



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, March 14, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2018 Spring Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

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

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Harris Cox
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, March 14, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.  
At this time, we will proceed with prayers.

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed with the Order Paper.  
Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Yukon Spirits' Two Brewers whiskey

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I rise today to talk about Yukon Spirits. I am here to pay tribute on behalf of all members of this Legislature to Yukon Spirits' success for its Two Brewers whiskey. I would like acknowledge in the gallery today Bob Baxter, co-owner of Two Brewers, Yukon Spirits and Yukon Brewing and Jasmine Sangria, who is the director of marketing and sales of Yukon Brewing.

I think most Yukoners know that Al Hansen and Bob Baxter are the duo behind establishing Yukon Brewing. Just in talking about Yukon Spirit, I want to talk about community spirit. They support many activities in the community — charities. They have supported my own Marsh Lake Classic Ski Loppet — thank you very much. They do a lot for our community.

For environmental spirit, they source local products, they use Yukon water and they reuse bottles, which is great for our landfills.

With respect to entrepreneurial spirit, they are great manufacturers within our community. Yukon Brewing has a sister company, Yukon Spirits. In 2009, they started distilling and aging a single malt whiskey, which they named Two Brewers. In 2016, they opened sales of their single malt and I remember last year — I believe — that the Leader of the Third Party was talking about being in line for the original sales when they went on sale in 2016. In 2017, one year later, Two Brewers garnered a number of accolades at the Canadian Whisky Awards.

For those who might not know, the Canadian Whisky Awards are held annually and recognize the very best whiskies that have been distilled and matured in Canada. These whiskies are judged by an independent panel of experts, who select the winners after blind tastings. Entrants include some of the oldest and biggest names in Canadian whisky distilling, including Canadian Club, Crown Royal, Gooderham and Worts, Hiram Walker, Forty Creek, Gibson's and Wiser's — just to name a few.

This year, in the 2018 Canadian Whisky Awards, Two Brewers whiskey surpassed everyone's expectations — a bronze medal for their Two Brewers innovative single malt, a silver medal for their Two Brewers classic single malt, and a gold medal for their Two Brewers peated single malt.

By the way, I met with Jan Westcott, the president of Spirits Canada last month, and he gave a shout-out to Two Brewers. I'll just pass that on here in the Legislature.

This is an astonishing feat for a distillery that only sold their first bottle of whisky in 2016, and it gets better. Yukon's very own Two Brewers is the 2018 Canadian Whisky Awards microdistillery of the year.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation and Government of Yukon is extremely proud of Two Brewers — and all of us here in the Legislature — and what they have been able to accomplish in such a short time. We are committed to supporting local manufacturers like Yukon Spirits and to finding ways to improve their success.

Please join me in congratulating Yukon Spirits and Two Brewers as our very own Canadian 2018 microdistillery of the year.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.  
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I have for tabling a response to a question from the Member for Copperbelt South. He asked that question on March 6, 2018.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling a response to the question asked by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King on March 7, 2018 regarding affordable housing and the next meeting for the Vimy Heritage Housing Society.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to repair and reopen the second access road into the new Grizzly Valley subdivision.

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

THAT this House urges the government to respect the preferences of Yukon employers and job seekers by restoring funding to the YuWIN job board.

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

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Marwell tar pit**

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I am happy to announce today that we are beginning major remediation work on the Marwell tar pit site. The site has been long in need of attention and we have budgeted \$4.6 million toward environmental cleanup of the site. The Government of Canada has contributed 70 percent of the cost of this project, and we appreciate their assistance in getting this remediation underway.

Yukoners might remember that the federal government reached an agreement with the territorial government for the assessment and remediation of this site in June 2010. The federal government committed funding, but previous governments did not follow up on the assessment work that was conducted. As a result, the Marwell tar pit has been awaiting further attention for years. It's not clear why the government would wait to get this work underway, but here we are, the better part of a decade later, and the work still needs to get done.

We have accounted for the cost in this year's budget and we're taking action to address this contaminated site. The tar pit is an unfortunate relic of our territory's oil and gas industry during the Second World War. An oil refinery was built in the Marwell area to process crude oil from Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories by way of Canol pipeline. The refinery was short-lived — less than a year — but it was around long enough to contaminate the site. It didn't help that waste was added to the tar pit for years afterwards, leading to a contaminated site designation in 1998.

Our government is committed to working with partners, including the federal government and First Nation governments, to clean up our land.

A contract for the work has been awarded to a contractor who will be engaging Yukon companies to carry out the remediation. The seasonally dependent work will include site preparation, excavation of contaminated soil, segregation of impacted soils and on-site treatment of contaminated soils. This is a major project, Mr. Speaker, but it is expected to take more than a decade to complete, followed by years of monitoring. Had previous governments acted on this agreement, which was struck in 2010 with the federal government, the project would be well underway. As I said, we are taking action to clean up this site and we're happy to let Yukoners know that the work is finally getting underway.

**Mr. Istchenko:** We support work on this remediation and thank the minister for her comments. As we understand it, some work and discussion had already been done on this file. We were considering options to proceed with remediation. This included hearing from local contractors for the environmental services sector about how to work cost-effectively while maximizing opportunities for local contractors, but we're happy to see that work is proceeding. I look forward to hearing how they intend to do this work in a way that maximizes opportunities for local contractors.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the department staff on the Marwell tar pit file and thank them for all their efforts over the years involving this project.

On another important environmental remediation issue, I would like to ask the minister what is happening with the Faro mine remediation. We have heard rumours that the government is looking at a change in the governance structure that would potentially see the Yukon government handing back control to Ottawa. This seems to us like a backward step in devolution and a reduction in local decision-making over important matters, and we hope the Government of Yukon is committed to working together with the First Nations, the Town of Faro and the federal government to clean up this land.

Are they contemplating the change to the government structure of the Faro mine remediation?

I know that this file crosses many departments, but I also know that this government has talked a lot about a one-government approach, so we are hoping that, with this whole-of-government and collaborative approach, the minister is able to share some information on this file. Hopefully the minister can provide us a bit more information and an update about this important environmental issue as well.

**Ms. Hanson:** Yet again, another ministerial statement — I would have to say this is beginning to sound like a familiar refrain from a Liberal government that said it would do government better. Sadly, their focus has become daily sound bites with already announced budget items with a flourish of editorial licence.

This ministerial statement says that the Yukon government has budgeted \$4.6 million for the Marwell tar pit remediation. As discussed yesterday, Yukon and federal governments signed that agreement on June 29, 2010, setting out the terms for the remediation of the Marwell tar pit. The overall project was set out at \$6.8 million, of which Canada has agreed to pay 70 percent, or \$4,760,000, leaving Yukon with the responsibility for the remaining \$2,040,000.

From the tone of the minister's statement, it appears that this is yet another Liberal-Yukon Party dispute. What is unclear is how the minister explains how the Yukon government, not a particular party, moved the project through the various phases from site assessment to risk assessment to plan of restoration to review under YESAB, which was done in 2015, with approval in October 2015.

As I said, in this House yesterday, public servants have worked hard on this project and I can say that I have read media transcripts — and heard and read on websites — detailed information about what has been done on the various phases.

What should be key is clarity from the minister on the objective of her statement. If it is to announce that, over a year after YESAB received and recommended — and the Government of Yukon accepted — to move forward on the Marwell project, that is great. But if she has delivered it to put on record that the Yukon Party did not follow up on the assessment work that was completed, again, as with the

Yukon Development Corporation and LNG drama, statements like this require clarification because, as an MLA, I query if this minister — like the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources — is saying that the previous government deliberately misled this House. I wonder how, as an opposition MLA, we are supposed to sort out the truth from fiction.

What we do know is that the previous government approved and agreed to the YESAB recommendation in October 2015 and did nothing for a year. This government has been aware of that decision since November 2016 when it was elected and has chosen today to make the announcement, 16 months later, to announce that it is finally going to act on the YESAB recommendation. Mr. Speaker, it sounds somewhat like the pot calling the kettle black.

The Yukon NDP has supported this project since the very beginning; we will continue to support it; we know how important it is to the residents of Whitehorse and Yukon, downriver, to ensure that the Marwell tar pit is finally clear.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I'm really happy to say that members of the Yukon Liberal government are really looking toward our relationship with Yukon First Nations. Our obligation to clean up a site that has been long left without any significant work being done — it's been there since 2010 and we are taking action to ensure that the Marwell tar pit that has been there for a significant amount of time is getting the attention it requires and we are proceeding as the Premier noted in his budget speech — and I quote: "In June 2010, the Governments of Canada and Yukon reached a financial agreement for the assessment and remediation of this site."

It's not about us getting into a political battle with the Yukon Party; it's about ensuring that we do what's right and that's to ensure we take our responsibilities to the finish line. That means that we will ensure that site is cleaned up. In the interest of transparency and in public finances, it's time to account for the costs and get the work underway and that's exactly what we are doing. It's not clear to me why the previous government would wait to get the work underway, but they did so and put it off for part of a decade. I think that what we're hoping to do is account for it and move on — move the project closer to completion. That means that we need to start. That's been long overdue. Taking action to address the contaminated sites is exactly what we're doing. Our government is committed to working with our partners, including the federal government and First Nations, to clean up our lands.

The contract for the work has been awarded and we will be engaging with Yukon companies to carry out the remediation. This seasonally dependent contract work will be included in the site preparation and excavation of contaminated soils, segregation of impact soils and on-site treatment of the contaminated soil.

This is a major project and, as previous governments perhaps didn't act soon enough, we're now looking at tying this into the projects and into our budgets and moving it forward. The work is well underway. As I said, we're taking

action to clean up the site. Considering options with local contractors — most definitely, we will consider all of the options to ensure that we provide and maximize opportunities to ensure that we engage with Yukon businesses and contractors.

