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HANSARD

Thursday, April 11, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2019 Spring Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
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

Ted Adel	Copperbelt North
Paolo Gallina	Porter Creek Centre
Don Hutton	Mayo-Tatchun

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Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 11, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

In recognition of Youth Parliament

Speaker: Prior to proceeding with the Order Paper, the Chair will make a statement regarding the Yukon Youth Parliament program which the Legislative Assembly has reintroduced after an eight-year hiatus.

We are fortunate to live in a territory and a country with well-established and stable political institutions. The health and prosperity of our society depends to a great extent on the health of our political system.

The Youth Parliament is one initiative that this Assembly has undertaken to reach out to some of our younger citizens and give them a hands-on experience that will give them valuable insights into our democratic and legislative processes.

We are extremely fortunate that we have this year over 20 bright and enthusiastic youth parliamentarians who are eager to learn more about the political system of our territory. I would also suggest that we, the Members of this Legislative Assembly, also stand to learn from them as they engage in a simulation of what we do.

The program involves youth parliamentarians meeting with current Members of the Legislative Assembly, attending educational sessions on the procedures of the Assembly, and participating in a model parliament session tomorrow.

Students will have the opportunity to, in the same manner as Members of the Legislative Assembly, vigorously debate motions that are of interest to them and topical in their lives, while at the same time allowing them to hear opposing viewpoints argued just as passionately.

The schedule for this year's Youth Parliament coincides with this 2019 Spring Sitting. This provides participants with the opportunity to, on this day — that would be today — observe the Legislative Assembly in action as well as to watch Oral Question Period and Orders of the Day. Later in the day, there will also be presentations and discussions with others who are involved in the political process, including local media and the Commissioner of Yukon.

To replicate the Westminster model of Parliament followed in the Yukon, participants will be organized into political party caucuses. The political parties will be fictitious creations for the purposes of this simulation, but students will learn how real caucuses operate.

The Youth Parliament session will occur tomorrow in this Chamber starting at 10:30 a.m. and will be recorded for broadcast on community television channels and over the Legislative Assembly's radio station. No pressure, youth parliamentarians — no pressure at all; no pressure.

The session will run using a similar order to a motion day in the House and will include an Oral Question Period and debate on two motions. Members of the media at that time have also been invited to assist with a mock media scrum. Everyone wishing to observe the proceedings, including school groups, is welcome to watch from the public galleries.

This undertaking has involved a number of people who I would like to acknowledge — first of all, the youth parliamentarians. Members may recognize some of them as current or former pages. We have with us Emma Boyd, Sheridan Curteanu, Liam Russell, Bella-Sol Roy-Gelinas, Kassua Dreyer, Ralph Hermosa, Brianna Heal, and Elliot Etches from F.H. Collins Secondary School. They have, I believe, named themselves the Progressive Aurora Party. Welcome to the F.H. Collins students.

Their community members are: Sylas Itsi from the Ross River School and John Ethel-McLeod from St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction.

Next, we have the vigorous Official Opposition from Vanier Catholic Secondary School: Phoebe Qiu, Jordan Keats, Joshua Lauer, Heather Mislange, David Cowx, Amelia Wallace, Simon Lauer, and Judy Russell. They have named themselves the United Vanier Party. Where did you come up with that name?

As well, we have the powerful Third Party from Porter Creek Secondary School: Grey Capot-Blanc, Annie Li — who is doing dual duty beside me — and Donald Halliday. They have named themselves ADG, which apparently stands for whatever you wish it to mean. It might have something to do with their names.

The following teachers were also involved and provided invaluable support: Jason Cook from Porter Creek Secondary School; Sylvie Hamel and Janet Clarke from Vanier Catholic Secondary School; and Michel Emery from F.H. Collins Secondary School.

I would also like to thank Danielle Mager, the manager of public affairs and communications from the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, who has come from Yellowknife to assist us. She has been involved in multiple Youth Parliaments in Yellowknife. We certainly are very appreciative to have her expertise here today. Thank you for coming.

I would also like to thank all of the members of the Assembly and their caucus staff who were involved in last night's reception and who will be involved today and tomorrow. I would briefly say that I think all members — and the Commissioner, I'm sure, as well — were very impressed with the speed and the cohesion of the groups — that all parties came up with their provisional party platforms within about one hour and presented them in a very polished manner. I think the current MLAs who were present last night were extremely impressed — well done with that.

Sittings of the Legislative Assembly are very busy for all of us, so I especially appreciate the effort of all of the currently sitting MLAs for their participation at this busy time.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank Allison Lloyd, the Legislative Assembly's Clerk of Committees, who

has devoted countless hours to the organization of the Youth Parliament since we decided in January 2018 to revive this event. Thank you so much. The 2019 Youth Parliament truly would not be happening without your efforts.

Thank you very much, and I wish all youth parliamentarians a wonderful ongoing experience and a fantastic model Parliament session tomorrow.

Applause

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Are there any additional introductions of visitors?

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Istchenko: I want to welcome Mr. John McLeod here, from the great riding of Kluane. This seat right here can soon be yours.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any tributes?

TRIBUTES

In recognition of National Volunteer Week

Mr. Hutton: It gives me great pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Yukon's many dedicated volunteers as we celebrate National Volunteer Week this April 7 to 13. The theme of this year's celebration is "The Volunteer Factor — Lifting Communities", with a focus on communities becoming better prepared to respond to the unexpected and better positioned for a more sustainable future.

Volunteers are a special kind of people — compassionate, caring, selfless individuals who enrich our lives on a daily basis. Volunteers bring life to our communities through all the great programs and services they provide. In Yukon, we are fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers dedicating themselves to responding to the unexpected. They do that while contributing to community safety. They include 141 EMS volunteers who are active in 15 rural communities, 150 volunteer firefighters, 36 Whitehorse-based volunteer responders for the special operations medical extraction team, more than 100 volunteers who support ground and inland water search and rescue, 50 Yukon Amateur Radio Association volunteers, and 12 new heavy operations team volunteers.

These are incredibly important activities and we appreciate the selfless efforts of these dedicated Yukoners. Each and every one of us has had our life or the life of a friend or family member impacted in a positive way because someone chose to volunteer. They sacrifice their time to make our communities, our territory, and our country such a great place to live.

Our communities and our territory host many fantastic events that promote community engagement and make us all proud to call Yukon home. From arts and cultural events to bonspiels, to the amazing First Nation hockey tournament that

just wrapped up in Whitehorse, large or small, what makes each of these events possible is the participation of volunteers and their willingness to work hard to ensure that everyone gets to enjoy these events year after year.

I want to give special recognition to a group I mentioned moments ago, and that is our emergency medical service volunteers. These folks rise above and beyond the call of duty all too frequently to help Yukoners during some of the most difficult and challenging times in their lives. When we're dealing with oftentimes very stressful and traumatic illness or injury, these good folks are there like a warm fire on a cold day, providing light, heat, and comfort in a time of cold, dark, worry, and fear.

This willingness to accept the burden of providing solace and comfort at a most uncomfortable time is part of what makes these folks so special. I want to take this opportunity to mention a few who I have had the privilege to know for many years.

From EMS in Whitehorse, I would like to give recognition to Devin Bailey and Michael Swainson. In my hometown of Mayo — an incredible group of EMS volunteers, some with 15 years of service, most of them with 10, and some with five-plus. I would like to give a shout-out to Ian Spencer, Trevor Ellis, my sister Darlene Hutton, my daughter Nicole Hutton, Steve Therriault, my niece Chelsea Dolan, and William Hummel.

In Pelly Crossing, the heart and soul of EMS — David Bennett and Graham Swainson. In Carmacks — we had them as visitors in the House the other day — Lorraine Graham and Mike Waslyk. These folks contribute to making our communities great places to live and I thank them for that.

Organizations that provide volunteer opportunities in the Yukon include Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Conservation Society, Environmental Education Association of the Yukon, the social justice club and Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. All of these organizations and many others are leading the way to a more sustainable future.

The Government of Yukon and government services also offer opportunities to contribute. For example, almost 80 volunteers work at the Correctional Centre providing Alcoholics Anonymous support and cultural and spiritual support to inmates.

Yukoners also offer their ideas and expertise by participating in public engagement activities and by serving on government boards. Thousands of volunteers are providing a lift to our communities every year. In fact, according to Volunteer Bénévoles Yukon, 50 percent of Yukoners are actively engaged in volunteering activities. That is an incredible number, Mr. Speaker — that means 20,000 people. This statistic is a testament to the community spirit of our territory.

Thank you to all those volunteers for preparing our communities to respond and for helping to position our communities for a more sustainable future. We owe all volunteers a debt of gratitude and our more sincere and heartfelt thanks.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize a very special volunteer from my community. In 1953, a group of people donated \$200 each to establish a curling club in Mayo. United Keno Hill Mines donated their old warehouse on the bank of the river. It was a corrugated tin building, but it was only sided on one side, so there was a donation from a local sawmill that provided the tin, and with the help of volunteers in Mayo, they closed in the side of the curling club. This woman was part of the executive for the curling club for 55 years in Mayo — from 1953 until 2008, when she passed away. Last week, we celebrated the 11th Annual Irene Hutton Memorial Bonspiel. A role model for all volunteers, Mr. Speaker, she made our community and our territory a better place to live.

For all the volunteers out there, I want to say these words: Because of you, someone will have enough to eat tonight, someone will have decent clothes to wear, someone will have shelter, someone will receive medical care, and someone will learn the skills they need to survive and succeed. Someone knows that there is at least one person who cares. The world is a better place because you volunteered, and we thank you for it.

Thank you, mahsi' cho, merci, günilshish, and sógá sénlá'.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member for that wonderful tribute. I remember his mother very well and all those hours she put into the Mayo curling club.

I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to National Volunteer Week with this year's theme: "The Volunteer Factor — Lifting Communities".

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless" — a quote from Sherry Anderson.

Volunteers are the backbone of every community, big or small. They give of their time, their energy, and their knowledge without looking for monetary gain or for glory. Each volunteer who I know finds something that interests them and then jumps in to assist where they can — usually with a smile. Some start out helping their children raise funds for school, selling raffle tickets, selling chocolates, or helping at a bingo.

Then there are the organized groups outside of school — Guides, Scouts, judo, swim club, and the list goes on. All of these rely on parent participation and volunteers to ensure that it all moves along smoothly and to assist the coaches and the leaders.

Recently, a Yukon junior soccer event was held at the Canada Games Centre and I recognized many single people who were helping these children have a great learning weekend.

There is so much to do for so many organizations and groups, such as the Legion, the hospital volunteer program, or sporting events such as the Klondike Road Relay — to name

only a few. These folks promote good deeds and improve the quality of life within their community.

Of the millions of volunteers in Canada, I specifically want to thank all Yukon volunteers. By recognizing all those who give freely to their community, we show that we value their contribution and help. We appreciate the time given and the impact their efforts make on others. A simple thank you note or letter, a small gift card, flowers, or simple recognition and applause is usually all the reward needed.

So thank you and we applaud all our Yukon volunteers, past and present. Our communities are better because of what you give. Well done.

Applause

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to pay tribute to National Volunteer Week and the thousands of Yukoners who regularly donate their time and energy to causes that move them.

Volunteers make things happen. They lift the community and make where we live that much better. You can see and feel the effects of volunteers every single day. Volunteering isn't only important for supporting the things we care about in the community; volunteering feels good. When we volunteer and we have the opportunity to work with others, our spirits are lifted. Our sense of purpose is lifted when we see how our efforts have helped those around us.

Anthropologist Johnnetta B. Cole said, "The ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are." Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more.

On behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus, I want to thank all the volunteers for sharing yourself and your energy with those around you.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling the Yukon Judicial Council annual report for 2018, which is tabled pursuant to section 37(1) of the *Territorial Court Act*.

I also have for tabling the workers' advocate annual report for 2018.

Mr. Cathers: I have today for tabling a press release dated October 29, 2015, entitled "Proposed Elections Act amendments tabled", including quotes from the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the NDP.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Today I have a legislative return for tabling.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Whitehorse to improve trail connectivity between Porter Creek and Whistle Bend.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada, in partnership with the provinces and territories and in collaboration with stakeholders such as Diabetes Canada, to plan and implement an approach to the prevention and management of diabetes in Canada through a national diabetes strategy, as outlined in Diabetes Canada's *Diabetes 360°: A Framework for a Diabetes Strategy for Canada*.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Whitehorse General Hospital improvements

Hon. Ms. Frost: Our Liberal government is committed to a people-centred approach to wellness that helps Yukoners thrive and to making strategic investments that contribute to healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities across the territory. Earlier in this Sitting, I announced that our government will be replacing the aging health centre in Old Crow with the new health and wellness centre that will have increased capacity to support the community's health-programming needs.

Today I am pleased to confirm two other major improvements that are in the works at the Whitehorse General Hospital: upgrades to the Meditech health information system and further planning and design for a new secure medical unit.

Our government is pleased to support the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the replacement of its current hospital information system, Meditech, through the allocation of \$7.2 million from the territorial health investment fund. The Yukon Hospital Corporation has been using Meditech as its hospital information system for almost 20 years, and it is a critical component in the delivery of many hospital services.

A contractor has been selected by the corporation to provide professional services for the planning and implementation phases of Meditech. They bring a team of information technology, project management, and clinical experts who are very experienced in Meditech implementation in a variety of Canadian health care settings.

Most client records in Health and Social Services are maintained in paper form at the point of care or in electronic systems that are not well-integrated. My department will collaborate with the cooperation and implementation of an integrated electronic health record. This is an exciting opportunity to establish a collaborative and connected health

system for Yukoners through an integrated system for electronic health and wellness records.

An integrated electronic health record provides authorized clinicians with a complete and comprehensive near-real-time view of a client's journey through the Yukon health system. In addition to enhancements for clinicians, implementation of an enhanced medical system will include a patient portal that enables clients to easily and securely access their health records online. Meditech is in use in seven provinces and two territories, and there are more than 50 successful regional installations across the country.

Yukon Hospital Corporation is also planning for the development of an improved secure medical unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital to replace the existing secure medical unit, which does not meet current client and patient safety standards. We provided Yukon Hospital Corporation with \$1 million this year to set out a detailed plan and design of the size, scope, services, and number of beds required for this new program.

There will also be a budget allocation in future years. This planning and design work has begun and will provide the government with information on a detailed program plan for beds, program areas, patients areas, a staffing plan, projections for operation and maintenance and equipment costs.

The improved space will also accommodate patient dining, a lounge, and a medication room. The hospital is considering the empty space above the emergency department for this new unit. With this information, the government can work with the hospital and other key stakeholders on the final scope and cost of the re-development of their second floor, which includes a secure medical unit.

I'm very pleased to be working with the corporation on these two initiatives.

Ms. McLeod: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to rise today in response to this ministerial statement. Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition has been calling on the government to replace the Meditech information system at the hospital since 2017. Although we wish the minister would have listened sooner, it's better late than never.

We're thankful the minister has finally listened to calls coming from us and from the Hospital Corporation on this.

On the topic of the secure medical unit — the Official Opposition has again been raising this issue with the government since last year. Once again, we thank the minister for listening to us on this important topic and we look forward to seeing both the new Meditech system come in at the hospital and the new secure medical unit as well.

