



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 52

2nd Session

34th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, November 9, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Fall Sitting

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

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New Democratic Party

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, November 9, 2017 — 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 Remembrance Day

Speaker: Before the House proceeds with the Order Paper, the Chair will make a few remarks.

This coming Saturday is Remembrance Day. It is the day when Canadians are encouraged to take time to honour those who have served and continue to serve the Canadian Forces. At this time of year, we remember the men and women who have defended Canada during times of war and have brought peace to troubled parts of the world.

While Remembrance Day has always been a day to remember those who died in the service of Canada, lately we have become more aware that the price paid by our servicemen and servicewomen sometimes extends beyond their time in uniform. We must remember this and continue to support these fellow Canadians.

At this time of year, we wear poppies. We pause for two minutes in silent tribute and attend ceremonies to honour the memory of our soldiers, sailors and air force personnel. In doing so, we often reflect upon the great battles they engaged in. This year, for example, we commemorate two of Canada's greatest battles — Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele. Last Saturday, a number of Yukoners came together to relive the exploits of Joe Boyle, the king of the Klondike, who recruited and financed a 50-man machine gun company in the Yukon. Boyle was also decorated by Britain, France, Romania and Russia for his exploits during the First World War.

While we remember the actions of soldiers, sailors and air force personnel during times of war, it is also worth remembering the legacy that they have left to us. The freedoms we exercise daily exist largely because of the sacrifices made by brave individuals who have served Canada over the years — sometimes in unimaginable circumstances.

As members of the Legislative Assembly we, like all Canadians, are beneficiaries of the freedoms that have been provided to us. Canada is a country where free and fair elections are held, where elected officials at all levels can openly debate government laws and policies and where the rule of law prevails. We have a *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that articulates for everyone to see the high ideals to which we aspire as a country and as a people.

We do not always live up to these high ideals. For example, for many years after Canada was created, women and indigenous people did not have the right to vote or be a candidate for election. However, the fact that these ideals exist and the fact that we have political and legal institutions that support them means that we can hold ourselves to this high standard and work toward achieving it. Due to the effort of some of many fellow Canadians working through our legal

and political systems, all Canadian citizens 18 years of age and older are now eligible to vote or be a candidate in elections.

It is easy to take this all for granted. We have been born in a country or have come to this country where these institutions already exist and are supported not just by laws, but most importantly by our belief in them and our commitments to them. The establishment of these institutions and the ideals they embody was only possible — and their continued existence is only possible — because there has been and continues to be fellow Canadians who are willing to serve and risk paying the ultimate price to protect them. This is one reason why we should always remember them. Thank you.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We shall now proceed with the Order Paper.
Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Remembrance Day

Hon. Mr. Silver: Today, in anticipation of Remembrance Day, I rise to pay tribute to the thousands of veterans who have allowed us to enjoy the freedoms that we have today. I also pay tribute to the men and women of Yukon, the men and women of Canada and around the world whose lives have been lost or deeply affected by war. Remembrance Day serves as a somber reminder of the great service paid by our country's men and women, both past and present. It is thanks to their service, to their personal sacrifice and collective dedication to their home and country that we enjoy the fundamental rights, freedom and securities that we have today.

This year, Mr. Speaker, Yukon is commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge during the First World War. More than 600 Yukon volunteers served from 1914 to 1918. This is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, because that is the highest per capita enrolment in all of Canada, and it is a fact that sets Yukon apart. As a Yukoner, I commemorate the anniversary of this battle with a mixture of pride, gratitude and also somber respect.

Some say the Battle of Vimy Ridge shaped our nation, that it was Canada's greatest battle and that it marked the rise of our great nation. The battle serves as an opportunity to pay tribute to all of those who have served their country and risked — or gave — their lives in that four-year struggle of the First World War. I invite you to join me in recognizing the 100th year anniversary of this battle.

It is also the 75th anniversary of the completion of the Alaska Highway. This highway secured a vital land supply route to Alaska during the Second World War and marked dramatic changes to the lives of Yukoners. I would also like to recognize not only the Canadian and American soldiers who built the highway, but also the First Nation guides who led them along their traditional trails toward the highway's completion.

Mr. Speaker, many indigenous lives were deeply impacted by the creation of the Alaska Highway and I

recognize and pay tribute to their lives and the lives of their descendants. I would also like to recognize all Yukon veterans.

Veterans in our territory have collective experiences that span from World War II, the Korean War to tours in Afghanistan and also service in the United States Army. Their sacrifice and that of their fallen colleagues is something that we should always remember. That is why we choose on this day to pause and remember their sacrifices with gratitude and to pay tribute to those who have bravely served our country.

I invite all my fellow Yukoners to pause today and on Saturday, November 11, at the 11th hour, to join me in this reflection.

Lest we forget.

Mr. Istchenko: Today on this last sitting day before Remembrance Day, I stand to pay tribute to Remembrance Day. Every year at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month we gather in memorial parks, community halls, workplaces, schools and homes to stand in honour of those who have fallen. Together we observe a moment of silence to mark the sacrifice of the many who have fallen in service to their country and to acknowledge the courage of those who still serve.

Canadian veterans have served throughout history in a broad range of conflicts and situations, from world wars to peacekeeping missions to crises on the home front.

On Remembrance Day, we honour and remember all veterans, whether they served in theatre or on Canadian soil; whether they kept the peace or fought for peace; whether they found themselves in combat or in support of operations. The Afghanistan war, the Korean War, the First World War, the Persian Gulf War, the Second World War, South African Wars — Canadian veterans have protected the rights and freedoms of Canadians and people from countries all over the world through peacekeeping missions, including Lebanon, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, Sudan, and others.

Many Canadian veterans have played a critical role in protecting Canadians on the home front, whether from fires, floods or threats. These men and women have risked their lives for our safety and protection. We must also recognize and support our military families — the fathers, the sons, the mothers and daughters who have endured alongside Canadian veterans.

This year, in addition to our Remembrance Day ceremonies in a couple of days, I will be participating with fellow Rangers and our Junior Rangers in a fairly new initiative, the No Stone Left Alone Memorial Foundation. This is a non-profit organization working directly with our Canadian Armed Forces, our educators and students across the country to honour our military fallen in the fields of honour across Canada. We recognize the sacrifices of our military by placing a poppy on every headstone. Our goal is to educate and engage the next generation to raise awareness to our Canadian veterans, serving soldiers and their families.

We will start at the cemetery in Haines Junction this year — and it will grow each year — and into surrounding graveyards — and we have many. I know the Whitehorse Patrol will be doing something in Whitehorse.

I want to thank those who put the time and effort into remembering — especially our Legions across Canada. As a young soldier posted in Germany in the late 1980s, and seeing the memorials and participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies at Vimy Ridge in France, I understand the ultimate sacrifices that were made for our freedoms here today.

Mr. Speaker, there's an old Bell telephone commercial that used to come on — and some of you might have seen it — nearly every Remembrance Day in Canada. It was one where a Canadian backpacker is shown walking on a beach with his maple leaf flag sewn on his backpack in France. He calls his grandfather, and when he speaks to him, his grandfather asks, "How is Paris? Are the women still as lovely as I remember?" He replies, "Grandpa, I'm not in Paris. I'm in Dieppe. I just called to say thank you, Grandpa."

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

We will remember them.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to add our voices to Remembrance Day. When I was searching for words that I wanted to share today, I found a beautiful spoken word poem by Dai Woolridge called "1135".

Mr. Speaker, I don't consider myself a religious person — more of a spiritual one, really — but the words and the sentiments within this poem resonated with me so I'm going to share it here today. It's called "1135".

To those who chose to be so brave
To those who rest within the grave
To those who fell and did not rise
With bayonets in hand and fear in eyes
To those who lay on Flanders Fields
To those blanketed in poppy seeds
To the trench-diggers, barbed-wire bangers and front-door chargers
To the privates, lieutenants encamped at war tenants
To the ones who didn't make it back alive
May they know John 11:35
To those fighting at sea, sand or land
To those who see war at first-hand
To the Normandy landers
To the beach-stormers and cliff-climbers
To those who lived at the sword and died at the sword
To the war zone patrollers and fresh-faced enrollers
To the heat-seeking missile controllers
To the every generation of soldiers
May their hearts bind to the two words from John 11:35
To those with battles back at home

To those isolated and alone
 To those who grieve and know loss of sleep
 To those with pain that cuts so deep
 To those who know the ache of loss
 To those who paid such a cost
 To those who know loss of their soulmate
 To the ones who do not yet know their fate
 To the thinkers, feelers and mind-blockers
 To the bed-ridden and rage-driven
 To the unforgiving and unforgiven
 To those whose joy was long left behind
 May they know John 11:35
 To those who fight for what is right
 To those who long to reunite
 To those who know their time is close
 To those who know that pain the most
 To those who feel there's nothing left
 To those fighting until their last breath
 To the cancer-bearers and the cancer-carers
 To the last-post players and the hopeless full-swayers
 To the light-searchers
 May they find at the end of the tunnel is John 11:35
 To those who breathe with lung-filled pain
 And wonder why the world is still the same
 To those who have given up on faith
 To the ones who feel that nowhere is safe
 To the ones who see through a suffering mist
 To the ones who doubt that God exists
 To the screamers, tearers and silent speakers
 To the guilt-built and shame-keepers
 May they know that he weeps with us
 To those who replay trauma in their minds
 May they know John 11:35.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lest we forget.

Speaker: I would like to ask all present at this time to stand as we observe a moment of silence in honour of Remembrance Day.

Moment of silence observed

Speaker: Thank you. Please be seated.
 Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to ask the Legislative Assembly today to help me welcome some visitors who are here with us today. We have Senator Arnie Roblan from Oregon, who is here representing the PNWER association — which we will speak about in a little bit — and Matt Morrison, who is the chief executive officer with PNWER. He has been here before. Thank you for returning. We're very happy to have you here today.

Applause

Mr. Hassard: I would also like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Steve Rose, who is here from the Department of Economic Development.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Ms. White: I have for tabling the Yukon Hospital Corporation's *Patient Rights and Responsibilities*.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling one legislative return in response to questions from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on government building maintenance.

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

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Notices of motions.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2017, Norman McIntyre, the Chair of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, and Ron Kneebone and Grace Southwick, members of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole to discuss matters relating to the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel final report.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to demonstrate its commitment to eliminating harassment in Yukon public service workplaces by:

(1) conducting a survey on harassment in the Yukon public service;

(2) determining the efficacy of the Yukon Public Service Commission's Respectful Workplace Office with respect to the purposes set out in government policy by reviewing:

(a) the number of cases the Respectful Workplace office has been involved with since its inception, broken down by department;

(b) statistical trends on the types of cases the Respectful Workplace Office has been involved in, including a breakdown of type of complaints referred to in the regulations, including abuse of authority, bullying, interfering in another individual's work, physical assault or discriminatory conduct contrary to the Yukon *Human Rights Act*;

(c) how many Respectful Workplace Office initial interventions have gone to independent investigation;

(d) how many Respectful Workplace Office interventions have ultimately resulted in disciplinary measures or the

termination of a Yukon government employee, including management; and

(e) the effectiveness of communication between departmental human resources units and the Respectful Workplace Office.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pacific NorthWest Economic Region delegation visit

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region delegation arrived in Whitehorse yesterday to conduct its capital visit. As the Minister of Economic Development and Yukon's lead delegate to PNWER, I would like to welcome PNWER president who we announced earlier — Senator Arnie Roblan — and PNWER chief executive officer Matt Morrison, into the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. We're pleased to have you. I would also like to acknowledge the PNWER program manager, Rachael Kopp, who is currently on a red-carpet tour of Whitehorse and will be returning later this afternoon.

PNWER was established in 1991 by the legislative leaders of British Columbia, Alberta, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Yukon joined in 1994, Saskatchewan in 2008 and Northwest Territories in 2009. PNWER's purpose is to increase the economic well-being of the northwest region, facilitate policy cooperation and coordination in the region, promote public and private sector communication and leverage regional influence in Ottawa and Washington.

I'm happy to inform the House that, next year, Whitehorse will host PNWER's 2018 annual economic leadership forum. This forum will see regional legislators, business leaders and creative thinkers meet and collaborate to address the major policy issues impacting the region and strengthen cross-border relationships.

The PNWER economic leadership forum will include the legislative leadership academy, as well as in-depth discussions on specific policy areas and key subjects affecting our regional economy.

There will be a reception for the PNWER delegation today at 5:30 p.m. in the lobby of the main administration building. I invite all members of the Legislative Assembly to join us. The delegation concludes its visit tomorrow and I wish them a safe flight home.

Mr. Kent: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition to respond to the Minister of Economic Development's ministerial statement.

I would like to recognize the importance of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region and acknowledge the long-standing relationship between PNWER and the Government of Yukon. Many of us in the Official Opposition, including the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, the Member for Kluane and I have attended PNWER events throughout the region and over the past number of years.

There are many important issues facing our two countries, such as the renegotiation of NAFTA and the softwood lumber dispute and, more regionally, we could also include Shawkwak funding as well as drilling in ANWR. Hopefully PNWER can be a vehicle to discuss these issues and that these issues are discussed at next year's forum here in Yukon.

I too am happy to welcome the PNWER delegation to the House and extend best wishes to you on your visit to our capital city. The fact that Yukon will be hosting PNWER's annual forum next year is certainly good news for our territory and we support their goals for promoting economic growth through cooperation.

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to voice our support for PNWER.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, I would like to echo the warm welcome extended by the minister. Welcome to the Yukon to the president and CEO of PNWER.

The opportunities that PNWER offers Pacific and northwest governments to work together to both develop greater mutual ties among and between governments, business and industry leaders, as well as to foster greater understanding of the opportunities that respectful and cooperative working relationships can bring to all of our citizens is a signature strength of PNWER.

We look forward to participating in the 2018 economic leadership forum here in Whitehorse — and I would urge you not to come in October because we will be sitting, so please come in September.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just in response, first of all, thank you to both members from across the way in your support on this. I think this is an event that all of us can rally and get behind and have a productive experience from it.

