do or how would I want my grandma to be treated. I can tell you that is not how I would want my grandma to have to live. It's unacceptable.

I hope that the 24-hour security helps. I hope that we can look into those common areas and make them common again. Being able to watch traffic outside of 207 Alexander Street was a joy. When it was first opened, when I went to visit, we would often sit and watch traffic as we talked about what was going on in the world. That was really important. Another thing that we have talked about that isn't included here is the importance of where we put motorized scooters. Where do we put motorized scooters in the winter? Because, you know, it's not just for summer. For some people, it is a tool they use all year-round.

There is a lot to be said, and it sounds very positive so far, so I am hopeful about that. I did realize, when I was looking at the motion, that somehow I must not have been paying attention to what was initially tabled because there is a mistake. It says "2017 Alexander Street," and I don't really know where that is but I can tell you it is not 207 Alexander Street, which is the seniors complex. I have an amendment to the motion.

Amendment proposed

Ms. White: I move:

THAT Motion No. 429 be amended by removing the number "2017" and replacing it with "207".

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Hutton): The Chair would like to confirm that the motion is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT Motion No. 429 be amended by removing the number "2017" and replacing it with "207".

Ms. White: What I am trying to do is change the address from one that does not exist to one that does exist. It is a friendly amendment, I guess. I am looking for support to make sure that we have the right building.

Amendment to Motion No. 429 agreed to

Deputy Speaker: Does any other member wish to be heard on the motion as amended? If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Ms. Hanson: I thank my colleague from Takhini-Kopper King, first of all, for catching that typo, and then I also want to extend my appreciation to the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and the Member of Porter Creek North for their comments with respect to the importance that it sounds to me like all parties in this House attach to ensuring that the Yukoners who are residences of Yukon Housing Corporation apartment buildings in downtown Whitehorse are able to live in a safe and secure environment.

We will look very closely to following and to being apprised of the developments that the minister outlined in her response this afternoon, because it is important. As I said at the outset, we really do think that there are lots of good ideas

from all sides. I think I have heard that before from the other side. We do want to work together on this and explore some of the modern ways of ensuring that security and involving the residents and those people who have the expertise to bring about that safe and happy place to live.

I just hope that we will have the support of all members this afternoon. Thank you.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion as amended carried.

Motion No. 429, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 436

Clerk: Motion No. 436, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

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.

Mr. Hassard: It’s a pleasure to rise today to talk about Motion No. 436. I know many of you probably think this just seems like common sense. I know that many Yukoners do this already, and I certainly thank those who do. I mean, who wouldn’t think to slow down and move over when passing a vehicle on the side of the road, let alone a vehicle with very visible flashing lights?

Unfortunately, the answer to that is not the answer we would think or want to hear. My Yukon Party colleagues and I have heard from numerous Yukoners over the past couple of years who have witnessed enough close calls to consider this to be a growing concern. Everyone from RCMP, firefighters, EMS, road crews and tow truck operators have expressed concerns about drivers speeding past them on the highway.

These are hardworking Yukoners simply doing their jobs, and they’re finding themselves in dangerous situations and potentially being put at risk. Just like every other Yukoner, these individuals deserve to have a safe workplace. It just so happens that, in the case of RCMP, firefighters, EMS, road crews, tow truck operators and others, their workplace often happens to be on the side of the road.

It has been extremely important for these people to raise their concerns, because it’s not only their safety that is at risk from careless drivers, but also the safety of the citizens they may be dealing with or providing services to in their respective professions.

The safety and well-being of all our citizens is, of course, top priority for all members of this Legislature. Anytime that we can improve safety for Yukoners, I believe it is important to take advantage of the opportunity. For that reason, I think it is incumbent upon all of us in this Assembly to take this matter urgently, not kick the can down the road for a year or two.

Mr. Speaker, why not all come together today and say, “Hey, this is a real priority; this will make Yukoners safe today”? As politicians from all three political parties, we can come together on an issue of importance, put partisanship aside and make Yukon a better place. We can put aside excuses and delays and get this done today.

We know that this can happen because, as we just saw in the motion from the Leader of the Third Party, it is reality and it can be done.

Mr. Speaker, in preparation for debate today, I did some research, and I was surprised to learn that Nunavut and Newfoundland are the only other jurisdictions in Canada, apart from ourselves in the Yukon, that don’t have this type of legislation in place already. It would serve us and it would serve Yukoners well not to be the last place standing.

In Ontario, for example, “slow down, move over” legislation was brought forward in 2003. The way the law works there is that it requires drivers to slow down and proceed with caution when passing an emergency vehicle or tow truck parked on the side of the highway with its lights activated. If a highway has more than one lane, the law requires that the driver move over and leave one lane between their vehicle and the parked emergency vehicle or tow truck, if it can be done safely.

The punishment in Ontario for not complying with the law is fines ranging from \$490 to \$2,000.

You may wonder what led Ontario to implement this law. In 2000, Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Margaret Eve was killed when her cruiser was struck by a transport truck while on the side of Highway 401. It is an important story that we need to reflect on, so I will just briefly quote from a Thunder

Bay tnewswatch.com article from July 2015 explaining the details around this tragedy: “On the afternoon of June 7, 2000, OPP Sergeant Margaret Eve of the Chatham-Kent Detachment and two of her colleagues executed a high risk take down on a subject vehicle they suspected was involved in an armed robbery near Windsor, Ontario. The officers were interviewing the occupants on the roadside outside of their three cruisers. Moments after the officers ascertained that the occupants were not involved in the robbery, a tractor trailer crashed into all three cruisers as well as the subject vehicle.

“Sgt. Eve was critically injured and airlifted to a hospital in London. Sadly, two days later (on June 9), she succumbed to her injuries. The other two officers (Provincial Constables Pask and Sakalo) were seriously injured in the incident but survived.

“Sgt. Eve was with the OPP for 14 years and was the first female OPP officer to die in the line of duty. She left behind a husband and two children. Senior Constables Michael Gula, James McFadden and Constables John Gregovski and Charles Mercier also died on duty while tending to a traffic-related incident on the side of the road (between 1989 and 1999)”.

Mr. Speaker, these tragedies were entirely preventable — and they took lives and they devastated families. Preventing further tragedy such as this is exactly what the Ontario government has attempted to do with this legislation.

Just how prevalent has Ontario found this problem to be since they brought in the new legislation? According to the Ontario Provincial Police Association, over 11,000 tickets were issued by the OPP on Ontario highways during the first 10 years of the law. In 2016, the OPP laid 24,043 move-over charges.

I know that you can never catch them all, but that is 24,043 cases where people were driving dangerously around people doing their jobs on the side of the highway. Obviously we know that the numbers won't be as high in the Yukon, but we know it's happening, and we should be taking immediate steps to address it.

If I could just go back to the Ontario example for a moment, I would like to highlight a *Global News* story from just two days ago — March 25 of this year. The headline of the story is this: “OPP reminds drivers to move over on highways after 2 police cruisers struck in 12-hour period.”

The first line of that story, Mr. Speaker, is: “Two OPP officers were lucky to escape serious injury after their cruisers were hit by other vehicles while sitting on the side of two different highways.”