With regard to the secure medical unit — obviously the budget tabled on March 7 highlights \$1 million for this project. The *Yukon News* did write a story about this very topic on March 25. Based on some questions in that article, I asked the minister questions in the House on March 26. Unfortunately, at the time, the minister was not able to answer, but since she has had some time to go back and get a bit more information, I am hoping she can provide an answer today.

On October 18 of last year, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, in response to questions about the open space at the hospital, told this House that "... we have done some extensive planning through the development of that as an improved secure medical unit." They went on to say — and I quote: "At this point, we have done detailed functional planning. We have created schematic designs and options associated, as well as high-level costing."

So my question for the minister on March 26 — which I didn't get an answer to — was: Since the Hospital Corporation told us last year that extensive planning and even designs had already taken place, we are wondering what is different about the \$1 million this year. I am hoping that the minister can answer that today.

On October 30 last year, the minister said that the secure medical unit was going to cost in excess of \$7 million. When I asked last month, she was not able to confirm whether that was still the projected cost, so I am hoping she can tell us if \$7 million is still the projected cost of the secure medical unit.

Finally, the five-year capital concept says that the project is to be completed by the 2021-22 fiscal year. The minister was not able to answer this question on March 26, so can she tell us today what the increased O&M estimates for the secure medical unit are? Do the future budget projections include the O&M estimates? If the minister does not have them today, when will they be available?

Thank you again. We think that these are important and worthy initiatives.

Ms. White: We are happy to be told about these two investments in the Hospital Corporation again. As we understand it, the current secure medical unit at the hospital is insufficient in meeting the needs of patients and this investment seeks to remedy that.

I would like to point out that while we are investing in the physical infrastructure at the hospital, too many people are slipping through the cracks and not receiving the support needed to not end up there in the first place. All too often, Yukon residents with mental health illnesses only receive help or support once they have hit rock bottom, and they end up seeking support or solutions from our legislative offices rather than from medical professionals. Worse, they end up slipping through the cracks and being taken to the jail or the police station. I am not disparaging those places; I just don't think that the criminal justice system is the best social safety net to catch the most vulnerable Yukoners.

I think that it is a bit pre-emptive to pat ourselves on the back when we're being told about a whole-of-government approach while the government is also overseeing a nearly 50-year-old mental health counselling and support services organization collapse in the Yukon.

As for the Meditech investment — I think this is really a promising investment for the Hospital Corporation. We appreciate that Yukon's medical professionals are always working hard to deliver the best patient care possible, and we are supportive of investments in technology that improves their ability to do so.

We are also excited about the possibility of better patient tracking. I noticed the data referred to in the Yukon Hospital Corporation needs assessment was delivered by Meditech-collected programs, so we are hopeful that this new investment will allow the Yukon government to answer basic questions about hospital operations and costs in a timelier manner.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you to the members opposite for their feedback and comments. They are very interesting with regard to the mental wellness support unit. Historically, the program was eliminated and cut from the budget, so we're speaking about restoring something that was completely obliterated and removed from our program service delivery model.

It will take a little effort to get it back on track. I believe we have done a very good job in doing that by establishing our mental wellness support units in our communities, working with the Hospital Corporation to ensure that we have necessary supports for the clients who have fallen through the cracks. I absolutely agree with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — we have clients who come forward that need specialized supports and we certainly don't want them to end up in a position where they are not supported. Our Liberal government will continue to make strategic investments that contribute to healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities across the territory.

The two improvements that we are discussing today will ensure that the Whitehorse General Hospital can contribute to top-quality health care services to Yukoners in the future. The enhanced Meditech system will enable organizations, health care providers, and others in the health system to realize new ways to provide care and extend their reach to connect patient services across the continuum of care. The platform will also support increased communications between providers to support greater collaboration when working with patients. As noted, Meditech is in seven provinces and two territories, and there are more than 50 successful regional installations across the country. This initiative has been identified as a critical proposal through the comprehensive health review. The expert panel to the comprehensive review supports the development of an integrated health record system.

I am glad to hear the Official Opposition support the investment today. They certainly didn't during their government, when they repeatedly turned down requests from the Hospital Corporation to fund the medical systems.

The creation of an improved secure medical unit at Whitehorse General Hospital will also enhance the hospital's ability to provide quality health care to patients with mental health disorders. The current staff at the secure medical unit include registered psychiatric nurses, social workers, and licensed practical nurses who will work closely with the hospital's First Nations health program. The new unit will provide opportunities to improve the physical space and introduce aspects of a healing environment which will promote better outcomes. It will also provide an opportunity

to improve recognition and respect of First Nation needs and cultures.

There are two important projects to improve client care at the Whitehorse General Hospital. In the not-too-distant future, we will also be turning our attention to the operating room expansion. Our Liberal government believes that all Yukoners deserve quality health care that meets their needs, and we are very proud of making investments to make that happen. Thank you.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Electoral reform

Mr. Cathers: At the heart of our democracy is the expectation that no party should be allowed to stack the deck or gerrymander the system. Past governments of every stripe have respected the importance of ensuring that any changes to election laws are fair and unbiased and are done through an all-party process.

The last two times the *Elections Act* was changed, the all-party Members' Services Board reached unanimous agreement on the changes. If the Premier wants to actually work with other parties and protect the integrity of his electoral reform commission, he can agree to an all-party process to appoint the commission and set their terms of reference. There is absolutely no legitimate reason for him to go with his one-party-decides-all approach.

We are asking the Premier: If he cares about our democracy and ensuring that the game isn't rigged in favour of one party, will he agree to an all-party and collaborative process? If not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will answer this question again, two days in a row. There are current processes — absolutely — that deal with the current system. Yes, the member opposite is correct that the Members' Services Board is the agency that would be dealing with that.

This is different, Mr. Speaker. We went to the polls last year and two parties committed to a process for electoral reform — two out of three; not the Yukon Party — and we're keeping good with that commitment.

On November 22, 2017, we passed a motion to work in cooperation with all political parties on the appointment of a non-partisan commission, and we're going to follow through on that commitment. We believe that a non-partisan commitment is the way to go, and the committee will be a non-partisan committee.

Mr. Cathers: The Premier made mention that the motion was passed, but in fact he is not following through on that because he's not working in cooperation. The fact is there are long-standing processes for considering changes to the *Elections Act* and the electoral boundaries that involve all parties so no party can stack the deck in its own favour. The approaches exist, the models exist, and there's absolutely no reason the Premier cannot use these models or a similar model.

Instead, he is departing from a principled all-party approach and is undemocratically using a model that stacks the deck in favour of the Liberals. The Premier knows what he is doing is wrong. Barely 24 hours after announcing the electoral reform commission, he was already facing pressure from Yukoners concerned with his one-party-decides-all approach. So what did he do? He delayed the deadline for the commission from April 26 to May 3, a few days after the Legislature rises. It appears he's trying to hide from the scrutiny of the Legislature.

Will the Premier agree to abandon his one-party-decides-all approach, which stacks the deck in favour of the Liberals, and actually work with other parties?

Hon. Mr. Silver: This is the reason why we want to go to a non-partisan committee. The Yukon Party has either zero interest in something, or it's overly partisan and overly political each and every time. I reached out to the two opposition leaders to talk about a draft terms of reference. What does the Yukon Party say? That I have already decided; that I already have terms of reference, which is just not the case. Now they're trying to say that I somehow am stacking the deck, when we have already committed that, once that ECO process goes through and shortlists a list of people, we will work with the opposition leaders. We will take input from them.

Again, I'm just so disappointed with the Yukon Party's tack on this. Do they want to work together on this, or do they not? It seems that, at every turn, it has to be political; it has to be partisan with them. We're trying to get away from that.

There will be a three-party committee and that committee, those names, will be public, and the people will decide if the three people who are picked for this committee through an open process are political in nature or not. It is our desire to make sure we have people who believe in democracy and can get together and work, go into the communities, listen, and educate the Yukon population on different models and different opportunities, and that's what we're going to do.

We're going to direct our attention to Yukoners through the feedback they gave us through engageyukon.ca, not the Yukon Party, on this one.

Mr. Cathers: I have to give the Premier kudos for his attempts at spin, but it's ridiculous to suggest that a non-partisan committee can be appointed only by the Liberals. The Premier has had two and a half years to work with the Official Opposition and Third Party on coming up with a model we can all agree on. His own "what we heard" document on electoral reform says that the very large number of respondents want elected officials to work together more collaboratively and cooperatively for the good of all Yukoners. This is a perfect opportunity to do that, but instead, the Premier strolled downstairs to check the box and make it seem he consulted when, in reality, he was just telling opposition parties how it's going to be.

Instead of working with everyone, he has gone with a partisan approach where he writes the rules, he picks the members of the commission, and his deputy minister, who reports to him and carries out his instructions, can literally

give direction to the commission. This is a one-party-decides-all approach that appears to stack the deck in favour of the Liberals.

Will the Premier commit to at least hold a referendum before making any changes to our democracy?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Checking the box on consultation — I think we went through that on the Peel, Mr. Speaker.

Again, we have told the opposition that we would work with them. We do that. We work with them and then we get accused of not working with them. We have said that after a shortlist comes back from the Executive Council Office, we again will work with the opposition parties. Again, we are being told by the opposition that we are stacking the deck in our favour.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, it is really difficult to work with the Yukon Party on this. I want to give credit to the NDP and to the Leader of the Third Party for her thorough analysis of the conversations that we have had and her thorough conversations and questions as we work on that draft terms of reference, which was put out on Tuesday for everybody to see. Again, it's a draft and we are willing to take into consideration options based upon that.

To somehow say that extending the timeline for applications is somehow stacking the deck in our favour is absolutely ludicrous. Again, what we will do is continue to commit to work with the opposition parties — as difficult as that can be sometimes — and we will absolutely be working forward on a non-partisan commission.

Question re: Electoral reform

Ms. McLeod: The Liberals are stacking the deck in their favour on electoral reform and it is because they want to control the outcome. You need only look to the recent electoral boundaries commission for proof. As you know, the boundaries commission is a well-established all-party process to examine and make recommendations about our democratic system and the weight of our votes. The problem for the Liberals is that this independent commission came back last year and made recommendations that would have weakened the Liberals' chances in the next election. So, what did they do? They voted against this independent commission — all because the commission made a recommendation that would hurt the Liberal Party election chances. Once bitten, twice shy. This time around, the Liberals wanted a process only they controlled.

Will the Premier abandon his partisan one-party-decides-all plans and commit to true collaboration?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Just repeating the same false information over and over again doesn't make it true. We have answered the question on the electoral system before and we will answer it again. We will continue to answer and defend the actual reasons why we do what we do. The Yukon Party can continue to use their spin and they can continue to make — if they say it, it all of a sudden is true — that type of narrative. I think Yukoners are smarter than that. I think, with the whole system, when you consider a 20th riding at the very last inning and all the way through that process, it is not even

in the draft report — it is not even in there. And then we hear all summer long that Yukoners are not in favour of an extra riding. I think it is pretty clear as to why we decided that we had to make that move. It was a carefully considered move for sure, Mr. Speaker. It was something that took us an awful lot of time and deliberation — something we took very seriously.

Again, when it comes to electoral reform, I have answered the questions on the legislative floor here. The Yukon Party can continue to make this partisan; they can continue to make this political. What we want to do — our intent — is to do the exact opposite.

Ms. McLeod: The problem with the Liberals is that they often confuse the interest of Yukoners with the interest of the Liberal Party. What is in the interest of Yukoners is a true collaborative all-party approach to electoral reform that doesn't stack the deck in favour of one party.

The Premier knows that there is nothing preventing him from going with a process that allows all parties equal say on the commission and their terms of reference, but the problem is that the Premier has seen what happens when an independent commission starts looking at our election system.

In the case of the boundaries commission, they came back with a recommendation that was bad for the Liberals, but good for Yukoners because it gave better representation to rural Yukon. Now the Premier wants to avoid a similar situation, so he is rigging the game so he can get his favourite outcome.

Will the Premier admit that he is going with this one-party-decides-all approach for purely partisan reasons?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, in a bizarre way, the opposition is making it sound like I am lying to the people, and I believe that is out of the rules of the parliamentary procedures here in the Legislative Assembly.

I have been told my intent. My intent is to make sure that we have a committee that is non-partisan. Just because the Yukon Party wants a specific way of doing things — that is good to know, but what is stopping me from going in their direction is the people of Yukon have asked for a non-partisan committee. That is what we are going to do.

Again, this is all about who the three people on that committee are going to be. It is not as if the names of these three individuals are going to be hidden from Yukoners. They will be out there, and we will be judged based upon who those individuals are. Do they have their minds set up already like the Yukon Party and like the Yukon Party did with the Peel plan, for example? Or are these people who actually want to see a democratic process that takes a look at the engagement process and at all of the different considerations of what electoral reform means to Yukoners and who will have a great conversation with Yukoners, with educational consideration there as well, and all in a non-partisan area?

I know that a non-partisan committee is a strange thing for the Yukon Party, but over here in the Yukon Liberal Party, we want to make sure that the decisions made on this committee are free of the political spin that we are hearing right now from the Yukon Party here in the Legislative Assembly today.

Ms. McLeod: The Electoral District Boundaries Commission wanted to give rural Yukoners more of a voice in this Legislature, and the Liberals were worried that this would hurt their chances. They also wanted to make Whistle Bend its own riding and give them equitable representation. The Liberals shut down this independent panel's recommendations for partisan reasons, but they have learned, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier said to himself, "Never again", and so next time the Premier would make sure that there was no independent commission that he couldn't control the outcome of. His plan — the Liberals set the terms of reference for the electoral reform commission; the Liberals appoint the members of the commission.

Does the Premier understand that his political manipulation of the electoral reform process will undermine Yukoners' confidence in the system?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I understand that personal attacks in the Legislative Assembly do definitely undermine the sanctity of these hallowed halls, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to the legislative process, we made a commitment to Yukoners, and we are going to stick to that commitment.

We also made a commitment to work in partnership with the opposition leaders, and we have done that and are going to continue to do that.

We will continue. Once we get a short list, we will work with the opposition parties. Again, Mr. Speaker, if you were to listen to the spin machine of the Yukon Party, you would think that we are doing this in a silo and that is completely untrue. All of the preamble to that question, although fun to listen to, is not the case and not true. We made a commitment to Yukoners, and we are going to stick to that commitment.

Question re: Diabetes treatment

Ms. White: For individuals with type 1 diabetes, the usual treatment option has been the monitoring of blood glucose levels throughout the day with finger pokes and insulin injections at every meal and snack.

Over the years, new technology and research have provided individuals with diabetes access to continuous glucose monitoring systems that provide the individual with ongoing blood glucose levels throughout the day and night at five-minute intervals. Individuals can now see how their bodies are reacting to food and insulin activity right on their phone. By seeing these in real time, it allows them to make more informed decisions throughout the day about how to balance their food, physical activity, and insulin, avoiding hypo- and hyperglycemic events that have huge negative impacts on their health.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide a description of the pilot project that is now being run by the department?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question. It's a great question because really when we looked at the concerns that have been brought to our attention — I have sat down with the families of children who are impacted by type 1 diabetes and we discussed quite thoroughly the constant glucose monitoring tools that are

available. Of course, we discussed the services that have never been provided historically to these individuals and we really wanted to ensure that we bridge that gap. We did that very effectively with their input. We looked at the type 1 diabetes continuous glucose monitoring pilot project which began on January 1, 2018, and is running until March 31, 2020. We provided some funding — \$10,000 per family — which is pro-rated for families who joined the program after January 2018.