In response to the Member for Copperbelt South — thank you — those are all exactly great topics that, over the last year, we have been discussing, concerning getting help from PNWER and from Matt as we continue to have discussions in Washington on Shawkwak funding and ensuring that discussion move forward on how we support the ANWR piece — and also opening up new markets, so not just about some of the critical issues that we're all focused on, but also what the new opportunities are.

I think personally, just to speak to my colleagues, part of the reason that I felt that this was substantial enough for us to talk about it in a ministerial statement was because it also gives Yukon and regional private businesses opportunities. We have some amazing businesses that do very innovative things and this will be an opportunity for those organizations to speak to legislators, whether it is in the resource sector or technology sector, from across the northwest.

I really look forward to hosting this event next year. Once again, welcome to the Yukon.

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Before the House proceeds with Question Period, the Chair will provide a statement regarding divisions.

Yesterday during division on Motion No. 184, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun expressed his regret in voting against the motion. Members will recall that during division on the motion for second reading of Bill No. 8, the Leader of the Third Party expressed regret in voting in favour of the motion.

The Chair will remind members that the time for debate and comment is during debate on motions, not during division. Once division is called, there is no further opportunity for debate and comments. Members should confine their remarks to whether they agree or disagree with the motion that they are voting on. The Chair now thanks members for their attention to this matter.

We will now proceed to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Childcare services

Ms. McLeod: Access to reliable childcare facilities is a priority for all families across the territory. Yesterday evening, we heard that Watson Lake's only daycare will be closing its doors starting tomorrow. This is Watson Lake's only daycare. This means that 11 families in Watson Lake will be urgently seeking childcare.

Will the minister work with the daycare board of directors to ensure that they do not have to shut down and also work to establish a long-term solution?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this to my attention. I was not aware of this. I will certainly follow up and ensure that the supports are there for the community of Watson Lake.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for her response. In June, the minister was travelling to Watson Lake and, knowing that the minister was visiting there, I sent her an e-mail asking her if she would meet with the director of the Watson Lake daycare to discuss their issues and priorities. The response I received was that the minister was too busy to meet with the daycare.

This is unfortunate, because if she had met with them this summer, then maybe we wouldn't be where we are today. I will note, however, that the daycare is having a board meeting this weekend, so will the minister and her officials travel to Watson Lake this weekend to meet with them and try to resolve this issue?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will commit to following up with the daycare in Watson Lake and will certainly hear them out and see what the issues and concerns that they might have are, bring that forward and provide a formal response to the member opposite. We did have a town hall meeting in Watson Lake on a couple of occasions. At that point in time, we heard the issues from the community, and this did not come up in our discussions in Watson Lake. If it was urgent at that time, it did not come to my attention. So I will certainly follow back

around through the department and ensure that they follow through with the daycare owner.

Ms. McLeod: On May 31 this year, the minister told us that the Government of Canada committed \$50 million in 2017-18 for childcare in the provinces and territories. She told us this money would support existing and future early learning and early childcare initiatives in the Yukon. Can the minister tell us whether or not any of this funding can be allocated to Watson Lake to address this urgent situation?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I did attend some federal meetings with federal and provincial ministers, and we discussed the early learning childcare funding across Canada. Specifically, we talked about early learning development initiatives in Yukon. As part of the funding agreement, we looked at expanded funding envelopes for the Yukon and, in that, we looked at direct operating grants for childcare centres. We budgeted \$3.9 million for direct operating grants and provided \$2.15 million to childcare operators to assist with their operating costs in 2017-18. The additional resources that we are getting from the federal government will look at providing additional supports to childcare centres. If the Watson Lake daycare is in need of resources to continue their childcare services, then certainly we would be looking at that as an opportunity to bridge that gap.

Question re: Student support services

Ms. Van Bibber: I have some further questions about the Student Support Services division of the Department of Education. Yesterday, we asked the minister how long it takes for a student to receive an assessment after they are referred. We then asked how long it takes for a student to receive services after they have been assessed. The minister did not directly answer it but said that it depends on the school, the child and the community.

Can the minister tell us: What is a service standard in response to a referral? Is her department meeting this service standard?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question from the Member for Porter Creek North, but I don't have an answer for you just at the moment because I am a bit puzzled by the question. I would like to confer with the experts at Student Support Services and the service standard that you make reference to and then provide you with an answer to that question.

Ms. Van Bibber: I thank the minister for getting that information. As we highlighted yesterday, the services from the Student Support Services are essential to the future of our children. These supports include speech-language pathology, psychology and support for the visually and hearing impaired. We have heard of instances of families waiting a long time for their child to receive these support services.

I'm wondering if the minister could tell us what the current backlog is for referrals waiting for follow-up from the Student Support Services.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: In answer to the question, which I appreciate, from the member opposite, we continue to work with schools, students and parents to ensure that all Yukon

students have the resources they need to be successful at school. We are committed to working with parents and teachers and other educational partners to ensure that Yukon students acquire the skills that they need for happy, healthy and productive futures.

Students who, because of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities, are in need of special education programs are entitled to receive those programs, as outlined in an individualized education plan.

As noted in the question, I did answer part of this question yesterday, and I have undertaken and — as a matter of fact, as we speak, a little bit more detailed answers are being prepared so that I can provide them to the member opposite with respect to either the wait times or the backlog for assessments. I undertook yesterday to do that. I tried to have them available for today but, in order to have accurate information to present to this Legislative Assembly, they need to continue that work and I will get them here as soon as possible.

Ms. Van Bibber: Just to follow up on yesterday, I highlighted that the minister said that the Student Support Services division was to be reviewed in the fall to ensure they were adequately resourced. I had asked the minister if she could update us on this review and if there are enough resources to properly support all the students. She has just said that she is waiting on the review, so I think my question here kind of leaves it open because I was going to ask if that update was available for review today.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, I appreciate the question. I certainly took the question very seriously yesterday. Before we were even out of this Legislative Assembly, I had asked the department to provide the information that had been asked. I will review the exact wording of the questions brought by the member opposite both yesterday and today, which are quite similar.

With respect to the review of Student Support Services, I can indicate that this work is ongoing because, at my direction and with the one-government approach that we have here with my colleagues, we are interested in making sure that all elements of the departments that we work with are as efficient and effective as possible.

Student Support Services, with respect to those assessments for students and individualized learning and education programs, are no different. It's not a matter, I think, of a finite answer to this, but certainly that work is ongoing. It is critical. It is important that the individuals who we have working in Education, in Student Support Services, are providing and meeting the needs of those students in the schools, in the places where they are learning, and in their homes for education. I've asked that this work be done, and I will be happy to tell you about it when I know more.

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the minister about patient transfers to other community hospitals. This topic has received some recent media coverage, including the story of an elder from the Haines Junction area

who was transferred to Watson Lake without consent. In her response, the minister said — and I quote: "... we have offered the family support to visit the patient in Watson Lake."

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have spoken to numerous family members of this individual, and no one has been offered support to visit their family member at the Watson Lake hospital. Can the minister tell this House what specific support was offered to the family to visit the patient who was transferred against their will to Watson Lake?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm not able to respond directly to the question, but I would be happy to provide the information once I speak to the department. I have been informed that the family from Haines Junction did come forward and requested some assistance, and I believe and I understand that the department has provided that support, but with respect to the specifics, I will get back to you with that.

Ms. White: As of after-work hours yesterday, no calls had been made. A family member has driven down once to Watson Lake — over a six-hour drive in one direction — and another family member has hitched a ride all the way to Watson Lake and is currently sleeping in a chair in her grandfather's hospital room. No one we spoke to in the family was offered any support by the Hospital Corporation or by the government to visit the patient at the Watson Lake hospital, yet the minister said yesterday — and I quote again: "... we have offered the family support to visit the patient in Watson Lake."

So Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what specific supports were offered, or will she apologize for making that statement on the floor?

Hon. Ms. Frost: If I misled the member opposite, that was not the intention. I think the intention was to state that, based on the information that I had from the department, I was led to understand that the Hospital Corporation, along with Health and Social Services, met with the spouse of the patient in question and attempted to provide the necessary supports and guidance to that individual, and that accommodations were made for them at the hospital in Watson Lake.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the fact that, in 2017, we're forcing patients to be transferred without their consent, hours away from family, is a true shame.

Another senior, a retired nurse with 33 years of service at the Whitehorse General Hospital, wrote a letter to the editor yesterday, and she speaks of her experience being given a 24-hour notice that she was going to be transferred to Dawson, where she has no family supports. In her letter, she says — and I quote: "What are my rights as a patient...? It seemed I had none."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister answer this senior: What are her rights as a patient?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I just wanted to make clear that the hospitals that we have in rural Yukon and in Whitehorse — the objective is really to provide the appropriate and necessary care to the patient, no matter where they are, no matter where they are placed. If there are additional pressures in the hospitals — then I think the question had come before this

House previously around the occupancy of the rural hospitals and how we are maximizing supports and services.

By the same token, we do need to ensure that we provide the best possible care to our patients. We've looked at working with the families in doing that, and we have had a few questions and concerns brought forward from patients. That is always taken under advisement. It's not an administrative decision that's made — the decision to work and provide the health care services. Essential services to the clients at the hospital are done through the medical profession, and Health and Social Services staff work with the hospitals to ensure that we provide services where necessary.

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Ms. White: The Hospital Corporation's website has a section about patients' rights. It lists the following rights — and I'm quoting again, Mr. Speaker: “be treated with respect, consideration, dignity and compassion... participate in all decisions about your treatment plan while in the hospital”.

Mr. Speaker, where is the respect and where is the dignity in forcing a patient to be transferred hours away from family without their consent?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Maybe I'll take this time to highlight the fact that medical services are provided to patients to bring them to the various hospitals where the help and the care is needed. Oftentimes, we transport, through air medevac, our patients to Vancouver, to Edmonton and to other supports outside of Yukon. It's really essential that the care that they require, if imminent, is provided. If there are acute care requirements, then that's delivered and presented in a timely fashion.

When we have patients in the hospital who need some alternative level of care and who are occupying the really critical beds at the hospital — which we've addressed here frequently in the House — medical pressures at the hospital, the beds at the hospital — the attempt is really trying to utilize the services that we have to our benefit, to the benefit of the patient. The patient's right to access an appropriate level of care is always considered, and that's done in collaboration with the Yukon Medical Association and the medical professional. Continuously developing and evolving strategies certainly needs to be considered. I respect the question, and I will take that back to the department for further analysis.

Ms. White: I wasn't calling into question the care at the hospitals. What I was asking about was consent, and this is about patients' rights. Patients deserve respect, and patients should have the right to refuse transfers hours away from their loved ones. The patients' rights listed on the hospital's website also include the right to accept or refuse any treatment or medication that is offered.

Mr. Speaker, how does it make any sense that patients can refuse treatment or medication but are not allowed to refuse being transferred hours away from their families?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I certainly respect and acknowledge that the rights of the patient are essential and critical and part of the decision-making around medical services and support.

Where we provide that support is at one of the three hospitals we occupy. If it means that the medical profession decides the best possible solution at the time to provide support is in one of the rural hospitals, that's a consideration the hospital, with the physician, takes under advisement and consideration.

Whitehorse General Hospital looks, in conjunction with the Health and Social Services, at alternative levels of care and trying to provide supports outside of the hospital as much as we can to get the patients back home or get them into a long-term care facility. We have heard from the CEO of the Hospital Corporation that the pressures encountered at the hospital are such that we are under immense pressures to provide acute care — imminent care — when we have patients who require alternative levels of care.

Ms. White: We spoke to another senior at the hospital who saw the elder they were sharing a room with being transferred against their will to another hospital. The patient was expressing verbally that they didn't want to go, as they were moved on to a stretcher and transferred out of the room. The senior who witnessed this was understandably upset, and now they are constantly worried that the same thing could happen to them at any point.

Mr. Speaker, what happened to the rights of patients and how is this acceptable? Will the minister immediately direct the Hospital Corporation to respect its own statement of patient rights and stop transferring patients against their will to community hospitals?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As expressed, I will follow up with the Hospital Corporation and I'll follow up with the department. Ultimately we want to ensure that the patient is provided the care where we can and where the supports are available. If a patient requires care, they receive it either at the Whitehorse General Hospital, Dawson City or Watson Lake. Oftentimes we transport them outside of the community. The patient's physician works in collaboration, and I'm hoping, as indicated, that this is done with the family and that informed consent and collaboration is followed through on and that the necessary supports are there.

If we are moving patients, I will commit that we will look at ensuring that family members are part of that process. I heard the question and I value the input and really think patients — we want to make sure we provide proper care, essential care and we want to do it in a respectful way. That means inclusive opportunities for family, as well as the Hospital Corporation and the whole staff to do just that to take care of the patient.

Question re: School replacement

Mr. Kent: In the minister's Education annual report, there's mention of a school revitalization plan. The annual report states that this plan will look at a number of older schools in the Yukon that have to be replaced or renovated in the coming years. It also goes on to say that the plan will be finalized in the summer of 2017.

Can the Minister of Education confirm for this House that the report has been completed on schedule and, if so, where can we find it, or will she provide us with a copy?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for the question. We have a lot of infrastructure that is going to require attention throughout the next five years and beyond. I am working with my colleague, the Minister of Education, to assess and actually come up with a plan to replace infrastructure. In this case, you are talking about schools, and that is part of our inventory of buildings that we are going to have to look at fixing over the next little while.

We have processes in place to evaluate on a regular basis what the state of our infrastructure is. It was one of the things that the Auditor General had asked for, and we are delivering on that promise. So yes, over the next few years, we will do the assessment, the triage, and make sure that the buildings that we have are treated and dealt with as money allows. As the needs of the students and staff require, we will deal with those school pressures.

Mr. Kent: What I was referencing in my first question was out of the Minister of Education's annual report and it is a school revitalization plan. It stated that this plan would be finalized in the summer of 2017. It doesn't appear that this plan is ready. Can the minister tell us when it is expected to be ready? Also, which schools are on the list? Most importantly, will any of the schools be closed as a result of this plan? That is the kind of information that we are looking for from the minister here today.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. The Department of Education is working very closely, as you have heard, with the Department of Highways and Public Works to ensure that all of our school facilities are safe and available for use for many years to come.