That story is from just two days ago. To quote Constable Curtis Dick of the OPP, who was interviewed in that *Global News* story, he said — and I quote: “I don't know of too many officers who haven't had close calls...”

“It's dangerous stuff,” he said. “When you are sitting in your police vehicle, you feel your entire vehicle shift and move when the heavy vehicle passes you in that lane closest to you.”

Let me also point members' attention to a news story from just a month ago. On February 25, 2017, CHEK news

reported the following story, with the headline of: “Saanich police warn public to ‘slow down and move over’ after cruiser struck.”

According to that story, an officer with the traffic safety unit pulled a vehicle over in the 700 block of Vernon Avenue on Thursday. The officer was just about to climb into his vehicle after speaking to the driver when another motorist hit his door.

To quote from Sgt. Julie Fast of the Saanich Police, who spoke with CHEK news, this incident was — and I quote: “... a strong reminder of how dangerous it can be for roadside workers and why every driver has a responsibility to help ensure these worker's safety.”

Now, I want to be clear that, with today's motion, I'm not asking the government to commit to exact wording of legislation or exact fines. For example, earlier I mentioned Ontario's fines, and I know that British Columbia has different fines. In BC, drivers can face a \$173 ticket and three points on their driver's licence if they violate the law — or worse, if they hit a vehicle or worker.

Ontario's fines, as I said, are higher, but I think those are important questions that can be worked out in the drafting of the legislation.

I am asking the government to commit to the principle and to commit to doing it now, not delaying action for a year or two or rolling the question into some other review. We know that this government can implement important legislation very easily, just as they did through increasing fines for motorists who pass school buses while their lights are still flashing. They can implement “slow down, move over” legislation right away. As we suggested, it is as simple as looking at the jurisdictions that do have this in place, such as BC, and building Yukon-specific rules from that.

I certainly was happy to see the government make the move to improve safety around school buses, so an honest kudo to the government for taking quick action on an important issue that cropped up there. But now we have the opportunity to build off of that. Let's learn from it. We can come together in this House and take quick action to make this legislation a reality today.

There is more to be done to expand safety to those who work along our roadways. The government was willing to act quickly to change legislation around buses, so we hope that they are equally willing to act just as quickly to introduce this kind of legislation.

Accidents do happen, but it is our job as legislators to find ways to reduce the risk of accidents on our highways, especially ones that are entirely preventable. By developing legislation that can deter reckless driving or speeding around vehicles with flashing lights, we can show our clear support for ensuring the safety of our first responders and those operating these types of vehicles while pulled over on the highway. As I said earlier, when an opportunity to improve safety for all Yukoners arises, it would be a mistake not to act quickly and take it.

I implore the government to please show urgency on this file. Please take action on it today. Don't punt it down the

road and say that you have to consider it as part of some changes you are looking at for the end of 2020. We know that this would be disingenuous, and we know that the government knows that. There is nothing preventing these changes being made today if there is just a will in this House to do so.

We have already provided examples of other changes that the government has made without waiting for the larger *Motor Vehicles Act*. Let's do the right thing. Let's commit to get "slow down, move over" legislation done immediately. With that, I look forward to hearing what other members of the Legislature have to say.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward this afternoon. I have a few thoughts on the matter this afternoon, and I will share them with the Legislature as we go forward.

I want to begin by saying that members on this bench are proud of the results we are getting with the work that we are happy to do on behalf of Yukoners. I am very glad to have the opportunity to address this very specific motion regarding traffic safety on the floor of the House this afternoon.

I have family who are emergency medical staff — paramedics — so this is an issue that is not lost on me. It hits home, Mr. Speaker. I want my family to be safe when they are on Yukon roads serving and saving lives. It goes without saying. I doubt there is a member in this House who feels differently.

As the Leader of the Official Opposition noted, this isn't an unusual rule or law in traffic legislation across the country; it is fairly common. It's not common here, and that is an issue.

I feel honour-bound this afternoon to acknowledge that the members opposite have at long last recognized the importance of highway safety laws, but I also believe that acknowledgement demands a little context. It wasn't always so. Just last week, the Leader of the Official Opposition said that a rewrite of the *Motor Vehicles Act* was a solution in search of a problem. He wanted to know what problems we sought to fix with a new act. Intoxicated driving comes to mind, Mr. Speaker — speeding, passing school buses when their lights are flashing, distracted driving, automated enforcement rules, rules for self-driving cars, clarifying the law itself so that it is better understood by the public and more easily enforced by the police and the courts and of course "slow down, move over" rules.

Just a week after calling the *Motor Vehicles Act* rewrite a solution in search of a problem, we now find that the Leader of the Official Opposition has started to glean the problems that are in need of solutions, and I am happy about that. The members opposite seemingly regret the results that they did not get with the work that they could not be bothered to do. So now they have peppered the Order Paper with motions to gull folks into believing they care about stuff that, just a couple of years ago, they could have fixed and didn't. They regret the results that they did not get with the work that they could not be bothered to do.

Take the motion before us today: "slow down, move over" rules. I am sure I'm not the only one shocked that such

rules are not part of the existing *Motor Vehicles Act* in the Yukon. It's a rule that is commonsensical, but not in the Yukon. These rules, as the Leader of the Official Opposition noted this afternoon, are in place in virtually every province in the country, but not here. The members opposite had years and years to fix things and to put in place a "slow down, move over" rule in legislation in the Yukon; they did not.

Today, they regret the results that they did not get with the work that they could not be bothered to do. The long-standing failure to address *Motor Vehicles Act* issues for more than a decade has compounded and complicated the issues we face today.

The clean-up crew has arrived. We are not afraid to tackle the hard job of rewriting old, obsolete legislation — even one as complicated as the *Motor Vehicles Act*. That is where such a rule deserves to be — not a stand-alone act, not a one-off rule and certainly not a new piece of legislation in the midst of a full-blown rewrite of the Yukon *Motor Vehicles Act* where it belongs. My colleague the Minister of Justice will talk about the Yukon tradition of boutique one-off laws that currently clog the Yukon legislative website.

The *Motor Vehicles Act* is a huge piece of legislation with a lot of moving parts. It is old, poorly written and wildly out of step with the times. The existing law was written when the Bee Gees were the hottest band on the planet. It was written at a time of bell-bottoms. It was written on a smaller, less busy planet. It was written for a smaller, less busy territory. When it came into force, there were just 21,000 people living in the Yukon. The existing law was written before seat-belt use was common, before car seats were even in use, before drinking and driving was socially unacceptable and before distracted driving was even a twinkle in somebody's mind. Heck — it was written before phones lost their cords. The 40-year-old piece of legislation has been criticized by the police in courts as poorly written, ambiguous and badly in need of replacement. One judge, borrowing from Churchill, called it a "riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma". It was his way of calling it useless.

Don't kid yourself: The inaction and neglect of decades has a real social cost. People have died and continue to die in this territory because of our obsolete law. We have the highest rate of impaired driving in the country. We have the lowest seat-belt use in the country. We have the country's second-highest traffic casualty rate.