There are two groups eligible for the pilot project: children 18 years of age and under and young adults, ages 19 to 25, who receive funding through type 1 diabetes support. Currently there are nine children and six adults enrolled in the trial program. Certainly we are open to further feedback, and of course as we look at pharmaceuticals and the costs associated, we want to be able to be as open and transparent as possible to services.

Ms. White: Unfortunately for some individuals with type 1 diabetes, they are ineligible to be part of the pilot program simply because of their age and are being denied access to this improved technology. There are individuals, Mr. Speaker, who, through no fault of their own, are diligently monitoring their glucose levels through finger poking and are still having high or low blood glucose readings and, in some instances, are in hypoglycemia unawareness.

These symptoms are life-threatening and can involve frequent ambulance calls and emergency room visits, extended hospital stays, and negative health impacts. We don't know the base cost of a visit to the emergency department, but we do know that an ambulance callout alone is tagged at \$600.

One individual I have been speaking to has had to use ambulance services numerous times a month through no fault of their own. Not once or twice, Mr. Speaker, but nine times in a month.

Why would a person be denied access to a continuous glucose monitor and have to rely on the more expensive ambulance calls?

Hon. Ms. Frost: A great question. Certainly, those are things that we are looking at when we look at gathering data from the trial and exploring options for the future.

Health and Social Services is open to collaboration with the Yukon Medical Association, the pharmaceutical association, and of course our partners to look at finding solutions. Clearly, the rising cost of insulin and the impact of the increased costs for diabetes patients have recently of course received a lot of coverage and we have heard this same question in the Legislative Assembly previously. We will continue to work with the clients in ensuring that all Yukoners are given the services and supports that they require. We will certainly take that under advisement as we look at the collaborative health care model and we look at efficiencies around supports for all clients and, in particular, those who suffer from type 1 diabetes and other chronic illnesses that have come to our attention.

Ms. White: Pilot projects are a great way to test new technology. When a pilot such as this one is used as a reason

to deny other people access and coverage for life-saving health care through modern technology, something is wrong.

Five ambulance calls cost \$3,000. Put on top of that the unknown emergency costs, and I'm guessing we're talking close to \$5,000 a month in unnecessary health care costs. A one-time \$4,000 purchase of a CGM that an individual can use with their smartphone, plus the \$120-per-month cost of the strips needed, brings these costs well under ambulance calls and treatment at the emergency department.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Department of Health and Social Services look at the research already available and make this proven, more reliable method of glucose monitoring available to all individuals with type 1 diabetes?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I believe that one of the things I have said in this Legislative Assembly is to look at the access to the drug that has not been readily available in the past. We want to make sure that this happens. It is not about denying clients the services that they need; it's about making sure that we look at all chronic illnesses and how we provide services efficiently to all of our clients. We really want to use this as an opportunity to look at all of the pressures that we're seeing. We certainly don't want to have clients continually coming to the hospital in an ambulance. We want to try to look at preventive measures and what services we can provide.

We will certainly link that back into the comprehensive health review when we look at the cost-drivers, like pharmaceutical costs. We look at the drug costs and efficiencies in client service supports throughout the Yukon — not just for those under 25. We want to make sure that we provide supports for everyone. We certainly want to acknowledge the parents who have come forward and are participating in the program, giving us the necessary information to help better align service needs for all children and all adults who suffer from type 1 diabetes.

Question re: Electoral reform

Ms. White: We have got to give it to the Premier that he has us and the Yukon Party on the same side of an issue.

When this House debated a motion on appointing a committee on electoral reform in November 2017, the Premier said that he would cooperate with all Members of the Legislative Assembly when appointing that commission. We don't believe that a short conversation in our office with the Premier is him adequately reaching out. He did not seek our input prior to his announcement, nor has he responded to our correspondence on the matter since.

In a letter sent to the Premier, we requested that the appointment of the committee members be done in a non-partisan, collaborative manner, that we should be consulted on the terms of reference, and that we have some input on the scope of the mandate. We have yet to hear from the Premier on these matters, Mr. Speaker, and we want to work together.

Will the Premier commit to pausing the electoral reform process and engaging with the opposition parties in an open, transparent, and meaningful manner to ensure that the creation of the electoral reform committee can receive all-party support?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We committed to working with the opposition members. We had one engagement conversation and received one letter back. We have responded to those letters and those concerns in that. The draft terms of reference are exactly that — draft terms of reference. We are happy to hear the comments from the opposition members as far as what their commitments are.

We have already taken a look at shortening some of the timelines that we thought we were going on because of the input from the NDP. They wanted a shorter time frame — we said that's good. We also heard that they wanted to extend the period for applications. We then accommodated that as well.

When it comes to the short list — we will be happy to work with the opposition when it comes to that short list. As I explained to both members already, any names that they want to put forward — or any names that they have exceptions too — of course we will work with them on that as well.

Again, we have committed to doing these things. We are doing those things. We asked Yukoners about their priorities for electoral reform, and now we are looking for Yukoners to work on those priorities by becoming part of an independent commission on electoral reform.

Ms. White: In order for this committee to be successful and to be considered legitimate, the terms of reference and the principles guiding its mandate need to be agreed upon by all political parties in the Legislative Assembly. The Premier says he wants this process to be non-partisan, but when one party is calling all the shots and shortlisting the candidates, that is the textbook definition of partisanship.

If the Premier really is committed to this process — and I believe that he is — he needs to work with the opposition in a meaningful way. We can and we should work to do this the right way. We aren't looking for some hollow commitment from the Premier to include our input on this matter after the fact. We want him to actually listen to what we have to say ahead of time and then work to include our input into this process.

Will the Premier commit to a process that allows the two opposition parties to provide meaningful input on the terms of reference, the appointment process, and the requirements and desired qualifications of committee members?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe I answered exactly that question in my first answer. I will again commit to working with the opposition leaders and the opposition parties.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I don't feel like my questions were answered. It is really unfortunate that this government is unwilling to commit to working with the opposition parties to ensure that this process is perceived as legitimate. As it stands, a party that received 39 percent of the vote is making 100 percent of the decisions on the processes of change in our electoral system.

The Premier said that this process would be conducted in cooperation with all political parties in the Yukon Legislative Assembly, and I don't feel like that is happening right now. The Premier said that he would seek out our input, and I don't feel like that is happening now. He said that the appointment process would be done in a non-partisan manner — a

cooperative manner — yet he alone will be shortlisting those candidates — his party alone will be shortlisting them — and bringing them to the opposition parties. Mr. Speaker, it feels like this is a case of promises made and promises broken.

If the Premier will not commit to a reset on electoral reform, will he at least stop pretending that this process is being done in a collaborative and non-partisan manner with the opposition parties?

Hon. Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the member opposite, I still haven't heard a particular reason why we would have to slow down a process when the Leader of the Third Party asked me to speed up this process. So again, I am left a little bit confused with the two members of the NDP because I am hearing two different things.

Mr. Speaker, again: We will work with the opposition. We already are. We went down with a concept — not even a draft terms of reference designed. We went down there specifically to the two opposition leaders to have this conversation — to actually talk to the opposition parties before a draft terms of reference, and now we are being accused of something else. We listened to the input. We put out a draft terms of reference so that we could get more input because the Leader of the Third Party said, "I need more time to talk to the folks on our team." "No problem," I said.

Again, I don't know how this isn't considered working with the opposition. We know, based upon the comments in this particular debate, that the opposition is mentioning proportional representation. We know where the NDP stands on where electoral reform should go. That is why we want to have a non-partisan approach to this. Three people will be picked for this committee. My desire — and hopefully the desire of the other two opposition parties — is to make sure that those three people don't already have their minds made up.

I believe that, if you leave it to political parties, the process will be considered flawed. That's why this is non-partisan.

Question re: Aviation advisory committee

Mr. Istchenko: Sixteen months ago, the government passed the *Public Airports Act*. In it, they committed to set up an aviation advisory committee. The aviation advisory committee is still not set up, so can the minister tell us why, 16 months after the airports act was passed, the aviation advisory committee is still not set?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I'm happy to discuss the groundbreaking airports act again. As members recall — just as a recap — this piece of legislation was 25 years in the making, and this government is the first one to actually deliver on a piece of legislation that will actually lay down some rules as to how we govern and manage our airport facilities throughout the territory. For 25 years, this integral — an economic driver for the territory — was run without any rules, with no legislation, with fees schedules beside library fines in our administration manual. It's ridiculous, and we fixed that. We have this legislation.

We will be engaging with the aviation industry stakeholders on developing the Yukon aviation advisory committee's terms of reference in the next few weeks. The advisory committee will provide their feedback and recommendations on the draft terms of reference to me, as minister, and I will review and approve the final terms of reference once they are developed this year.

That's what industry asked me for; that's what I'm doing.

Mr. Istchenko: The contract to develop the terms of reference for the aviation advisory committee was only issued four days ago. That means it took this minister 500 days to even start thinking about developing the terms of reference.

Can the minister explain why it has taken him so long to start something he had promised that he would get done right away?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Where I come from, they call that leading with your chin. Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Yukon Party had 14 years to pass aviation legislation — an airports act — and they did nothing. That's more than 3,000 days of inaction. We took action. We passed the act. It was one of the very first actions I took as Minister of Highways and Public Works. We got that through the Legislature, and we had a very robust debate on that bill, which then became legislation. I'm very proud of the passage of that act.

Now we're looking forward to implementing it, getting the regulations, and having an aviation advisory committee in place. Again, that committee was something the industry wanted, because they felt they hadn't been heard in the past. They wanted an avenue to have interactions with the Minister of Highways and Public Works, the individual who looks after airports. They didn't have that in the past; they asked for that; we acceded that request. We said yes. We put the airport advisory committee in place. We are very excited about getting this committee started and rolling. We'll take the time necessary to get it done right.

As I said, this piece of legislation was a quarter-century in the making, and we have taken a little bit of time to get the committee in place, and we'll do it right.

Mr. Istchenko: I believe the minister just said the committee is in place. He might want to correct the record for those who are listening throughout the Yukon.

The contract to develop the terms of reference for the aviation advisory committee was only issued four days ago — some 500 days after he committed to doing it. I don't know what the minister is trying to explain with his Liberal math, but the one thing I did notice is that I thought it was very interesting that government is issuing a \$45,000 contract to go with an Outside company to develop these terms of reference for the aviation advisory committee.

Why doesn't the minister think that the department is capable of developing these terms of reference using existing resources?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I don't really know where to go with that preamble or that question. I don't agree with it, Mr. Speaker.

We will be engaging with the aviation and industry stakeholders on developing the Yukon aviation advisory

committee's terms of reference this spring. We said we would do that and we are going to do that. That process is beginning. I am very happy to say that it is beginning. It is going to be a targeted consultation with industry to find out where they want to see this go. The advisory committee will provide their feedback and recommendations on the draft terms of reference to me as minister, I will review and approve the final terms of reference once they are developed this year, and I will then form a committee.

Mr. Speaker, for more than 5,000 days, there was no action on this file under previous governments. We are taking action to bring in legislation that has been long needed. We are the only jurisdiction in the country, for a quarter-century, with no legislation governing our airports. I don't know why that was the case, but we fixed that. We did it because it was necessary. It was hard work and we debated it here on the floor of the House — I am proud of it — and we will now have legislation that will govern these important economic engines for the territory.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 464

Clerk: Motion No. 464, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(3) of the *Human Rights Act*, does remove Carmen Gustafson from the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators, effective immediately.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Since being appointed to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators, Ms. Gustafson has accepted a job that puts her in a conflict with respect to her appointment. Ms. Gustafson has consequently resigned from the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators. Although her term was brief, I would like to thank Ms. Gustafson for her contribution to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators, and wish her all the best in her new job.

I take pride in being able to bring this and a couple of other motions here this afternoon to the Legislative Assembly for the purposes of providing personnel and individuals to the Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators and the Human Rights Commission itself with respect to the process that is set out in the Legislative Assembly for the opportunity to do that and empanel this board here. Those are my comments for this motion.

Mr. Cathers: The Official Opposition will be supporting this motion. We note that this is the result of — this appointment and appointments to the Human Rights

Commission and the panel of adjudicators do go to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees. I would also note at this time that this is an area — first of all, the all-party committee on appointments to major government boards and committees is something that every party in this Legislative Assembly had committed to. It was not until I tabled a motion as then-Government House Leader that the committee was actually created. It was created by the Yukon Party and continued — we are pleased to see — under the Liberals.

But I would note as well, Mr. Speaker, in this area that the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators' appointments were referred to the committee outside of the list specified in the Standing Orders. We have, as the Official Opposition, and through processes including both the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges and the all-party Standing Committee on Appointments made to Major Government Boards and Committees — we have recommended that the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators be added to that list specified under Standing Order 45(3.2)(a).

We have also suggested a list of several other government boards now that this committee has proven to be successful for the course of over a decade in operations — that we believe it would be benefited by providing for an all-party process for reviewing those appointments. Those include appointments to the Hospital Corporation as well as other bodies that we suggested. Unfortunately, the government is in year 3 and has still committed to — has left it at, shall we say, committing to maybe review and possibly added it some point — maybe — but they haven't given us a real yes-or-no answer.

Again, that's an area that we would like to see added to the Standing Orders. With this specific appointment that is being dealt with here — the specific matter, I should say — again, we support that. We recognize that, in the case of a resignation from the panel, the government needs to take the action in the Legislative Assembly to achieve that. But we are disappointed that the Liberal Party has not been supportive to date of expanding this all-party collaborative approach.

Ms. White: In speaking directly to the motion, what I would like to say is that I would like to thank Ms. Gustafson for the work that she has done. It was her second appointment. I imagine that she brought a lot of who she is outside of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators to her job — which is enthusiasm, empathy, and her ability to see outside of herself.

We thank her for the time she was on the board. We wish her well in her new endeavours and we look forward to making the next appointment.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we support this motion.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard on Motion No. 464?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I would like to echo the comments regarding the work of Ms. Gustafson on behalf of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators.

It is unfortunate, in my view, that the member opposite is keen to take any opportunity to criticize the government — even a motion for someone to be resigned from a board that is an important part of our Yukon community. I look forward to the full support of this motion.

Motion No. 464 agreed to

Motion No. 465

Clerk: Motion No. 465, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(2) of the *Human Rights Act*, does appoint Judith Hartling to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators for a term of three years, effective immediately; and

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 22(2.01) of the *Human Rights Act*, does designate Judith Hartling as deputy chief adjudicator for a term of three years, effective immediately.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As you have just heard, the position of deputy chief adjudicator of the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators became vacant when the current member who held that position resigned. The position was advertised through the boards and committees advertising process. The all-party Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees has reviewed all of the applications and put forward their recommendation for the appointments to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators. It was tabled on April 8, 2019.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those individuals who put their names forward, as there were many qualified and outstanding applicants. We thank them for their willingness to serve on behalf of all Yukoners, Mr. Speaker.