There is, of course, a situation where the age of schools needs to be taken into account. We are currently undertaking a comprehensive planning process to address future school construction and/or renovations to existing school buildings to make sure that every student has a safe and appropriate place for learning. Responsible investment in education will support improved student achievement and better outcomes for Yukon students and the social, economic and community goals that we have in every community. There are a number of schools on a list that are being worked on with respect to this comprehensive program, Mr. Speaker, based on the age of the school, the facilities that are available there and consideration of how those can be replaced or improved, if necessary. I have absolutely no interest in any schools being vacant or closed prior to that comprehensive plan being determined.

Mr. Kent: As I mentioned in the previous two questions, this school revitalization plan, according to the minister's Education annual report, was to be finalized in the summer of 2017. It does not appear that it is finalized. What we are looking for is when we can expect that plan to be finalized, and we are looking for the minister to provide the public with a copy of that plan.

A further quote from the minister's annual report is that: "...the goal will be to upgrade or replace one school building approximately every three years."

Can the minister confirm that this is still the commitment and if so, how long will the entire plan take to implement?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the importance of having appropriate schools and having the schools properly revitalized, renovated and/or replaced if necessary. A proper planning process is, of course, required, which includes functional plans and business cases in order for that to be the case.

I note that in the concept of the question, there is this idea that this kind of a plan would be finite in a list and therefore followed in a way that does not necessarily consider moving targets — if I can say it that way. We're looking at a plan that will take into account a number of things, not just the age of those buildings, but broader than that — the community learning spaces that are required, the opportunity for revitalization of those buildings and not necessarily just knocking down a building and building a new one, but a much broader one-government approach that will determine how we can best meet the needs of the aging infrastructure in our Department of Education.

Question re: Hospital bed shortage

Mr. Cathers: Yesterday, after more than six months of us asking for it, the government finally agreed late in the afternoon to release a copy of the Yukon Hospital Corporation's budget request and then used their majority to shut down debate.

We're hearing more and more from Yukoners and from the Yukon Medical Association and individual physicians about problems at the hospital because of bed pressures and the government's choice not to provide, by the Minister of Health and Social Services' own admission, \$5.2 million that they requested this fiscal year. In the spring, we told the Premier and the minister that this was a mistake. We also encouraged them to include funding in the budget later this year to provide for the hospital's needs, but, unfortunately, we see that the supplementary budget does not include the increase it should to meet the hospital's O&M needs.

The simple question for the Premier, as Finance minister, is: Why?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: As the Government House Leader, I will take an opportunity to respond to a portion of the question asked by the Member for Lake Laberge.

With respect to what occurred yesterday, just to remind everyone, the topic of debate was set by the opposition yesterday as it was clearly a Wednesday afternoon for opposition motions. The opposition asked for a document that has historically never been made public. As an open and transparent government, we provided the document that was requested. We did so during the beginning part of that debate. If they want to have a larger debate about funding of the hospital, I'm sure they will do so and certainly have the opportunity to ask questions, which we expect them to do as well.

Yesterday a motion was made to adjourn the debate to permit us to move on to other motions, which in fact did happen. That motion to end that debate was supported by the members of the Third Party who voted with the government in order to move on. The member opposite has an issue with what occurred; my suggestion would be that they consider how the motions were called yesterday for debate. Clearly, the opportunity to ask for the document was theirs to choose, the opportunity to provide the document to end that debate was taken by the government and we had the opportunity to move on, which was appropriate in my view.

Mr. Cathers: That answer is just not going to cut it. We have been telling the government since the spring that the funding they provided the Hospital Corporation was inadequate. We have been asking for the information for more than six months, and only when finally faced with the prospect of voting on a motion that, if passed, would have been an order of this Assembly to release a copy of the hospital's budget request did the government finally relent after more than six months.

The Premier is simply not treating our health care needs with the seriousness it deserves and he has chosen to dismiss the request from the Official Opposition. We now see the Third Party is also jumping on to this issue and recognizing the problems that exist at the hospital. We see that, unfortunately, the Premier is not treating this issue with the seriousness it deserves, is not listening to health care professionals and is not providing the funding the Hospital Corporation needs.

Will the Premier recognize his mistake, do the right thing and increase funding for the Hospital Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think what we're seeing here today is an interesting indication of why the Government of Yukon is now in a structural deficit. I guess the old way of doing things would be to get a proposal from a department or from a corporation and just say yes. This resulted in decades of overspending and has left us in this tight financial spot we are now in.

We have taken steps to address that with the Financial Advisory Panel. We have announced today that members will be able to ask them questions here as witnesses in the Legislative Assembly on November 21. I'm very proud of the work that my Minister of Health and Social Services is doing on many fronts, including plans to make better use of beds in the hospitals, because it is a continuing pressure and we are working on it, and also more money for home care in this year's budget — more money than normal.

It will take some time to address these issues, absolutely. The lack of planning that has occurred means we're going to have to take an awful long time to deal and repair these long-standing issues.

With regard to the debate yesterday, I believe the House leader summed it up very well. The opposition asked for a document. We gave it. Case closed.

Mr. Cathers: Again, first of all, page 4 of the Public Accounts disproves the Premier's narrative around the finances and I would urge all members to take a look at it.

The Premier is dismissing the request made by the Hospital Corporation and is not taking seriously the chief of medical staff's report of the last fiscal year about the pressures of the Hospital Corporation and is treating their request as being unreasonable. In fact, a one-percent funding increase, as admitted by the Minister of Health and Social Services, and underfunding the Hospital Corporation by \$5.2 million, again as admitted to by the minister, is simply not going to cut it. The government is simply not taking this issue seriously enough, has chosen to dismiss reasonable requests and has not stepped up to provide the hospital with the funding it needs.

Again, we're giving the Premier an opportunity to realize he made a mistake and provide the funding the Hospital Corporation needs. Will he do that, or is he going to continue to play the blame game and duck responsibility?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Here I am standing, not ducking, and I'm very proud of the work the Minister of Health and Social Services has done on this file. With the extra money we're putting toward initiatives that have been long-standing problems with home care, long-standing problems with mental health care in our communities — we understand the pressures and we've heard from the corporation here but, again, this is an old adage from the Yukon Party, I guess, if they were going to just accept the first request from all the departments and from all the corporations — well, Mr. Speaker, we are in a financial bind here and we want to make sure that we're making decisions with Yukon taxpayers' money that makes sense for Yukoners. It's a tough position to be in and tough decisions are going to be made by this government.

Again, Mr. Speaker, through a motion that was given by the member yesterday with regard to the particular way that this government has dealt with giving more information than has ever been offered in the past — I will ask the members opposite if they have in the past provided this level of information. I don't recall and this team doesn't recall. I am very proud of the work here.

We were asked for a document, we provided it, we ended debate and we moved on to other issues of the day that are important to Yukoners.

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. 178

Clerk: Motion No. 178, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

Speaker: It is moved by the Hon. Premier:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of the *Ombudsman Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council reappoint Diane McLeod-McKay as the Ombudsman of Yukon for a term of five years, commencing June 10, 2018.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am not going to take too much time on this motion here today, but I am very pleased to move the motion this afternoon to appoint Diane McLeod-McKay as Ombudsman for Yukon for a term of five years, as you said, beginning June 10 of next year.

As members are all aware, the Ombudsman is an officer of this House. The established practice of this House is for the Members' Services Board to consider the appointment of all House officers and make recommendations to all members. The motion before the House today reflects the recommendations of the all-party Members' Services Board.

Ms. McLeod-McKay was first appointed as Ombudsman of Yukon in June, 2013. With this appointment, Ms. McLeod-McKay also became the territory's Information and Privacy Commissioner in accordance with section 40 of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, Ms. McLeod-McKay took on an additional role — that of Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner — when the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed. A year later, in August 2016, she also assumed further responsibilities — those of Information and Privacy Commissioner — under the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*.

Ms. McLeod-McKay brings considerable experience as an advocate for the protection of personal privacy to the various positions that she holds here in the Yukon. She has worked in this area for the Calgary Health Region, for the office of Alberta's Information and Privacy Commissioner and as a privacy and security consultant for the British Columbia government. Ms. McLeod-McKay also has a law degree from the University of Victoria. Her practice focused on advising public/private health sectors on the responsibilities for compliance with privacy legislation.

Ms. McLeod-McKay has ably served the territory as Ombudsman and in the other positions that she holds. The *Ombudsman Act* recognizes that the appointment of the Ombudsman requires the solid support of the Members of the Legislative Assembly. Accordingly, the resolution presented today requires a recorded vote supported by at least two-thirds of the members present.

I am pleased to join with my colleagues on the Members' Services Board in recommending the reappointment of Diane McLeod-McKay, and I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to support this motion.

Mr. Kent: I thank the Premier for his words in introducing the motion. He did a very admirable job of explaining the qualifications of Ms. McLeod-McKay to continue on in this position. The Official Opposition will be supporting the reappointment of Ms. McLeod-McKay. There are a number of important initiatives underway that we believe will require some consistency in this position, including and not limited, of course, to the ATIPP act review. So those are some of the important things that Ms. McLeod-McKay will be undertaking throughout the next number of years, and we congratulate her on her reappointment. I know

that she has become an important member of our community as well, with her family. Congratulations to her, and we wish her well over the next five years.

Ms. Hanson: On behalf on the Yukon New Democratic Party, we just take the opportunity to confirm, as the Premier indicated, that the decision by Members' Services Board was a decision of all members to agree to the reappointment of Diane McLeod-McKay as the Ombudsman, Privacy Commissioner and public wrongdoings disclosure officer. Mr. Speaker, one of the things, I think, that became clear in the conversation is that the work of the Ombudsman as an office has grown, and the objective nature of the work that has been done by the incumbent has been important and helps guide this Legislative Assembly as well. We look forward to a positive endorsement by this Assembly.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard on this debate of the motion?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I won't take any time here at all, other than to say thank you to my colleagues for their words today. I have to say that we've had many amazing ombudsmen in the Yukon Legislative Assembly in the last couple of decades.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

For the record — and the Hon. Premier did set this out — I'll set it out for the record for greater detail. Before putting the question, the Chair must draw members' attention to section 2 of the *Ombudsman Act*. That section requires that the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly to the Commissioner in Executive Council respecting the appointment of an Ombudsman be supported by at least two-thirds of the members of the Assembly. The effect of section 2 is that, for the motion to be carried, at least 13 members must vote for it. In order to ensure that the requirements of section 2 of the *Ombudsman Act* are met, the Chair will now call for a recorded division.

Division is called by the Chair.

Bells

Division

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried by the required support of two-thirds of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and that Diane McLeod-McKay has now been reappointed as Ombudsman of Yukon for a five-year period.

Motion No. 178 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

Deputy Chair (Mr. Adel): The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 203, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Before we get started, I would like to recognize the Member for Kluane.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Istchenko: I would like to introduce — no stranger to this House — former Speaker Dave Laxton of the Legislative Assembly. He is here today. He is a 22-year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces and a very active Legion member. Veterans have been busy participating in schools in Remembrance Day ceremonies all day long. They were at Macaulay Lodge, they'll be participating in ceremonies this afternoon at the Thomson Centre, and they'll be at Copper Ridge tomorrow.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our Legion members and those who work so hard, so I would like to introduce and welcome him to the Legislature today — Dave, thank you.

Applause

Bill No. 203: *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18* — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 203, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I spoke with my colleagues across the way about getting on and finish up general debate. I believe there are not going to be any more questions from the opposition on general debate specifically, but I do have some unanswered questions from the Member for Lake Laberge. I would like to entertain that now in my remaining 12 minutes. I won't take all that time, Mr. Deputy Chair.

There was a question about the MOU. The member opposite asked — and I'm quoting here, I believe: We would appreciate more information about the ongoing costs of the Salvation Army, both in Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation, and whether they are receiving money from a different pot. That was from the Member for Lake Laberge.

The MOU was overseen by the Department of Health and Social Services. The minister can speak to the MOU and any further details required by the member opposite during the individual departmental debate for both those departments.

The supplementary budget includes the total of \$745,000, and \$408,000 of this was the original project estimate and \$337,000 was for additional costs that were due to that contamination piece that we spoke about before on the site for the Salvation Army.

Another question and quote from the Member for Lake Laberge — and I quote: "...we noticed a press release... citing the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on January 24, 2017..." — and then he suggests that because that press release does not contain the standard boilerplate language about pre-budget announcements, he would like information around which year the funding was allocated toward and whether they are in the mains or the supplementary estimate.

The member opposite can find that information regarding contributions made by Energy, Mines and Resources in the government transfers section of the department's budget for the 2017-18 main estimates, which begins on page 9-19 of that document. The details around the transfers made by EMR in the 2016-17 fiscal year may be found on pages 179 and 180 of the Public Accounts document.

I will point out to the member opposite that, with very few exceptions, the details of transfer payments made by the government are listed by department, so the information he is requesting is readily available as well.

The member opposite also asked about Public Accounts — the \$2.2-million unpaid construction bills — and was referring to a statement about a press release. The member opposite was speaking about whether or not that \$2.2 million was part of another \$8 million announced in the press release. No, this has nothing to do with debt repayment. These are construction costs that were incurred under the previous

government for the Dawson City and the Watson Lake hospitals.

The Member for Lake Laberge spoke about the members of the Kluane community and how they're asking about the procurement of two bridges on the Aishihik Road, believing that the projects were never listed on a registry. He was asking about that and he was also asking about whether the work procured — how it was procured — and was it a different method from the usual method. At this level of detailed specificity, I would encourage the members opposite to reserve that question for the Minister of Highways and Public Works during departmental debate time. I do not profess to be the pro in this area and my minister will provide those details.