With respect to what is happening with the Faro mine, I'm sure my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, will be happy to speak on the Faro project, which I'm not responsible for, but I'm happy to provide assistance and guidance. We are always taking steps to work with our partners and work with our local First Nations. In that particular case, we will ensure whatever measures possible to engage with the Ross River Dena Council.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Procurement policy

**Mr. Hassard:** On March 5, we asked the Minister of Highways and Public Works if he could provide us with the criteria that were used to decide which contracts were going to be chosen for the 10 contracts that are eligible for local procurement exemptions under the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*. We also asked him at that time to provide us with the criteria for those who may be eligible to bid on those 10 contracts.

He was unable to provide that information at the time, so I'm curious if he could provide that information to the House today.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, I'm more than happy to talk about the fulfillment of this promise to improve local procurement, to keep money in the hands of local businesses and inside the local economy, and to actually try to build a local economy. This government vowed to support local procurement and maximize government spending, and it has done so. I'm happy to take these questions.

As for the criteria and all the local benefits, a list of the 10 exceptions is on the Highways and Public Works website, along with contact information for companies that wish to be invited to tender. So if you want more information, you can go online and we'll have more information before this House in due course.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's just difficult to determine what "due course" is in the minister's mind, so we have to continue to ask the questions so we could hopefully someday get an answer.

The minister talked about the website, saying that people could get the information on those tenders, but we have talked to contractors who have had to call and essentially beg, argue and debate with government to get added to that list of invitational tenders. So can the minister please confirm today for this House if that is the case?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I don't think I agree with the way the member opposite has framed his remarks. I have a lot of confidence and respect for the civil servants and for the way they deal with the public. I find it astounding the

member opposite would say such things, but that's where we're at.

I will say that, once again, the procurement team worked exceedingly hard to get these exceptions out the door. We kept \$4.4 million of the territory's money in the economy this year. We worked so quickly, Mr. Speaker. We're the first jurisdiction in the country to get these exceptions done and implemented, and I think the department has done a tremendous job doing that. We'll have more information on this process over the coming weeks.

**Mr. Hassard:** I guess that's why we're left here to ask these questions, because the minister seems to think that doing things in a year is quick.

My question to the minister would be: Why did the government not just open up these tenders to all Yukon companies? Why not make them all public and give all Yukon contractors the opportunity to bid? We have heard from very capable Yukon contractors who were not invited to bid on these contracts that they are upset that this wasn't more open and transparent.

I'm curious: What would the minister say to those contractors?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** This government worked exceedingly quickly. The staff of the procurement support team of Highways and Public Works did a remarkable job getting these exceptions out the door in record time. July they were available to us; within a series of months, I asked that we get some processes in place. We did this thoughtfully; we're not just handing out the money willy-nilly to whoever it was. We got that process in place and got the exceptions out the door.

Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of astounded because the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, which predated the *Canadian Free Trade Agreement*, had exceptions in it as well, and the members opposite never employed them.

So this government, in a period of months, did what this government across the way has not done in 14 years, and we're really proud of the work that the team did at our direction to get money into local hands — be the first in the country to get these exceptions out the door, to put \$4.4 million into local hands, to actually fulfill our election promises on several counts, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot express enough my gratitude to the hard work of the civil servants. I have heard from the businesses as well, and they are very happy that this actually got done. The members opposite were criticizing us for not doing it fast enough, and now we did it and they're happy they got the opportunity.

#### **Question re: Procurement policy**

**Mr. Hassard:** I'm sorry to say that I'm not going to give the minister a chance to cool down because I have another question for him in a similar regard.

Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works please tell us what criteria are used to determine what a Yukon company is?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Here we go. This is going to keep going, I guess. As I said, I asked the department to come up with criteria. We're going to be presenting that criteria to the House in a period of time — a matter of weeks — and I'm more than happy to talk about that at that time.

**Mr. Hassard:** That is interesting because I thought the minister just told us that it was on the website, so it is an interesting line of answers — or lack of answers.

One specific project that the minister provided an exemption on was for slope and drainage improvements along the Campbell Highway. We have found that, despite the minister's claims, a company based out of British Columbia has been invited to bid on this contract.

Yukon trade negotiators fought hard for these exemptions. They were meant to ensure that up to 10 contracts a year went only to Yukon companies, but now we're finding out that, for at least one of these contracts, a southern company has been invited to bid.

Can the minister explain why a southern company was invited to bid on a contract that was meant only for Yukon companies?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Our government is using all 10 of the \$1-million exceptions this year to bolster regional economic development. We're going to increase the ability of businesses to win government contracts by restricting competition on these 10 contracts, and we have used criteria to select projects that will maximize economic benefits for Yukoners. It will be focused on whether or not the money spent will stay in the Yukon and if projects support industries or suppliers.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's interesting that the minister can stand here and talk about the criteria that were used through this process but he refuses to tell this House what that criteria consists of. We found out that a number of contracts were selected that appeared to have never been in jeopardy of going to Outside companies, and now we find that a southern company was invited to bid on at least one of the contracts.

Can the minister tell us how allowing a southern company to bid on a contract meant for only Yukon companies is in line with a provision of the trade agreement that allows us to award to only Yukon companies?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to address this issue. The reality is — and the member opposite has alluded to it — that he doesn't think that companies would come swooping in from afar and actually take contracts. We have seen examples of companies doing just that over the years, and I am not taking anything for granted.

As far as restricting the competition, we don't know when a southern company is going to come in and actually take work from Yukon companies. We employed the exceptions to prevent that from happening. The member opposite doesn't think that is the case. I wanted to provide protection for roofing companies and for cleaning companies. You never know when a company is going to come in and actually take that work. Now these industries have the ability to, on these smaller contracts, actually have some measure of confidence

that they have a chance to do their work and get the job done here.

**Question re: Protection of health information and patient privacy**

**Ms. White:** On Monday, I asked about a conflict between this government and a psychiatrist. Both ministers completely ignored the question, so I will give them another chance to address this very specific issue.

More than one year ago, it was revealed that the Department of Health and Social Services was requesting detailed patient information that the psychiatrist deemed to be confidential. The department would not pay for the services provided without this information. The situation has escalated to the point where patients have now received a letter from their physician saying that they might eventually be billed for the services or that they may not be able to access the care that they need.

Let me simply ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if she understands the undue stress that this situation is putting on patients.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I appreciate the question. Of course, I understand that patient confidentiality is of the utmost importance, and we want to ensure that we provide the necessary essential services to all of our clients and ensure that this happens as required. I don't intend in any way to withhold information or to hinder a process. I think the objective of the system that we have established is to provide efficient, effective and transparent services and supports to all of our clients. Privacy is very important to us and we will ensure that we uphold those laws that apply to us.

**Ms. White:** Mr. Speaker, Yukon patients are paying the price for this conflict — worrying on one hand about the privacy of their health information and now, after receiving a letter from their physician, worrying about whether or not they will still be able to access the care that they need. This conflict is not new. It has been in the public eye for over a year. You would think that we would be closer to a solution by now but the conflict is actually escalating and patients are stuck in the middle, through no fault of their own.

It does not look like government has taken any steps to resolve this conflict but I would love for the minister to show me otherwise. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell Yukoners what specific steps have been taken over the past year to resolve this conflict and protect patient privacy?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I am just going to reiterate that I am not going to get into any specific details on a specific file in this House. I think we will leave that up to the departments to address, ensuring that we provide the services and supports that are required to all of our clients in Health and Social Services. We need to ensure that we carry out that work responsibly and respectfully.

**Ms. White:** Unfortunately for the minister, this is about a very specific issue that is affecting Yukon citizens right now.

My questions are about a specific conflict between a psychiatrist and the Department of Health and Social Services.

This is the sixth question I have asked about this very, very specific conflict and no minister has yet to address that issue so far. This is starting to really sound repetitive.

I want to know — and I am pretty sure Yukoners would also like to know — if the Minister of Health and Social Services has done anything at all over the last year to solve this conflict and to make sure doctor-patient confidentiality is respected.

It is that simple, Mr. Speaker. What specific steps has the Minister of Health and Social Services taken to resolve this conflict between a psychiatrist and her department?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I want to just respond by saying that the department — I have the utmost respect for the staff within Health and Social Services — will provide the services and support that is required.

With respect to the very specific issues, the conflict between a psychiatrist and a patient will be resolved through that process, through a process where privacy rights of the patient are respected.

If there are any other recommendations or suggestions that the member opposite would like to provide us in terms of how that could be addressed — I respect that the staff are doing their utmost to ensure that the supports are there for the clients we have coming to our offices on a daily basis.

**Question re: Liquor transport**

**Mr. Istchenko:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we asked about the tender for a liquor haul into Yukon. In Question Period the minister didn't have an answer, and then, later in the afternoon, the tender was cancelled.

How could the minister go from knowing nothing about the contract to cancelling the contract in the course of just a few hours?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank the members opposite for the question. I didn't cancel the contract; thank you. That was the department that cancelled the contract.

When I talked to the department, the work that they are undertaking is how to facilitate Yukoners and Yukon licensees to create as much efficiency as they can in the shipping contract. The reality is that the system of barging it up takes weeks; driving it up the highway takes days.

The original contract, as it was worded, got responses. The responses were overbudget, and the corporation has decided to reissue the contract and find a way to split it so that we can have the best of both worlds. For alcohol that is being shipped up from Alberta, we will be able to use the faster route, which will keep it cheap, and the route from British Columbia can use either option. That will allow us to get the best price for Yukoners.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank the member opposite for the answer, but it does seem a little strange that the government would be so reactive and they would cancel a multi-million-dollar contract simply because it was raised in Question Period.

There were local companies that bid on this project. Since this was an already closed tender, those prices were made public.