By way of a brief introduction, I would like to highlight the recommended applicant, Ms. Judith Hartling. Ms. Hartling is a professional lawyer and has over 40 years of experience practising law, both in private practice and as a Crown prosecutor. She is retired from that practice. She has been a member of both the Yukon and Canadian bar associations. Ms. Hartling has given lectures on many areas of law, including criminal law at a variety of conferences and venues. She is also a major contributor to the Yukon cross-country skiing and biathlon communities, having coached and mentored athletes of a variety of ages.

Thank you to the standing committee for taking the time to make this recommendation, and I urge all members of the House to support this motion and the appointment of Ms. Hartling to the Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators as a member of that panel and as the deputy chief adjudicator.

Mr. Cathers: Again, with this motion — we will be supporting it. We do thank Ms. Hartling for putting her name forward as well as for the contributions that she has already made to the Yukon.

I do just need to correct the Minister of Justice and remind her of the fact that the referral of appointments to the Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators to the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees was not done through the Standing Orders. It was only temporarily done via letter, and that letter needs to be renewed when there is a changeover in ministers.

So although the minister chose to try to characterize it in another manner, I am pointing out the fact that this is an area where adding this committee formally and permanently in the Standing Orders would strengthen the all-party collaboration around appointments to major government boards and committees.

I think that it is fair to say that since that process has been implemented for the boards to which it applies, it has provided Yukoners who are putting their names forward with the comfort that they are less likely to be seen as partisan appointments by the government in power, and it provides an opportunity for Yukoners who want to contribute to their community and to their territory on boards and committees to put their name forward and to recognize that collaborative all-party approach that reviews them, based on qualifications, has been set up through this process.

Again, I do have to remind the minister that the request we made to add this committee formally in the Standing Orders was made early in this government's term. We have not received a yes-or-no answer in the third year the government is in office. It's disappointing to see the lack of interest in collaboration coming from the Liberal government on this.

In concluding my comments, I would like to thank all the members of the panel of adjudicators for their work in this area, and I wish Ms. Hartling luck on her appointment and thank her for putting her name forward.

Ms. White: I'm keeping my comments focused on Ms. Judith Hartling or, as I would like to refer to her, Judy. I am incredibly enthusiastic about this appointment. I know that she will bring her lawyer mind with her; she will bring her enthusiasm and empathy and the work and volunteerism that she has done in the territory so far.

I also thank the other members of the community who put their names forward to be on this. We wish Ms. Hartling success in her endeavours and we look forward to maybe not hearing about them here.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, she will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard on debate with respect to Motion No. 465?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am very pleased to bring these motions forward today on a day when we recognize

volunteerism here in our community. I agree with some of the comments made. This is a stellar appointment to the panel of adjudicators with respect to the Yukon human rights panel, and I expect full support by all members for this appointment, which has been recommended to the Legislative Assembly by an all-party committee.

Motion No. 465 agreed to

Motion No. 466

Clerk: Motion No. 466, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Speaker: It is moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to subsection 17(1) of the *Human Rights Act*, does appoint Karen Moir to the Yukon Human Rights Commission for a three-year term, effective May 24, 2019.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Ms. Karen Moir currently sits as a member and deputy chair of the Yukon Human Rights Commission. Her term is set to expire on May 23, 2019. Ms. Moir is a thoughtful, intelligent, well-spoken, and dedicated volunteer. Again, I'm happy to bring this on a day that we recognize volunteerism.

She brings a wealth of experience to the commission, as she holds a master of laws in international human rights law from the University of Essex. In addition, Ms. Moir has completed substantial additional continuing education and training in Yukon human rights law during her time with the commission. Ms. Moir has been an immense asset to the work of the commission in the promotion and protection of human rights for all Yukoners.

The all-party Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees reviewed all applications that were received and recommended that Karen Moir be reappointed to the Yukon Human Rights Commission.

Thank you to all those who put their names forward to serve on the commission. I would also like to thank the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees for their recommendation. I urge all members of this House to support this motion and the appointment of Karen Moir to the Yukon Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Cathers: The Official Opposition is pleased to support the reappointment of Karen Moir. We do recognize that this reappointment was recommended by the all-party committee. We thank her for her service to date and wish her well during her next term.

Ms. White: It is particularly rewarding when someone who has already sat on a government board or committee asks to be reappointed, so we are grateful that Ms. Moir has put her name forward a second time. We wish her continued success in that position.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Motion No. 466 agreed to

Speaker: Government bills.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 32 — Act to Amend the Securities Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 32, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 32, entitled *Act to Amend the Securities Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 32, entitled *Act to Amend the Securities Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is my privilege and honour to speak to Bill No. 32, *Act to Amend the Securities Act*. I realize that not everyone is so interested in securities. I am not sure how riveting securities will be for, say, youth parliamentarians, but I am going to work to try to interject a few adjectives here, such as keen, peppy, zippy — energetic adjectives, Mr. Speaker — because regardless of your excitement level, it is of course a very important issue and an important piece of legislation.

Before I outline the bountiful benefits of bringing forward these amendments to the *Securities Act*, I would like to provide some riveting background on how we regulate the securities industry and how we protect investors in the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon and all of the other territories and provinces are members of the Canadian Securities Administrators — CSA for short. The purpose of the Canadian Securities Administrators is to foster fair and efficient capital markets and protect Canadian investors from unfair, improper, or fraudulent practices. Among the tools that the CSA provides is a national registry system, the system for electronic document analysis and retrieval — also known, excitingly, as SEDAR. SEDAR helps stakeholders, professionals, and investors alike to be diligent by enabling them to look up important information about securities issuers — for example, corporations that offer to sell shares to the public.

Additionally, the CSA provides a “discipline list”. This list also assists with due diligence. It contains the names of individuals and companies who have been disciplined by principal securities regulators across the country — sort of like a “naughty list”.

Principal securities regulators are the eight provinces other than Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. None of the territories are principal regulators. Since the Yukon is not a principal regulator, when we need that kind of advice, we will consult one of the larger jurisdictions.

The CSA reviews securities legislation on an ongoing basis. Its overall aim is to strengthen protection for investors in all Canadian jurisdictions and to deter fraudulent and illegal trading. The CSA has identified five specific legislative areas

of potential weakness affecting investor protection. The recommended changes to the *Securities Act* will strengthen protection for all stakeholders, including Yukon investors. These changes will also help ensure that the Yukon is part of and consistent with a cooperative national system of securities regulation.

Our ongoing membership in the CSA and a memorandum of understanding that we signed back in 2004 commit us to make these changes to our legislation to ensure that our legislation is consistent with that of other jurisdictions. We would want to make these changes in any event. If we did not, we would put Yukon's stakeholders, including investors, at a disadvantage compared to stakeholders elsewhere in the country, as Yukoners would not have the same rules and protections and we would become the weak link in the national regulatory chain. Every jurisdiction has made, or is currently in the process of making, these changes to their securities legislation. I look forward to us debating this in the House.

As part of this process, all the principal regulators posted information regarding several of the changes on their websites. The CSA has also published the changes on its website, which all stakeholders — including those in the Yukon — regularly access. Most Yukon stakeholders are likely already aware of these proposed amendments from materials posted on regulator and CSA websites. They may still be holding their breath as I give this speech, but they may already be aware. However, in order to ensure that Yukon industry stakeholders are aware of these upcoming amendments, we sent letters to the investment community to inform them of these coming changes. We also invited them to note any concerns. Since they were already aware through dealings with other jurisdictions, we were not surprised that we received no responses. In this case, I count no news as good news from the investment community.

I would like to take the next few minutes to present each of the changes and explain why they are important and exciting. As already noted, these amendments aim to provide regulatory consistency and strengthen investor protection in a number of ways.

First, they will confirm that an order in any jurisdiction that sanctions or restricts a person, such as an investment dealer, will also apply here in the Yukon. As an example, the Ontario Securities Commission may find that an individual has been fraudulently trading or selling securities. If the Ontario Securities Commission issues an order that terminates the status of this person as a broker or a dealer and bans them from trading or selling securities in Ontario, all other jurisdictions will enforce that order in their territory or province.

As a result, if that individual decided to come to the Yukon with the intent of setting up shop here, the Yukon would recognize Ontario's order and ban that person from selling or trading securities here. This effect is automatic and would not require any further steps by the Yukon's superintendent of securities — which is a rather exciting

position in Community Services, Mr. Speaker: the superintendent of securities.

Another amendment gives the superintendent the power to make orders based on sanctions against a person in other jurisdictions. This confirms that sanctions issued against investment dealers outside of the Yukon can be recognized and acted upon here. For instance, if the Alberta Securities Commission finds that an investment dealer has done something illegal in Alberta, they may, for example, suspend the dealer from selling securities for a certain period of time in Alberta. The Yukon superintendent, under our amended *Securities Act*, may, with or without a hearing, be able to make an order that restricts the dealer's activities in the Yukon as well. This means that when one jurisdiction issues certain sanctions against an investment industry stakeholder, the Yukon superintendent has discretion to issue an appropriate order that will apply in the Yukon without receiving a complaint or conducting a hearing.

A third amendment will introduce the option of requiring additional disclosure requirements for financial instruments such as exchange-traded funds. An example of this is mutual funds traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Disclosure is where someone who sells an investment product such as a share in a corporation provides the potential investor with mandated information regarding the investment. With this new provision, as investment products change and as new products are created, the Yukon can establish requirements to ensure that Yukon investors are appropriately informed about the investment products they are buying. Just as a corporation selling its stock must provide prospectus documents in advance to prospective buyers, this amendment will require that purchasers of other investments such as exchange-traded funds receive additional relevant information on which to base their investment decisions in a timely manner.

A fourth amendment will clarify that, while civil actions regarding alleged securities law violations are in court, any limitation periods will be paused until the court matter is finished. A limitation period is a specific window of time after the occurrence of an event, after which legal action cannot be taken regardless of the allegations. For example, investment clients who believe they have been damaged by misrepresentation regarding an investment product will be able to pause or stop the clock on the limitation period while the matter is before the courts. The relevant limitation periods for the *Securities Act* vary, depending upon the circumstances, from six months to three years.

I was going to just comment on the suspense, Mr. Speaker, but I will leave it there. I recognize that securities regulation is not an everyday subject for most of us. This is why having the clock on limitation periods stop ticking until the issue is resolved in court will provide additional time and security for Yukoners to navigate these issues. A final amendment in the *Securities Act* will standardize how financial benchmarks are set and administered. Who knew benchmarks could be so exciting?

Benchmarks are standard interest rates and other financial reference points that can be used to set other rates or to set the

value of specific financial instruments. For example, the Bank of Canada has a critical interest rate known as the “overnight rate”. The bank announces eight times a year whether there will be a change in this rate. Retail banks use this rate as a benchmark when they set their consumer rates, such as prime rates and mortgage rates. The prime rates and mortgage rates, which are higher, will increase and decrease with the Bank of Canada rate. A benchmark could also be used to value a specific investment. For example, the value of an option to purchase shares in a road construction company could be tied to a benchmark, such as the value of Ontario’s 10-year municipal bonds.

To be clear, the Yukon would not set benchmarks on its own. They would be set by an agreement among all the members of the CSA. The objective with these amendments is to provide the authority in our legislation to allow for the appointment and oversight of a benchmark administrator to ensure good governance and to maintain trust in the financial contracts on which our economy is built. I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the role of the benchmark administrator has me on the edge of my seat.

Altogether, the amendments to the *Securities Act* will strengthen protection for Yukon investors. Equally important, the changes will strengthen protections for all Canadian investors, because no matter where they are located, they can be assured that, once these amendments are made across the country, they will receive the same level of protection no matter where they live.

In closing, I would just like to thank both the Department of Community Services and our very talented securities specialist from the department as well as the amazing work of the Department of Justice in preparing this bill. We had a very talented legislative drafter involved in this, and I just want to acknowledge the tremendous work of both on this project.

I look forward to further debate at second reading and in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 32. I know my colleagues across the way will be very excited to stand and speak to it.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the note of levity in the minister’s introductory speech. The *Securities Act* is an area that is quite dry for the average reader and highly technical. It’s also critically important in terms of our economic system, and I would like to join the minister in thanking the staff of the Department of Community Services as well as Justice and our technical experts in this area for their work on this. Without them, the Yukon government would have a great deal of difficulty grappling with the changes in this highly technical area.

I would also just ask the minister — during the clause-by-clause review of this legislation, we would look forward to some additional information. I have read through the legislation and it appears to be largely a technical and likely appropriately structured bill, but in the fine print, we will be asking some questions during Committee review.

I would also ask the minister if he could provide an update when he rises to conclude his remarks at second

reading as to the status of the CCMR initiative — that being the Cooperative Capital Markets Regulatory System. As the minister will know, the commitment was made a number of years ago by the Yukon to participate in this. According to a press release from yesterday, I understand that Nova Scotia has agreed to join the Cooperative Capital Markets Regulatory System. The Council of Ministers of the Cooperative Capital Markets Regulatory System welcomed Nova Scotia with the signing of an MOU just yesterday. Nova Scotia joins British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and Yukon as well as the federal government in the participation of it.

We don’t really have a lot of detail either on the status of that work. It does go back awhile. I will join the minister in attempting to spice up the debate by just adding a personal note that the commitment to join the CCMR process was a commitment that I made verbally while on a phone call with the federal minister’s office on the front porch of the Eldorado Hotel in Dawson City. That began the work that has gone on since that time. I know this is very technical and that the work that is being done by all jurisdictions involved takes a lot of work by their respective experts in coming up with a model that works, because securities is a relatively boring topic for many people. It is also one that we depend on when people’s — everything from investments to purchases — are dependent on a properly functioning regulatory system and, indeed, our economy here and across the country is directly affected by the operation of this system.

In concluding my remarks, I would just ask the minister if he could please provide us with an update now about the progress of the work toward the CCMR system and its expected launch and implementation date. If he is not able to provide that information here today, I would just ask him to get back to this House when he is able to with more information on that.

Ms. White: I would like to thank my colleagues for their educated responses. I am going to keep this extremely brief.

I would like to thank the officials for their work on this legislation for it takes a special kind of mind to work on and fully understand all aspects of legislation like the *Securities Act*. Most importantly, it takes a special kind of person to be able to explain it to laypersons, so we thank them for that.

This isn’t necessarily the most gripping legislation for MLAs and I would suggest that is possibly because it’s so confusing, but we do understand it’s an important bill to ensure harmony between the Yukon and other jurisdictions.

Again, I thank the officials and the minister and of course the Member for Lake Laberge for their comments. The Yukon NDP will be supporting this legislation.

Speaker: If the member now speaks, he will close debate on second reading of Bill No. 32.

Does any other member wish to be heard on second reading?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I agree with both members opposite that, in trying to find a way to keep it entertaining, it in no way takes away from how critically important this work is to ensure that our financial systems for Yukoners are stable and secure. It is incredibly important, even despite its complexity for someone like me.