Yukoners know this is a problem. When I'm out in the communities and municipalities of the territory or walking through beautiful Whitehorse West, I hear about traffic problems more than any other issue. People are speeding and driving dangerously. My constituents want people to slow down and drive better. Those people want signs, flashing lights, speed bumps and traffic-calming measures. When they talk about these valid measures of control, they are really looking for solutions to a foundational problem, and that problem is bad driving — bad driving fostered by a piece of legislation that is woefully inadequate to the task.

People want cars to slow down. They want people to drive thoughtfully and better. They want to reduce dangerous

driving. At the heart of all this sloppy, dangerous driving on our roads is a law that is, as I said, woefully out of date — a law that has been neglected for decades. In the last 20 years, when it could have been refurbished, it was left to fall into further disrepair. It has been ignored for years and years. Really, now it is beyond repair.

I want to be very clear: I would love nothing more than to be able to make minor updates to a modern piece of legislation on the floor of this Legislature. That's not what we have inherited. The years and years of neglect have led us here, and that neglect has brought us to a time when legislation is beyond fixing and people are clamouring for an end to the chaos and speeding they see every day on our roads. There's a huge amount of work to be done modernizing our *Motor Vehicles Act* to address issues like the fact that it doesn't call on drivers to slow down and move over when they come across emergency vehicles stopped on the side of the road — my brother working on injured people on the side of the road, our family members, our police officers, our firefighters and tow truck drivers.

Now we have the Official Opposition coming forward with what to me looks like a proposal to put a thin coat of paint on a condemned building and call it fixed. I don't think it's an adequate fix, Mr. Speaker. A condemned building should be torn down and replaced with something modern and efficient, with the latest ideas to make it relevant to people today. That is what this government will do with the rewrite of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. It will thoughtfully consider all manner of improvements and proven rules in place across the country, including but not exclusively “slow down, move over” rules.

With that in mind, I would like to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I move:

THAT Motion No. 436 be amended by:

(1) removing the word “develop” and replacing it with the word “consider”;

(2) removing the word “legislation” and replacing it with the words “legislative provisions”; and

(3) adding the words “as part of the new *Motor Vehicles Act*” after the word “lights”.

Speaker: There's an amendment on the floor. I will review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk.

It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Public Works:

THAT Motion No. 436 be amended by:

(1) removing the word “develop” and replacing it with the word “consider”;

(2) removing the word “legislation” and replacing it with the words “legislative provisions”; and

(3) adding the words “as part of the new *Motor Vehicles Act*” after the word “lights”.

The proposed motion as amended would read as follows:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to consider “slow down, move over” legislative provisions 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 as part of the new *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: With this amendment, we are just dealing with a common improvement to our motor vehicle laws in a thoughtful and efficient manner. After all, why draft a second law in the midst of a complete tip-to-tail rewrite of the relevant legislation, where it clearly belongs?

We on this side of the House are clearly willing to get on with the job to do the important work necessary to make sure that our highway laws are modern, relevant, clear and up to the task of governing our roads. It is part of the work that we have been doing throughout our mandate to modernize, improve and advance many files that require attention.

This legislation — the *Motor Vehicles Act* rewrite, in particular — is very important. The people of the territory are clamouring for better driving in the territory. We see it in Porter Creek on Wann Road. We see it on Falcon Drive, up where I live. We see it on Hamilton Boulevard. We see it on our highways.

I have been out with my colleagues on the opposition benches — with the Member for Copperbelt South — and he has pointed out some improvements that need to be done on the south highway down toward Carcross Cut-off.

I have certainly entertained many requests from the opposition to improve our highways, making them safer and more efficient. We are going to be doing some work along the Alaska Highway to do that very important work as well, all with an eye to making sure that our roads are safer and that when we travel, bike, walk or move throughout our communities, our lives are not put unnecessarily at risk.

With the “slow down, move over” legislation, we are taking a step by putting rules like that into our legislation. We are working to make sure that our emergency personnel and those who work along our highways amidst traffic that flows very quickly are looked after and protected. As I said, I was surprised to learn that we don't have that in our legislation, yet I wasn't surprised because our law is more than 40 years old and has been widely criticized as being inadequate and in need of modernization. When I am travelling through the communities from Dawson to Beaver Creek and talking to police officers, they are very happy. They have expressed their thanks to me for actually tackling this very important job because they know how difficult it is to enforce the existing act.

There is an awful lot of work to be done on the *Motor Vehicles Act*. We are in the process of doing that work of consulting with communities, with municipalities, with First Nations, with businesses and with Yukoners in general and throughout the territory to find out their thoughts on what they would like to see in a modern piece of legislation. We are also doing best practices across the country — things like “slow down, move over” rules.

We on this side are willing and acting quickly to get the hard work of modernizing our territory done. We are seeing it through new and improved e-services, new and improved medical services, new and improved mental health services throughout the territory, new and improved procurement processes —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

Mr. Hassard: Clearly the minister is not talking to the amendment that is on the table.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I tend to agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: — and a new and improved *Motor Vehicles Act*.

We are proud of the results we are getting with the work that we are happy to do on behalf of the people of the Yukon, and I look forward to hearing members' thoughts on the amendment.

Mr. Hassard: I am not surprised that the government brought forward this amendment. Certainly it is a little disheartening. We heard the minister talk about common improvements. This isn't, I don't believe, a common problem. He says that this government wants to get on with the job, but then he says in the next sentence that he will deal with this in a year or two. He says, "We are going to act right away on this in a year or two."

I'm not sure if the minister completely understands his own words, because acting right away or getting on with the job on this side of the House means actually doing something, not putting it off for a year or two.

The minister seems to enjoy standing up and pointing fingers and blaming everyone else for everything. That's not necessarily the job at hand. We have an opportunity to do something, just as the government had the opportunity to do something in regard to school bus safety. I said kudos to the government; they took action and made things happen.

Here we have another very similar example. The government has the opportunity to do something good, and they choose to blame everyone else instead of taking action — a complete lack of leadership, Mr. Speaker.

We have heard this Premier say on numerous occasions that he and this government will take good ideas from all sides of the floor, and yet, you know, I would like to think this is a good idea. The member opposite, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, says it's a good idea to do later. He talked about having family members who work in the EMS world, and this is something that could potentially save their lives, but it is still not important enough to do now — we'll do it some other day.

We haven't heard from the Minister of Community Services. He is in charge of EMS crews and fire crews. The

Minister of Justice works with the RCMP. Do we not take these people seriously enough in our lives to say, "Hey, here is an opportunity to improve safety for these people"? The Minister of Highways and Public Works is responsible for highway crews out there working, and apparently their safety isn't important enough to do something about right now. We'd rather kick it down the road a year or two.

Unfortunately, I would never be able to vote in favour of this motion. Another reason that I know I couldn't do it is because of the track record of this government on things they say they're going to do: eliminate the small business taxes — that was a campaign commitment. Well, maybe next year; maybe next year. The Minister of Highways and Public Works promised to tender all seasonally dependent contracts by March, but maybe next year. Let's kick these things down the road.

Action plan on mining and municipalities, collaborative framework on timelines and reassessments, all-party committee on electoral reform, Little Blue Daycare — you know, Mr. Speaker, this government —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Porter Creek Centre, on a point of order.