So we're left questioning what kind of thought the minister gave before taking this drastic step to cancel a contract yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, what sort of certainty is this government giving industry if the government isn't going to issue tenders or if the government is just going to issue tenders and cancel them willy-nilly?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I just stood up here less than a minute ago and said that I did not cancel a contract.

By the way, it's a request for proposal that has been cancelled, not a contract. The department did it; they did it for good reason. The bids came in overbudget. We prefer not to pass additional freight costs on to consumers so the tender was cancelled and will be reissued with changes intended to reduce shipping costs. Specifically, the corporation will reissue separate calls for bid for the Alberta and BC routes, and the corporation intends to keep with requirements for a shorter turnaround time on the Alberta tender and will allow for a longer time to market via BC, which should allow for more flexibility in terms of how products get to market, whether that is by road or water.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I appreciate so many answers there, but could the minister explain a little bit more in detail on how he plans on moving forward with retendering now that all the companies have had their very competitive prices revealed to the world, and specifically their competition?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I can again turn back to the department and talk about this.

I will say that I appreciate the work that's done by the private sector in order to get goods here to the Yukon, but I would also like to acknowledge the work that has been going on with the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the staff there. I know they have been working very diligently over the past year on files like the *Liquor Act* review, like cannabis legalization, and ultimately then cannabis regulations and the work to allow for the private sector to come into play.

They have been doing a lot of work; I'm very happy with their work. I think that this is a standard process, but I will try to get back some answers for the member opposite to address his concerns.

#### **Question re: Procurement policy**

**Mr. Kent:** I have some procurement questions for the government today. On October 11, 2016, the Liberal Party put out their platform commitments for procurement. In that plan, they stated — and I quote: “As a priority implement the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel Report in an accelerated manner, completing its implementation by 2018.”

Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works give us an update on what has been accomplished to date and when, in 2018, all these recommendations will be implemented?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the member opposite for his question. We are working very hard on the procurement front. We're making great strides in improving procurement for local contractors and reducing barriers to First Nations and local businesses that want to secure government contracts.

We will achieve a variety of goals, including open, transparent and fair procurement processes that generate economic benefits for Yukoners.

We spoke a little bit about this earlier today. We will reach our goals — the member opposite did strike a panel. The panel came back with recommendations. We have actually looked at those recommendations. We have pledged to not only implement those recommendations but to go even beyond that because that is just one step in a process toward improving procurement.

The member opposite knows that this is a fast-evolving field. The rules change all the time, and we are working very hard to keep up with the changing field and making sure that Yukon is modern and has opportunities for local business while, at the same time, getting the best bang for the public dollar.

**Mr. Kent:** I did ask a very specific question. The Liberal platform commitment as announced in October of 2016 was to have all of these recommendations implemented by 2018. Perhaps the minister can give us a specific date this year that those recommendations will be implemented.

In that same announcement, the Liberals committed to — and I quote: “Add a local servicing and warranty provision to all tenders.” Can the minister tell us if all tenders now include a local servicing and warranty provision?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I am really happy to be able to talk about this subject because it is one that is good news for this government. We are hearing a lot of feedback from the local industry about our procurement practices. We are making changes as we hear that feedback, taking the praise as it comes and making the improvements where needed. We have already added a fair-wage schedule clause to our construction tenders. We have created standard templates for use in public and invitational tenders when buying goods.

We have developed and published standard clauses for value-based procurements for First Nation capacity building — including northern experience and local knowledge — to help local companies with planning for tenders and to improve response rates to tenders. We have increased forecasts about upcoming tenders — over \$75,000 on the tender forecast system — and added access to closed tender documents and created a three-week minimum tender period for all public procurements.

That is just a smattering of the improvements we have made over the last year. It has been a tremendous amount of work on the part of the department, and I am really happy that they have come together under this government to help improve procurement for the people of the territory. It was a long time coming and I am really happy to be able to speak to this.

**Mr. Kent:** The question that I asked the minister was about this specific Liberal platform commitment that would add a local servicing and warranty provision to all tenders, and I did not hear him in his response address that question. Perhaps he will in his final answer. Unfortunately, it appears that we are heading for another Liberal platform amendment with these broken promises that are starting to pile up.

I will ask the minister if he can tell us, as was promised in the Liberal platform: Do all tender submissions demonstrate measurable Yukon benefits as part of the evaluation process? How is that being accomplished?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Once again, this government and the Department of Highways and Public Works under this government have done an exceptional job in refining the procurement processes used by this government.

We will go above and beyond the panel recommendations by incorporating Yukon First Nation governments' perspectives and aligning with recently approved trade agreements. We have seen that with the procurement — with the exceptions we employed this year we're getting more money into local hands. We're doing it in a thoughtful, methodical manner and we're going to make sure that we build this economy and improve procurement for the people of the territory and the Government of Yukon so it's a lot smoother, a lot more efficient and so that people know what they're bidding on.

We also brought in the seasonally tendered contracts — I think more than \$48 million in seasonally tendered contracts out the door by March 31 — which is an extraordinary feat for the government. I don't think it has ever been achieved before and it's another promise delivered — promise made, promise delivered.

#### **Question re: Procurement policy**

**Mr. Kent:** The line of questioning is very similar to my previous one on procurement.

It appears that the Liberals said one thing to get elected and now are doing the exact opposite in many cases. In the questions before, I referenced specific Liberal platform commitments and I will do that again.

In that same Liberal announcement on October 11, 2016, they mentioned in there what I would assume is what their definition of a Yukon business is and that's for those businesses that have an office and minimum two full-time Yukon employees. Is this the definition of a Yukon business that the Yukon Liberal government is now using?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** The members opposite can continue to repeat the fact that we're not fulfilling our promises every time we announce that we have fulfilled a promise, and that seems to be the narrative we're getting from the members opposite that every time we actually move the ball forward they say: "Oh look, they fumbled it." That's not the case, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is we are making tangible progress on a number of fronts. We're getting exceptions out the door, money into locals' hands — \$4.4 million this year. We are improving the procurement process in a methodical and thoughtful way to actually meet the terms of the procurement improvement panel that the members opposite struck and didn't actually finish the work. We're going to finish that job and actually go one step further, as I said today. We have money into locals' hands. We are getting First Nation procurement involved. We're making deals with First Nations that are very helpful for communities. We're making a lot of progress on a lot of

fronts and I'm more than happy to talk about this all afternoon if the member opposite would like.

**Mr. Kent:** Again, the minister is bragging on the floor of this House about \$4.4 million in contracts. He had up to \$10 million to use under those exemptions so he left \$5.6 million on the table. Again he talks about local companies, but we heard earlier in Question Period here today that one of the companies invited to bid on these Yukon-specific contracts is in fact a British Columbia company.

I'll move on to another Liberal promise. It's our job as the opposition to hold the government to account to the promises that they made to Yukoners during the last campaign and one of those promises was to develop an inventory of shovel-ready projects.

Can the minister give us an update on this commitment please? Does that inventory already exist? Is it, or will it, be made public?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think part of what we're seeing today is a trend to attack some of the good work that our Department of Highways and Public Works has done.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this because I think it is important that I reflect upon what I am hearing from the business community.

We need to go back a bit in history and understand some of those bigger projects — F.H. Collins, Whistle Bend — and where the resentment toward what was happening with government and procurement was going. When we went into our election process — we have identified a number of steps. Some of those steps have timelines, and I appreciate the work that my colleague is doing. Some of them are going to be worked on over the next couple of years. But what I do know is that, right now, we see an economy that is booming, we see more larger projects going to local companies, and we see projects such as the new, large, multi-purpose \$40- or \$50-million project.

With the previous government, it probably would have gone to a company from Outside. In this case, it is a local company that is building that, and we are going to continue to see that.

When you talk about shovel-ready — I appreciate the five-year capital project. That is how you identify shovel-ready.

I also want to thank the road builders and the construction groups that are coming in to meet this month and next month with Finance and with your department, to ensure that you support the work that we are trying to do in Economic Development to keep money in Yukon, and that is what is happening.

**Mr. Kent:** I am pleased that the Minister of Economic Development has entered the debate on this because it was he, as the candidate for Porter Creek South at the time, who made these commitments to Yukoners when it comes to procurement. Hopefully, he is holding his colleague in Highways and Public Works to account on delivering on all of these promises that they made to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, I have one last question about the Liberal election promises regarding procurement, and I quote: "Work

with the business community to further review barriers and establish fair and transparent Yukon contracting practices that ensure local contractors have a level playing field when competing for Government contracts.”

Could the minister provide this House a list of the barriers that were identified and what the government is doing to address them?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would like to take this opportunity to answer the question concerning opportunity and level playing field. Part of what we are doing today — we have the opportunity, of course, to announce our new innovation hub, which is an opportunity to support entrepreneurs and to put proper processes in place so we can see business grow.

Secondly, continuing to work with our department — and we will be speaking further within the Legislative Assembly on our strategy to look at red tape and reducing it. The government — we had a bad mark this year, and certainly the previous government had years of bad marks. We all have to come together and share ideas in this Legislative Assembly to reduce red tape and that is key.

Thirdly, I want to thank Victoria Gold, as well as Goldcorp. I met with Victoria Gold yesterday. We will be hosting, with Economic Development, a forum — once again, another commitment we have made to ensure that these large industrial projects give the best opportunities to Yukon companies. That will be happening in the next number of months. We are thinking early April.

I will come back to the House to explain and communicate to the public but we want people to know that those are opportunities. As we talk about the Coffee project, and they go through the regulatory — there are still great opportunities there.

I believe we are meeting with Goldcorp tomorrow on this subject as well, and we will be rolling that out. So it's not just government procurement but big industrial opportunities as well.