It is highly technical work, and I again thank them for their acknowledgement of the officials who did all of the work on this, because that is definitely where the praise needs to go.

I don't have a specific update at my fingertips for the Member for Lake Laberge. What I can say is that I will get one and have it ready either for clause-by-clause debate or to pass across directly. I look forward to our discussion and the technical questions during clause-by-clause debate when department officials are here.

I can say that, overall, the approach was for multiple small jurisdictions to come together to make sure that we were protecting ourselves and working efficiently across all jurisdictions. What I will say about that is that, again, it is about being smart with our resources here in the Yukon to ensure that we are protected, while not having to burden the overall systems with a replication of securities and protection measures that are similar across many jurisdictions. I thank the members opposite for having initiated that work.

There have been some delays over time because some of it has taken much longer than we anticipated, but my understanding is that it is still coming forward in time. I don't have a timeline. I know that it is still in progress, and I will get a further update for the members opposite.

Again, thank you to all of the members of the Legislature for their support on this piece of legislation, and I look forward to Committee of the Whole.

Motion for second reading of Bill No. 32 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

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

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any general debate?

Yukon Housing Corporation

Hon. Ms. Frost: As the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, I rise today to present the 2019-20 capital and operation and maintenance budgets for the Yukon Housing Corporation. Before I begin my address, I would like to introduce the officials who will assist me today: Pamela Hine, president of Yukon Housing Corporation, and Val MacMillan, manager of finance at Yukon Housing Corporation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the staff and the board of the Yukon Housing Corporation for their continuous hard work and dedication to making more affordable housing options available to Yukoners and going above and beyond on a daily basis.

Healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities are a priority for this government. To have healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities, Yukoners need to have homes that fit their needs and that they can afford. This budget will continue to work toward that goal. We are bringing the future into focus with the three goals of the Yukon Housing Corporation's strategic plan.

We are a trusted housing partner. We are renewing and rebalancing community housing, and we are strengthening our corporate stewardship. We are not working by ourselves. Our partners in our communities are helping us to deliver housing that meets their needs.

As a trusted housing partner, we support housing stakeholders by continuing our investment in housing programs that Yukoners rely on and launching a new program to fulfill our commitment to energy efficiencies.

We are receiving federal funding under the 10-year national housing strategy that will rebalance and support our existing programs as well as renew and expand our community and social housing. Our grants and loans programs have established that we are a trusted housing partner, we are here to work with our communities, and we strive to achieve local housing results. Our new housing initiative fund is a partnership program that supports increased affordable housing options to Yukoners across the housing continuum.

We have had two successful intakes: June 2018 and February 2019. From the 2018 intake, we were able to fund 10 projects that will result in the creation of 110 new affordable homes for Yukoners. We will announce the 2019 successful proponents as the projects are approved. After the first intake and the proven success of the housing initiative fund, we are excited to continue to support this program through the \$3.6 million that we have made available for 2019-20.

There is \$1.5 million allocated to continuing to offer the municipal matching rental construction program again this year. This grant contributed to 40 new rental units across the territory in 2018-19. This has become a very popular grant and, as such, we have increased the annual allocation to reflect the maximum uptake of this program. We have allocated \$1.75 million for the developer build loan program, which was launched in 2018. It provides construction financing to developers even when it is difficult to get support from a traditional lender and will allow for new builds throughout Yukon.

Our home ownership loans program helps Yukoners who need support to buy or build their own homes but are unable to get a loan from a traditional lender. We have committed \$2.5 million to our first mortgage loan program, \$750,000 for our owner build program, and \$100,000 to our down payment assistance loan program. We also support Yukoners who own their own homes and need help to make sure that their homes are safe, healthy, and accessible. We have \$1.7 million available for our home repair loan program. This is broken down into \$1.1 million for a partial subsidy and \$600,000 for forgivable home repair loan programs, depending on the client's income. The \$200,000 committed to for the rental and secondary suite loan program will help Yukoners to maximize the use of their property.

We are designing our loan programs based on the needs of Yukoners. Our loans need to be relevant, effective, and designed for maximum benefit. We have reduced the amounts allocated for our loan programs in the budget to better align with program uptake by Yukoners over the past several years. If we receive greater than expected uptake, we will make more funding available.

First Nation governments are huge providers of housing in the Yukon. Together, we are working to make sure that Yukoners in all of our communities have access to safe, adequate housing. We are renewing our First Nation partnership program by making \$1.5 million available this year.

Additionally, we are making sure that First Nation housing is energy efficient by investing just over \$1.5 million in our new First Nation energy retrofit program. This program will support energy upgrades in First Nation housing, which in turn will contribute to housing sustainability, create jobs, and support a greener economy.

We know it is important to build new housing, but it is also important to invest in repairs and upgrades. We are renewing and rebalancing the Yukon Housing Corporation's housing stock. We own over 800 housing units Yukon-wide that are home to low-income Yukoners, seniors, and Yukon government employees.

This year we have budgeted \$800,000 to begin the design of a new multi-use 10-plex in Old Crow that will help address the social, seniors, and staff housing concerns in that community. This will also support the new health and wellness centre being planned for Old Crow.

To make sure that existing homes are safe and healthy for years to come, we are investing \$2 million in repairs and

upgrades to social, seniors, and staff housing across the Yukon.

We have committed \$1.4 million to converting single family homes into duplexes in both our staff and social housing to increase the number of homes we can offer in our communities.

We are working toward building resilient communities under the *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change*. We have committed \$2.1 million to make energy-efficiency upgrades to social, seniors, and staff housing.

We know that there needs to be more affordable housing available in Whitehorse. Recently, the Bureau of Statistics reported that the vacancy rate in Whitehorse remains below three percent. That is why we have committed \$300,000 for the design of a mixed-income housing project in Whitehorse to address the housing needs of a variety of Yukoners.

We are also supporting the Challenge Cornerstone Affordable and Supportive Housing Development with \$4 million this year. This major project will provide affordable housing in Whitehorse and supportive housing for Yukoners who need help gaining and maintaining housing.

This is just some of the good work being done by many of the dedicated officials and staff at the Yukon Housing Corporation. Canada's Top 100 Employers project is a national competition to determine which employers lead their industries in offering exceptional workplaces for employees. Yukon government has been recognized, since 2016, as a top employer for Canadians over 40 — as a top family friendly employer. As an employer, we are proud of this recognition. More importantly, we are proud of our employees and the work that they do for Yukoners.

Through our training budget of \$50,000, our staff are learning new skills and increasing their client service delivery. Our staff takes pride in working to find solutions to affordable housing as the Yukon population and economy continue to grow.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, with our partners, we are implementing the housing action plan for Yukon. We are increasing affordable housing options across the territory by making effective use of federal funding and we have extended the life of the municipal matching rental construction program.

We are taking a new approach to staff and social housing through collaboration with the private sector on models that promote economic growth in our communities. This budget continues to work on the housing action plan and puts the Yukon Housing Corporation in a position to maximize existing housing and to incentivize and support new housing projects.

With our partners, we will work to make sure that we provide the housing solutions that Yukoners need. Together, we will build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities in the Yukon.

Ms. Van Bibber: I thank the department officials who are present here today and the staff back at the office.

With respect to the review last year of the Yukon Housing Corporation's loan programs, I am wondering if the minister can provide the results and an explanation of how the budgeting process was carried out this year, as it seems that the funds allocated to the home ownership programs have decreased. This includes the down payment assistance program, the first mortgage program, and the owner-build program. Because budget documents don't give any indication that these loan programs were undersubscribed as the full amounts allocated look to have been used, can the minister please outline what the subscription to these programs was in 2018-19 and whether this was lower than in previous years? Also, was there any funding unused or lapsed that we may not be aware of during this time period?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Our loan programs aim to help Yukoners who have trouble getting a traditional loan or a mortgage through a bank to buy, build, or fix their homes. As the member opposite highlighted, there are a few of those within the Yukon Housing Corporation. We are in the process of modernizing the programs to be relevant to the changing housing needs of Yukoners. We have reduced the amounts available for loan programs in this budget. These budget amounts better align with program uptake by Yukoners over the past several years. Last year, for example, the uptake on our down payment assistance program was \$26,000. This program had \$500,000 budgeted. Obviously there was much more money than was needed, so we reduced this amount to \$100,000. We believe that this will sufficiently address the needs of programs, and future budget allocations will be considered based on the uptake of these programs by Yukoners.

Our government is really clear that we are striving for efficiencies in how we deliver programs and services, and we will continue to work across all of our departments to improve our budgeting processes. If we see changes in this coming year and in future years, certainly we would look at the necessary amendments as required to better align with services to ensure that the Yukon Housing Corporation is providing programs and services in a fiscally responsible way and that we are making the resources left over at the end of the year readily available up front at the beginning of the year and not turning them over as unspent resources. We are really trying to be responsible, but more importantly, it's looking at addressing housing needs throughout the Yukon without really reducing amounts of program funding, but doing it in a way that makes sense. If we see any decline, then we will make adjustments and we will bump up our supports elsewhere. That's what the corporation has done very effectively.

Ms. Van Bibber: We have recently seen record high prices for average homes and lot prices released. It's getting harder for families and individuals to move from rental into home ownership, so these decreases appear to be counterintuitive to helping people access mortgages and build homes.

Can the minister confirm whether funding for these programs will be expanded to meet demand should the need

arise? I know you said more funding will be made available. I'm wondering where that money would come from.

Hon. Ms. Frost: In my opening comments, I did say that we believe that the efficiencies around programs and services for this particular line item, based on what we've seen historically in the decline of uptake, really resulted in some of the changes. If in the future there are future pressures and we're seeing more interest, then certainly we can align that accordingly. As noted, we have a number of line items here that the corporation has some flexibility in moving around if we're seeing some uptake perhaps in some areas and not in others. We want to be as flexible as possible to align with the demand of Yukoners' requests.

Ms. Van Bibber: Can the minister please provide a breakdown by community of applicants to each of these housing loan programs — those ones that we have listed — and also the municipal matching program? I would also be happy to receive this information by a legislative return.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to the loan distribution by location, we have in Carcross one loan for \$7,000; Carmacks, we have one loan for \$134,000; Dawson City, there were seven loans to the tune of \$1,339,000; Haines Junction, there were three loans for \$241,000; Marsh Lake, there were four loans for \$606,000; Mayo, we had one uptake for \$208,000; Teslin, there were two for \$69,000; Watson Lake, two for \$20,000; Whitehorse, 36 for \$4,118,000. The total: 21 community projects for \$2,634,000. The total combined for all of it is 57.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that, minister.

Further to the home ownership programs seeing a decrease in funding, there also appears to be a decrease to the rental and secondary suite loan program. Will there also be extra funding made available should there be a rise in uptake on these particular programs?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for your patience. The secondary suites or the rental suites — the applicants can apply under the housing initiative fund or the municipal matching grant. So there are opportunities to look at accessing resources through those two programs as well.

Ms. Van Bibber: Can the minister please provide an update on the government's plans to increase seniors housing capacity in Whitehorse? Can she confirm whether assessments have been done in the communities to see what changes need to be made toward seniors housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What we have with the seniors — the question around access to seniors housing in the city and then of course in the Yukon communities — we have, right now, a very innovative and exciting project that we are embarking on. It is the Whitehorse mixed-use housing project. We are proud to invest in a mixed-use housing project in Whitehorse, and we have budgeted a total of \$18.3 million toward this project. That is really to look at a number of different client groups and incorporate it into that as more seniors housing units for the City of Whitehorse. We are looking at working with our communities as well as we look at future opportunities in rural Yukon communities. Our goal is to ensure that we better align with the needs of seniors in the Yukon.

I am really happy to say that the Housing Corporation participated in the aging-in-place consultation and engagement throughout the Yukon — some really great feedback on what they would like to see in their respective communities. As we go ahead and look at working with our partners in our communities — whether it is through the municipal matching grant or through the housing initiative fund or this partnership build loan program — it is really to try to highlight some of the key priority areas. One is, of course, seniors, and the other is affordable housing for our communities.

When we look at the project in my community, for example — we don't have a seniors unit in Old Crow, nor do we have anything in Pelly Crossing. There are some communities where we really need to start looking at seniors units. Carcross is another community.

As we go ahead and look at where the priorities lie, we want to make sure that we better align with client service needs and try to put our energy into those communities, working with the municipality or the First Nations. I am really looking forward to that.

Just for the record, we do not have a lot of seniors on the waiting list right now. We have our housing stock in our communities. I just recently announced that we opened up the four units in Carmacks. The vision is to really ensure that we have that throughout the Yukon and have opportunities to expand that. Currently, we are looking at Wye Lake Manor in Watson Lake and are trying to upgrade that to provide more units there as well.

We are certainly taking that into consideration. Currently, the total for seniors on our wait-list is 114 throughout the Yukon. The vision and goal is really to have zero, and the means by which to do that is using the new initiatives and the new projects that we have announced recently.

Ms. Van Bibber: You must have read my mind. That was my next question: What was the wait-list for seniors? Perhaps if I could just get a breakdown by community — and again, she can do that with a legislative return.

If seniors want to transition out of their own homes or rentals into social housing due to any number of reasons — whether it be health or financial reasons — I just have a question on the process. If a person wants to apply for seniors social housing in a community but owns their own home, is it a requirement to sell that home before they actually make an application?

Hon. Ms. Frost: So I can note for the record the previous question around seniors in the communities — we have two in Carcross, five in Dawson City, one in Faro, two in Haines Junction, one in Pelly Crossing, and 103 in Whitehorse. That is the list that we have, and the rest are at zero.

With regard to whether or not a senior can apply for Yukon housing while they own their own homes, there are no parameters around that. They can apply and get on the wait-list for the Housing Corporation's seniors housing units and, after that time, they will be required to take the necessary

steps to ensure the disbursement of their assets to move into a seniors unit.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that answer.

You mentioned the new project that is going to be happening on Jeckell Street. I am not sure if it was mixed use or mixed income. I got a bit confused. Are there specific units allocated for seniors either in the Housing First complex or in the new mixed-use complex?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am very proud to be investing in a new mixed-use housing project in Whitehorse on the 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street property that is owned by the Yukon Housing Corporation. "Mixed use" means that it is intended for multi-generational groups of individuals — so not prescribing specific categories at this point. I think it will really be determined by our community engagement and looking at supporting a combination of priorities. We certainly want to make sure that we have seniors units in there. Part of the mandate or direction for that came from the engagement with our aging population and through the aging-in-place summits that we have had. The seniors made it quite clear that they wanted to look at a multi-generational integrated model that puts them in a facility where there are other folks who they can better interact with. I am very excited about that.

Ms. Van Bibber: A touchy-feely question — some seniors or residents have pets. I know if I had to leave my pet, it would be very unsettling because they become your companions and best friends. Pets can ensure that a resident stays active and it wards off loneliness as well. Are there any situations where a pet is allowed in a Yukon Housing unit? Is it possible that policy could be developed to allow pets in certain situations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I absolutely appreciate the question because I know that oftentimes what we are hearing through our aging-in-place summit is that seniors need the companionship, whether it is through a mixed-use facility or allowance of their pets in our facilities. I do know that the Housing Corporation and the housing navigators really work hard with the seniors to accommodate their requests, ensuring that they have access to a unit that accommodates their pets. It would be difficult for us — I think it is really trying to balance and to accommodate those seniors who have medical challenges like asthma or some breathing allergies. We have to take into consideration all of that with our limited units and try to accommodate direct access to the outdoors without the senior having to bring the pet through the facility to get to the outside. What I understand is that accommodations are made and the department does the best it can to accommodate their requests in a timely fashion. Sometimes it takes a little while to find the right unit that suits the needs of the tenant.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for that clarification. I had picked that out of the aging-in-place document, so it is obviously somebody who is in a unit that does not allow pets.