Mr. Gallina: I'm struggling to see how this is speaking to the amendment on the floor.

Speaker: Does the Leader of the Official Opposition have anything to say on that issue?

Mr. Hassard: Yes, Mr. Speaker — just the fact that I'm trying to provide a narrative. The amendment says they're going to do it later, and I'm trying to show that this government doesn't have a very good track record on following up with those commitments.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I hear you are putting forward a proposition for why you are opposing the proposed amendment, and you're providing some examples of why you are opposed to the proposed amendment. I will provide you with some additional latitude on this.

Mr. Hassard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, those are just examples of why I would never vote in favour of an amendment such as this. I think that it's very unfortunate that this government would rather play political games with the safety and lives of professionals in the Yukon. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll end my comments.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: First of all, I would like to acknowledge that the Leader of the Official Opposition gave some kudos to the government for working on school bus safety, but there was something in what he said that I don't agree with. It wasn't legislative changes that came about; it was regulatory changes. We went to the maximum that we could in a regulatory fashion.

When we open up any piece of legislation in this House as a government and bring it to this House, it's almost always a significant amount of work, but especially when you're talking about something as big as the *Motor Vehicles Act*. We are opening it up. That is work that is ongoing. It's not kicking any can down the road. It is work that is ongoing right now.

In the amendment that was proposed, as the Leader of the Official Opposition spoke to it, he said that he had hoped that we as government would take the good ideas that are offered. I think this is a good idea. I thank them for it. I think it's important for EMS. I think it's important for fire. I think it's important for RCMP. I think that there is a need to amend the *Motor Vehicles Act*, but effectively, there is a diligence that is required around amending an act.

For example, we want to talk with Yukoners. While I appreciate the urgency that's being expounded by the members opposite, one of the things that I think is important that I thought we had all agreed on here is that we need to talk to Yukoners.

By the way, as I have been talking to Yukoners about this issue, I have heard about our emergency vehicles but I've also heard about our school buses. Effectively, the notion here is: Should we do the emergency vehicles first and school buses later? Photo radar to capture those people who are passing the school buses — now or later? What I think the correct solution is, and what's proposed in this amendment, is that we take this good idea, we act on it now and we do so by building it into the work of renewing, revitalizing and fixing the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

I think it is so important to do this work, and I don't think it is an easy task. I have watched departments work on large pieces of legislation. My own departments have done a couple of them. It takes a lot of effort, and one of the challenges is when you have these sorts of extraneous pieces that are lying around doing different things. I think the right thing to do is to do it in a concerted effort. It is to acknowledge that it's important.

I thank the member for bringing forward this motion. I support the amendment because I want to see a whole bunch of these pieces coming forward as quickly and as diligently as we can bring them forward.

Ms. White: In speaking to today's amendment, once, during the 33rd Legislative Assembly, the then-minister — or the current member, although different hats — said that I acknowledged that there was power in words. It was because, on the very first opposition Wednesday we had, I had put in a motion about developing a housing strategy and it listed everybody. Interestingly enough, years later, there was a motion to develop a housing strategy and it included all those same partners, and here we go — we have those housing strategies now. The lesson I learned in language is that the word “develop” was removed and what was put in its place was “implement” it.

I have some real concerns. It was “implement its housing strategy” as opposed to “developing a housing strategy”, and it changed the whole motion. It was November/December of

2011 and we had just been elected. I was hopeful because we all talked about how we were going to work together. I got slammed to the ground in the Legislative Assembly, and I tried to figure out how I could quit, because I was like, “This is not what I signed up for.” So there is power in words.

When a motion comes up that says we are going to amend the motion — and I don't disagree — I mean, it is a majority government. If we can't find common ground, there is an end here, and let me just say that it lies on the side of the majority. When we talk about changing the word “develop” to “consider”, it is important to think about the power of those words.

So “consider” — we are going to think carefully about, we are going to reflect on, we are going to examine, we are going to appraise, we are going to review — we are going to consider. It might happen, but there is no guarantee. When we use the word “develop”, it talks about initiate, instigate, institute, put in place, establish. I haven't heard anyone right now speak about this original motion — about the “slow down, move over”. So far, no one has said anything against that. Everybody understands the importance — the Minister of Highways and Public Works has talked about his family members, and we have heard that reflected by the Minister of Community Services — so I don't think that there is disagreement on the importance.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber, sometimes we have to make decisions and they may not be popular across all things, and sometimes they definitely are not. But the difference between the word “consider” and the word “develop” is very, very different. They are different words. They have different outcomes.

Sometimes, when we talk about how we are going to consult, we are going to reinvestigate and we are going to talk — sometimes it is okay for government to say, “This is important and this is what we plan on doing when we open up the *Motor Vehicles Act*.” You can say that. The government can say, “We are going to say that this is important. People who drive tow trucks are important; people who drive school buses are important. People who have any vehicle with a flashing light, whether they be park rangers or bylaw or anyone, RCMP — everything across the bar is important — so this will be included in the consultation when we develop a new *Motor Vehicles Act*.” The government can say that — the majority government can say that.

So I take issue with the replacement of the word “develop” with “consider”. I will be moving that the motion be amended. I would really appreciate it if we could keep the word “develop” in this motion. If we're going to talk about taking it to the *Motor Vehicles Act* legislation and we're going to talk about that, I appreciate that.

What I am asking for is that we keep the word “develop” as opposed to “consider”. Because with “consider”, it may happen and it may not, but “develop” says that it is important to all members of this House and we will do it.

Subamendment proposed

Ms. White: I move:

THAT the motion to amend Motion No. 436 be amended by removing line 1 and renumbering the remaining points.

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has a proposed subamendment with the requisite copies to be distributed by the page for review by all members.

I have had an opportunity to review the proposed subamendment to Motion No. 436 and can advise that Mr. Clerk has suggested two edits, so that it would be:

It has been moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT the motion to amend Motion No. 436 be amended by removing clause 1 and renumbering the remaining clauses accordingly.

Speaker: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on the subamendment — you have just over 15 minutes.

Ms. White: I appreciate the editorial comments from the Clerk. I don't think that I can say anything more.

We are talking about the power of language, and I think we have this opportunity to say that this is important and it will be in the new legislation. I just ask members to recognize the importance of the words we choose.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing this amendment forward. I fully support it. I think it improves the amendment that I put forward a little while ago, and I appreciate the thought she put into it.

Mr. Hassard: I too would like to thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for bringing forward this subamendment. I think it is important — her words about wording and how important the words are. I still think that it is unfortunate that the government made the amendment, but we will move forward.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the subamendment?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the subamendment carried.

Subamendment to Motion No. 436 agreed to

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment as amended?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 12 yea, five nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. The amendment as amended is carried.

Amendment to Motion No. 436 agreed to

Speaker: Is there further debate on the main motion as amended? The Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Leader of the Official Opposition have spoken already. Does anybody else wish to participate in the debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am pleased to rise today to speak to this motion as amended. I appreciate very much the subamendment that has brought us to the matter that is now on

the floor. I think it is overall an improvement, and the debate on this particular motion is absolutely critical.