Touching on a Public Accounts question from the Member for Lake Laberge about the Tourism Industry Association and the Public Accounts seeing an increase — I believe the question was what was composed of the \$100,000 increase and who made that decision. The answer for the Member for Lake Laberge is that the Tourism and Culture overage came from the Connecting America co-op marketing program in collaboration with Destination Canada, but I would once again encourage the member opposite to direct that question to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for more information.

We also had a question about the Archives project on page 189 of the Public Accounts. The question was — I guess it was being proposed by the Member for Lake Laberge that it was additional spending under the Liberal government. He was asking for extra information on that. The funds for this item are for the Yukon asset construction agreement — or YACA — related to the Whitehorse Archives vault expansion project. Again, I would encourage the member opposite to direct further questions on this particular item to the Minister of Tourism and Culture during their departmental debate.

I believe those are answers to all of the questions that were outstanding, or at least urging the member opposite to direct those questions to the specific departments as we get to those in the Fall Sitting.

Mr. Cathers: In the interest of moving on to individual departments, I won't resume with additional questions. I do have a few more, but in response to the items that the Premier suggested we ask the ministers in individual departments, I would just encourage those ministers, either in their introductory remarks in departments or prior to that, to provide us with the information that I have requested on behalf of our caucus that the Premier was not able to provide today.

With that, I will just thank officials for all their work in assisting the Premier in answering the questions that we have asked and look forward to departmental debate.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 203, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*? Seeing none, we will now proceed to clause 1. Clause 1 includes Schedule A, containing the departmental supplementary estimates.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 2013, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: We will take a 10-minute break.

Recess

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation, in Bill No. 203, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*.

Yukon Housing Corporation

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to thank everyone and I rise today to present the 2017-18 supplementary budget for the Yukon Housing Corporation. Before I begin, I would like to introduce to members of this Assembly the officials who will be assisting me today: Pamela Hine, president of Yukon Housing Corporation, and Luzelle Nagel, manager of finance, Yukon Housing Corporation. I would like to provide updates to all members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on a number of key initiatives now underway at Yukon Housing Corporation.

As you know, victims of violence need special assistance when looking for and finding accommodations. Through Yukon Housing Corporation's program, four NGOs in Whitehorse have each secured \$10,000 in funding to assist with housing needs for victims of violence. The four groups are: Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Blood Ties Four Directions, and the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon.

These groups explained that, once clients have identified the need for housing, timing is of the utmost importance, so they look to Yukon Housing Corporation for funding that would address the needs of their clients, such as emergency accommodation in motels, security deposits required from landlords, and rent supplements to assist with affordability.

Increasing the supply and availability of affordable housing in Yukon communities is an integral outcome of Yukon Housing Corporation housing programs. There are multiple projects underway, including the renovation of eight housing units and the installation of one well by Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. In Watson Lake, a private developer is building a new duplex. In Dawson City, nine new affordable rental housing units are under construction by Chief Isaac Inc., with an anticipated completion date of March 2019.

In Whitehorse, there are two projects currently under construction: the Da Daghay Development Corporation is constructing and will be operating a 42-unit residential housing development in the Whistle Bend subdivision. The Housing Corporation will be providing financial assistance through rent supplements to be offered to social housing eligible clients for 30 of those units.

In downtown Whitehorse, 360° Design Build is building a multi-residential building on Hawkins Street and Yukon Housing Corporation is providing \$500,000 so that 10 units

will have affordable rents for the next 10 years. The anticipated completion date of that is March 2018.

Yukon Housing Corporation also has applicants from Selkirk First Nation and Kluane First Nation for the repair and upgrade of a total of 17 units. These applicants are currently under review and I believe that the Selkirk First Nation's agreement is finalized and they are proceeding with their project.

From April to August, over \$5.1 million of Yukon Housing Corporation's funding allocation for lending programs has been expended or committed. This includes three different home ownership programs, home repair and rental, and secondary suites. During the same period, approximately \$2.5 million of Yukon Housing Corporation's funding allocation for grants programs has been expended or committed. This includes programs such as First Nation partnering, victims of violence and municipal matching rental construction.

There are two very important initiatives currently underway which will help guide Yukon Housing Corporation into the future. I spoke of the new development of a new strategy planned for Yukon Housing Corporation and the upcoming announcement of a new national housing strategy. Recently, Yukon Housing Corporation went out with a public tender seeking the assistance of a consultant to support the research and drafting of this new strategic plan. A consultant has been hired who recently interfaced with all Yukon Housing Corporation employees during an off-site engagement process.

There are many components to the new strategic plan, including environmental scan, organizational assessments, an engagement strategy and a need-gap analysis. Further to this, the corporation's goals and objectives in a new strategic plan are to align with the appropriate goals and objectives of respectful cross-government departments, such as Health and Social Services, Community Services, Energy, Mines and Resources and the Public Service Commission. I look forward to receiving the new strategic plan and working on new initiatives with the corporation and the board of directors.

At the national level, the Yukon Housing Corporation continues to engage with the federal government to promote the interests of all Yukoners in the development of a national housing strategy. We support the vision that all Canadians have housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. Housing is the cornerstone of sustainability, healthy and inclusive communities and a strong Canadian economy where we can prosper and thrive.

With the implementation of the housing action plan for Yukon, Yukon Housing Corporation is well situated to participate in a national housing strategy process and present the housing needs of Yukoners at the national level. We are advocating for support for northern, homeless, and indigenous opportunities.

I will now turn to the Yukon Housing Corporation's supplementary budget and provide numbers with a line-by-line explanation of changes to the main estimates.

Under operation and maintenance, there is a reduction of \$256,000. This is comprised of two amounts: first, there is an increase of \$71,000, which is a carry-over amount from 2016-17 for the enhanced rent supplement program. This amount is 100-percent recoverable through the corporation's investment in the affordable housing agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The second — there's a reduction of \$327,000, which pertains to the rent-supplement agreement with the Da Daghay Development Corporation. This agreement will provide 30 units in the 42-unit rental development to Yukon Housing Corporation Corporation's social housing clients. Noted here is that 12 of those units will be allocated to the citizens of Ta'an Kwäch'än. These funds have been deferred to a future period due to delays in the construction of the multi-residential development in the Whistle Bend subdivision of Whitehorse. These funds are fully recoverable through the corporation's agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and rent from tenants. The net decrease of operation and maintenance is \$250,000, leaving a revised total for 2017 and 2018 of \$19.259 million.

I will now provide information on changes to Yukon Housing Corporation's 2017-18 capital budget. Under the home repair program, specifically the forgivable home repair program, a total of \$514,000 was carried over from 2016-17. A total of \$300,000 has been deferred to a future period, while \$214,000 has been allocated to this year's budget. All of these funds are fully recoverable through CMHC.

There are two changes regarding funding for the municipal matching rental construction program. Funding of \$1 million in this fiscal year has been deferred, while \$1.531 million has been carried over from the previous year under the northern housing trust. This carry-over includes a \$157,000 from this year's rental allowance program that has been reallocated to the municipal matching rental construction program due to lower than expected uptake.

\$1.129 million has been carried forward from the northern housing trust for recipients to complete projects under rental quality enhancement and accessibility. In addition, \$221,000 has been carried forward for the implementation of a housing action plan. The joint venture represents funding that we are providing to the Salvation Army for their Whitehorse project. The amount of \$1.175 million is a carry-over of unspent funds from the 2016-17 fiscal year. The Yukon Housing Corporation will transfer these funds to the Department of Health and Social Services. This funding is fully recoverable through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation under the affordable housing agreement.

I will now focus on social housing and funding that we receive through the investment and affordable housing from CMHC. All of these funds are fully recoverable. The victim of violence funding reflects a carry-over of \$346,000, while \$300,000 has been deferred to another fiscal year. The overall budget for this fiscal year has been increased by \$46,000. Originally it was projected that two new rental projects funded under the modest affordable housing program would be

completed in 2016-17 fiscal year, which explains why there is no amount in the main estimates.

Both projects require additional start-up time and lengthened completion dates, so \$1 million was carried over into this fiscal year, of which \$450,000 has been deferred to future years. These affordable rental projects are being constructed in Dawson City by Chief Isaac Inc., which are the nine units I referred to, and in Whitehorse by 360° Design Build, and those are the 10 units.

With respect to emergency repairs, a total of \$2.47 million was carried over from the previous year; \$1.167 million has been added to this year's budget, while \$800,000 has been deferred to future years.

The affordable rental housing development budget has been reduced by \$830,000 to align with the expected expenditures during this fiscal year. These funds have been deferred to future years.

The First Nation partnership program has a carry-over of \$894,000. The budget was then reduced by \$1.5 million, which will be deferred to future years. The net impact of the budget for 2017-18 was a reduction of \$606,000, and the budget is now \$894,000. There has been a carry-over of \$601,000 in this fiscal year to support upgrades to existing stock.

Seniors construction in Carmacks requires a carry-over of \$649,000; \$1.2 million has been deferred to future years. The net impact of this budget item has been reduced by \$149,000 to reflect expenditures in this year. Non-seniors construction required a carry-over of \$1.5 million. A total of \$2.7 million has been deferred to future years. The net impact is that this budget item has been reduced to \$300,000 to reflect expenditures in this fiscal year.

The Corporation has identified \$26,000 in internal administrative charges with respect to staff housing, renovations and rehabilitation of existing stocks. This budget has seen an increase of \$133,000 due to carry-over of contract commitments from 2016-17.

The total increase in capital is \$2.941 million, so the revised capital budget total for 2017-18 is \$25.284 million. Except for the \$133,000 increase to the renovation and rehabilitation of staff housing, all of the funding increases are fully recoverable and do not affect the Government of Yukon's bottom line.

Before I conclude my address, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors for their active engagement in providing oversight to the corporation, and for their commitment and engagement in the development of new a strategic plan. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all of the corporation's staff for their commitment and assistance in helping Yukoners address their housing needs.

Mr. Istchenko: Before I get into some questions, I just want to thank the officials who are here today. I also want to thank those who work in Yukon Housing Corporation in the rural communities and Whitehorse — and the board of directors the member just spoke about who are working on a plan. I will have some questions about that later.

The first question I have today is going to be follow-up on some of the questions we have been asking for the last little while to see if we can get a little bit more of a finite answer.

As you know, we've seen the wait-list for Yukon Housing double over the last year, so I'm wondering if the minister can tell us how many seniors and social housing units her government intends to build over the next year to alleviate this concern.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The direct question around how many units are being built this fiscal year — we have, as stated in the House previously, committed the resources for the four units in Carmacks. That has been allocated, and the tendering process is happening. We're hoping that this will go out very soon. We will work through the capital projects with the Housing Corporation for the next fiscal year, and that will identify more units in Yukon communities.

Mr. Istchenko: Yes, the four in Carmacks — I got that.

I want to follow up on this. I think it's an important question that Yukoners would like to have an answer to. If the minister can provide us a list of how many seniors and social housing units her government intends to build over the next year — broken down by community would be very helpful. If she cannot provide that today, could she give us a timeline as to when she can share these numbers with us?

What I'm getting at is — there is a wait-list and it has almost doubled. It's important. It sounds like, with this wait-list, we need more seniors housing units and social housing units. If we could get an answer from the minister or, like I said, a timeline would be nice.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I should note that the Housing Corporation has worked quite closely with the municipalities, First Nation communities and the NGO groups over the last year. We have had numerous engagement sessions here in Whitehorse and in Yukon communities.

With respect to specific community requirements, the decision on the capital plan has yet to be made for next fiscal year, and we are working on the priorities with the First Nations. At that time, a decision will be made on how the funds will be allocated.

Mr. Istchenko: They're working on a plan. The minister said she's working with First Nations. She said she met with municipalities and stuff, but her final statement was working with First Nations. Does this plan include anything else besides First Nation, social or seniors housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the question. Where things stand right now with regard to the strategic plan for Yukon Housing Corporation in defining priorities, what we have also taken into consideration is a broader capital plan. We have heard, presented through various means, that there are quite a lot of resources coming into the Yukon — innovation funding, energy efficiency resources — and we have identified in our budget allocated amounts for housing in our communities.

So we are working with the municipalities, we're not just working with the First Nations. I should note that we are meeting with the municipalities. We have had broad community engagement here in Whitehorse. We brought in experts to talk to our communities and talk to the builders and

get their input as well on innovation in building. We are working with our communities to tie in the community needs. That will be tied into the long-term capital plan — the five-year capital plan — for the Yukon. That will be done in conjunction and collaboration with Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services. Yukon Housing Corporation will use the various methods we have. There are funding agreements that are coming from the federal government, and we will tie that into a partnership agreement so we can maximize opportunities and maximize the infrastructure we have in our communities.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member for that answer. It sounds like there's a strategic plan and that's going to play into the five-year capital plan. On this topic, one more question I would ask then is: Can I get an answer on where we are with this strategic plan and a timeline? Also, with a timeline, it would be really good if we could get some sort of timeline so we can tell our constituents that there is a plan to address some of this basically doubling of the wait-list over the last year.

If the minister can give us a bit of a timeline and when she figures this plan will be done?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to provide some context. The Member for Kluane may be aware that the Yukon Housing Corporation's strategic plan expires and the board is currently working on a renewed plan. The direction was for them to provide me with that plan by the end of December, so that we can tie it into our capital planning for next fiscal year. As well, with the new resources, we're getting into, with various departments, the collaborative approach with this government in trying to — our vision is really about a one-government approach. What can we do to maximize opportunities and work together with the departments, not working in silos?

What is happening with Community Services and all the resources they are getting through national funding? As well, we just signed on to a national housing strategy. The national housing strategy will define specific resources. As well, Energy, Mines and Resources has an allocated amount of resources coming in on energy efficiencies and alternatives around innovation in building.

We're trying to look at not dealing with it as one department, but looking at it from the holistic perspective in working with our partners and really maximizing opportunities and putting as much of those resources out into the communities as possible.

Mr. Istchenko: I gather then that until at least the next building season, which is next summer, the only work that is being done is in Carmacks, which the minister spoke of — but I guess there is a plan coming.