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

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 251

**Clerk:** Motion No. 251, standing in the name of Mr. Istchenko.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Kluane:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate consultations with Yukon residents about the possible elimination of daylight saving time in Yukon and report back the results of that consultation to this House before the conclusion of the 2018 Fall Sitting.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 251 in which the House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate consultations with Yukon residents about the possible elimination of daylight saving time in Yukon and report back the results of that consultation to this House before the conclusion of the 2018 Fall Sitting.

The action of society as a whole taking a few minutes twice a year to change every timepiece they utilize has been a long-standing and somewhat bothersome tradition in many countries. While many argue that its purpose still serves, I continue to hear from constituents, friends, family and other public groups that the time change is no longer necessary and that society would benefit more from putting an end to this practice. Advancing clocks during the summer months so that the evening daylight lasts longer is referred to as “daylight saving time” in the United States, Canada and Australia. Some countries refer to the practice simply as “summer time”. The common phrases “spring ahead” and “fall back” refer to the adjustment of clocks forward one hour at the beginning of spring and back one hour in the fall.

The idea of daylight saving time was proposed by George Hudson in 1895. The practice was implemented first in the German Empire and Austria and Hungary in April 1916. The majority of Canadian provinces and territories have adopted it since then, as laws relating to timekeeping are a provincial and territorial concern. However, there are a number of geographical areas in Canada that do not follow the practice. In the case of Saskatchewan, the province has adopted to follow Central Standard Time, although it is geographically located within the Mountain Standard Time zone. This effectively puts them on daylight saving time year-round. Confusing? It might especially confuse those of us from the Yukon who take a trip down a highway and cross through the areas of Peace River Regional District or the east Kootenays, as neither follows daylight saving time.

In 2015, Fort Nelson decided to join those ranks and stay on Mountain Standard Time year-round. It is usually around this time of the year when I hear grumblings — and I am sure we have all heard it from friends — or formal concerns from constituents about the time change. There are folks who make a conscious effort to go to sleep a little earlier in the day leading up to the time change, or those who are early risers anyway and simply do not mind the change. Those are not the people who have concerns with daylight saving time.

Those who do have concerns are parents who have to wake their sleepy children in the morning, whose internal clocks simply do not function according to the legislation. They are the people who have sleep disorders and struggle with regularity in their sleep patterns. They are the people who simply do not see the necessity of such a mundane practice. Some would say that the sacrifice of normal sunrise seems to also lead to the sacrifice of routine and normality for children. I would argue that this is not the case only for children. This conversation has been happening across the country but, more specifically, it has been taking place throughout the territory year after year.

It has spanned political lines and been raised as a resolution with the Association of Yukon Communities. Removing daylight saving time has become an increasingly topical and local conversation. Our office has received calls in the last week from constituents or members of the public who are advocating for the elimination of the practice.

We already know and recognize that Yukoners want to be heard. It has not always been the practice of this government to seek their input. This is not only a concern that has been raised with us by people from different areas in the Yukon, but by putting the topic out for consultation and allowing Yukoners a formal avenue to air their concerns with daylight saving time, this government has the opportunity to make change that Yukoners will appreciate.

Consult with people; find out what they have to say. I'm confident that the Official Opposition is not the only place Yukoners turn to in order to have their say about issues like daylight saving time. I would urge members across the way to have conversations with one another about what you have heard. Proponents of daylight saving time argue that people refer to more daylight after the work day.

They also still argue the importance of the decreased energy consumption by reducing the need for lighting and heating. The actual effect on energy use is disputed, especially within the Yukon. The Yukon is a magnificent place, and we are fortunate to have extensive daylight hours during the summer months, regardless of the clock change. In fact, one would argue the fact that the time change really has little to no effect on Yukon daylight in the summer, except maybe confusion.

There have been studies undertaken on the effect of daylight saving time on the human body, including negative effects on health and sleep cycles. The time change is reportedly tied to decreased awareness for both drivers and pedestrians. I've been doing a little research, and Manitoba Public Insurance reported that, after clocks moved ahead in 2014, there was a 20-percent increase in crashes on Manitoba roads on the Monday as compared to all other Mondays that year. Other groups have done similar studies, reporting that the probability of accidents and fatalities in the days directly following the time change increases greatly.

In a 2013 news interview, a UBC sleep expert, Dr. Stanley Coren, told CBC News, "We live in a society that is chronically sleep-deprived, and very bad things happen when chronic sleep deprivation is an issue..." Studies have also been done on the effects that the ending of daylight saving time has on a person. It is believed that, with the end of daylight saving in the fall, also comes a multitude of effects on one's health. There have been links made to depression with the increase in darkness. The winter blues are a real phenomenon, especially here in the Yukon where winters are long and days are short.

When we revert back to standard time, we might gain an hour of sleep, but we also lose the additional hour of daylight in the morning as the days are already getting shorter and colder. There is no benefit to either the morning or evening, in terms of light.

Daylight saving time was perhaps beneficial to some geographical areas at different points in history when energy consumption had to be monitored and limited. However, many argue that this now has no relevance and there is no time like the present for conversations to take place around ending the practice.

We were encouraged to hear the Association of Yukon Communities bringing the issue to the attention of the government in the form of a resolution at their 2017 annual general meeting.

Their resolution touched on the time change having little effect in the Yukon. Studies undertaken on determinants to health, vehicular safety, energy consumption and productivity, effects on metabolism and sleep and the effects on children and animals — I have heard aspects of all these points and more and I would be happy to hear more discussions from Yukoners.

An article written by CBC in response to this resolution sported the catchphrase, "Time's up for daylight saving time". We are also encouraged to know that the Minister for Porter Creek Centre will be onboard with this motion as he brought forward a similar motion. The Third Party should also be onside as we have heard their support in the form of a motion as well. I look forward to hearing each of their comments in this Legislature today.

We are currently an hour ahead of Alaska. A point worth mentioning would be the consistency in time we would experience over the busy tourist season with our neighbouring state, our cousins in Alaska. Now this isn't to say that Alaska would not have its own discussion and do away with daylight saving time in the future, but for the sake of our conversation here today, it would be certainly a welcome change for the tourism industry, especially for those who operate cross-border tourism operations and the travelling public.

The debate continues across Canada for the elimination of daylight saving time. News clips continue to surface as more jurisdictions report on conversations to end the practice. We have seen petitions and bills come out of the Northwest Territories and Alberta. British Columbia has mused about it in the past, although no formal consultations are planned.

Yukon has a history of leading the pack when it comes to many things and I would be proud to see the Yukon headlining a Canadian trend of doing away with daylight saving time. We would like the government to take the necessary steps to initiate conversations with Yukoners. We want to know what people think beyond those who believe strongly enough in the issue to seek us out for a conversation or call our office and give us their thoughts. It would also be beneficial for Yukon to work with British Columbia if we are to begin the consultation phase, as there would be a merit in working together going forward. We would like to urge Yukoners to participate in consultations. This same discussion is taking place in other jurisdictions and Canadians are starting to become tired of a tradition without merit.

Until changes are made, we must deal with the effects of this time change. The Canadian insurance company RSA has compiled a number of tips aimed at helping drivers reduce

accidents after the clock change. Make sure you are alert at all times and never drive while overtired. The shift from drowsy to asleep can happen more quickly than people think. Ensure all interior lights are off in the car and the onboard navigation devices are dimmed so the bright lights don't distract you. Be aware of all drivers on the road. Just because you're wide awake and focused doesn't mean that your fellow drivers are as well, so be aware of swaying in between lines and abrupt stops.

I found a CBC legislative clip from February 19, 1973 where the MLA for Kluane, who was my grandma Hilda Watson, was opposing a motion not wanting the north highway in Dawson to be on the Yukon western time zone, which would have made them different from the rest of the Yukon. She was standing up for how this would affect the business community and for the Dawson residents with the Anik television and tying in with local programming. I especially love the part where she said: "I would like to inform this House that the north highway is not even fortunate enough to have television."

She did win the motion and it was defeated, but my point for bringing it up is that, like then, this has become a topic of interest once again and in the Legislature we are able to hold a wholesome debate once again.

In conclusion, I do look forward to hearing more from the members on both sides of the House. Now is the perfect time to have the discussion. This same conversation is taking place, I'm sure, in other jurisdictions and Canadians are starting to become tired of a tradition without merit.

**Mr. Gallina:** I'm happy to rise to speak to Motion No. 251 and I thank the Member for Kluane for bringing it forward for debate. I think that I will continue to remain the MLA for Porter Creek Centre for this debate and not the Minister for Porter Creek Centre.

Just last weekend, Yukoners adjusted their clocks forward an hour in accordance with daylight saving time. The change allows Yukoners to enjoy more sunlight in the evening and also reminds them of how many clocks they own in their home. It also makes Yukoners wonder whether it is a good idea to continue putting clocks forward in spring and turning them back in the fall.

The issue is important to many Yukoners, but opinions are mixed. I would say to the Member for Kluane that I have also had conversations with constituents and businesses and the feedback that I am receiving is mixed. I have a number of residents approaching me, looking to consider removing daylight saving time and I have businesses that have approached me, telling me that the removal of daylight saving time would impact their business. So I will say that I am receiving mixed messages from the community that I am speaking with.

Some notice impacts on their sleep and overall wellness, or that of their children and loved ones. Others appreciate the opportunity to maximize the use of daylight after a long, cold and dark winter season. It is not clear whether or not the

change provides positive impacts for Yukoners, especially in light of the unique lifestyles and circumstances of Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be helpful to provide some background on the issue. I know the Member for Kluane has done that, but I will touch on this briefly. Historically, the implementation of daylight saving time has been tied to reductions in energy consumption. First proposed in Britain over a century ago, the original benefit of daylight saving time was based on lowering lighting costs and extending outdoor activities. The idea that daylight saving time saves energy continues to be raised by those who favour the practice but evidence is inconclusive. Recent research in the area suggests that the effects of daylight saving time on energy consumption is too small to justify completely switching the time, but it has been noted that jurisdictions with the longest summer daylight hours, such as Yukon, or the furthest from the equator, enjoy the largest energy savings from daylight saving time.