Legislation has many purposes. It can be designed to regulate, to authorize, to outlaw activities, to permit or provide authority for activities, to sanction or to declare. A decision to make a law — any law — must be carefully considered. Law should not be reactive. There must be a clear rationale for why legislation should be used to help solve the problem. It's not always the answer.

In this situation, you've heard that we do support the idea that the "slow down, move over" provision should be in law. It's just where it should be that's up for debate in the last part of today's motion.

I dare say that there is no one in this Legislative Assembly or even possibly in the Yukon who would not agree that all drivers should take care. They should drive safely, obey the rules of the road and absolutely respect the emergency work of our first responders and the other work that is done on our roads by slowing down and moving over to allow them to deal with whatever situation they have without interference. But I caution that a separate standalone piece of legislation is the way to achieve the safety that this motion seems to be targeting and in fact is targeting.

I will turn for a moment to the concept of well-considered legislation and the elements of it. It is important for Yukoners to know just how complicated that can be. Not in every situation, but in general, the process for developing legislation involves answering a series of questions to produce the best possible and the most effective laws. These questions and answers operate for the purposes of clarifying the issues. They help identify the issues. They determine how new legislation interrelates and will interact and impact current legislation or parties. They also operate to ensure that any new legislation will be legally correct. They ensure that legislation is expressed as clearly and as simply as possible.

A full analysis to determine if new legislation is the answer includes a number of things, Mr. Speaker. I am commenting today in a general way. My comments at the moment are in a general way with respect to determining whether or not legislation is in fact the answer to certain situations to solve certain problems. A full analysis is necessary to determine if new legislation is in fact the answer to a particular problem or issue. That full analysis includes: What laws do we currently have that might be able to address the issues that are of concern? It also includes a review of what other jurisdictions have done, and I will come to that in a moment. It includes consideration of what policy, if any, the sponsoring department or the department that might be responsible for that legislation has already — or what policies the government already has.

A one-government approach makes it necessary and appropriate for us to determine: How will a newly proposed piece of legislation or a new law interact, impact and interrelate to other departments? Are there any conflicts in that way? An analysis must be done of who will be affected by the proposed legislation. We must consider our amendments to other pieces of legislation necessary in that

circumstance. Are transitional provisions needed? If so, how should that happen? We must consider what, if any, regulations will be needed to complete the legislation — to give it life and to finish it. What requirements or commitments are there for consultation?

If we are considering passing legislation in a general way that will create an offence —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: Standing Order 19(b) requires a member to speak to the question under discussion. The minister, by her own admission, is speaking, in her words, "in a general way". She is giving a very long explanation about the process of legislative development, and it does not appear to be directly related to the subject matter contained in the motion or even have very much connection to the motion at all.

I would ask you to rule on that point.

Speaker: Are you referring to 19(b)(i): speaks to matters "other than the question under discussion"? Yes.

The Minister of Community Services, on the point of order.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I find the debate, as presented by the Minister of Justice, completely relevant to discussing how legislation — in particular, this legislation — would unfold. We have a motion as amended talking about working it through the *Motor Vehicles Act*. I am interested in this and I find it relevant.

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

Government House Leader, please.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is not a point of order at all, Mr. Speaker. This motion is about legislation and how it should come to be. The debate on the floor of this Legislative Assembly today is exactly about a piece of legislation, and I am speaking about how legislation happens.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: I tend to agree. The motion is asking the Yukon government to now develop legislative provisions. The Government House Leader and Minister of Justice is reviewing her view in debate as to how legislation comes to be and what considerations there are. In my view, it is still relevant. I would just note that the Minister of Community Services — although I am glad that he finds it interesting, that is not necessarily the test as to whether there is a point of order.

The Minister of Justice, on the debate on the main motion as amended.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think what I just said is that, in the event that legislation is being drafted, there must be an analysis of who will be affected by that proposed legislation. We must consider if amendments to other pieces of legislation are required. Are

there in fact transitional provisions needed and how should that happen? What, if any, regulations will be needed to complete the legislation?

We must also consider what requirements or commitments there are for consultation. The laws in the Yukon Territory require consultation with certain parties and certain topics and those have to be considered. In other cases, broad consultation is done without those commitments necessarily being adhered to. In particular, as would be in this case, Mr. Speaker, if we are passing legislation that will create an offence, we must consider how it will be enforced. Who will enforce it? What penalties or sanctions will be included? If, for instance, there is a ticketing scheme considered or charges to be laid, they will all have an impact on the *Summary Convictions Act* and how it interrelates to the *Summary Convictions Act* and its regulations.

I have just described what is an enormous amount of work. As suggested by my colleague the Minister of Highways and Public Works and others here today, that work could and should be done as part of the amendments that are being undertaken with our current *Motor Vehicles Act*.

I am sure that the Leader of the Official Opposition was not intending to leave the impression — when he spoke about the fact that there were “slow down, move over” pieces of legislation everywhere across Canada with the exception of Nunavut, I believe — and as a result of that, a quick scan will reveal that there are some jurisdictions in which that type of legislation exists in their motor vehicles act — an example of that is New Brunswick, for instance.

Whenever possible, legislation should be as comprehensive as possible. The notion of “slow down, move over” legislation should be considered, but should also likely be included in the extensive work that’s already being planned and underway for the work being done on the *Motor Vehicles Act*, as my colleague has mentioned.

That work should be done with diligence, and that will result in the best possible version of our laws aimed at road safety.

Mr. Speaker, I’m sure we all agree that the behaviour must be addressed and curtailed. The safety of our first responders and our citizens who work on our roads is paramount.

Briefly, I would like to note that one-off, stand-alone pieces of legislation have not always served Yukoners well. Our laws should be knowable for citizens. Having small or distinct or specific pieces of legislation targeted at a few activities does not usually contribute to the greater understanding of our laws. For example, there are no less than five pieces of legislation or regulations here in the territory that deal with student financial assistance. This clearly results in a complicated and complex system.

I will note, just for a moment, as the notion of school bus safety has been brought up, that in fact — as was said by the Minister of Community Services earlier — those changes were quickly done. Rightly so, Mr. Speaker — but they were changes to regulation. We have been working with families and school communities, and we were clear with respect to

that information that the fines went up to \$500 for passing a school bus with its flashing lights going, because that’s the maximum that’s currently allowed under the act. The regulation was \$200; we’ve changed that through Cabinet to \$500, but that is a distinction that must be noted here, because it is not the opportunity for us to change that in the legislation — to make it even higher, which I agree with many of my colleagues here that it should be, as well the provisions for distracted driving or speeding in the territory — all things that are causing our citizens to be in danger should be higher, but they are currently restricted by an outdated *Motor Vehicles Act*, and we would like to do that work as soon as possible.

I note that we’re working hard with respect to the concept of school buses with our school communities, with the parents who have come forward, with the school bus company and with our colleagues at the Department of Highways and Public Works and the RCMP and Standard Bus to address the concerns of school bus safety along our highways. It is absolutely critical; it is something that we have brought attention to by virtue of public-awareness campaigns. We will continue those and reinvigorate those, of course, in the fall when kids are coming back to school, and we have instituted a number of other projects that work to address this issue — in particular, the school bus safety issue.