If we're going to do some plans, of course when it comes to plans, you have to consult. Can the minister provide some details around the consultation she has held with the municipalities, the local chambers of commerce, and our seniors and elders about the construction of housing in communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What has happened and what has transpired over the summer months up to this point in time is that we have really, I think, worked quite closely with our communities and had some broad public meetings and engagement sessions. That included invitations to the chambers and working in the communities.

When we work with the First Nation communities, of course the consideration would be looking at the obligations of working with all of the community, including the seniors and perhaps the younger people as well. So what we're really doing is working with all of the groups.

The housing action plan that was announced by the previous government — the implementation of that and the concepts around that the member would know. The housing action plan committee consists of the chambers of commerce, the Association of Yukon Communities and it also includes the board of the Yukon Housing Corporation, Health and Social Services and Energy, Mines and Resources. We have met with the Association of Yukon Communities, City of Whitehorse, Council of Yukon First Nations, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Challenge Disability Resource Group, CIBC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Anti-Poverty Coalition, Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Residential Landlord Association and the Yukon Real Estate Association. So the member can well appreciate we are doing our due diligence and trying as much as we can to incorporate the input from all of the groups of people and organizations in our community that would be impacted by a decision or would get value from the work that is happening and from the resources that we have available.

Mr. Istchenko: What I'm getting is that she met with a lot of people and it happened in the summer. There have been a lot of questions in the House this Sitting about consultation and the consultation processes. Some ministers have extended consultation processes and some have been, I guess, a little stubborn on doing that, but the minister listed the people she had met with, but I want to speak a little bit about rural Yukon a little bit more.

I did send the minister a letter in January about a campaign commitment of mine and the previous government about working with seniors and a seniors facility in Haines Junction. I don't think it matters whether you're an MLA for Kluane, for Watson Lake, for Takhini-Kopper King, for Mountainview, or for Porter Creek North or South — you have constituents and seniors. If you have ever talked to a senior, talking to an organization that says, "We speak for seniors" just doesn't cut it. You have to meet with the seniors.

In the letter that I wrote to the minister on January 17, I said that a meeting with the Village of Haines Junction, the First Nation, the St. Elias Seniors Society and other interested parties can provide the necessary information to move forward with the design and completion of this project. In the Premier's Budget Address in the spring, he said that those seniors will want to live full and engaged lives. I'm not going to speak for the Premier, but I think that engaged means you engage and he was talking about seniors.

So my seniors group and my First Nation elders group out there have two wonderful ladies who work with them every day. They get together and I'm looking forward to the chief and me going to their Christmas luncheon. I go down and I am becoming quite proficient at lawn bowling and indoor activities. I'm carded though, so I can't play on the national level, but I'm allowed to play in the community.

When the minister wrote back to me, it said that the Yukon Housing Corporation hosted a housing forum for Yukon First Nations and municipal governments to discuss housing needs and opportunities in our rural communities. Representatives from both the Village of Haines Junction and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations attended this forum and provided feedback on behalf of their organizations. I also attended the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations General Assembly in July and I follow the GAs. They're their own government, so I don't stay for them, but I follow the resolutions that come out of them and if anything applies to something I can help with, I work with them.

Then it says: My office is working to arrange meetings with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in September, if possible. I hope to also meet with the Village of Haines Junction. There will certainly be an opportunity to discuss seniors housing needs at that time.

Nowhere in the letter does it say the St. Elias seniors group. The St. Elias seniors group was started many years ago. It spent a lot of time lobbying the then-premier of the day, Mr. Fentie, for what we needed. It's a nine-unit and it's occupied. It never goes for more than a day or two without having someone in there. It's a very busy place. Phase 2 of it would be muchly appreciated.

I'm sure if the minister had the opportunity to sit down and meet with them, she would probably get a lot of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations elders to come, because they get together now and they meet. Social inclusion — it's incredible to see the working arrangement that the two have.

My question would just be: When did the consultations take place? If I can get a legislative return on whom the minister met with or the Yukon Housing Corporation met with. As I said in my letter, former ministers and premiers met on many occasions with seniors in every community in the Yukon. I think you have to meet face-to-face as a minister. You hold the budget strings, and that's who they want to see. The good work of the Housing Corporation and the employees there — it's important that the minister meet them.

If you can't provide an answer for me today, I would like to see it in the form of a legislative return. Can the minister commit to actually meeting with the St. Elias seniors and the elders within the community of Haines Junction, sometime before this strategic plan and the capital plan for the Yukon government are put forward — the five-year capital plan?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Yukon Housing Corporation is committed to working with Yukoners to create solutions, to promoting aging in place. As the member requested, I will commit to getting the information on whom we consulted with

and how many times we consulted. We have held many engagement sessions. I'll be happy to provide that.

The member opposite read the letter that I provided, which was specific to the request from Haines Junction and the commitment. To give a bit of context, the expansion of the seniors social housing unit in Haines Junction — during the 2016 session, there was a statement made that there would be an allocated amount to support planning for this expansion under the leadership of the previous government, and there was no budget allocated to that.

With respect to the broader strategic plan, we will look at the whole of Yukon. We will look at establishing future housing priorities and undertaking information collected in analysis, and engaging and determining the demand within each of the communities.

We absolutely respect the elders out there. They are essential in terms of the direction we go in as a government. They have a lot of experience and a lot to offer us in terms of guidance, and most certainly we will commit to meeting with the seniors groups in our communities. I do have a meeting coming up shortly with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. As time permits, we will ensure that, as we go out to the communities, we'll extend broadly the invitation.

As a note, when working with Health and Social Services, as we look at establishing our future housing priorities — social housing, seniors housing in our communities — we have communities that don't have seniors housing, nor do they have social housing. Those communities are Pelly Crossing, Old Crow and Ross River. Health and Social Services identified these communities as key pressure areas. We do need to look at where the demand lies.

I just want to give a bit of background now. One of the questions posed to me in this House was: How many seniors vacancies do we have throughout the Yukon? Those are things that we take into consideration when we set priorities — the demand from the communities and the need in the communities. At this point in time, the social housing units and the wait-lists — there are units in Haines Junction, and currently we do not have any seniors on the wait-list for Haines Junction, yet we are seeing extensive pressures in Whitehorse. We have 194 seniors on the wait-list, whereas in Dawson City, we have 10. In Watson Lake, there are a number on the wait-list as well. We are trying to look at exploring new approaches to seniors social housing, including potential collaboration with the private sector. That is part of our engagement — ensuring that we extend the invitation out broadly to our communities so that we have broad input and consideration.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for, I guess, some of that answer. I am encouraged to see that she will be heading to the community to meet with the St. Elias seniors. I am just hoping that they have time to organize and that the right people are contacted.

I have a question for the minister. We talked earlier about the waiting list. She just brought it up again. What are the criteria for being eligible to get into a Housing Corporation unit?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As we look at the Housing Corporation seeking to find solutions with our seniors, we oftentimes speak about social housing and housing geared toward income.

We know that our older adults are oftentimes in a specific category in terms of income — on senior supplements and so on — so really attempting to improve client services as much as we can and ensuring that we provide the opportunities for the seniors to age well in their communities — so certainly going to look at the possibilities of expanding our care to the communities, our program areas in the communities. That's a key priority of this government.

As much as I keep saying that in the Legislature, we are working toward that. You'll see that part of the commitment from the government in working with Health and Social Services. The partnership and the collaboration between Yukon Housing Corporation is really to provide that opportunity, the opportunity to partner.

The criteria that the member opposite requested in terms of how decisions are made — Yukon Housing Corporation's social housing program provides subsidized housing to low-income Yukon households who are eligible to live independently but may not otherwise be able to afford market rent. Eligibility is based on Yukon residency and income. Applicants on the wait-list are prioritized according to the severity of their need.

Seniors housing is specifically for social-housing-eligible clients who are seniors. As such, this is part of the same program as Yukon Housing Corporation's social housing. The eligibility for social housing, household income, must be under the following household income limit: for a single person, or bachelor, it is \$39,000; for one bedroom, it's \$49,000; for two bedrooms, it is \$53,500; and for three or more rooms, it's \$74,000.

All Yukon Housing social clients pay rents that are geared to income, and that is currently being reviewed as well. We're trying not to put up barriers but to take down the barriers that are there and ensure that, as much as we can, we look at eliminating some of the pressures that we're seeing but still try to look at the pressures on the wait-lists. The social housing wait-list changes monthly, and typically we have it fluctuate, as I indicated. In the list I provided, we have in excess of 100 applicants sometimes in Whitehorse, and smaller numbers in the communities. That doesn't necessarily mean that there are fewer requirements in the communities; it just means that there are alternative pressures in the communities. We're seeing overcrowding in our communities. We're seeing multiple families living in one unit. We're trying to address that broadly and look at the allocation.

I'm sure that we can provide a little more context, if that's necessary, around how decisions are made for the eligibility criteria because that's public information. I would be happy to provide that.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you for the answer. So when it comes to the eligibility criteria, have the criteria changed since this government has been in place, or are they the same criteria that have been ongoing for years and years?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As the member opposite would know, the criteria that were set are exactly as it existed previously.

What we're trying to do is look at addressing some of the pressures and, if necessary, through this approach with the Housing Corporation board of directors, look at some options and look at ensuring that we don't put up barriers, but provide opportunities. If that means that we work through a seniors social housing model with our communities and our partners, we will do that, and the eligibility criteria would be defined differently in the communities with the partners. Wherever we can, we're reaching out, but the units that we have currently in the control of the Housing Corporation and that are managed by the Housing Corporation — it is defined by pre-existing criteria.

Mr. Istchenko: The minister mentioned in one of her previous statements a review of the rent geared to income. I guess the question I would have is: Are these criteria not just for seniors housing and social housing — but Yukon Housing Corporation also has staff housing — is the minister looking at reviewing all of the criteria? She talks about a review, so I am not exactly sure. If she can give a little bit more detail about what she is going to review and what is open for review and what is not open for review?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I want to look at the challenge between staff housing, social housing and seniors housing. The delivery of housing in each Yukon community is unique and it is really based on the population, demographics and the proximities to economies of scale. So really, when we look at rent geared to income, there are huge discrepancies. That has never been assessed or reviewed. We have heard this; I have heard loud and clear that you have rent geared to income for a social income client or a low-income client, and then, on the other side of the duplex, you have a Yukon government employee who is paying for subsidized housing and can live in that unit forever, as long as they are employed in that community. The inequities are identified as a concern. Are we looking at that? We're looking at all of the possibilities and are certainly working with the Public Service Commission on those policies and working with my colleague from Community Services and the Public Service Commission.

When we talk about criteria, the funding that we receive from the federal government pre-defines what we do and how we deliver programs in our communities. The attempt is really to look outside of that — outside of the criteria that is pre-determined by the federal government and the arrangement with, say the Da Daghay Development Corporation or Chief Isaac Inc. — and to look at working with the private sector so that we can reduce the pressures and get out of the bureaucracy and the criteria that have been pre-determined for us and allow that flexibility.

It would perhaps reduce the pressures we're seeing, in terms of modernizing and being flexible in our approaches to housing in rural Yukon. We all know that when you get out to rural Yukon, you don't see the resources there, whereas in Whitehorse, we have more opportunities to seek partnerships.

We have municipalities and then we have unincorporated communities — so unique circumstances in each one of our

communities, and that's part of the challenge in working with unincorporated communities. We can't maximize municipal matching grants to build social housing or seniors housing, so what alternatives do we have? Very few — so as we go through our capital plan, our five-year plan and our strategic plan, there has to be the flexibility to allow for some diversity.

Mr. Istchenko: If I could get just an answer — a little bit shorter answer — is the minister planning on reviewing the criteria for social housing, seniors housing and staff housing? Will you be reviewing all three or just the staff housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: All three.

Mr. Istchenko: I would hope to get a bit of a timeline on this also. If you can't provide that today — but in a legislative return with the timeline and whom you will be consulting with — which communities, and probably with the union and a few other people — so if I could get a list of that.

I want to move on. The Yukon Housing Corporation's down payment assistance program has been a welcome assistance plan to help many Yukon families take the first step into home ownership. However, it's only offered as an option to families who have a household income of less than \$90,000. A number of families have voiced concerns over this, saying that they have a dual income of over \$90,000 but, for reasons out of their control — such as child support payments, other obligations — they are unable to come up with the down payment for a home.

Is the minister willing to look into the option of offering loans, either based on higher household incomes or on a case-by-case basis?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm just going to give a little bit of information around the current income limits. Effective as of September 2017 for the lending and grants program, the down payment assistance program is a little more than the Member for Kluane highlighted. It's actually \$100,130, which is a sliding scale — so the more you make, the less you get. It allows more flexibility, and it will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Mr. Istchenko: Just to follow up, I asked the minister if she was willing to look into the option of offering loans on a case-by-case basis that might be out of that limit.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the question. The criteria are set so that it remains consistent across the board and is reviewed on an annual basis by the board. If there is a requirement to adjust, then the board will make recommendations.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that answer.

The owner-build program through the Yukon Housing Corporation has also had a number of inquiries from people who believe that they are unfairly excluded from the program. In the case where the people are not first-time homebuyers, are able to get bank financing and would like to build and have other requirements of the program, but feel that the program is a better fit for them financially than bank financing, would the minister consider making their acceptance to the program on a case-by-case basis?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The owner-build and first mortgage programs do not have income limits. The whole intent and

purpose of the home ownership program and the owner-build program is to assist those clients who cannot get bank financing or are not eligible for financing. You really do not want to be in the business of competing with existing institutions.

If a first-time client comes forward and is not able to afford financing, then we would certainly consider that. If a client is a returning client and wants to access funding, then certainly you would need to take into consideration the application. That would be done on a case-by-case basis. We want to be able to provide financing for clients who are not able or ineligible to finance through other options.

Mr. Istchenko: In the Premier's mandate letter, he requested that as Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, the minister increase affordable housing options across the territory, including making effective use of federal funding. The minister spoke about some of the opportunities to support this housing. In the 2017 federal budget, \$24 million was allocated to Yukon for housing outside — I would note "outside" — of the \$225 million committed nation-wide for housing in indigenous peoples off reserve. Can the minister explain the government's current plan to ensure that this funding is utilized effectively across the territory? How much money does this work out to per year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am just going to reiterate what I have said previously in the House, which is that the total amount of money coming to the Yukon over the next 10 years is \$24 million. We're receiving \$2.4 million and that's not going to come forward until next year. The planning around that and the allocation around that is being considered and discussed through this long-term capital plan.