The mechanism for changing Yukon's time is straightforward. The Government of Yukon has the ability to set Yukon's time by order-in-council and, from time to time, it has varied Yukon's standard time. In 1973, the government brought standard time in line with Pacific Standard Time, which remains the case today.

In 2006, the government aligned Yukon daylight saving time with the rest of North America, making the changes in time on the second Sunday of March and the first Sunday of November.

The authority is there but there are a number of other considerations in changing Yukon's current practice, including economic and social impacts, which I'll touch on in a moment.

Any decisions on changing Yukon's current practice of following daylight saving would impact all Yukoners in all walks of life. It is important that the government understand these impacts, if and when it considers such a change. As this House is well aware, the motion before us echoes a motion I tabled last May on the issue of daylight saving time. I believe my motion was framed in a way that is sensitive to the broad and complicated impacts that could result from a change to our practice concerning daylight saving time.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, I would like to propose an amendment to the current motion that I believe my colleagues and I on this side of the House can support.

*Amendment proposed*

**Mr. Gallina:** I propose the following amendment:

THAT Motion No. 251 be amended by:

- (1) removing the phrase "initiate consultations with Yukon residents about";
- (2) adding the word "investigate" after the word "to"; and
- (3) removing the phrase "and report back the results of that consultation to this House before the conclusion of the 2018 Fall Sitting."

**Speaker:** I have had an opportunity to confer with Mr. Clerk with respect to the proposed amendment and can advise that it is procedurally in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek Centre:

THAT Motion No. 251 be amended by:

- (1) removing the phrase “initiate consultations with Yukon residents about”;
- (2) adding the word “investigate” after the word “to”; and
- (3) removing the phrase “and report back the results of that consultation to this House before the conclusion of the 2018 Fall Sitting.”

The proposed amended wording is:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to investigate the possible elimination of daylight saving time in Yukon.

**Mr. Gallina:** Mr. Speaker, the amended motion we have before us calls on the government to investigate the possible elimination of daylight saving time in Yukon. I believe such an investigation is a prudent first step for the government to take in light of the complicated issues that this possibly gives rise to. I would like to take a moment to discuss some of those issues.

Besides energy consumption, the other elements to consider in this area include traffic safety, crime rates and commercial activities. For example, a traffic accident that takes place on a day where a time switch has occurred could still be attributed to adverse road conditions or weather. This makes the actual effects of time switching difficult to estimate without well-defined research parameters.

In terms of economic impacts, businesses have stated that abolishing time switching would have negative impacts.

Some advocates of daylight saving time suggest additional daylight hours in the evening provide a consumer spending boost in addition to reducing energy consumption. Some research has suggested that daylight saving time has little impact on consumer spending, and if anything, the impact is slightly negative.

The economic impacts likely vary by sector and by business. Perhaps retail stores see an uptake in activity following the spring adjustment, but consider the local airline industry, which must already coordinate business activities with other jurisdictions, including some in alternate time zones. Changes to Yukon’s daylight saving time regime could make that coordination much more complicated for airlines, to say nothing of the impacts on Yukoners and visitors alike, trying to arrive on time to check in and board their flights in and out of Yukon.

The interconnections between Yukon and other jurisdictions are an important part of the consideration regarding potential changes to Yukon’s time regime. Indeed, we need to consider the implications of such a change within the broader context of Canada and beyond, and what is happening in other jurisdictions related to this issue.

Despite public comments showing many Alberta citizens favoured abolishing time change, representatives from Alberta businesses expressed opposition, citing that it would impact their ability to be competitive. The BC Premier has also said

that there are no plans for public consultation on the matter in that province.

The legislative picture worldwide is uneven. Efforts in western American states have not been passed into law, citing reasons such as the need for further cost-benefit analysis data; however, most of the New England states — Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island — are creating commissions to study the issue. Florida passed a law last week called the *Sunshine Protection Act*, to establish year-round daylight saving time. Finally, the European Parliament, on February 2018, voted to thoroughly assess the practice of biannual time switching and report back to the Legislature within a year.

This mixed legislative response points to the need for further study on the issue if and when it becomes a priority for the Government of Yukon.

In addition to economic considerations, there are social factors at play as well. There are potential health impacts of daylight saving time — both short and long-term. Some have noted effects on their internal clock, if you will, or disruptions in sleep. Some parents have concerns about effects on sleep resulting in further impacts on the educational outcomes of their children. There are many issues to consider.

As I have said, investigation of the possibility of eliminating daylight saving time in Yukon is a prudent first step for this government to take.

**Mr. Istchenko:** I’m not sure how to take this. The Member for Porter Creek Centre, on discussing his amendment, basically talked about some of the stuff he could have just talked about on the motion that was put forward here today. All he has done, by putting an amendment forward, is take out the fact that we’re not going to talk to Yukoners. When you say we’re going to investigate — the Government of Yukon will investigate the possibility — investigate with whom? It’s Yukoners who bring it to our attention as MLAs. It’s Yukoners who bring it to our attention by phoning our offices or talking to their MLA in the grocery stores. The intent of this motion was to actually go out there and listen to Yukoners and that is why we put that forward. By eliminating reporting back the results, we’re going to investigate and then we’re going to do what the Liberals do — just don’t tell anybody what you heard. You have to report back to Yukoners. When you’re going to discuss something as topical as this is right now with daylight saving time, you have to go out and talk to all Yukoners and then you have to get back to them and tell them what you heard.

Like I said to the media, it doesn’t matter whether we say, “Yes, we’re getting rid of daylight saving time,” or “No, we’re not getting rid of daylight saving time.” It’s having that discussion — that is the only thing with this motion and good government gets back to the residents of the Yukon and then you can move steps forward.

We’re not going to support this amendment because, basically, it just reiterates the member’s motion that he put forward, which basically says, “Somebody mentioned that we

should get rid of the time change, so I'll make a motion to keep them happy and not do anything about it."

**Ms. White:** To speak to the amendment, I appreciate all the points that the Member for Porter Creek Centre brought forward, but I think those are all reasons why there should be a consultation with Yukoners. I think that in the original motion, the wording is "... initiate consultations with Yukon residents about the possible elimination..." so I think that would be part of the investigation. I would have been a lot more comfortable if we had removed the reporting back to the Legislative Assembly by 2018.

So my concern is that, by the amendments that have been put forward, we are actually taking this into an action item that starts a broader conversation with the public and allows them to put their two-cents in. I, like many other people, have heard positives and negatives about it, but I think the really important part is that if we remove the phrase "consultations with Yukon residents" and we replace it with "investigate", it then turns from something that we do outward with others to something that is done internally.

So I also will not be supporting the amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will just speak to the amendment and then afterward I hope to speak to the main motion, if it is amended or if it is not. My notion of the word "investigate" is that it will include conversations with Yukoners. When we come to the main motion — whichever way this goes — I will acknowledge that because of the resolution of the Association of Yukon Communities, I will definitely be having a conversation with municipalities around their interests and considerations, or their support of and/or concerns with this motion.

One of the challenges with the timeline that is there is that it just makes it very prescriptive, and we are looking to allow this to have more opportunity than it would otherwise. I can appreciate the comments from the Member for Kluane, and later on when I speak to the main motion, I am going to refer to the Member for Kluane's grandmother, who was the Member for Kluane. I love that story; that was great.

While I appreciate his concern that he is worried that somehow an investigation would not include dialogue with Yukoners, I do not share his concern. I believe that it will include dialogue with Yukoners.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I was not going to stand to speak to this, but I just want to address some of the comments from the Member for Kluane. The word "investigate" does not mean "to put on a shelf", and I resent that is what the Yukon Party believes we are going to do on this particular topic. We have already mentioned that the dialogue from us has gone all the way to the Council of the Federation. We understand where it came from through AYC and we appreciate that process. We believe more investigation needs to be done. That is exactly what we want to do.

It is interesting that the very first unanimous motion that I ever had passed in this Legislative Assembly — unamended

— was to get J.J. Van Bibber's book into every school curriculum and, you know, I don't think it is in every school curriculum. That was a long time ago. To accuse us of taking these motions and putting them on a shelf — maybe I can see why the Yukon Party would think that, but it is not something that we are going to do.

**Mr. Cathers:** I wasn't intending to speak to this today, but I do want to say that if the government is saying that with the motion they brought forward, they would still consult with the public, then why delete all reference to public consultation from the excellent motion moved by my colleague, the Member for Kluane?

Again, this is another area where the government's assurances ring hollow because their words often do not match their action. If the government is serious about consulting with Yukoners, there is nothing in the original motion that needs to be changed. This does seem like an effort to do this work behind closed doors without consulting with Yukon citizens.

**Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Disagree.

**Mr. Kent:** Disagree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Disagree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Disagree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Disagree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Disagree.

**Ms. White:** Disagree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yeas, seven nays.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the amendment carried.

*Amendment to Motion No. 251 agreed to*

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

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I'll just try to take a minute to go over a few points. I thank the Member for Kluane for raising the resolution that was at the 2017 Association of Yukon Communities.

I would just like to read it into the record here. I'm quoting now: "Whereas daylight savings time has little effect on the overall amount of daylight the Yukon receives; and

"Whereas studies in other jurisdictions show that daylight savings time can be detrimental to health, vehicular safety, energy consumption and productivity; and

"Whereas metabolisms and sleep cycles of our own human bodies, as well as those of children, livestock and pets still do not 'know' the hands on the clock have moved forward;

"Therefore be it resolved that the Association of Yukon Communities engage with the Yukon government to determine if there is a case for removing daylight savings time in the Yukon."