Blood Ties Four Directions' tiny house project has garnered a lot of attention in this last little while. Has the Housing Corporation considered doing something similar for seniors or social housing needs?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Great suggestions — certainly the project with Blood Ties Four Directions really sets, I think, the standard that we want to look at in terms of meeting the client needs. Tiny houses — is that the way of the future? I don't know, but I do know that we will continue to have that dialogue. We just recently partnered with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for 10 tiny units in Haines Junction.

With regard specifically to seniors, we certainly have to have that conversation with the seniors as we continue to have our dialogue on the aging-in-place discussions to see if that is a vision of theirs — I think in terms of resources available and of course priorities in trying to build according to the parameters that they describe as wanting and needing.

Ms. Van Bibber: Through the series of meetings on aging-in-place which eventually ended up in the report, it was very nice to see the topics from people and the little comments — all very easy to read. I was wondering if the minister could confirm whether any housing-related issues that were brought up at the Whitehorse meeting specifically were also inserted into this report.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to just acknowledge that it would be some 18 months ago when I had the first meeting with Seniors Action Yukon, when they came forward and said, "We need to have a voice and a process going forward that better aligns with our needs." At that point, it was very enlightening, because I have seniors directly in my circle who I care dearly about, and I want to make sure that we align with their needs. We looked at housing and housing issues.

Right away, as soon as we had discussion — not focusing so much on social programs or service supports around seniors — we integrated Yukon Housing Corporation into that mix in the planning discussions, so we always had staff readily available at the aging-in-place summits and engagement sessions so that we can better align and capture what the seniors are saying with regard to housing and really trying hard to bump up the Housing First Initiative — so trying to keep the seniors at home longer and with better accommodations through the Housing Corporation profile and their budgets and then working with Health and Social Services so that we can have home care supports.

The re-enablement unit at the Hospital Corporation allows for that nice transition into their own homes out of the hospital — lots of great debate and discussions around housing needs and redesigning of the criteria for seniors housing.

Ms. Van Bibber: On to a few questions on social housing: We are wondering about the current number for the wait-list on social housing and whether there are any additional social housing units to be built, other than the one at Jeckell Street. If so, which communities and when?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

Currently on our wait-list — the number is continuously dropping and we want to continue to work toward eliminating that list. Interestingly enough, we don't have a huge wait-list for non-seniors within our communities.

Currently, in Carcross, we have three on the wait-list; Dawson City, there are 13. I just want to note that through the Klondike Development Organization and this partnership build and the municipal matching grant, we have worked very closely with the Klondike Development Organization to better align with the needs there to try to provide services.

In Ross River, we have 11 non-seniors on the wait-list. We are continuously working with Ross River Dena Council, and we have done that in the last two years. We have met with them and participated in in-depth discussions with the federal government to try to get some resources into the community. We currently have our housing units that are ready and available for the Ross River Dena Council's access. In Whitehorse, we currently have 140 on the wait-list, and we have six in Watson Lake.

There was a second part to that question. If the member can just ask me again, I can respond.

Ms. Van Bibber: The second part was: Were there any plans to build additional housing units in any of those communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to talk a little about the housing initiative fund and the partnership build program, because I think that really highlights a lot of really good work in the communities and with our partners. I know that last year, we put \$3.6 million in the budget. Out of that, we were able to partner on \$26 million worth of projects to align with new initiatives.

The same thing is happening this year. We have \$3.6 million in a partnership program to increase affordable housing options for Yukon. As part of that, we have 10 new projects that will total an approximate combined value of \$31.4 million. That is throughout the Yukon. We are working really hard with our partners to bring new units into the market.

We also made the announcement of the Challenge initiative project. That will bring 40-some units into the market. The Jeckell and 4th Avenue project will bring 48 units on to the market. The project in Carcross in the year following will see additional units there as well. We just announced the mixed-use facility in the community of Old Crow. Part of it is for staff housing because we don't have staff housing in our communities — or in that particular community.

We want to make sure that we align with the community needs. Currently, what I can gather from the housing initiative fund that is currently going through the review process — we have in excess of 70 units, I believe, coming into the market this year. That is really great, and it plays out throughout the communities. We will see new initiatives coming out. Until we finalize that process, I can't really reveal that. I am happy about the process, and I look forward to future partnerships.

Ms. Van Bibber: Not being able to reveal where the houses are going — is that what she just said? Sorry, it's just to clarify. I might have missed it.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Because we are just concluding the project process, it wouldn't be advisable for us to make that announcement, but I just want to reflect that we are moving forward with the same project as last year — summarizing, in

general terms, what I can publicly state, but not specific enough to jeopardize the process.

Ms. Van Bibber: I have a few more questions on housing policy. At times, when people are renting from Yukon Housing and, for whatever reason, are not able to work or they have to stay home with their children, are there rules around home-based businesses — for example, a business like selling Avon or Tupperware, et cetera? This brings in a small amount of money for a proponent. I understand it causes the renter to report that as income and then that causes the rent to go up. Is that true?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would suggest that this is not encouraged — having home businesses. We provide opportunities for social supports and social housing. That is really based on the policies that are established — so 25 percent of the gross income as defined in the tax assessment from the previous year determines what the rent is for the clients — the household income — on a monthly basis. That is the parameter we use to set the rules. The policy is pretty clear on that.

Home businesses are clearly something that we do not encourage. It is not something that is supported.

Ms. Van Bibber: It was a question asked of me. I am just a conduit to say that it kind of defeats the purpose of trying to get someone off social assistance. It gives them incentive to be a little more active in the community, gives them some pocket money, and improves their lives. Perhaps we should review that policy at some point.

Can the minister tell us how the income of a household is calculated and what is included in that income? For example, if a husband and wife are both working and two teenage kids start working part-time while they're in school — is all of that lumped together to be included in the calculations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am just seeking a little clarification around the policies. It is the gross household income, and it is defined under the tax ruling — I don't know which section it is, but it is specific to when we have a student who is in school full-time and is over the age of 18; clearly that is not something that is taken into consideration. But if that young adult is working full-time and lives in the home and if the house is assigned to the parent, it is something that is taken into consideration.

So the total income, as allotted for the 25 percent, incorporates all of the members who live in the household — with a few exceptions to accommodate those students who are in full-time post-secondary education.

Ms. Van Bibber: To clarify, if I have a 15-year-old who is working at McDonald's, his income wouldn't be included. It is just if somebody is working full-time.

Hon. Ms. Frost: For clarity, no — if a child is 14 or 15 and working at McDonald's, that's not incorporated into the total income. It's if the child exceeds the age of 18 and is now an adult who is living in a social housing unit and if there are a number of individuals in that house all working full-time, then you would take into consideration the total income.

We are looking right now at the policy around social housing and around staff housing to better align with

incentives. As the member opposite highlighted, we really don't want to encourage individuals to live in social housing forever. We want them to seek employment; we want them to find their own homes, and the alignment of that is ensuring that we give them the support that they need. Part of that is case management and of course ensuring that we provide services — not to de-incentivize but to incentivize and encourage them to seek the supports that they require to move into their own homes.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thanks for that clarification.

Using the median rate as provided by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Yukon Housing Corporation told us during the briefing that it currently sits at \$950 for a one-bedroom unit. I think this is really unfortunate, as I certainly haven't seen many rental advertisements with anything resembling this number. Usually it is well over the \$1,000 mark — plus, plus, plus.

Would the minister consider raising the median rent rate to be comparable to what is in the market to allow families and individuals a better chance to find adequate housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for the question. That is certainly something that we will take under advisement as we look at our policies within the Housing Corporation.

Ms. Van Bibber: That sounds good to me. Is there a possible review of the policy to perhaps have rent control for our social assistant applicants in social housing? Is that a doable thing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question because it is certainly something that we want to look at in terms of balancing how we govern ourselves — working closely with Health and Social Services on the social income clients and ensuring that we have a balanced approach as we amend our policies.

Ms. Van Bibber: With the carbon tax coming up pretty quickly here, what is the anticipated increase in the cost to the government — in particular, Yukon Housing Corporation — with respect to the carbon tax on the home heating fuel for all their units? Has that been taken into consideration?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As we go forward from here, given that we have the new energy-efficient building projects coming on stream, we are going to of course clearly start tracking cost-savings. It is a key priority — reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. You will note that, in the budget, we are modernizing and creating more energy-efficient homes as we build new projects, but also the remodeling of our existing units is really to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create energy efficiencies.

Ms. Van Bibber: That leads me into the next question on the energy retrofits. We see that there is an increase in that line item. Can the minister tell us which units or communities will see these retrofits, or is there sort of a certain amount going to each community? Has the carbon tax also been budgeted for in this next little while before these energy retrofits are in place?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The project for the social housing duplex conversions and the opportunity there allows us to look at retrofits — of course making them more energy

efficient but also the conversion there. We haven't yet determined those to the communities, but we have allocated \$700,000 there.

With the low carbon economy fund, we are looking at social and staff housing projects within a variety of communities across the Yukon. In Watson Lake, there is a seniors complex there. There is \$750,000 going into that project. In Dawson City, we have two units there that will see \$160,000 of upgrades. In Teslin, there are two units that will see \$160,000 of upgrades as well. Then in Carcross, there are a couple of units there as well. We will put \$160,000 there.

As I noted, we have over 800 units across the Yukon in staff and social housing. It's imperative that we start looking at some of these units. A lot of them are in excess of 30 years old. We have to not only bring them up to building standards, but we have to bring them up to the new standard of energy efficiency. In Watson Lake, we have Campbell Way duplex — converting that to a triplex. There is \$250,000 going into that project. In Faro, there are two units for \$160,000. In Dawson City, there is an upgrade on one of the units there. Those are the projects in the communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: A few questions on staff housing: If a government employee is living in community staff housing and pays the going rate, and if that employee also has private property that they have purchased while living there, is there an obligation for that employee to declare their asset, as is required by social housing residents?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I had to clarify the policy. The policy currently states that if a staff member is living in a staff housing unit, they cannot own a property in the community. If they do, the proper processes will be taken to have them choose where it is they choose to reside.

Ms. Van Bibber: Very interesting. Do government staff employees also have a fixed rent rate where it doesn't fluctuate with their income?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Great question. Staff who are currently in subsidized housing for government — what they pay and what they have been paying for the last 20 years is \$650 a month. When we talk about inequities in our system, we talk about 25 percent of income for a family within a social housing unit, and then at the other end of the duplex, we have a staff member of Yukon government who pays \$650. What we heard from Yukon communities and Yukoners is that this is absolutely not acceptable. So when we talk about incentivizing and trying to encourage social assistance clients to move into their own homes — it is very difficult in some of the communities where the household income increases in the spring when employment opportunities arise, and then we take more money away from the families. That is just not acceptable, so part of modernizing — clearly the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission and I received a mandate letter to look at a new approach to staff and social housing through collaboration with the public sector on models that promote economic growth in our communities but to also take away the inequities that are there. It's about changing the way we provide staff housing in Yukon communities, to focus on increasing the amount of affordable

housing to Yukoners by reducing competition with the private housing market and fully utilizing existing housing, looking at providing incentives in the communities.

We have seen in some of our communities — for example, Dawson City or some of the larger communities where we recruit — and the objective of recruitment and retention was historically to provide these incentives. Well, we have modernized to a place where now some of these communities are communities where more individuals want to go and grow their families. We want to encourage them to buy their own homes and not live in subsidized housing. That is not acceptable. So there are limits that we are looking at in terms of policy direction.

I am really pleased about the new approach and looking at the GAM policy that speaks to this specific policy. It is 20 years old. Clearly \$650 a month is not acceptable when you have a salaried employee at the top end of the salary scale in some of our communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: With regard to the government housing policy — and I know that this perhaps goes for the staff housing and the social housing units — by community, how many are vacant either through renovation, repair or where no one wants to pay a higher rent due to it being 25 percent of their income? I don't know if she would know that number — but just by community, how many are vacant due to renovation or repairs?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I was just seeking clarification on what we have available in our communities.

My understanding is that, as the unit becomes available, they are allocated. In some circumstances, when we have some concerns that are coming to light in some of our communities, then clearly we would hold the vacancies. I want to just use an example — right now, we have a facility in Watson Lake, Lakeview Apartments, which is being closed. That has been ordered to close its doors. There are 11 tenants in that facility who were given two weeks in which to vacate. We had to take quick action to mobilize a team to get to Watson Lake to try to accommodate the transition out of these units. We knew that the Town of Watson Lake was proposing this closure, so we really worked hard to work with the partners in Watson Lake and look at the private sector and holding some of our vacant units in Watson Lake, pending this closure, to accommodate. I am really happy to say that we were able to do that very successfully. By next week, I believe, they have to vacate the premises. That's a good example of what we do when we see things coming down the pipe at us — we try to hold some of the units to better align with needs.

Another one is the Ross River Dena Council, for an example. They were seeing some crises. We made some adjustments to allocate units to better accommodate their needs. There are some units that are aging out of the system, so those units would clearly not be put back on the market until they're brought up to the National Building Code standards and of course the energy-efficient levels as well.

Ms. Van Bibber: The new housing project on Jeckell Street — does this current budget — I think we had a little

discussion earlier, and I thought it was mixed income was how it was initially rolled out. Now we're saying mixed use. That's what I was wondering — what the proper term for this building was — because I couldn't see how mixed income in the same building was going to work. Could the minister clarify that for me first?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The mixed-use housing project on 4th and Jeckell takes into consideration a number of parameters. That is to look at Yukon Housing Corporation supporting a cross-section of clients in the housing continuum — from homelessness to affordable to market rental housing — all in one development. When we talk about two separate things — one is a mixed-use, intergenerational approach — so families or single units — is considered in terms of the scope of the design. At this moment in time, the planning is going to take effect with members of the community to prescribe that going forward — so wanting to be flexible enough to look at how we provide seniors, social, and affordable housing in a mixed-use facility, considering multitudes of income as we look at seniors income, affordable, and social housing as well — so subsidized. It is an opportunity to do something different. It is used elsewhere in the country very successfully, and we want to try it here in the Yukon. Hopefully it is a model that we can mirror in other communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: I think that the initial output — when she spoke about this building — was mixed income, so that was the confusion.

Does this current budget include demolition costs for what is on the land at the current time? I believe that there are current units owned by Yukon Housing Corporation, and will that be included in this budget cost? How many of these units are still occupied?

Hon. Ms. Frost: There are six units on that current property. Of those six units, five are occupied. In the current budget, there is an allocated amount of \$300,000 for planning. In the future budget, it will take into consideration the construction and the taking down of that facility and clearing the property for this 48-unit facility. The five tenants who are in the units right now are aware of the project and have been notified. They would have the right of first refusal in this new project. We would certainly ensure that they are adequately accommodated as we go through this project.