The question around the indigenous component — we don't have any resources, nor has the federal government committed to indigenous housing initiatives. We are currently taking that into consideration as we look at the budgets that we currently have control over. At some point in the future, my understanding is that the federal government will enter into those bilateral discussions and we haven't heard what that is yet.

The final procedures required — we have negotiated broadly across Canada a national strategy, but we're looking at finalizing the bilateral agreement for Yukon. I noted also, which is really of significance here, that what we have not seen historically is that funding arrangements that we've negotiated with the federal government — the success I'm really pleased about is that we've raised, in federal language, that we've not seen before the unique circumstances of the north and remoteness factors. We have seen it in self-government agreement language in terms of allocated amount, but we've never, ever seen it in territorial or regional funding envelopes. That was done in collaboration with the ministers of housing for Nunavut and Northwest Territories and me to get that federal language changed. I think that will get us a little closer to where we need to go with flexibility within the budget.

I stated previously that the funding we receive right now is really defined in a specific category and set by motions of

the federal government. It defines criteria. This new language — we're hoping — in the bilateral discussion will give us more flexibility in terms of adaptation measures, looking at innovation in building and looking at remoteness factors. Allocated amounts can be increased over time to reflect that.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for the answer. As a minister in a previous government, I would quite often be frustrated also with making sure that the north was recognized as different from the rest of Canada. I can say probably the most frustrating was meeting and having the discussion of a carbon tax.

Anyway, I have another question for the minister. In some communities, Yukon Housing Corporation clients and staff are over-housed. What I mean by that is that one person is in a three-bedroom house. Some of these houses have been renovated into duplexes.

Could the minister tell me how many houses have been done? Are there plans to do more, and in which community?

Hon. Ms. Frost: A question around housing clients and staff housing — we've noted that and that has been brought to my attention that, sometimes in our communities, we have one person who resides in a four-bedroom house or a three-bedroom house when we're having housing pressures. We have taken into consideration the staff housing, social housing and the whole of the Yukon Housing Corporation stock. As we look at the stock we currently own and manage and as we go through the retrofits, we will make accommodations in the future — also looking at working with my colleague from the Public Service Commission around staff housing in comparison to social housing.

The policies will be adjusted accordingly. We are also looking at ensuring we put the resources into the retrofits in the right area, so we're not maximizing. Some of the things, as a note — in some of our communities, we have vacant houses that are defined as staff housing, and then we have social housing pressures or housing pressures for seniors. We have policies and procedures that have been set in place. We want to be able to look at those things and look at perhaps making the necessary adjustments so we can best align with the needs of the unique circumstances of that particular community.

Mr. Istchenko: I do agree wholeheartedly that it's case by case, but what I was looking for was how many have been done to this date. Maybe she can't answer about the plans to do more because maybe they don't have that quite yet, but how many units have been done?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that number right in front of me, but I would be happy to provide that to the Member for Kluane.

Mr. Istchenko: That would be great if she could provide that, and also if she could provide a bit of a plan on some of the other units and which communities they will be done in.

I believe it was in Question Period and maybe in a couple of motions we put forward in the House that I asked the minister about the plans for the Vimy Heritage Housing Society project, now that the location on Fifth and Rogers has been deemed no longer suitable for the project. I know the

minister has been working with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on a location, but I didn't really get an answer from the minister, so I would just like to ask again.

The question would be: When was the last time this government met with the society representatives, what was discussed and when will the project be scheduled to proceed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thanks for the opportunity to speak to this question concerning the Vimy project. We — being the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and I — have been working in a collaborative manner to come up with a series of options or solutions for the Vimy society. There was dialogue in the Assembly in the first Sitting, discussing exactly what they needed. Some of the information that flowed wasn't exactly accurate, such as whether it was just that the solution was a land solution or whether it was a loan solution or whether the organization was looking for an actual grant.

The Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation has given me the ability to work on the land piece, which we have been doing. The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, with support from Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services have had at least one meeting with Vimy — I don't have the exact date of that meeting — but, funnily enough, I have a meeting tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. with Mr. Sarin, who was here earlier this week. We are going to have a discussion about multiple choices of land.

Truly the Vimy piece is a bigger discussion I believe from what Vimy has indicated to me than just land. It is a land piece. It is a conversation as well about potential financial support — what that financial support looks like — and then taking into consideration that there has been support for some work on it, but I believe that the business plan that is in support of the project is about four to five years old at this point, so maybe there is some renewal of that information.

Further to that, taking into consideration the fact that the organization — tomorrow I will get a better understanding and indication of what they are looking at from capacity, but the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and her staff are already undertaking the large job of identifying significant capacity that is going to be needed for some of the projects that are currently underway, such as Whistle Bend.

There is a lot of work happening right now. There is probably going to be a competition out there to try to find capacity to work in this sector, so those are all the things we are taking into account, but, for the Member for Kluane — this is a priority. I really respect what the group is trying to get done and trying to figure out we can work with them and we'll look forward to further discussion during Question Period in the House on this particular topic.

Deputy Chair: Order. Would the members like to take a break?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: We will take a 10-minute break.

Recess

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

We are continuing with general debate, Yukon Housing Corporation.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to go back to the Vimy heritage project. It sounds like there is going to be a lot of conversation happening, which is incredible. This is a great project. Can the minister — whether it's the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — for this House and for those listening, give us a bit of a timeline, through meetings and getting together, when they figure this project could proceed and when they could get started breaking ground?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would say that, at this point, I'm not going to come out with a timeline, because I think what we've outlined is that there are a lot of questions that have to be answered. To be prudent, I would say that the first steps are to figure out if the model and working with the group to actually understand what the needs are. That's the first key point. I'm still endeavouring to understand exactly what the needs are. Are the needs simply a land piece? Members from the opposition — both Third Party and the Official Opposition — have stated on a couple of occasions that it's just a loan. I don't think it's just a loan. There's a land piece and then, if there's land involved in this equation, is that land raw land or likely developed land — and if it is developed land, is it suitable?

The Minister of Health and Social Services had previously spoken about housing at Fifth and Rogers. Although that was part of an early conversation, it's not necessarily what the organization was looking for.

I would say that, at this particular point, I would definitely not stand up today, though no offence to the member. I know we want to get this good project to a place that works for everyone but, at the same time, what's the financial impact? The minister of housing has said over and over again that we have to make these decisions taking into consideration the total financial picture of the government, Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services, and a commitment to the Assembly to look at all the options and respect the amount of work that has gone into this to date.

First, what is the land piece? What other funds are available through programs? Is it a loan piece? Is the plan that is in place now a concrete plan? It's not to critically view these plans, but to assist these individuals.

What a great story in that you have a group of people saying, "Hey, we want to come up with a solution to help this group of people, but also to help you and government and to come up with our own solutions." I apologize to the Member for Kluane that I cannot say that groundbreaking is on this date. We are really not there yet. I think over the last couple of years there were some light conversations on this. I think we really have to dig in and understand exactly what is going to be needed, exactly which programs can help, and understand exactly the magnitude because there have been some changes as well — is it 35 units or 40 units? But also respecting the group and Mr. Sarin and continuing to have that dialogue, I

am excited to sit down with him at 3:30 tomorrow in my office, which has been booked, to continue this dialogue.

Mr. Istchenko: I can appreciate the minister's answer. Thank you.

In the 2017-18 capital estimates for social housing, it is \$7.663 million. I had asked the minister previously what this money is earmarked for and if she is on track to spend it all in this fiscal year. The minister was not able to answer the question, but did commit in her response to provide information on a later date. Can she provide today what the capital estimates are earmarked for? Will it be spent or not?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to provide that information. I thank the member opposite for the question.

In our 2017-18 estimates, we have \$800,000 allocated for retrofits with our existing stock. That covers things like: reshingling of roofs; releveling; interior retrofits and renovations; furnace conversions; decommissioning some boilers; interior retrofits and some mechanical upgrades. There is a whole suite of work that has been conducted on the rehabilitation of existing stock. There is \$6.863 million that was invested in affordable housing that, combined together, makes up the \$7.663 million.

The investment is federal funding, which I noted in my presentation, so a lot of these projects are 100-percent recoverable funding through CMHC.

Energy upgrades to Yukon Housing Corporation's social housing stock, there were six units; Habitat for Humanity, four units; and home repair emergency repair grants were up to 28 units. I can give the numbers. Habitat for Humanity received \$500,000. There were energy upgrades on social housing for \$500,000. Home repair emergency grants for the 28 units was \$846,000. First Nation partnership housing program for up to 30 units was \$1.5 million. The affordable housing program, up to 22 units, was \$1.1 million. Victims of violence shelter allowance was \$100,000; victims of violence shelter infrastructure upgrades, \$157,000; seniors housing project in Carmacks, \$660,000; and in the Whitehorse project, there are 15 units for \$1.5 million.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for her answer.

Now I want to turn to Ross River a little bit. Some of the concerns in Ross River — with the MLA for the riding, we put together some questions here. I know that, during the election, a spokesperson from the Liberal Party said that there was a crisis and they would dedicate money toward housing in Ross River. The minister stated that the government has been very successful in their collaboration with the Ross River Dena Council to address housing needs in Ross River. We all know about the six-unit staff housing complex that was constructed.

Besides that six-unit staff housing, can the minister confirm how much money was spent to address the housing situation in Ross River — I think we've asked this before — and whether the government will be increasing those funds in the next fiscal year to ensure housing needs are met? I'm looking for some numbers for this year — besides the six-unit staff housing — and monies for the next fiscal year.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With respect to the Ross River Dena Council and the current situation there, I'm really happy to say that we met just yesterday with Chief Caesar and members of his council and his support staff. It was a very successful meeting. The Yukon government is committed to working with the Ross River Dena Council. We have been from day one. Chief Caesar is really pleased with the support that he has received.

The Housing Corporation — I'm not going to give specific numbers because I don't have them right now, but we've spent hundreds of hours working with the Ross River Dena Council and providing capacity development, having staff on the ground through Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation, and we will continue to be there.

At every session and every meeting that the Ross River Dena Council has with its contractor, with the builders or Aboriginal Affairs Canada, we have staff there supporting them. We will continue to do that.

What we've also committed to — and which I'm not able to give the numbers on — early on is to provide them staff housing during this pressure time where we're doing the retrofits on the houses. There was funding allocated from the federal government of \$2 million for a project to build additional units in the community plus, I believe, there was \$250,000 to do retrofits on 10 units.

The Ross River Dena Council was not able to, I guess, expedite the process, given their staff shortages and given capacity, so the Yukon Housing staff stepped up to the plate and started working with the Ross River Dena Council.

In that process we went and shared all of our resources with them, helped them to build up their inventory, build their database system, and share with them the procedures and guidance that was provided. It was really on the ground to capacity and providing units. We still have our units allocated to the Ross River Dena Council, so we have units in Faro and in Ross River. So that's what we've committed to.

I've had a lot of pressures around the five units that we've allocated to the Ross River Dena Council, suggesting that we didn't commit to the existing five housing units that would become surplus assets. We have committed — I raised that with Chief Caesar yesterday, as well, that we would follow through as we committed to last year. That has always been the commitment and we will ensure that that happens.

The concerns, or perhaps some of the feedback, that we're getting is that we need to modernize or upgrade those units to align to the needs of Ross River Dena Council. So we are working with our partners — Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada — to ensure that the five housing units that we currently have, once they become surplus to the government will flow over to the Ross River Dena Council in the best state possible, and get the upgrades they require. That has to be done in collaboration with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and with our partners — Ross River Dena Council. So we are working with the Ross River Dena Council and I'm really happy to say that Chief Caesar, at this point in time, is quite pleased with the relationship. We will continue to work with them and build

capacity. We've gone so far as to offer a secondment to the Ross River Dena Council to help, for a short period of time, to work with the Ross River Dena Council and give them the supports they need to be successful because, historically, they have not received the support.

I would venture to say that Liard First Nation is also one of the First Nations in Yukon that perhaps didn't get the support they require, so I'm really pleased to note that the Ross River Dena Chief and Council has agreed to work with the Liard First Nation and share their best practices and share their successful models. We're looking forward to that continued collaboration with the Ross River Dena Council and the Liard First Nation on addressing some of the housing pressures and shortages, and perhaps better aligning the needs of the people in those two communities.

Mr. Istchenko: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am pleased, as always, that the government had a meeting and they're collaborating with Ross River Dena Council. The staff do need to be commended for the work that they're doing in the community. I know in previous governments that's what the staff is there for. They go to those communities, they work with the communities when there are issues.

Now the Liberal Party themselves said it was a crisis situation, and the minister — I believe there was a news release today talking about how she's been in government for a year now. She just spoke about the \$2-million funding from the feds and the \$250,000 in retrofits. So can the minister just confirm for me that none of this money has been spent to this date? When will some of this money be spent? I'm not talking about the six-unit staff housing complex.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am going to talk about the complexity of an unincorporated, completely 100-percent indigenous community that is reliant on federal resources. The complexity of that relationship — I'm sure the member opposite is aware, as is the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, having travelled to Ross River many times himself. I'm certain that he would want to represent his community and his constituents in bringing the message forward and that is what I have been doing — to work with the partners and provide the support that the community needs to be successful.

What we have seen is that putting more money into the community is not going to fix the problem. We have seen that what we address as a challenge — in terms of what they have asked from us — is guidance to assist in finding solutions to completing the current duplex projects that were started last year. The duplex — there was \$2 million allocated from the federal government, and that wasn't completed. Why? Because they ran into some challenges with a contractor out of Vancouver. That project had to cease and desist. The Yukon Housing Corporation provided some intervention with the Ross River Dena Council in collaboration to look at what we can do to bring that project back on line.