I'm going to talk about that in a moment. Let me just back up for a second. Canada is one of the places where we came up with time zones in the first place. It was the railroad — I think it might have been the CPR. There is some dispute about whether it is Canadian or American, but I know the whole notion was about trying to organize the movement of people, goods and services so that they were coordinated. That issue is what's with us today around time zones, including daylight saving time. The point is that much of our economy, our communities and our lives are very integrated, and we have to try to make sure that they are coordinated. It isn't just whether it's coordinated between here in Whitehorse and Dawson, Beaver Creek and the Alaska Highway; it's also about how it's integrated with the whole of the continent, I guess — certainly the country.

I want to reference for a second the Member for Kluane — that is the grandmother of the current Member for Kluane who was the Member for Kluane. I said it before and I'll say it again, that is an amazing story. What she was doing was talking about trying to make sure that the time zone for Kluane was integrated with other time zones. That is one of the questions being driven at here. What is happening with our time zone, not only for us but for how it connects?

For example, the Member for Kluane talked about tourism and said that it might improve. Well, having lived in Saskatchewan for my high school years and first degree, I know that you get a little confused when you drive from Saskatchewan to another province — a neighbouring province — and the other way around because you have to remember what time of the year it is, whether you're going to stay with the same time zone or change. That's one of those challenges. Banking — all the ways in which our economy integrates.

I thought that the Member for Kluane's suggestion to work with British Columbia was an excellent suggestion, and I also agree with many of the points that have been raised by the Member for Kluane and the Member for Porter Creek Centre about why we should get past daylight saving time — that it is not serving the purpose that it was originally intended to serve.

What I would like to do is stand up and make a commitment here in the Legislature to work and to engage with the Association of Yukon Communities, as they asked in their resolution, and to make a commitment for the Member for Kluane that I will work with them on this issue. I will dialogue with them, talk with them, gather all of that up, and I will be happy to table that back here as a report to the Legislature. I do think it's important that we talk with our communities to hear what their issues are. I'm happy to hold that conversation.

In that way, I wish to make a commitment. When I think about the ideal solution, as the Member for Kluane has noted, it would not just be a Yukon solution; it would be a coordinated solution with neighbouring provinces. I doubt we would get the neighbouring state, but it would be great if we had that too.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion, as amended. I appreciate from the members opposite that they preferred the original wording in the motion. I hope they will still support the motion as it is amended, because I think it is a good one. I think it's good for us, as Yukoners, to have this conversation.

**Ms. White:** I thank the Member for Kluane for bringing this forward. I appreciate the thoughts, especially a commitment from the Minister of Community Services. There is a really timely thing we all received in our inboxes, which is an e-book from an Australian author named Chris Pearce, and it's called *The Great Daylight Saving Time Controversy*. He goes on to talk about how it's the most controversial issue in the world, and he lists the fact that, for 25 years, he was involved in public service and did all sorts of research and, despite the fact that he wrote a 400-page book, he has no strong opinion on one side or the other, but it will give you arguments to both.

I appreciate what the minister said. If we look at our own history, at one point in time Dawson City had a different time change than southern Yukon. I appreciate that the Premier likes that point when we make it home — that Dawson is so individual that they had their own time zone. But it doesn't mean that, in Yukon, we should look at that compared with everything else.

I ultimately think that the conversation has to happen on a larger scale than just territorially. I believe that what we should be doing, as a country, is having that conversation across the board. If Canada decided to remove daylight saving time, then it would be a lot easier to coordinate those things.

When this was first brought forward, I got an e-mail from a constituent. He had a couple of really interesting points to make. He said that, when setting a meeting time with those people, the first step in that conversation goes, "We are on Pacific Standard Time, the same as Vancouver and Los Angeles." It's a great simplifier for them. The second part is that the computer schedules the appointment. I go and select 3:00 p.m., and they're on Eastern Standard Time and they get a notice for 6:00 p.m.

We talked about the complications of doing work outside of the territory electronically, but, like everyone, I have seen

everyone I know with kids post about the trials and tribulations of children and daylight saving time.

Mr. Speaker, although I think it's important that we have this conversation and I think it's important that the minister has that conversation with Yukoners, I believe we actually have to have that conversation on a broader scale, and that's with the entire country. I appreciate that Yukon might join the outlier of Saskatchewan and say no to daylight saving time, but that might not be the most effective thing for Yukon.

Although I think it affects not only us here — it affects the rest of the country — it is really going to be a broader conversation and, after the minister has his consultations with Yukon, maybe he'll take it to his federal counterpart and suggest that the conversation start on a broader spectrum, and that's across the country as a whole.

I thank the Member for Kluane for bringing it forward and for people's opinions. Another pitch for Chris Pearce — his book is quite entertaining and it goes way back further than any numbers that have been listed so far about daylight saving time. With that, Mr. Speaker, I am finished.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Mr. Istchenko:** I thank everyone in the House for their comments today. I am a little bit disappointed that we are not going to consult with all Yukon residents.

Before the dander gets up on the other side there, it is great that the minister is going to talk with AYC, but we have the communities of Beaver Creek, Old Crow, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay, Mendenhall subdivision and lots of other little places that have Yukon residents that this applies to. The City of Whitehorse itself is a lot of people for AYC, so I would hope that the minister would go out and consult with all Yukoners. The reason that I did put in to consult with Yukon residents — that way it opened it up for everyone to be talked to.

We are going to support the motion, as amended. I think it is important that we have this — I guess now we are just going to investigate, but I sure hope that we do get back to Yukon residents like we should. As a government and as elected officials, we owe it to our constituents to get back to them when we talk to them.

I think it is also important — the Member for Takhini-Kopper King brought up a valuable point. I did bring up the fact that we need to have a conversation with British Columbia, but maybe it is a country-wide conversation that needs to be had and maybe that is something that can be discussed, because it is being talked about in other jurisdictions. I will close my remarks here today.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question on the motion as amended?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

## Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

## Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agreed.

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

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

*Motion No. 251, as amended, agreed to*

## Motion No. 45

**Clerk:** Motion No. 45, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate a review of the medical travel program in order to ensure it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners.

**Ms. McLeod:** I am pleased to rise to speak to Motion No. 45 in which I urge the Government of Yukon to initiate a review of the medical travel program in order to ensure that it meets the needs of all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, the medical travel program is becoming increasingly burdensome for Yukoners. I have worked on a wide range of issues that are raised with me by constituents, and there a number of issues Yukoners face that can be remedied easily, but there doesn't appear to be any room for movement within the regulations. Yukoners are not happy.

I am going to speak to a number of areas where we are seeing a rise in concerns, both in Whitehorse and in the communities. My community of Watson Lake has a unique set of issues due, in part, to its distance from Whitehorse and recent problems around transportation. I will speak to these transportation issues first, as they are about to be even more of a problem.

Watson Lake is fortunate to have access to a community hospital, but there continues to be a high number of medical situations that require residents to access the medical travel program. Much of the travel originating from the Watson Lake area is in-territory travel, meaning residents must travel to Whitehorse in order to meet with specialists and have

routine surgeries, medical procedures or MRIs that can be done in the territory. When required, residents must first travel to Whitehorse before being sent to Vancouver, Calgary or Edmonton for appointments, treatments or surgeries that can only be done Outside.

We have been fortunate in our community for many years to have bus service, as Greyhound passed through in both directions, and residents could access this public transportation. Alkan Air's announcement of direct flights between Watson Lake and Whitehorse was welcomed, as residents had yet another option to get to appointments in Whitehorse.

There has been a recent decision to reduce the number of flights made by Alkan Air, and, of course, we have all heard of the pending discontinuation of service to northern BC and Yukon by Greyhound. This leaves residents of Watson Lake little option but to travel to Whitehorse by private vehicle, a hard thing to do for seniors or those who do not have access to a vehicle.

In some cases, for both in-territory and out-of-territory travel, Yukoners are forced to make three separate trips: for a consultation, a pre-op visit and a final trip for the procedure. Then there is the likelihood of a fourth visit for a follow-up.

There are often trips booked when no procedure or exam is warranted and telehealth could easily be used to avoid medical travel altogether. If a routine exam is required, there could be opportunity to have a nurse perform the exam during telehealth communications.

From what I am aware of, there has been no consistency as to who is approved for air travel. Some are approved and some are told to take the bus. Unfortunately, bus service is going to cease in June of this year. With reduced flights with Alkan Air and no bus service for residents, Watson Lake is looking at a scary situation for people needing medical care outside of the community.

I believe that Alkan Air has submitted a proposal to the Yukon government to provide prepaid, reduced-fare flight segments on Watson Lake scheduled service for explicit use by Yukon medical travel patients. I would respectfully ask that the government consider discussions that would explore options such as this one offered by Alkan Air.

Transportation issues are not only occurring in Watson Lake; they happen across the Yukon. People without access to a vehicle live in all communities and I have heard concerns that appointments are booked repeatedly without consideration of where that patient resides. Booking appointments together would not only cut down on expenses, but would eliminate the inconvenience put on the person who is struggling to get to those appointments from the communities.

In one situation, a patient was scheduled to attend an appointment with an anesthesiologist prior to his surgery. The appointment, which could have easily been bundled with other pre-op appointments, required a special trip to Whitehorse and was scheduled around the anesthesiologist's busy schedule. In the end, the patient didn't even see the anesthesiologist, but instead saw a pre-op nurse.

I have had a number of suggestions made to me on how things could be better and what could be done within the medical travel program to ease the work that patients have to do to get to their appointment. Rather than having multiple people working on all aspects of medical travel, it would be very helpful if it was the job of one person to deal with travel coordination for medical travel and non-insured travel. It has been raised that with so many people involved in travel coordination, patients are often finding it difficult to schedule what should have been straightforward travel.