The upcoming changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act* will be significant and important. We need to take the time to do it right. The diligence and the work — I don’t think you will see anyone here disagreeing that the “slow down, move over” concepts are critical to the safety of our community. They must be included and developed as part of the work being done there and going forward. We will take the time to develop a strong, comprehensive piece of legislation to serve Yukoners and to protect their safety.

Ms. White: In speaking to the amended motion, the first thing that I want to start with is the statements made by the Minister of Highways and Public Works. He previously has called the work that we do in this Chamber “political theatre”. The first time he said it, it made me really angry because I felt that sentiment feeds into all of the stereotypes that exist of politicians.

I, like many others, take issue with the statement that what we do here is political theatre. However, he certainly lived up to that in his initial response to the motion in a way that I frankly found hard to sit through —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I always hesitate to interrupt one of my colleagues, but I don’t see how this is speaking to the motion as amended that is on the floor.

Speaker: I anticipate that this is some sort of preamble that’s going to get somewhere relatively quickly.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, in the Assembly, we have the opportunity to speak to the comments that other members

have made while debating the motions, and that's what I'm doing. Then I will move on with my initial prepared thoughts.

Speaker: You are saying that you have the latitude or the freedom to speak to whatever other members have said at any other time during the 34th Assembly. Is that what you are saying?

Ms. White: No, in direct response to the debate that has been held here today.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: You can proceed.

Ms. White: As I was saying, I was disappointed. It took away from the valid points being made after the opening, and there were valid points to be made. To be clear, Mr. Speaker, there were three of us who sat in opposition when the Yukon Party was in government. Trust me — we've been there. We've been there, but I think we have a responsibility here.

I'm supportive — we're supportive of the now-amended motion by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, because it's well-established law in several other jurisdictions in Canada and we would be happy to see it in Yukon. We would. It would be great.

When preparing for the debate on this motion, I asked one member of our ace researching team to take a look because sometimes I just don't have time. He decided to take a look through the Yukon Department of Highways and Public Works driver's handbook to see what, if anything, we are teaching our young drivers when it comes to passing stopped vehicles on the highway. People might be surprised to know that the handbook says — and I quote: "Slow down and leave plenty of room when passing stopped emergency vehicles displaying red and/or blue or amber flashing lights. These include police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, tow trucks, and vehicles used by vehicle inspectors, conservation officers, park rangers and special constables."

It goes on to say — and I quote again: "Know the rules — all traffic must slow right down when approaching stopped emergency vehicles displaying flashing lights (Exception: This rule does not apply if you are on a divided highway and approaching the emergency workers from the opposite direction.)"

It is surprising to see that these were included in the driver's handbook — not because I don't think that they should be there, but because we are debating a motion to create the rule cited in the handbook. After reading this, he went through the *Motor Vehicles Act* and couldn't find any corresponding rules in the legislation. It is surprising to me that we are teaching new drivers rules that we don't have the ability to enforce.

While we are on the topic of road safety, I would like to take the opportunity to raise two other issues that are laid out in the driver's handbook immediately after the section on passing emergency vehicles. Those are passing school buses and slowing down in construction sites. These rules fall into similar categories as the proposed "slow down, move over"

rules. However, we have seen increasingly that those rules are being ignored by motorists.

Just recently, we have heard a number of accounts of stopped school buses being passed on the Carcross Road even though they had their lights flashing. The RCMP have responded to those complaints and said that they would undertake some action to try to crack down on those infractions. Again, we already have rules around reducing speed through construction sites, yet we also see drivers not adhering to those speeding rules. The point that we are trying to make is that without effective education, fines and enforcement, these changes won't have the teeth necessary to make the desired changes. If you Google search "slow down, move over" in British Columbia, the first news story contains several video recordings of tow truck drivers being passed in the immediate lane by nearly every single car.

So to be really effective — and you know, we've amended the motion — it will require changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act* legislation and for that, we appreciate it. We are supportive of the "slow down, move over" change. We are happy that we have kept the word "developing", and we look forward to a vote.

Mr. Cathers: In speaking to the motion as amended, I do want to speak in support of the concept of this legislation as brought forward by my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition. It is disappointing that the government has found a way to delay taking action on this. We see that this is really becoming a pattern with this government, such as in areas like this — delaying it until the *Motor Vehicles Act* is reviewed in a year or so until we might see a product out of that. We have also heard reports of longer timelines for that review, such as that it might take a couple of years.

This is an issue that — as my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition noted and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King just noted as well — is a common-sense measure that in fact reinforces what is already recommended in the Yukon driver's handbook as far as safety around emergency vehicles. There aren't teeth right now in the *Motor Vehicles Act* to deal with this issue. It's a gap that was brought to my colleague's attention by someone who is affected by this legislation in their daily work. They expressed this concern and believed that it would help protect their personal safety.

The Leader of the Official Opposition also noted a number of instances from other jurisdictions of where there had been serious accidents and fatalities associated with people hitting a police officer or an emergency services worker who was stopped at the side of the road.

This is an area where, without this Liberal government even delaying their *Motor Vehicles Act* review, it is certainly possible to make a discrete amendment. This would not even be a very complex amendment to make to the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

Again, it is becoming an unfortunate pattern with this government that, although they claim to take good ideas where they come from, when it comes to requests made of the

Motor Vehicles Act, rather than the government taking specific actions as they could and dealing with the matter quickly, they push it down the road and cite the excuse of the review as the reason for not taking action.

We have seen it as well in the area of the comprehensive health review, that government has frozen the funding to a number of important NGOs that are valuable service providers, in many cases — especially in the Department of Health and Social Services — and is leaving those NGOs very squeezed and refusing to address their needs and pressures, offering a handful of them a cost-of-living increase, while failing to respond to increased pressures for their services and increased needs of Yukon citizens.

Even in the area of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, we see another year of inadequate funding by this government in operation and maintenance, when you take out the cost of the hospital pension plan that was added in from this year to last year and when you take out the costs of cataract surgery — which the government only acted on after we pressured them relentlessly last fall.

Again, much as with this motion and the excuse that it has to wait until the *Motor Vehicles Act* review is done, for those important service providers — they are hearing the answer from government that they are refusing to take the action that is necessary until sometime down the road — in another year or so, maybe — when the health care review is completed.

They are using these reviews as an excuse to not act on issues that are affecting the lives of Yukoners each and every day. It is unfortunate. We are not surprised. This government is gaining a reputation for being more interested in photo ops and platitudes than in actually taking action and dealing with the issues brought forward by Yukoners. This is another area where, rather than responding with a pretty simple piece of legislative amendment that it would take to bring forward a change to the *Motor Vehicles Act*, or bringing forward separate legislation to implement the “slow down, move over” legislation rules — as proposed by my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition — we instead see this government citing another review as an excuse not to take action.

I just hope this is not another case where they form yet another panel to do the job of governing for them at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to Yukoners, while we see a lack of action and lack of government — even in the case of the health care review, setting the terms of reference for this body that they have formed, which is just bizarre for government to form a panel and not provide them with instructions or terms of reference on what their job is.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion as amended. It is unfortunate that it has been amended.