That was done through various meetings with the community and various meetings with the contractor, and at that point we ran into a bit of a challenge — so looking at where we go from here. The follow-through on that project is starting then from the foundation back up.

Our commitment at this point in time — putting more money into Ross River — putting more money into the community is not going to address the problem. We need to fix what is there right now and what was committed to previously.

In last year's budget, there were resources allocated through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and it disheartens me and it makes me sad that the contractors that come into these communities take advantage of the communities and they don't work in good faith and we see failures. The failures result in communities suffering as a result of that misappropriation. What we're doing right now is working with the Ross River Dena Council in securing a local contractor to look at the three duplexes and trying to ensure that we get those built as quickly as we can, in collaboration with our partners. Yukon Housing Corporation is at the table with the Ross River Dena Council, with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the project manager and the new contractor, and we will continue to do that and — perhaps at some point in the future, once we have addressed the current pressures on the resources we have available and that are there in the community — then we will look at the needs of the communities going forward. That is being done with Chief Caesar and his council.

Mr. Istchenko: I guess my final comment is for the minister today. I will have a couple of questions at the end and she can answer them, if possible.

I have been asking the minister questions for the past little while and here again today. We have heard the minister talk a lot about working with partners. We have heard her talk about meeting with communities. We talked about collaboration, and that's great and it all sounds good, but the minister is being very vague on some of the details. I think the minister would probably agree that providing some specific details to us on this topic is something that Yukoners would expect — those people on the waiting lists, those people in Ross River. I said earlier that I saw in a news release today about how she has been in government for a year now. Depending on how you look at that, it's 20 percent of your mandate, or even a quarter of the way through.

All that we really got today was that there are a bunch of initiatives. There's a strategic plan, but I have heard previous ministers in this House — when the previous ministers were being grilled by the opposition, the Official Opposition of the day, the ministers would stand up and say: You know, we're working on a plan but that doesn't mean you stop everything. Just to be clear, it doesn't mean that you stop everything.

What it looks like to me and to the Official Opposition is that nothing is going to happen until they have a plan. We have been asking for numbers; we have been asking for timelines. We get lots of initiatives and now we have a strategic plan, but dollars that aren't being spent in budgets — it has been a year at the job. So a little bit of clarity from the minister before I sit down finally today — is the minister's government doing any housing initiatives while we wait for this strategic plan? Will we see anything at all? We haven't seen anything.

The previous government would say that, and the minister, in some of her early answers in Question Period, highlighted a lot of the initiatives from the previous government. My final question is: Is the government doing any housing initiatives while we wait for this strategic plan?

Hon. Ms. Frost: It has actually been 11 months since I have taken on this role as housing minister. Lots has happened in the 11 months, and it took the Yukon Party 14 years to get here and I'm sure it's not going to take us 14 years to resolve the challenges before us. There is lots of success, I must add, around what we have done and what we have accomplished.

I'm going to recite some of that, because clearly that wasn't clear to the member. Yukon Housing Corporation is developing its next five-year strategic plan, which will expire very shortly, and that foresight wasn't put in place. We are now ensuring that we align with Yukon communities and that we're considering pressures from rural Yukon. The pressures we're seeing from rural Yukon — it's really important that we best align the needs.

The member opposite really highlighted the seniors housing and he allocated \$50,000 — well, that wasn't in the budget for the seniors complex in Haines Junction. We didn't see any other resources put out into the Yukon, broadly speaking, and we are looking at ensuring that this plan takes into consideration and account the needs of the most vulnerable people of our society. It supports rural Yukoners aging well in place — not aging infrastructure in Watson Lake or elsewhere — but aging as an individual in your own home community — looking at the seniors complex in Haines Junction, for example. How can we keep the elders and the older aging adults in the community? All of us here are getting to that place — 55 and older. How are we going to stay in our own communities? Consider First Nation housing needs — ensuring equity and encouraging economic growth.

Homelessness, Housing First — I spoke often in the House about partnerships. That has to happen; it wouldn't happen solely on the shoulders of Government of Yukon. Changing mind sets, changing perspectives and changing our partnership models — the Housing First care model is really radically changing how we deal with homelessness and the most vulnerable. This government has made homelessness a new priority. We have been engaging our partners in developing a Safe at Home plan to end homelessness in Whitehorse and, as noted here, the distinction between Housing First homelessness, homeless action plan, housing action strategies and anti-poverty reduction — they are all pillars of social inclusion and what we're doing as a government.

I noted that we committed \$3 million, I believe, to a Housing First model. We talked about broad strategic approaches in this year's budget. We committed the \$3 million to a true Housing First approach. That hasn't happened before, so that's a successful story. I think you're going to see some new units being made available in the City of Whitehorse to address homelessness and some action around the housing action plan.

We just announced — and worked in collaboration with the City of Whitehorse and Kwanlin Dün to launch a Safe at Home plan. Last winter we worked with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the City of Whitehorse to open an emergency shelter to address the needs of Yukoners, the most vulnerable, during the very critical time of mid-winter. We allocated \$90,000 and we provided staff support.

We look forward to working with our partners — the Kwanlin Dün, Ta'an Kwäch'än, City of Whitehorse and the Anti-Poverty Coalition to implement the Safe at Home plan — and bringing components of the plan to Yukon communities. That's a good strategy and a good pillar to bring to some of our communities and, in particular, communities with larger centres — Watson Lake, for an example, or Dawson City or Carmacks. Safe and adequate shelter is an important part of Housing First. To further support this model, we are providing financial support under the social infrastructure agreement with Canada to provide victims of violence housing supports for four non-profit organizations that are seeking opportunities to partner with others.

We have begun the process of working on a Housing First model. The first step has been to build understanding and capacity through government stakeholders, and we are now looking at implementing that, as just stated.

We also looked at the commitment to providing a by-name list initiative. How do we provide support to individuals by name — not discriminating against anyone — so that we provide inclusivity and opportunities? Work has begun on the implementation of our Housing First care model. As a note, we hosted two forums this past spring and summer to begin this work. The first forum was held in April to introduce the topic of Housing First to care providers, housing providers and non-governmental organizations. In an earlier question, the member opposite wanted to know whom we met with and when we met. These are some of the dates.

In July, we continued to build capacity regarding Housing First by bringing in experts to present their Housing First experiences and lessons at the poverty reduction and housing forum. The Yukon, being unique, and with the unique circumstances of the north, clearly we need to take into consideration the pillars of the Housing First model and utilize it wherever we can and build our own initiatives here.

In addition to Housing First, Yukon Housing Corporation hosted a First Nation and municipal housing forum in March. Those are some of the dates for the member opposite. He wanted to know specifically when we met, who we met with and what we discussed.

The important conversations about housing challenges and establishing relationships, building meaningful partnerships, the municipal matching rental construction grant — I should note here that the municipal matching grant was set to expire, meaning that it was an initiative that would have terminated. What this government committed to was to allocate the resources for another year. That was from feedback that we received from our communities. The partnerships are really essential in increasing the availability

of rental housing. We have extended the municipal matching grant.

I am going to go on and say that, since April, we have approved 19 additional housing projects under this project. The municipal matching grant looks at the creation of individual suites — various projects. Whitehorse and Dawson City are good examples — Yukon Housing Corporation stocks as well. We have looked at great strides to increase the supply and availability of affordable housing in Yukon. The member asked earlier about what we are doing about houses that are overstocked — supplies that are overstocked in our communities where we have one individual residing in a three-bedroom unit. We are taking measures to address that, and we are doing that in partnership with the Public Service Commission. As we retrofit the buildings, modernize and upgrade, we will hopefully deal with all of our stock in time. We have allocated \$1.1 million in federal funding from investment in affordable housing to upgrade social housing infrastructure. Upgrades included — and I read the list earlier: energy efficiency; converting single-family dwellings to duplexes to reduce wait-lists and increasing efficiencies there; converting some of the units from oil-burning to electric to address greenhouse gas emissions and the reduction there, and so looking at allowing energy efficiency and more cost-effectiveness.

Moving on, we stated that the Ross River Dena Council and the six-plex there — we're looking at exploring options with the Ross River Dena Council. We'll certainly follow through on that, so some really good initiatives with \$3 million allocated from CMHC for affordable housing, which is going to go toward a Housing First initiative. I'm happy to say that will commence in 2018; private sector partnerships — the list goes on. I can keep going on.

We have Watson Lake affordable housing construction program for the development of a new affordable housing complex; looking at the 360° Design Build, the 10 units there; housing outreach — there's so much. We have done so much in 12 months. Working with First Nation partnerships and looking at developing initiatives with the corporations — Chief Isaac Inc., as well as the Da Daghay Development Corporation. We're looking at eliminating, or trying to bring down, that wait-list that we have — that big long wait-list in Whitehorse and in rural Yukon — what can we do to address that? It doesn't take a day, it doesn't take a year, it will take a little bit of time to just chip away at that, and the only way that can happen is by partnerships.

I will continue to say that we need to have the partnerships. Solutions are not to be shouldered on the government only. The Government of Yukon is not responsible for 100 percent of the pressures. It has to be done with our partners in our communities. That's where we'll put our efforts.

The Yukon Housing Corporation will continue to lead development on affordable housing and seek partnerships. We'll look at a concerted effort and we'll see that in some of the language in our strategic approaches, in our five-year capital plan, and in looking at our partnerships. Under the

First Nation partnerships, we have provided \$500,000 to the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, which is a success — an unincorporated community that would not have had the resources otherwise to look at improved renovations and retrofits.

We have looked at working with some of the other communities to ensure we will expand our scope and our policies around the First Nation housing initiative for First Nations that are perhaps in some of the communities that would not have the resources otherwise. Housing action plan, context and implementation — the guidance comes from our partners. I listed the partners earlier and who we collaborated with. The member opposite seemed to have perhaps some issues with me speaking about partnerships, but I provided a list of everyone — all of the associations, corporations, chambers of commerce, the City of Whitehorse, Yukon Chamber of Commerce, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, municipalities, Association of Yukon Communities. We will continue to do that.

We'll also look at working with the Anti-Poverty Coalition in providing assistance and guidance where needed — lots of success. The member opposite wanted to know what we did in the 12 months and what did I do as a minister — that's what we've done and we'll continue to work really hard to expand our housing accomplishments and start working with our community partners.

Mr. Istchenko: I just would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff in the House here today for their assistance.

Ms. White: Mr. Deputy Chair, I love the Yukon Housing Corporation. I love talking about it. When someone asks who is excited about this department — it is definitely me. So again, I thank the officials for being here and for the last six years that we have had to interact. I really do appreciate it. Of course the people down at the office, from the people who do the herculean work at the front desk to the loan managers to everyone there who works so hard in putting all the pieces together — I truly appreciate the Housing Corporation and the work that they have continued to do and will continue to regardless of what government is in power. I also thank the minister for the opportunity to ask questions.

Housing is critical and previous examples, when I used to sit further down there to my right, a lot of what I did was trying to get to the root of whether or not the government believed that housing was a human right. So I am happy to say that the Liberal government has agreed that housing is indeed a human right. In recent days, I think there has been some misunderstanding in the House about the definition of Housing First.

I would just like to start off with this. The minister just mentioned Housing First, so if I could just start with: Can I have the minister's definition of Housing First please?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am going to read the definition for Housing First: "Housing First is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness..." Let me re-phrase: it is: "...the recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness

into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed."

As the Yukon government, we have had quite a lot of studies, approaches, and strategies. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness defines Housing First programs — a Housing First approach is a community-based plan. The provision of high-quality housing support services tailored to meet the needs and wishes of clients is critical to their success. These range from Housing First programs to address different population needs and the housing market in the community. Housing First can also exist within different housing forms, from scattered-site housing in private market to housing in mixed affordable housing to permanent supportive housing.

Now what we are moving quickly toward — and I'll note that, through the housing action plan, some of the pillars around Housing First have come into conversation and discussions. We've taken elements of that into our new relationships. The new relationship with the safe-at-home advisory committee considers some approaches and community-based planning to end homelessness in Whitehorse. It defines quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into safe and appropriate housing, while offering supports and services, regardless of one's history with addictions and/or mental illness. Those experiencing homelessness should be rapidly rehoused, rather than remaining in the emergency shelter system.

So when I speak about a collaborated approach, I take into consideration the relationship, say, with the Salvation Army, for an example. We didn't have a relationship with the Salvation Army. They were going to receive a facility and some resources to provide services they defined as essential needs, based on their national model. So we pushed really hard to integrate elements of the strategies that we received back from our partners — the Anti-Poverty Coalition, the housing action committee, safe at home — so really, that is my definition and that's what we're working toward.

This government is working toward ensuring that we quickly move people experiencing homelessness into safe and affordable housing, while offering them the supports and services. We have some transition units at the Salvation Army — 25 units — and we're working as quickly as we can with the Salvation Army, with Health and Social Services and Yukon Housing Corporation. I'm really happy to say that we have an oversight committee. The oversight committee will manage the transition, which was not a part of the conversation a few months ago, but now we have that.

The interest groups will define and sit with the clients, and you'll see one-on-one support — client supports, transitioning into successful homes, into successful approaches.

Now I've stated earlier that Housing First is a bit of both a philosophy for housing provisions and is clearly defined in a program model. We take the philosophies and try to tie them to something that we didn't have control over before, but elements of that — you'll see in the next little while that we have allocated amounts of money in our budget for a true Housing First model. I'm happy to note that I will follow

through with the member from — which I've noted with her — is that I would provide some input to the Member for Whitehorse Centre. I would be happy to provide that to any other member in this House, and to clarify what the next steps are.

Of course, there are procedures that we have to follow in order to hit that place of definition in saying that this is what we're going to do, but we have that allocation amount in our budget specifically to deal with Housing First. Elements around that, the philosophy around that, we need to tie it into other projects as we move so that we're not leaving people homeless and that we provide them supports to be successful in our society.

Ms. White: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. There are important points that the minister just hit: it was moving toward permanent housing and it was without barriers.

It was the concept that it was not based on sobriety or access to services.