It would also be very helpful if the department or a designated travel employee compiled a list of people who are willing to be an escort for those who are unable to travel alone. By creating a network of people who are able to act as medical travel escorts, people would not be missing appointments due to not being able to find someone to travel with them.

Additionally, building a database for patients or families to find places to stay, eat and rent vehicles would be helpful. Patients often try to find these answers from clerks during their travel, who do not have time to act as a travel guide. By having one person oversee all the aspects of travel arrangements, there is a better likelihood that there would be fewer problems.

Aside from the issues of transportation and the issues around scheduling, the most common issue that constituents raise with our office is around medical travel rates. This includes rates for both in-territory and out-of-territory travel. It is important to look at both sets of rates and per diems to ensure that they adequately cover Yukoners who have to travel for medical reasons. For the vast majority of medical travel, the travel part is unavoidable and is mandatory. Unfortunately, to tell someone they're being scheduled an appointment for their health problem, and for that person to have to decline the appointment, based on not having any money to fund the trip — well, Mr. Speaker, we have a problem.

Whether the department has to look at substituting per diems for pre-booked hotel rooms and taxi vouchers, something must be done to ensure that all appointments are accessible to all Yukoners. We have heard from people who are unable to even come remotely close to funding a hotel, transportation and meals in Vancouver with the \$75 per diem rate that begins on the second day of travel. While I'm not necessarily arguing that the government should be paying 100-percent of the trip, I do believe that, with the rising number of people experiencing problems, something has to be done.

We have heard from parents who have more than one child who must attend appointments outside Whitehorse. Rather than allowing the family to book a single trip outside and stay in Vancouver for a couple of days between appointments, they are forced to make two trips. Surely if one was to sit and look at the cost differentials between options, they would find the department would have saved much money by funding a single trip.

It's these small things that must be reviewed. Yukoners must be given a platform to give their opinions and let the government know how things could be made better. I urge the government to develop a survey that actually gives Yukoners the opportunity to provide their stories and offer solutions to aid in policy and regulation development. There have been a number of solutions offered to problems that exist but, unfortunately, there is nowhere for people to submit them and no means for change.

I have recounted a number of areas that need attention. There are many more yet to be discussed, which is why this motion suggests a review of the medical travel program in its entirety to ensure that it is meeting the needs of Yukoners. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, it is not currently meeting those needs. I encourage the members of this House to not just consider the big picture, but to consider each issue that has been brought to their attention and to recognize that something must be done to ensure all Yukoners have equal access to health care and no barriers, in a way that makes fiscal sense to taxpayers.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Thank you for the opportunity to stand in this House to speak to Motion No. 45, which reads: "THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate a review of the medical travel program in order to ensure it is meeting the needs of all Yukoners."

This government supports the medical travel program. Everyone on this side of the House hears from Yukoners about how important it is to families and individuals across the territory. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to remind members of this House of what the medical travel is and how many Yukoners it helps.

The travel for medical treatment program is available to assist eligible persons with the cost of medically necessary transportation. In the 2017-18 year to date, the medical travel program assisted 2,993 Yukon residents with 5,768 trips, both within and outside of the territory. Currently, costs, year to date, are \$10.86 million.

Medically necessary transportation refers to a medical emergency and to those non-emergency services not available in the territory but necessary for the well-being of the patient.

Patients who are not admitted to a facility and who require outpatient services may be eligible to receive a \$75 per day subsidy reimbursement beginning on the second day they receive outpatient services, to a maximum of 90 days. The purpose of this subsidy is to assist patients with the cost of their accommodation, meals, taxis and any other expenses incurred while on medical travel status.

In comparison to the rest of Canada — even the other two territories — Yukon has the most generous medical travel program for its residents without any deductions or co-pay requirements. The \$75 accommodation and meal subsidy is the highest subsidy of its kind in Canada.

Medical travel happens for many reasons. We know, from looking at the reasons why people are sent out, that cardiac care and orthopedics have been driving our costs in the past. The recent addition of an orthopedic surgeon to the roster of

local specialists is helping to reduce the requirements for medical travel. In addition, we will be analyzing our medical travel data and identifying other pressure areas that we may be able to address at a local level in a similar fashion. We now have a resident pediatrician to support the visiting specialists. This will also help to reduce medical travel. As a government, we will also focus on improving access to telemedicine, which will also reduce the need for people to travel out of territory to see specialists.

This government would like to propose a friendly amendment to the motion standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake. The friendly amendment is going to be confirming that we are reviewing medical travel as part of the comprehensive review of Health and Social Services. Our decision to support this motion is because we do support this very important program and appreciate —

**Speaker:** Order, please. I believe that once you have initiated the process of amendment then there is a motion to amend. The Chair will then receive your motion to amend now.

*Amendment proposed*

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Okay, let's get on to that then.

I move:

THAT Motion No. 45 be amended by

(1) deleting the words after the phrase "Government of Yukon"; and

(2) following the phrase "Government of Yukon", add the following: "initiate a review of the medical travel program as part of the comprehensive review of Health and Social Services to ensure it is meeting the needs of Yukoners."

**Speaker:** We have received notice then of the amendment. Are there are copies for distribution?

Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** We will recess for 10 minutes or less.

*Recess*

**Speaker:** Order.

Minister of Health and Social Services.

*Withdrawal of proposed amendment*

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to just make note for the record that during the break I spoke with members of the caucus and we have all decided, through unanimous consent, to agree to let Motion No. 45 stand, as presented by the Member for Watson Lake.

**Speaker:** So just to confirm for the record, there will be no amendment?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** There will be no amendment, but I would like to note for the record that all Members of the Legislative Assembly have agreed that we would let the motion stand, as is, on the condition that it is considered in the

broader review of Health and Social Services, as recommended by the Financial Advisory Panel.

**Speaker:** Is there further debate on the main motion, without amendment?

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I will speak to Motion No. 45 on medical travel. The issue of medical travel is one that is felt across the north — especially in our rural communities, which usually have health centres where they have to medevac patients on a regular basis, as they just don't have the facilities or equipment to deal with certain health issues or emergencies.

Even in our largest community, Whitehorse, we know that with modern facilities, doctors and expert staff, we still have to send many patients south for treatment, and this can be due to many reasons.

This government was going to focus on medical travel in the health care talks with Ottawa. In a passage from the *Yukon News* on December 30, 2016, Premier Silver states — and I quote: “Each province and territory has specific concerns that are important to their jurisdictions, and in Yukon it's medical travel. Any opportunity that we have, we are throwing that at Ottawa.” The question that comes to mind is: Has anything been thrown at Ottawa? Has anything been thrown back?

I have a constituent who is a senior on a small pension — most likely CPP and OAS. She is battling cancer. She has travelled out already and now is required to travel to Edmonton every six months for further treatment. As one who does not have third-party insurance or other coverage, she is finding that the travel assistance is just not adequate. I have written a letter to the Minister of Health and Social Services and am waiting for a response; however, in the meantime, we have many others in the same position.

The Minister of Health and Social Services recently said — and I quote: “I empathize with the fact that it costs a lot of money to travel. But we certainly can't be footing 100 percent of the bill.” The problem is that currently the government is not covering anywhere close to 100 percent of the bill. For example, today I looked at the price of hotels near the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton, and the current rate, as of this afternoon, is \$187 a night. Currently, the Government of Yukon only provides \$75 a night on the second night, so that is only 40 percent of the cost for a hotel, not to mention the cost of other things such as food.

The request is not to cover 100 percent; it is to cover a percentage that is more supportive of Yukoners. The \$75 is not only to cover the cost of accommodation and meals and incidentals, but perhaps even starting the \$75 on the first day would be a small improvement. My constituent has worked and contributed throughout her working life. Now she finds that she is unable to cover all of her living expenses while seeking medical treatment.

I also did a quick check on our sister territories, and I am afraid to say that we are not the lead in medical travel. In the Northwest Territories, for non-beneficiary residents who hold valid Northwest Territories health cards, if they are a senior or

a family whose income is \$80,000 or less and they have no third-party insurance, the territory covers the cost of travel. In Nunavut, non-beneficiary residents with valid Nunavut health care cards — again, if they have exhausted the third-party insurance and have no other medical insurance — are entitled to flight, taxi, commercial accommodations starting at a rate of \$125 a night, and \$50 for meals per day.

There are many Yukoners who, after working and contributing for years to our communities and now with regular rising living expenses, cannot afford vacations or luxury travel. To now have required medical travel put on their plates, it is stressful and, I am sure, not helping their healing process, so let's make a difference by supporting this motion.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I wasn't going to stand and speak to this motion, but I feel I need to respond to the quotes that were put in the Legislative Assembly by the Yukon Party in terms of the medical travel.

It's interesting, because we all know that THIF funding was set up a while ago and renewed from THSSI to THIF and back and forth. But when we went — the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Finance — to Ottawa — and I believe that this is where that quote is from — that is exactly what we did. We threw medical travel at Ottawa. From the *Health Act*, from a national perspective, there is an obligation from the federal government to make sure that every jurisdiction enjoys the same quality of health care right across the nation. Our issue was that, under the Yukon Party, the THIF funding was scheduled to lapse, so the good work of the Minister of Health and Social Services and also the meetings of the finance ministers got that money reinstated.

To answer the question asked by the member opposite, that is what we got done, as far as THIF. We got it rescheduled, reinstated, and also what we accomplished that wasn't accomplished before through THIF — we had a lot more control over how that money could be spent locally, just to answer the question from the member opposite and to comment on that particular piece. I do want to thank all three caucuses for quick decisions being made so that the amendment was not necessary and that we can use, again, this important piece of a larger puzzle when we get to the good work of the Health and Social Services review, as recommended by the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel.