We hope to have some really robust consultation and engagement across the city, and of course it aligns very nicely with the City of Whitehorse's official community plan and it aligns with the mandate of the City of Whitehorse.

Chair: Do members wish to take a 15-minute recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any general debate?

Ms. Van Bibber: Just going back to staff housing for a minute — in these staff housing units, does the government cover the cost of the utilities such as heat and power, or are they the responsibility of the staff member?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The tenants are responsible for the utilities.

Ms. Van Bibber: Could the minister tell us what the average cost per month to the government for maintaining staff housing is — that is per unit?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The repair and maintenance for all 800 units is \$2,000,980, and we don't keep specific costs for specific units.

Ms. Van Bibber: Also a clarification — going back to children's income being included in household income calculations — the minister had said children under the age of 18. I am assuming this is while they are in school. Can she confirm that this is the case, or is it age 19?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I stand to be corrected. It is actually 19, not 18. Young adults over that age who are in school — be it university or whatever — then I think there is some flexibility around that — the total household income.

Ms. Van Bibber: If they are in university and they are earning an income part-time, is that included — or let's say Yukon College?

Hon. Ms. Frost: My understanding is that is not taken into consideration.

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you for the clarification.

On her Housing First project, can the minister tell us what the expected timeline for completion is? Is the project on-budget? Can she also tell us whether there is a client list already? How many individuals are currently on a wait-list for the Housing First project?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Housing First construction contract was awarded for \$3.9 million, and the opening is projected for late June or early July. We will work very closely with Health and Social Services to align with the clients that are going to occupy that facility.

Ms. Van Bibber: So there is a client list already to take those units?

Hon. Ms. Frost: No, I would say that Health and Social Services is working on the client profiles and trying to best align client service needs. Based on the profile of the Housing First project — the project itself is really defined as ensuring that we provide opportunities for those who are hard to house. As an opportunity to do that, we need to clearly work with the clients of Health and Social Services.

Ms. Van Bibber: Could the minister inform the House of the eligibility criteria to access this complex? The second part of that is: How will this complex be managed — for security and for a superintendent? Could the minister fill us in on those facts?

Hon. Ms. Frost: There is a significant number of low-income individuals who continue to be homeless or precariously hard to house. We want to ensure that the standards that are set by Health and Social Services really entails that and looks at the internal review of client data regarding housing needs and supports. The informed decision will really be based on that, so Health and Social Services — not the Yukon Housing Corporation — will determine that. In terms of how it is managed — it will be managed through Health and Social Services.

Ms. Van Bibber: There was \$1.545 million allocated to the First Nation housing partnership program. We were told during the briefing that this money would possibly be equally divided among the 14 First Nations. Could the minister provide an outline as to how this money is actually going to be used and distributed?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Historically, given that this is a new initiative — we have not seen this historically in the budgets — the \$1.5 million for First Nations — because they were never funded or supported historically. Through their self-government agreement process, they were given a small amount of money for housing units. Inequities and disparities within our First Nation communities were pretty evident. I think that when we discussed with the First Nations the opportunity to look at a model that would better align with modernizing and repairing their building needs — which is often referred to as “catch up and keep up” — so catching up to the units they acquired in 1973, with no resources ever put into modernizing or bringing those buildings up to the national building standards and codes.

So we went ahead and put the allocation in the budget last year of \$1 million. We did that by an application process. This year, through consultation and engagement with the First Nations, we understand now that they want to look at an allocated amount based on communities’ needs, and it is very similar to what we’re doing with other funding envelopes and initiatives — that is \$50,000 per unit, be it for a repair or a new build.

We are having those discussions with them right now. The funding is in the budget, so once we clarify that, I would be happy to provide more clarity.

Ms. Van Bibber: We were also told at the briefing that this fund was perhaps on a first-come, first-served basis as well, since everything wasn’t written in stone yet, and that non-governing First Nations could also access these funds. As it is called “a partnership”, can the minister tell us what is involved in accessing these funds? Who are the partners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With the First Nation housing initiative fund, the partnership is with the First Nations. With regard to the first-come approach, what I am hearing from the communities is that this is not working for them and they want to be able to look at some equities across the board.

Right now, I have to say that the resources that we put on the table last year allowed the communities and the First Nations to leverage their own resources and, in some cases, we put in — say \$400,000 in one specific community, and they were able to leverage in excess of \$800,000 to modernize

and upgrade their units. It is important to note that when we look at our communities and our First Nation communities — because the First Nation communities’ individuals don’t own land, it is very difficult for them to access conventional financing, let alone program financing from any other sources, because it is owned by the government — therefore private homeowners on settlement land have never been able to upgrade and modernize their homes. What we were seeing was a lot of issues around mould and a lot of issues around inequities in housing needs and in modernizing and bringing them up to the national standards. There was no cost required — it was through a grant process with the communities, but they had taken it upon themselves to use a cost-matching initiative — much like the municipal matching grant concept — and put more resources into effectively addressing units. Some of the communities were able to take a bit of this money to modernize and upgrade 10 units within their communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: With much of the money allocated under capital for First Nation housing, could the minister provide the cost-share that would be provided by the federal housing programs that First Nations already receive? Will this money under First Nation housing be equal among all of the First Nations? Is it a match with the federal housing program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: That is a great question. What I understand is that, historically, when the First Nations signed their self-government agreements and received governance funding, they were only allocated enough resources for two houses. That was \$500,000 in their base funding, and that was 25 years ago. In their base funding from the federal government — because they are self-governing — they couldn’t get access to additional resources or funding from elsewhere. They have put that on the table for their FTA negotiations as renewal funding. It has been there for many years. What we have tried to do is work with our First Nation partners to identify and find local solutions to housing challenges by supporting capacity, providing financial resources, and assisting in capital planning. When we speak about accessing federal funding, there aren’t a lot of federal resources directly allocated to self-governing First Nations. The federal government made significant announcements on indigenous housing but that really doesn’t reflect adequately what the needs are in Yukon. So we have been working very closely with the self-governing First Nations and looking at partnership initiatives so that we can effectively get access to some of the federal funding that is available. Part of that is the co-build initiative as well. There is \$40 million announced that the indigenous community can have access to.

We want to ensure that the First Nation partnership program provides resources to First Nations to meet their specific housing needs. It is an opportunity for us to put a little bit of the resources on the table, which has not been there before. When I refer to the resources available, they are only for the land previously set aside in the communities, meaning that CMHC will only allow the First Nations to take down \$500,000 to put on land that has been previously set aside. That has been maxed out in many of our communities, so they cannot access any more federal resources, which makes it very

complicated and difficult for us as a government to address the needs within our communities.

We are trying to look at innovative approaches, and this housing initiative process is an innovative approach to trying to bridge that gap and looking at our partnerships. I am pleased about that and pleased about the working partnership that we have with First Nations and trying to access and acquire the necessary lands to build these facilities on. A good example of that partnership is that we don't have any resources or land — just from my own experience in Old Crow — and we need to have a frank discussion with the First Nations around accessing some of the land that they may have readily available for us to build some new social housing units or staff housing.

It's the same thing in the Na Cho Nyäk Dun traditional area where we work with the municipality and the First Nation. Really, I think the scope goes far beyond just building houses. It's really about capital planning capacity. It's about providing the funding but also providing opportunities to try to bridge a gap that has never been there before.

Ms. Van Bibber: Being a little familiar with the First Nation housing program, I do know that there have been quite a few units built and retrofitted over the years. Is this for First Nation residents who live on First Nation land only, or is it for Yukon First Nation residents who own their own homes that are not on First Nation land? I guess what I am asking is: Can all First Nation citizens apply for funds to retrofit their homes?

Hon. Ms. Frost: There are two separate things. One is the home-repair program, and the home-repair program doesn't differentiate. It provides an opportunity for any homeowner to access \$50,000 for home retrofits, and it's through an application process. The other project is the First Nation partnership initiative fund, and it's to work with the First Nations on housing stocks within their communities. So it's really trying to provide access to all members of every community where there is a need.

Ms. Van Bibber: Will the Yukon government be assuming more responsibility for First Nation housing other than what is listed in this First Nation housing partnership in the coming years?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would say that the objective is not to assume responsibility, but it is really to look at addressing indigenous housing needs or housing needs within each one of our respective communities, recognizing that 25 percent of the population is indigenous and the majority of our rural Yukon communities are indigenous. Therefore, indigenous housing strategies and the distinction between what we do and what the federal government does with the First Nations — really, I think we need to better align how we address housing pressures within each one of our respective communities.

We are committed to working together in partnership with First Nation communities and the federal government to ensure that we have a strategy that best addresses the specific housing needs of all of our communities — of course, within the obligations of the self-government agreement as well. I have seen some things in our communities in terms of hearing

back from the communities around the need for expanding the partnership. I'm really open to that concept and looking at ensuring that the needs of each one of our municipalities and each one of our rural Yukon communities aligns with service needs and housing needs — and housing as a human right, as it has been described to me. The first thing we want to ensure is that every individual has a home and that we address some of the overcrowding issues in our communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: On that note, I promised my colleague from the Third Party that I would hand it to her at a quarter to — thank you to the officials who are here.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Porter Creek North for her generosity right now. Of course, I am excited to be back having a conversation about the Yukon Housing Corporation. It is one of my favourite corporations in the entire territory. I thank the officials for being here and the hard-working staff back at the office — especially the front-line workers, who I have had lots of different dealings with. I know that the job is tough and I always appreciate it.

One of the things I wanted to go back to was for clarification — the press release for the 48 units was actually — it did say mixed-income housing project. The reason I am coming back to this is that there is an actual definition of what mixed-income housing is and a definition of what mixed-use housing is. It says that the definition of mixed-income housing is broad and encompasses many types of dwellings and neighbourhoods. It talks about mixed housing meaning a deliberate effort to construct and/or own a multi-family development that has a mixing of income groups as a fundamental part of its financial and operating plans.

If we go to the definition of mixed-use housing, it talks about mixed-use development or something similar to that as being a strategy for living spaces. So it's housing that blends residential, commercial, cultural, and institutional and entertainment uses. I am just looking for clarification. The press release the government put out on March 22 referred to it as "mixed income". Now we have heard the term "mixed use". There are definitions and they are different. If the minister could just clarify — I do appreciate if we are talking about different kinds of people — the minister and the description have made it sound like it is mixed income, but the term "mixed use" has been used, so I am just looking for clarification.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the member opposite for the definitions of a mixed-use project and a mixed-income project. Clearly it is about being innovative and trying to find a fine balance, working with our partners to align with a project of this magnitude.

With the types of groups in terms of the housing initiative — when we looked at mixed income and then we looked at mixed use, we really wanted to ensure that we allow for good dialogue to happen with our partners — with the City of Whitehorse and with the neighbourhood — keeping in mind that we have an obligation to look at providing mixed-income and mixed-use spaces within the city, and this is really a creative and innovative way of doing that — clearly understanding the definition of both and something that we

would take under consideration as we look at the project expansion and design/build.

Ms. White: Mr. Chair, does that mean the corporation is considering allowing commercial space in this development?

Hon. Ms. Frost: No.

Ms. White: Prior to the announcement the government made on March 22 about that portion of land on 4th Avenue and Jeckell Street — I was just curious as to who was consulted — City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün or Ta'an Kwäch'än? Were conversations had? Because of course the City of Whitehorse has an official community plan, and I just wanted to know who knew ahead of time that was in the pipe to come out.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Just for clarification, currently the property is owned by Yukon Housing Corporation, and it fits within the city bylaws in terms of zoning and it fits within the official community plan criteria. The housing action plan implementation committee was informed at a high level that we were going to proceed with this project. Until it was officially announced and we put in the resources and the planning funding — that process — we couldn't pre-empt that. As soon as that happened, we are now fully engaged with the City of Whitehorse and the partners through the housing action plan implementation committee.

The consultation will be robust and it will certainly include input from the neighbourhood, from the city, from the housing action plan, and the Safe at Home committee — really open to feedback and recommendations on that as well, on the consultation and potential design.

Ms. White: Was any conversation prior to that announcement with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation?

Hon. Ms. Frost: We spoke to Kwanlin Dün, when we spoke to the City of Whitehorse, much like we did with Ta'an Kwäch'än, after we made the announcement — the housing implementation plan committee announcement — that we engaged and the staff have been full-on engaged with those partners within the city boundaries.

Ms. White: I got a text message from a friend on April 7, who was asking about the home repair program — one which I have talked about at length here because I have accessed it two times. I am very glad that it is up to \$50,000, because when you own a home built in 1958, you actually can't energy retrofit it for \$35,000, so I was happy when that happened.

On April 7, that website actually said that they weren't currently taking applications. I was just online and that has changed. I just wanted to know for how long the website said that the program wasn't taking applications and what the reason was for that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: My understanding is that it was necessary as we changed over from one fiscal year to the next, so it wasn't there for long and it wasn't intended to discourage anyone. I would encourage your friend to make connections.

Ms. White: I have already sent the text message to say that it is back up and running.

I was incredibly pleased when we had the debate in the Legislative Assembly about the safety of seniors buildings. One of the questions that I had is: What two Yukon Housing buildings will have the 24-hour security? I know that has happened, so when did that start?

Hon. Ms. Frost: When we look at the security in the seniors housing units downtown, the concerns that were brought to light were very critical. The safety of our tenants is of course our priority — and in particular the safety of our seniors.

We have critical safety concerns that have been brought to our attention at Greenwood Manor, 26 Alexander St., 1190 Front St., Closeleigh Manor, and Waterfront Place. The action that was taken to address the safety was done very quickly — mobilizing the staff.

Yukon Housing Corporation increased security staff at two of the facilities, and so right now, we have 24-hour security at the Front St. and Alexander St. apartments. The 24-hour check is for two weeks, and at that point, we will then evaluate and assess what we should do for the long term. Clearly, 24-hour security is not a solution, and so we need to come up with a plan that really addresses and reassesses the exposure for the seniors. We want to ensure that we engage with our expert resources within Justice and within our non-governmental organizations to explore options for improving tenant safety and security.

Some of the options included the increased use of security cameras and increasing seniors centre programming and supports. We talked a little bit about the possibility of bringing in a resident manager within these two facilities, which is an option. We have done that historically. If that worked, then we would certainly keep that in mind as a means by which to address the concerns.

The other one that the seniors brought to our attention was the possibility of this mixed-use, multigenerational building opportunity — so trying to make sure that we have younger people in the building to interact with the seniors as well.

Ms. White: I guess one of the reasons why I ask that question is that it was at Greenwood Manor where the post boxes were vandalized and furniture has been sliced with knives, and that was one of the buildings that we have had lots of phone calls about. On the same side, there have been reports of bad behaviour at the Waterfront seniors complex, to the point that some seniors don't leave their houses unless they have people coming to meet them or they are planning on leaving together. I do appreciate that the two buildings that were named, were named. I think it's important because, in some cases, people didn't like to use the elevators.