I should just also note that the government has a pattern — particularly the Minister of Community Services is fond of standing up on government private members’ days when the Official Opposition or the Third Party proposes amendments to a motion — and the minister and some of his colleagues like to complain that we haven’t shared the text to the

amendment with them first. I would point out that, again, this is a case where they are not practising what they’re preaching.

We’ve seen the case where the amendment the government made was not shared with this side of the floor before they proposed the amendment to the motion, which really does substantially weaken the motion my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition brought forward which would have called on government to act quickly to deal with this issue instead of the rather long-winded excuse from the Minister of Justice about the legislative process, explaining something that didn’t need to be explained to anyone in this Legislative Assembly and the rather long-winded remarks by the Minister of Highways and Public Works and his weak excuses on why this could not be dealt with immediately.

Instead, he’s going to push it off — a year, two years, maybe more. Maybe this issue will still be waiting for the next government to act upon at the rate that this Liberal government acts and the way that their timelines around reviews — including the comprehensive health care review — start slipping a few months every time they talk about it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up my remarks on this motion.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on the main motion as amended?

If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Hassard: Where to start? It’s interesting to stand here today. You know, we brought forward a motion that I thought could be agreed on by everyone. Unfortunately, we heard a lot of things here today that didn’t necessarily need to be said. I think it’s important to point out that this isn’t an issue that just arose. It’s almost a year ago that I wrote a letter to the Minister of Highways and Public Works to talk to him about this issue. It was several months before I got any response to it. It certainly didn’t appear that it was something that the minister felt was a priority.

We’ve heard from the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Community Services how, when we’re dealing with legislation, we have to take time, we have to consult and we have to really think it through, but it’s interesting, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you right now a great example of something that this government did that there was no consultation on — they just went ahead and did it — and that was giving the Premier a raise. They pushed that law through lickety-split. It really makes you wonder where the priorities of this government lay. Is it in making sure that their paycheque is big enough, or with the safety of Yukoners?

We say time and time again that governing is about priorities; it’s about leadership. I think this is a very good example of where the government could have shown leadership and really set some priorities, but instead they have chosen to take this motion and punt it down the road a year or two. Thankfully the Member for Takhini-Kopper King was able to change the wording enough so that the government at

least now is committed to do it. I guess time will tell and we'll see if it actually happens, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yeas, nil nays.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion as amended carried.

Motion No. 436, as amended, agreed to

Motion No. 437

Clerk: Motion No. 437, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake:

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 clear what steps the Government of Yukon will take to ensure that these important services resume.

Ms. McLeod: It's my privilege to rise today to speak to Motion No. 437 in regard to the uncertainty around the provision of mental health supports that are important to many Yukoners.

As you know, for nearly three months this winter, the staff at Many Rivers were on strike. We're all aware of the challenges that the organization has been experiencing. This is including problems that were in place before employees of the organization entered into this labour dispute and strike, followed by a return to work and almost immediately a layoff of the employees.

Yukoners have benefited from the ability to receive counselling in their home communities. These are important services for many people. The same Yukoners who rely on

these services were negatively impacted as they found disruptions to these important, and sometimes life-saving, counselling services.

The most concerning aspect throughout this entire issue has been the silence and lack of leadership from the Minister of Health and Social Services. At a time when the minister should have been stepping up to help resolve an issue concerning essential health services such as this, she was nowhere to be seen.

We have an issue, not only with this continued gap in essential services, but where counsellors and support staff are unfortunately out of work, and this is after being in and out of work going back for several months now. These workers have the unfortunate reality of trying to pay bills, make mortgage payments and pay other expenses all while not being paid. That's tough on them, and as I said, the minister's silence on this has been unfortunate.

This labour disruption and inaction from the minister has meant that Yukoners who are in need of essential mental health services are still struggling to receive them. This affects all of our communities, not just Whitehorse.

I can recall when service to my community was limited to a brief visit from a counsellor only one day every two weeks. I recall writing to the government of the day, imploring them to ensure that these services were available on a permanent basis, because the residents in my community who needed that support could not get by with just one day every two weeks. Finally getting permanent mental health support services in Watson Lake gave the community members the full-time support they needed and allowed them to develop that essential relationship with their counsellor.

When we spoke about this matter in the Chamber a few days ago, I was alarmed by the comments from the Health and Social Services minister. She indicated that, in her opinion, the much-lauded mental health hubs were picking up the slack in the absence of private counselling services and that was a satisfactory solution for her. This of course raised a number of red flags. It left us with the impression that the Minister of Health and Social Services would be okay if an NGO providing mental health services simply folded and completely closed up operations.

Mr. Speaker, mental health supports and counselling are very personal and intimate relationships. People who seek and require these services are going there for very difficult reasons, and this can be very emotional and stressful for a person. So when a Yukoner loses access to their established counsellor, this can be a huge blow. It is not as simple as going out and finding a new counsellor. This is not like shopping for a new car mechanic. These are very personal decisions, and people develop these close relationships with their counsellors. It is not as simple as telling people in need, "Oh, don't worry, there is a counsellor available at the department to help you, possibly in about six months."

The minister's lack of attention to this file has been unfortunate and concerning, and Yukoners are hurting as a result. That is why we brought this motion forward today. There is a lot of uncertainty right now, and the minister needs

to take some steps to end this uncertainty. She can do that by making clear to Yukoners what her government is going to do to ensure that these important services continue.

The minister needs to stop the wait-and-see approach. The minister needs to provide a plan, and that plan needs to be up front and clear with Yukoners. Where do we go from here? Yukon needs leadership on this matter and Yukon needs an answer.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would like to thank the member opposite for bringing this motion forward today, just as I thanked her two weeks ago when she brought forward the motion regarding non-governmental organizations. It is unfortunate — I don't know whether we are going to have enough time to get through the motion today, but it is an important motion, and I do look forward to the debate here in the Legislature.

Let me begin by acknowledging that Many Rivers has been contributing to a strong Yukon by providing important health and well-being services for 50 years now. I think they started in 1969. That is an amazing track record. It is impressive for any organization and one of the things that I had thought a couple of years ago, when we were looking at Many Rivers, I thought, "Oh, I look forward to the day when we get to stand up in this Legislature and acknowledge that track record over time."

Unfortunately, all of us here in the Legislature have been concerned over past months as Many Rivers has been dealing with several internal issues.

First was that the society failed to submit their financial statements, which led to them going out of compliance. I think they were originally due to have it in by the end of June. Then that AGM was cancelled; then they had a three-month window in which to get their financial statements in and they didn't do that. If memory serves, Mr. Speaker, by the first of August, they went out of compliance.

Not long after that, they had an internal labour dispute. I just heard the member opposite, the Member for Lake Laberge, suggesting that we should have — I think I heard her say that we should have taken a leadership role and got involved in that labour dispute. I want to say in this Legislature — and I've said it previously — that it would have been inappropriate for us, as a government, to get involved in that labour dispute. It was not and is not within our jurisdiction.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

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

Mr. Cathers: I think the minister just made an inadvertent mistake, but he was just misidentifying the Member for Watson Lake as me.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: That is correct. I heard that myself.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I did mean to say the Member for Watson Lake — my apologies, Mr. Speaker.