Based on the fact that we're talking about permanent housing, does the minister believe that the Salvation Army is offering Housing First?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Great question — that keeps coming up and everyone is pressuring me. Well, what is the Salvation Army? I don't try to box myself in, and I don't try to box this government in. The member opposite seems a bit perplexed, but we don't box ourselves in — never box yourself into a corner. You need to provide and be flexible.

The Salvation Army is a transition unit. The transition unit is a continuum. Certainly the Salvation Army — the core principles of housing — a Housing First approach is part of that. It's part of — not permanent, forever home. It's a transition, because we really want to bring the 25 individuals who will occupy these units on a 12-month period out into their forever home, and that takes a bit of a continuum of care to be successful and to be ready.

We will certainly look at the units that we have on our books for building in the next few months — within the next 12 months, in fact — which will be the barriers — it won't be a forever home for individuals. We want to make sure that this successful model — we will use the philosophy around the housing readiness and with the philosophy as defined in the Housing First continuum. Salvation Army is not a true Housing First model. It never was. It never was intended to be that. It was to be a transition period. Housing First is a forever home for individuals — barrier-free homes. Well, this is a transition. It will transition individuals in; it will transition them out.

My hope and our hope through the government and through the Housing Corporation is that we can find them that secure place in the future, and that's partly why we have the oversight committee. The oversight and the management will allow for that transition to happen.

Ms. White: Just to clarify, is the minister's understanding that the reason why the Salvation Army isn't a Housing First model only because it is transitional — so it's because it's a year-long process that you can be in the transitional units? Is that the only part that the minister doesn't

see that reconciles with the Housing First definition and housing?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I just want to clarify for the record. I stated 25; it's actually 20 — just to correct the record.

The Salvation Army units — we didn't have any units a few months ago. We didn't have any control over what was happening and what was being provided through the Salvation Army in terms of compatibility with our overall Housing First model. The Salvation Army would never commit to that. They probably wouldn't have committed to our agreement, had we not negotiated a compatible solution to looking at some ongoing case management in-house community supports to align with the Housing First approaches.

That is really important. It was never a transitional housing piece of the Salvation Army build — it is really to look at the broader housing and support continuum. It was not intended to be a Housing First. I'll just make that note that we are working with them and will transition out into a Housing First model. That's why we put the efforts into building Housing First units — multiple units — that you will see in the next 12 months.

Ms. White: Just to clarify again that you are able to access Housing First regardless of your sobriety or your access to psychiatric care. When we talk about transitioning from the Salvation Army into Housing First units, my first concern is that the transitional housing offered at the Salvation Army is contingent on sobriety. It removes the ability to remove those barriers. The Salvation Army in the media has said they will be dry units, and that does not match with the Housing First philosophy, programming or continuum.

Can the minister just clarify the stance on how we imagine that the transitional units from the Salvation Army will transition into Housing First?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Housing First model that's being considered is the question around whether a person can consume alcohol in these facilities. The Salvation Army model is not that you have to be alcohol- or drug-free to occupy these units; it's about consuming alcohol while on the premises. That's the agreement as it exists right now. One cannot come into the facility and continue to consume alcohol while on the premises.

Perhaps members from the Legislature have gone on a tour of the Salvation Army facility. There are lockers available to individuals when they come in. If they bring in alcohol, they will have a unit where they can store their personal supplies and their personal belongings. When they leave in the morning, they will take that. The objective is not to turn individuals away at the door if they are under the influence. That was not the objective. It never was the objective to be a completely wet facility — but to allow a transition opportunity.

I just wanted to clarify that. I don't think that the Salvation Army would allow it. They don't allow it now, and I don't think they would allow in this new facility. It is not something that we committed to as well. We committed to providing resources and supports to individuals in their transition units.

Ms. White: If I put it this way, I am wondering if the minister can agree with me that there is an emergency shelter that will allow access to people, regardless of sobriety, but that the Salvation Army is offering transitional units for people who meet their criteria, including sobriety, and, therefore, the Salvation Army is not viewed as a Housing First model. I am hoping that by talking about what the Salvation Army offers as far as shelter and transitional housing, we can agree that it is not Housing First.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have said this before. It is not a Housing First project. It never was; it never will be. For clarity and for the record, that was not the objective of the Salvation Army. It is transition units.

Ms. White: I am hopeful then that, in the future when I have questions about Housing First, the Salvation Army doesn't come up as part of that solution. The minister mentioned the agreement that was between — well, I am not sure if it was between Yukon Housing Corporation or whether it is Health and Social Services and the Salvation Army. I am hoping I can get a copy of that, or maybe a “Coles Notes” version of that.

I can understand the process, so I am hopeful that, sometime in the future, there will be an announcement from the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, who also happens to be the Minister of Health and Social Services, that we will talk about a true Housing First model. I look forward to that. I will leave the Salvation Army behind, and I will walk away from the Salvation Army because that, to me — and we have now agreed — is not a Housing First model.

One of the things that I would like to clarify for all sides of the House — and I will probably eat these words later on, but I really fundamentally believe that the reason why the wait-list has doubled in the last year has to do with the number of housing navigators in the community. We have talked on this floor many times, Mr. Deputy Chair, about the complications of filling out a housing application. They are six pages; they require your full financial background, including your previous year's tax return. It is big — the applications are really big.

We have talked about one time when I spent time with a couple from near Beaver Creek, and it took us an entire work day to get the application filled out completely. I think, in all fairness, one of the reasons why the wait-list has increased the way it has is because of the number of housing navigators in the community.

If the minister can tell me how many housing navigators there are and what organizations they are working with, that would be a good start.

Hon. Ms. Frost: It is a really great point being made by the member opposite about why the wait-list doubled, or why we're seeing an increase. The Housing Corporation, in collaboration with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition really worked on trying to remove barriers as much as we can, and that means clearly a complex process that individuals who don't have access to a computer and perhaps may be illiterate or don't understand the complexities of having to define your income before you can qualify for a housing unit — it is not

an easy process to navigate. I absolutely appreciate and acknowledge that, and we are working with the Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services to provide the supports to the clients.

However, the policies still apply that rent geared toward income criteria. That means that the potential applicants will have to provide some context. We really want to provide broad supports where we can and work with the community and ensure that we don't put up walls but that we take down the walls and provide essential services. That is what we do — we're an essential-service agency and we provide the essential services. The earlier point is that housing is a human right. You want to provide food, shelter and clothing for the individual to make sure that we have happy and healthy individuals — housing is a part of that. To be successful in society, you want to make sure that people are comfortable and feel supported.

Ms. White: It's important to note that I don't disagree with the application process. If it could be streamlined and it could be easier, that would be fine, but there definitely needs to be the financial confirmation that someone living there meets the criteria. I don't disagree with that.

The point I was trying to make with the housing navigator is that there are multiple in the community now — are there not? If the minister could just tell me which organizations have housing navigators — I could guess.

Right now, I know that YAPC is the coordinator — Blood Ties Four Directions, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, and Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. I am getting nodding in confirmation. I am not sure if there are others, but the point is that the way the list has increased is a direct reflection of the assistance that people are getting.

It's not that all of a sudden there are many more people on the list we didn't know about; it's just that now there are many more visible people on the list, whereas the 100 who are newly added have been living in poverty and have been struggling to meet their housing needs — it is just that now they have assistance to get on that list, which I think is really important.

I was under the impression that the housing navigator, through the Anti-Poverty Coalition, is funded through the Yukon Housing Corporation. One of the questions I had — we have had lots of conversations with different ministers, it doesn't matter, but the Housing Corporation and I, and the relevant minister at the time, have had conversations around the importance of actually having a coordinator. Having someone like a navigator working outside of the Housing Corporation is important, but what is also important is that the navigator, who is at the top of the hub of the other housing navigators — because I know they have inter-navigation meetings — has access to the Housing Corporation. I want to know what that access looks like.

Who are they able to speak to? If they recognize a high-priority client, are they able to identify them? How does that relationship with the coordinator of the housing navigators work with the Yukon Housing Corporation?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The housing navigators, as you have identified, are funded by — well, one in particular, but there are a few in the community. The Anti-Poverty Coalition navigator is funded by Yukon Housing Corporation. To your point, the Housing Corporation saw the need, as did the community organization, so they came forward and collectively decided that a good partnership was to look at creating a navigator. That essential piece — your point is well taken. Clearly that information has to feed back into the Yukon Housing Corporation in terms of observations, on-the-ground views and real data on what the barriers are and what the individual is seeing. We're hoping that will go on for quite some time and we will use that information to feed into policy direction as we go through perhaps strategic alignments and strategies within Yukon Housing Corporation. There may be some policy adjustments that have to be made.

I appreciate what you're saying and appreciate that we can't create something and not consider the feedback. That's what we're all about in looking at partnerships and necessary program alignment.

Ms. White: One of the things I have talked about often on the floor when I spoke about this position, as I hoped it would be — one of the reasons why it's really exciting that it has come into play is because it is a critical need. Coming through the Anti-Poverty Coalition, it makes so much sense for so many reasons, from the fact that the coordinator is available at Whitehorse Connects and that they're also in tune with the other organizations.

It just so happens that the person who has this position has worked in the community in a lot of poverty reduction and homelessness and harm reduction capacities, so they are perfectly matched for this.

The one issue always though — and the minister just touched on this a little bit — is just making sure that it's not a position without the power to communicate with the Housing Corporation directly. I just want to know whether there is one contact person who they deal with or whether there are multiple — I hate to use the word empowered, but to know that the person isn't just being sent out into the community to try to figure out how to address housing needs and are not able to actually take that information anywhere. I just want to know how that coordinator position works within the Housing Corporation.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the feedback — because that's what it is. It's providing some feedback. I wanted to note that certainly what I don't want to see is that we create positions and create opportunities to fill a gap and then walk away. That's not the objective. We want to make sure that we get the critical feedback and the great feedback that is needed. So the housing navigator is actually meeting with the president of the Housing Corporation as well as the VP of operations and the director of housing, which will tie itself and find itself back into the broader conversation that we have around the strategies.

It's really essential — essential to good governance, it's essential to good program management and it is essential to good fiscal management. We certainly don't want to be in a

position where we're spending needlessly to fill a gap. That's not the objective and that's not my objective as the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation.

Ms. White: That was the dream answer, to know that the navigator had the ear of the top who also happens to be one of the support staff today. I thank the minister for that answer.

There was reference to the 360° Design Build project. I just wanted to know if that was done through access to the affordable housing construction program. If it was, how much was accessed through that program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I noted that earlier, in downtown Whitehorse, 360° Design Build is building a multi-residential building on Hawkins Street and the Yukon Housing Corporation is providing \$500,000 so that 10 units will be affordable rentals for the next 10 years. That is coming out of the investment in affordable housing budget.

Ms. White: The good news is that the officials will be able to assist you with this one because this one was a bee in my bonnet for quite a long time. My biggest concern, knowing that 360° Design Build was able to access a \$500,000 grant — a grant; it is not repayable money — for 10 units, that is \$50,000 a unit, and it is only guaranteed to be affordable for the next 10 years. The reason I want to highlight this again is that my concern is that after 10 years there is absolutely no guarantee what happens to those units. They could be condominiumized. The rent could double. There are all of these things that could happen. Where does this minister stand on that? I would think that if we really want to make sure that we are addressing housing in our community in the long term, we would look past the 10-year point. At this point in time, I am six years in, and I can tell you that housing has not eased up since 2011 by a whole heck of a lot.

Hon. Ms. Frost: As the member opposite will know, I am all about solutions. I am all about finding solutions and looking at what we can do to improve the resources we have. As I stated earlier, the resources we get from the federal government have really boxed us in, and it defines how we spend our budget and how we report back.

My understanding is that it absolutely is a challenge for us and we understand your concern around the timelines and the funding requirements. The criteria is defined under the federal program.

I'm happy to say that what we just successfully negotiated was a scope that's a little broader than what we were accustomed to in the past with resources flowing to Yukon Housing Corporation. That means the language you're going to see in the national strategy is around the unique circumstances of the north — affordability around remoteness factors.

I hope we can address some of those challenges and I take that under advisement. As I'm having the conversations at a national level and with the department, it's to look at finding solutions and not to stay defined within the parameters that are set for us, but if we can, as much as we can, seek flexibility.

Ms. White: Just to clarify, the reason why that is only tied to a 10-year guarantee for affordability is because it's federal government criteria?

All right — just so it's in Hansard, I have the affirmation from the minister. It's because of government or federal government criteria. That, I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Chair, is upsetting because really, in the long run, I would like to see that investment last longer than 10 years. My concern always — and I have voiced it before — is that, with access to this program, the possibility that things can be condominiumized. When they become condominiumized, they're no longer rental housing and then they're no longer affordable, and it changes everything.

I'll just leave it at that. I thank the minister for explaining that it's based on federal criteria.

How many different projects this year have accessed funding under the affordable rental construction program? How many units will we see developed? I'm not really all that concerned with the timeline of when they're going to be finished, because I realize the minister is not the one building them, but I wanted to know how many units will be funded through this program.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The specifics — the allocation went to Chief Isaac Inc. and the affordable housing to Watson Lake, and the 360° Design Build project. In total, there were 21 units.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. Knowing that there are 21 — I mean, it's great that there are 21 extra housing units coming online.

What is the maximum — because I realize right now in looking at the website, for example, it says that YHC is now accepting applications for these programs. What is the maximum number of units that can be — I don't want to say built, but what is the maximum number of units that can be funded through this program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The maximum amount is \$500,000 — \$50,000 a door — so for a total of 10 units, and that's allocated for rural Yukon.

Ms. White: Just to confirm, there is only \$500,000 available in the next calendar year for rental? I was trying to figure out what the full envelope was. I understand that there is a maximum of \$500,000 per project — so for 10 units per project — but is there a maximum of projects that can access that funding?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to clarify for the record. I misspoke earlier. I said \$500,000. That's for a project. The total project amount is actually \$830,000.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Adel: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 203, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2017-18*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 14, 2017.

The House adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

The following legislative return was tabled November 9, 2017:

34-2-78

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: government building maintenance (Mostyn)