There is an issue with the seniors buildings downtown, and it's just because they are vulnerable populations. I appreciate the terms of mixed ages. I'm not sure if that is sometimes the answer. Sometimes visitors are the issue. What's happening with Greenwood Manor and what's happening with 22 Waterfront?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The critical safety concerns at seniors social housing buildings are important. Quickly addressing

that with tenants so that they can feel safe in their own homes is a key priority for Yukon Housing Corporation. The staff recently held meetings at a number of these facilities and seniors housing buildings to talk about safety — but to talk about a number of solutions as well. The seniors have to be a part of the solution as well.

How do we better manage? We have keyed systems getting in and out of these facilities. My understanding is that someone rings a bell, and the senior opens the door. So part of it is working with the tenants within all of these units so that we can try to find solutions that they are a part of — so very open to that.

We do currently have the 24-hour support at these locations that I mentioned. We will take some action around that, try to better monitor frequency of incidences, then look at reducing the level over a period of time, try to hit the high-frequency times, and really continue to monitor that throughout the spring.

Ms. White: Historically, the stories I have heard are that the bad things typically happen at night — so not so much when people are coming and going during the day but when things slow down at night.

I have a question about the entrance systems. I spend quite a bit of time at 600 College Drive, and the last time I was there, I couldn't see the display panel. I could push buttons and hope that they were the right buttons. I couldn't actually necessarily talk to someone, but I was told that it did ring. Occasionally, those systems go down. The last time I was at 600 College Drive, it didn't work. I just wanted to know how we make sure that those security systems are in place and that they are functioning in the way that they should.

Hon. Ms. Frost: My auntie lives at 600 College Drive and my house mother from when I lived in the dorm lives at 600 College Drive, so I spend a lot of time there as well. I know what the member opposite is referring to in terms of the display panel and accessing in and out.

I think that as soon as that comes to our attention or we have security in and out of the facility — so if these things come to our attention, the staff are immediately mobilized to try to fix the issue within 600 College Drive or elsewhere. We want to ensure that we effectively manage the facilities and we are timely with our responses.

My understanding is that we get a lot of calls as well — the Housing Corporation — from the clients, so they are quite eager to call and we are quite eager to respond. I encourage the member opposite to get that out there and let the seniors know that if they have a concern, we want to react and respond as quickly as we can because we want to ensure that they feel valued and safe in their own home.

Ms. White: I was just smiling at the minister when she said that the seniors call — because they do. I do not hesitate to think that they will call as required, based on personal experience.

The last time I was at 600 College Drive, I was actually there for a meeting between the residents, the Yukon Housing Corporation, and the Yukon College. The first question I have

is: Have the sound-dampening tunnels been installed around the radon-cleansing machines? I am not sure. There was a meeting held in the common area at 600 College Drive with these machines that made the most horrific white noise extraction sound. It was almost funny to me actually that there was a bunch of seniors and me, because I have hearing damage from that same sound of exhaust in kitchens. I was hopeful that they have been covered. The residents were told that those poles were going to be covered and that it would be less loud in the future.

Has that happened yet?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I think that it is great that if the seniors have a concern, they will bring it to our attention. We want to try to look at mitigating the concerns that are brought forward. The seniors asked whether the radon mitigation unit in the common space could be insulated and covered to reduce the noise and be more visually appealing. The Housing Corporation has committed to doing that. I don't know when that will happen, but we will ensure that it gets done in the next little while.

Ms. White: It is not so much the visual. It looks kind of like something from the future, but it is the sound. Bingo happens down there twice a week. It is a place where residents gather quite often, so that it is a concern — just based on that sound.

The other interesting thing that the meeting was about — it was talking about a pilot project with the Yukon College about a roommate situation with college students. It didn't go over — I don't know why it didn't go over super well, but it did bring a bunch of other questions forward because it was suggested by one of the officials from Yukon Housing Corporation that seniors could have senior roommates, if they wanted. If they knew someone who was on the wait-list or currently within Yukon Housing Corporation or approved to be in Yukon Housing, they could actually look at sharing a space.

I would just like to know more about what that would look like and how rent would be charged — what that would look like, really.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to just highlight the aging-in-place discussions we have had throughout the Yukon. There were over 1,200 participants — perhaps even some of those were multiple. Whenever we had engagement sessions, part of the discussion was really around those options. These came from the seniors — the recommendations came from the seniors, so it was broaching that subject with them about whether this was viable or not and what that would look like. Clearly, it would tie into the future and the implementation of the seniors action plan and involve further discussions with the seniors. So that is part of just following back around to say, "The seniors made these recommendations. What are your thoughts and how do you feel about it?" It gives us a little bit of perspective on how they feel about it because we clearly have to address that within our units. That particular project at the college came forward as a proposal from the college as well, but it aligned very nicely with what the seniors were telling us.

As I understand it, it was subject matter that they wanted, so we put it on the table. If it's not something that they agree to there, but may agree to it elsewhere, certainly that is something that we would consider in the future. With regard to seniors rooming with seniors and if that is an option — this is something that seniors put on the table as a conversation topic as well. I don't know what that looks like and I don't think the department does either, but it is something we want to follow through on with the seniors.

Ms. White: The meeting with the Yukon Housing Corporation and Yukon College was very much about a roommate situation with students. It was an interesting conversation. I hope that being there was helpful for the staff. I will soften things as we go. It was an interesting conversation.

I want to ask about — we got a response today from a letter about accessibility at 22 Waterfront Place. It is dated today, so I appreciate getting a response to that. One of the biggest issues with seniors and mobility is the ability to actually leave where you live and get out to the rest of the world. What was highlighted at 22 Waterfront Place — it might be really unique right now to 22 Waterfront Place. 207 Alexander Street changed very much when the roadwork happened and there was no longer a steep hill to get down to the road, so that was quite helpful. It is hard to manoeuvre around 22 Waterfront Place if you have a walker, a scooter, or a motorized wheelchair.

I do have the response. To quote the letter, it says, "When 22 Waterfront was constructed in 2011, this project met all the City of Whitehorse developmental regulations. However, as development continues in the Waterfront area, we are witnessing many changes to the local built environment and need to work closely with other property owners and the City of Whitehorse to ensure our buildings are both safe and accessible.

"To further improve the safety and security of tenants in our multi-unit social housing buildings, Yukon Housing Corporation staff will be looking into the specific concerns you have raised regarding paved access from 22 Waterfront to the Millennium trail and safe access to the local bus stop and the crosswalk at Quartz Road."

I was just looking for a timeline on that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The letter came from the MLA for Whitehorse Centre, and the specific concern was around the accessibility at Waterfront Place.

I think that part of the discussion is really around multiple things happening in that general vicinity — multiple buildings, multiple facilities coming up. We want to ensure that we really look at the local building environment and work closely with other property owners — of course, the City of Whitehorse. My understanding is that, as this evolves, we are hoping to have that discussion in the coming months — to have that discussion — because the environment is changing in that particular area with multiple new facilities coming on stream. We want to ensure accessibility to the facilities that we own, but we need to do that in clear collaboration with our partners.

Going back briefly, Yukon Housing Corporation is working directly with the tenants at Yukon College, as I said earlier, to address the radon issue there. There has been a work order issued. I just wanted to put that on the record. That has been addressed.

Ms. White: I guess I appreciate that something will happen in the coming months, but if the building was constructed in 2011 — and if you look from the side of the building back toward the Millennium Trail, you still have to cross over the train tracks — which were there prior to 2011 — and through two ditches to get to actually access the Millennium Trail.

I would suggest that when we talk about health and happier lives, that would include recreation. So I look forward to the day when I can visit there and can easily help my friends get out to the Millennium Trail. I will just put that pitch in. We look forward to that.

The minister talked about the possibility of looking at building managers. She mentioned it again just now, but she had mentioned it in the debate the other day. What would that look like? I will put this out there because the minister and I have not had this conversation, but the officials and I have had the conversation about how one of the ways to ease tensions in seniors complexes would be to have a person there. I learned that sometimes seniors buildings are a bit more like junior high school than retirement homes because people spend a lot of time together. What would having a building manager look like in a seniors complex?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I also look forward to the completion of the multiple new buildings around the Waterfront property, because there are quite a few building fences there and we want that to be finished before we do anything new. It is absolutely correct that it has been there since 2011.

With regard to the management of the facilities that we have — we have multiple facilities. We really wanted to look at a solution, and it is something that we are taking under consideration as we look at all of our facilities — how to better manage them to ensure that we mitigate some of the concerns and safety issues that are out there. I am not going to prescribe or suggest any way as to what that might look like without first going through the process of engagement and finding the right solution for each of the different facilities, because they all vary.

Ms. White: In this year's budget, there is \$4 million allocated to the Challenge Cornerstone Housing project. During the briefing, we talked about how the land was \$750,000. Last year, there was \$1.5 million transferred over, and this year, it is \$4 million. Then I asked if there was a guaranteed number of Yukon Housing Corporation clients spaces within that space.

I will just ask the minister: Is there a guaranteed number of units available for Yukon Housing Corporation clients within that Cornerstone Housing project?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The partnership with the Challenge Cornerstone Housing initiative is really for them to go ahead and build the facility. They did indicate that they would work with us to accommodate some of our clients. That is not

prescribed, but it is something that they are willing to work with us on. We want to ensure that they provide services to their demographic group of individuals who they currently provide supports to — those who are disabled or have specific mental challenges and need extra support. We want to ensure that they are the first priority, and then we would work on addressing additional supports.

Ms. White: There is interesting research that talks about buildings with people with physical and intellectual disabilities and the percentages of how that should work out. It is interesting, because a lot of the research talks about how it should be 80 percent of able-bodied people and 20 percent of people with different challenges. I know the Challenge model is looking at 80-20 in the opposite direction so it will be interesting to see how that goes.

I was really happy to see that, this year, the rent-supplement program has been increased. For a lot of years, it was held — I can be corrected, but I believe it was \$400,000. This year, it's my understanding that it has been budgeted at \$1.1 million. My colleague from Porter Creek North touched on this a bit. When we talk about the median rent — Mr. Chair, you and I haven't had this conversation, but I have talked about it at length — how median rent is quite complicated in the territory because it takes a spectrum of rooms and houses, it takes multi-room houses — it does all these things and then comes out with this calculation. Just like the Member for Porter Creek North, I know very few people who rent one-bedroom houses for \$950.

During the budget briefing, I asked if someone would qualify for the rent-supplement program if the rent for a one-bedroom place was over \$950. Could the minister explain to me how that works?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I absolutely agree with the member opposite that it is complicated and it is complex. As we look at our policies going forward — our staff housing policies or social housing policies — we want to ensure that we provide opportunities for support.

Really, at this point, it is up to the tenant to find their own unit — so going out and ensuring that they are looking for a modest unit that can effectively fall within the category of \$950. It's not something that we are leaving there or parking there. We are taking a detailed look at the policies as we evolve. I am looking forward to that. In the coming months, we will have continuous engagement on that. The corporation is doing a really good job in terms of looking at its policies and trying to modernize.

Ms. White: I guess one of the questions I have is — I am almost gobsmacked with the idea of finding accommodation for \$950 and that we are talking about how — it makes it sound like people are looking for really fancy places. I have to say that if you spend any time on — you could check out Facebook, for example, for rentals in Whitehorse. The average room these days — this is an example — a one-bedroom, brand new basement suite in Crestview, available May 15 — \$1,400 per month. Here is a person coming up, looking for a place to stay between \$500 and \$700 per month.

We have applications which I would challenge that, in some cases, probably would not be considered acceptable by the Human Rights Commission. We have three-bedroom houses for \$2,700. We have rooms in houses for \$750 plus utilities. It is bleak, Mr. Chair — is kind of what my point is right now, as I scroll through this. Finding accommodation is bleak.

One of the things that I spend a lot of my time doing is trying to match people to rental accommodations, including driving them around and taking them to places to see. There is one apartment building in Riverdale where the rent is still \$850. I would suggest that if it was to be inspected, it probably wouldn't do very well — but it is cheap.

When we talk about the \$950 and then we say that — if you were looking for modest accommodation, I would suggest that there is a lot of very modest accommodation available right now for what could be considered more high-roller prices if it wasn't that this was the new norm.

The reason why I asked about this during the briefing and I ask about it again is that there are lots of people who qualified for Yukon Housing Corporation, but as the wait-list is large and there are not units, they are told to look elsewhere — to take a look in the community. If the price point is \$950 and they can't find something that is for \$950 or less, then what is the answer? They don't qualify for any subsidies, so then they are paying way more than what is considered affordable — which is 30 percent of what they earn. How is someone supposed to deal with that in the community? We are talking about modest accommodation. How would the minister tell someone to go about looking for an affordable place to live when they don't qualify for the subsidy program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Really, I would like to talk really broadly — as I generally do in the House — around meeting the needs of Yukoners where they are and where they reside. When I say “modest” — that is what is available and that is what is defined in the policy. Clearly, that is not our objective. We really are working hard to look at providing the necessary accommodations and the necessary units across the Yukon. In the last year alone, through the housing initiative fund, we have brought on to the market 185 new units and that is tied to the median rent for 20 years. It means that the objective of that is to address housing pressures, not to discourage folks from applying to Yukon Housing Corporation. But this is a huge opportunity for us, and this year, we have increased that yet again and we will have more units on the market. Part of the new initiative through 4th Avenue and Jeckell is really to address that as well.

The department is doing, I think, a really amazing job in trying to be innovative and creative in addressing housing pressures across the Yukon and ensuring that we provide services — not to discourage individuals, but to help them find units. It is not as a means to encourage them to find places that are not up to standard; it is really to allow us an opportunity to work with our communities in working to meet the demands for affordable housing through our partnerships and with the private sector.

The investments in 2018-19 toward housing programs and commitments supported over 400 homes in the Yukon. We want to keep doing that every year and, eventually, we will reduce the pressures that the member opposite highlights and address a reduction in the wait-times that the Member for Porter Creek North raised earlier. The more quickly we can reduce those numbers, the better it is for Yukoners and the better, happier, and healthier lives that Yukoners will lead — if they have a suitable home that meets their needs.

Ms. White: I appreciate where the minister is coming from, but the reality of the situation is that there are units that are \$950 a month for a one-bedroom. They don't come vacant very often and there are a lot more people looking for places to live than that, including the people on the wait-list.

I know that the Member for Porter Creek North asked about the numbers on the social housing wait-list. I thought I heard just the rural numbers. How many people are currently on the wait-list in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Currently, we have 140 non-seniors on the wait-list.

Ms. White: Does the minister know what the current vacancy rate is in Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I understand that it's around three percent. Of course, the new housing units that are coming on the market will see that reduced.

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

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

Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

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

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: Before we adjourn for the day, I just have two things. First, thank you to everyone who is assisting with the Youth Parliament tomorrow. Second, if members could clear the tops of your desks so that you don't have any of your personal effects on the desks, that would be great. I'm sure it's what you would prefer. Thank you.

I wish you all a good weekend.

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

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 11, 2019:

34-2-92

Yukon Judicial Council Annual Report 2018 (McPhee)

The following legislative return was tabled April 11, 2019:

34-2-206

Response to Motion for the Production of Papers No. 18 (Frost)

The following document was filed April 11, 2019:

34-2-69

Workers' Advocate Office 2018 Annual Report (McPhee)