What I have said here in the Legislature is that a labour dispute, beyond a labour dispute with our own union, which does also happen to be the union that represents the workers of Many Rivers — it is not appropriate for us to get involved in that labour dispute. In fact, when the labour dispute happened and some of those comments started to come out in public, I took the opportunity to call the head of the union and ask that person directly whether or not I was mistaken in my understanding. I was told directly that it is not our role; it is the federal Canada *Labour Code* that is the correct jurisdiction, and it would not be appropriate for us to be involved. So I disagree with the Member for Watson Lake's suggestion that this would be a responsible thing for us as a government to do; in fact, I think it would be inappropriate.

While the labour dispute was underway, the next thing that happened was that there were some complaints from members of the community who were concerned with the society and how it was dealing specifically with membership and meetings, and those complaints came to the registrar of societies. When I spoke with the department about those complaints, I asked what the role of, for example, myself as minister was, and it was to not be involved in any way. In other words, the registrar has the responsibility to consider those complaints and to respond to them. So again, it would be inappropriate for me as a minister to interfere with that work, and I hope that this is not what is being suggested here today.

What I can say is that, throughout that time, I remained open to speaking with any person about the issues to provide them the information that had been provided to me, to hear their concerns, to pass them on to the registrar and to continue to engage with the public, but not in any way act to displace the role of the registrar, which is to take decisions about those complaints.

That investigation wrapped up late last week. A decision was taken. It is my understanding that the groups involved were informed this past Friday and that they are now taking that information from the registrar. It is at their discretion how they respond. In fact, I understand that Many Rivers is meeting this evening. The group called the Community Counselling and Support Services group has put in to form a new society as of two days ago. This is the group that called themselves "Friends of Many Rivers", and they came to the Legislature just a couple of weeks ago to speak to us and to witness this Legislature in action.

Just two weeks ago today, the Member for Watson Lake introduced another motion that I spoke to earlier in the Legislature. It urged the Government of Yukon to recognize the value of services provided by non-governmental organizations. I was looking forward to continuing debate on that motion, and I am still hoping that the Official Opposition will call it back to the Legislature.

I said then — and will say again today — that non-governmental organizations are important to the fabric of this territory, and we will continue to work with them to ensure

that the critical services they provide are appropriately resourced and delivered effectively.

In discussing non-governmental organizations and support, sometimes I have heard from members opposite that we shouldn't ask any questions about how societies are spending government contributions.

I have heard today that we should act right away. We should tell societies what to do. For example, we should just speak to Many Rivers and tell them, "Okay, here. Go ahead."

I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services will talk about the service provision of these non-governmental organizations, and I will stick to talking about the role of societies and how we, as a government, treat those groups.

I want to say that there are many non-governmental organizations here in the Yukon, thankfully, and they do a lot of great work. But all of us, as ministers, work with a range of non-governmental organizations. As a responsible government, we acknowledge that providing support and effective oversight to our funded NGOs is essential, and we need to ensure that the services being provided by any society — and funding provided — are being used well and effectively.

I started off talking about Many Rivers and that this is 50 years for them. How long a society exists doesn't necessarily determine their performance. It's not, "Okay, you've been around for decades. We don't need to keep an eye on those funding agreements." No, we absolutely do.

I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services has posed these very important questions to Many Rivers to understand how the funding supplied to Many Rivers has been used to supply counselling services. Again, I'm sure she will speak to that.

There was something that the Member for Watson Lake talked about. She talked about action — needing action. That is the action that is ongoing. It is critical that we make sure that the funding we supply is serving all Yukoners.

Let me speak for a moment on the registrar and the decision that came out late last week. Generally, where the registrar decides to make an order, the objective of the order is to provide a society a clear path to addressing relevant issues so it can come back into compliance as quickly as possible. The registrar has provided Many Rivers with a letter outlining the impact of his findings on their filings and has explained the steps that the society must take in order to become compliant with the requirements of the *Societies Act*.

The registrar's findings for Many Rivers are that there was a failure to admit some complainants as members upon receiving their membership application and processing payment of their membership fees. There was a failure to maintain an updated membership registry that also includes these members and a failure to follow due process regarding annual general meetings.

The steps for Many Rivers, if they wish to come back into compliance, are to allow those people who support the vision of Many Rivers — of counselling, contributing to healthy individuals and families — to pay their fees and become

members of the society and then to host an annual general meeting and report on their financials. Beyond that, if they wish to and if they do come back into compliance, then there is still that question that remains regarding the Minister of Health and Social Services to continue her work around ensuring that the services were provided against the funding that was provided by Health and Social Services.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, on Monday — this past Monday — a group of Yukoners who had been rallying in support of counselling services in the Yukon took the steps to form a new society: the Community Counselling and Support Services Society. This group, Many Rivers and no doubt others in the territory all have ideas and thoughts about how best to provide counselling services here in the Yukon.

With respect to the motion as proposed by the Member for Watson Lake — we agree that counselling support services are very important for Yukoners. We also agree that the Minister of Health and Social Services does and should show leadership on ensuring that these services are available for all Yukoners. We do not agree that the government should have a role in dictating the future of Many Rivers. That is not our function and not the role of a responsible or accountable government.

Active volunteers and non-governmental organizations make for strong communities. To that end, our job at Community Services is to support societies — non-governmental organizations — about how to be in compliance. In our societies, if there is staff or an executive director, they are responsible to the board. The board is responsible to the members. The board and the members are responsible to their own constitution and bylaws, and the constitution and bylaws have to be appropriate under the *Societies Act*. That's the way it works.

There is nothing in that chain saying that we as a government will step in and tell a group about how they should work or what they should do. That's not the role. The role is for us to tell them about how they are compliant or not. They choose to form, they choose to dissolve, and they choose to exist.

The challenge that I have with the motion, as the Member for Watson Lake has proposed it, is that we are supposed to provide certainty regarding the future of Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services. That is not our role.

I think it is important that there be action around services. I thank the Minister of Health and Social Services for continuing to focus on those services. What I can also say is that, each time I have been approached by citizens who want to ask questions about Many Rivers, I've always talked about the importance of us, as a government, making sure that there is that service provision for counselling here in the territory. That is what I think is critical here.

The challenge that I have with the motion as it is worded is that we're supposed to somehow pick a winner with Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services or another group. I think what we ought to be doing is working to support any organization that is working to provide counselling services here in the territory.

Those questions are not for us — in the role of this Legislature — to use motions to say, “Here, Many Rivers — you are the group. Off we go.” No, I think that the job of Community Services is to ensure that those societies are compliant and in order, and I think it is the job of each of us as ministers, as we work to support non-governmental organizations, to make sure that any funding agreement that we give to them is supporting the delivery of services as per those contribution agreements.

Speaker: Order, please.

The time being 5:30, this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

Debate on Motion No. 437 accordingly adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

**The following legislative returns were tabled
March 27, 2019:**

34-2-196

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 208, *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19* — French first language secondary school project (McPhee)

34-2-197

Response to oral question from Ms. Hanson re: American Sign Language program (Mostyn)