**Mr. Kent:** I am going to be brief in my remarks here this afternoon, but I just want to put on record a couple of constituency concerns that have come to me in the past while with respect to medical travel. I'll give some specific examples and then some anecdotal examples as well.

The document that I'm just going to be referring to is the medical travel by air policy, which is on the Health and Social Services website. A constituent of mine who I met with last week talked to me about requiring medical treatment that is unavailable in the Yukon, and there are two choices for him. He can go to Vancouver or Kelowna, but the facility in Kelowna is the preferred one for his medical practitioners up

here — they would prefer it if he went there. As the policy states — and I'll quote directly from it: "If the medical service required is unavailable in Yukon, travel will be arranged to Vancouver, Edmonton, or Calgary." Of course, a number of years ago those were the three gateway cities that were available — serviced, of course, by Air North, Yukon's airline. It made sense back when this was done.

If this gentleman travelled — which he has, and he would like to have the procedure done in Kelowna — on the right day he would actually go with Air North through Kelowna to Vancouver, but he would not be able to get off in Kelowna. They would only make the flight arrangements or the travel arrangements for him to Vancouver, so he would have to find his way back to Kelowna.

This is one of those things now that perhaps we could address in the review of this, or perhaps it is something that the minister — whether it is a policy, or a regulatory or even a legislative change — would consider, because the gateway cities have expanded for us. Whether it is the level of care or the type of care in Kelowna or even now in Victoria that is required — whether or not families have better support services, or patients have better family supports on Vancouver Island or in the Okanagan — we would certainly like to see the minister, as part of this review of the medical travel program, take a look at that as well.

One of the other things that this individual brought to my attention was the fact that for one of the procedures that he needed, there was a two-year wait time here in Yukon for that procedure but, since it was available here, he wasn't eligible for travel Outside. It was cataract surgery and, again, a problem for him. He had to wait and, obviously, anything that affects your vision certainly affects your quality of life, and he was running into that. Maybe there is some tweaking. I certainly don't want to make suggestions for these changes on the floor of the House — leave it to the professionals in Health and Social Services to come up with the appropriate language — but that is another instance that I wanted to get on the record here, as something that the minister could have her officials look at as part of this review, or maybe it is something that they could change in the shorter term.

A couple of other instances that maybe we could take a look at are specific to medical travel by air. One is the changing of flights, and this is something that I heard a few times during the campaign and previously. The medical travel program bookings are done through, I believe, Health and Social Services, but if someone is in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary or Outside and has the ability to come home early, it has happened sometimes on the weekends that they are not able to get a hold of the medical travel individuals to make the necessary travel changes, so they are perhaps stuck in Vancouver — especially for some people who don't have escorts with them or, in particular, our elderly individuals.

Again, I don't have the solution, but something to take a look at is an easier way for Yukoners to make changes to their travel arrangements while they are Outside, especially if they are able to come home earlier and get back to their families earlier.

The final thing that I wanted to talk about is escorts. I know there are criteria around when escorts are eligible to be paid and when they're not, but I'm kind of hoping that, in this review of the medical travel program, the government would look at an age threshold for that, because even though someone may not qualify for an escort given the procedure being undertaken — I'll use a personal example.

My mother is 83 years old. Fortunately I have a large family up here. There are five boys and two girls in the family, so we are able to make arrangements to take her Outside for some of the medical care she has required lately. My family has the resources and the size, but that isn't the case for all individuals and all elderly individuals. Perhaps the government would look at an age threshold whereby individuals who have to go Outside automatically qualify afterward. My mom is in great shape, but getting around Vancouver, Calgary or Edmonton by herself is certainly something that I don't think would be possible for her, just given the size of those cities. Again, I would look to have the government take a look at are some sort of a threshold so that beyond a certain age you automatically qualify for an escort.

I'm going to conclude my remarks there. I thank the government for supporting this motion. I thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing it forward and putting on record her comments, as well as my colleague from Porter Creek North and what she shared with us today. With that, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to, hopefully, a timely review of the medical travel program so that we can meet the needs that I have identified and the other needs that will be identified here today.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I would truly like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion. I think it's a very important motion for us to discuss. I have to state that it is something that I have wanted to be able to work with and support the Minister for Health and Social Services on as she continues to take on her role with that portfolio.

I would like to touch on just a few points and put them on the record for the Legislative Assembly. First of all, I ask the members opposite — the Official Opposition as well as the Third Party — that, as we have this dialogue, we challenge ourselves to take into consideration the fact that this has been an issue for a long time, but we have an obligation, all of us together, to come up with some solutions.

During the election process, many houses that I went to passed on stories of very challenging situations that their families were going through. Whether it was, as the Member for Copperbelt South has just touched upon — which is a great point — individuals and families who have contributed immensely in our community — friends, family members, volunteers, people who we know well — when it came time to go out and get support and assistance, it was very difficult because a spouse couldn't be there or, after an initial treatment, it was difficult to support that.

We know this has been an issue for a long time. I think the previous government and the current actions of the department — they are doing something they feel is an

appropriate standard of care and support, but we likely have to do more. I appreciate that this motion has been brought forward.

In our family, my mother-in-law went through multiple trips for her treatment, and at a point where she was in a terminal state, we were lucky enough — the same as the Member for Copperbelt South — where we put our family resources in so my wife could travel, time and time again, and incurred multiple costs. We were lucky enough that we could absorb that. There are many who, at the time, couldn't. Even in the case of an individual at the time, and that was a few years ago, it still impacts — taking that time to be there for any family.

The key point for today is — I felt an obligation to put this on the record — if we remember, we did a tribute here in the House, the Legislative Assembly, and I think I and the Member for Porter Creek North spoke to this — and I apologize, I think it was the Leader of the Third Party — regarding Florence Roberts. She was an amazing lady who contributed a tremendous amount to the Yukon in her volunteer work, as well as her time spent in municipal government and many other things that were touched upon. I think we owe it to Florence to put this on the record.

In her last days — I may be in a better emotional state to tell this story now than when we did the tribute — Florence reached out. In our government, we were only about a month into our role. It was early January and, using the system at play, she had an extremely challenging time trying to get home. She knew she had only days, potentially — or weeks — left, and she wanted to come back to the Yukon. Within the structure and the time frame of trying to get back, there was a delay. Essentially, what she ended up doing was using her own dollars to take an Air North flight and come back home to the Yukon.

During that time period, when we sat on council together — at the time, the mayor was Bev Buckway. Bev reached out to me and asked if I would sit down with Florence as soon as I could. I had the opportunity to go and sit with her. Being the amazing person that she was — always taking into consideration where she could contribute to Yukoners and to the Yukon, to make things better, her time was spent — I sat next to her bed, and she said to me, “We’re not working in hours; we’re working in minutes,” as she looked at her — we had about 30 minutes while she was receiving an IV treatment. She said at that point, “I know it’s new for you and it’s new for...” — Minister Frost; she did say her first name. “I know she can get this done. It needs to get done, and you need to make sure that when you go to work on Monday morning, you sit down with her because this is what I have just experienced.”

They had a long-time friendship as well. I came back that morning and had that discussion with the minister. I appreciate that I know that this has been a priority of the minister and it is something that I think we owe to her. We all spoke very eloquently and kindly about Florence, but I think we all have to work together.

I think part of the challenge is going to be when we move down this, there are some immense costs. The members across the way who have had these responsibilities know that part of the reason there weren't a bunch of big changes over the years — these are certainly some of the challenges that have been there — is because there is enormous cost with it. I think we can get to the right place. I think that through a review, which we are committed to doing, we can see what the real impact is. I think we owe it to Yukoners to ensure that we do the right thing and make the right changes.

I say thank you to the member, because this is something that, if nothing else, I had an opportunity to support in five years. This was a commitment that somebody made in their last days — a request that they made in their last days to me, and so I really appreciate the member bringing this forward. I appreciate the members coming together, and I look forward to the work being done so that we can take a look at how we can improve the system so that we don't have to have those types of conversations at that point and that people feel that they have the right supports in place.

**Ms. White:** I thank the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for those words. It was really important to ground what we are talking about in truth.

There are some things that our colleagues across the way are new to here and then there are some colleagues on this side who have been at this even longer than most. I think the one thing that I can talk about in my time here is that one of the biggest concerns and frustrations that I deal with often is the issue of medical travel. The \$75 per diem — the Member for Porter Creek North used an example of costs — the \$75 — whereas a government employee is able to access to \$98.15 while travelling out of the territory and a hotel is separate. It is not part of that calculation.

We heard from the Member for Watson Lake about being without the bus service and what that means, and I would say that people in Watson Lake have always been very fortunate, because if you live in Keno and you don't drive because you are a senior, how are you going to get into town? There are issues on all sides of this.

Right now, I can say that our one staff member has gone to deposit cheques that he has had to pick up from social assistance to deposit for a family who is stuck in Vancouver for medical travel. I think about what that would mean if they did not reach out and how panicked that would be. I thank the department and the people in that office who made sure that those cheques were available, but is that the right system?

We heard from the Member for Copperbelt South when he talked about concerns around Kelowna. I know of people who have been able to get off in Kelowna but haven't been able to get home. They have had to pay — and interestingly enough, were not even able to take the Air North flight. They had to pay from Kelowna to Vancouver and then come home on Air North. There is a sleep clinic in Kelowna and everybody in the territory gets sent to that sleep clinic in Kelowna. That is the sleep clinic that Yukoners get sent to.

It's in Kelowna and it's not a destination for travel from Yukon.

There are issues around forms. I have dealt with seniors who have been trying to get reimbursed for medical travel as a companion and despite the fact that we put two letters from the specialists in Vancouver that said the spouse was required there because it was possibly a life-ending illness, we still haven't got it reimbursed because now we have to track down the doctor in the Yukon who said, "Yes, get on that medevac flight. Get on that medevac flight right now because we don't know if he is going to make it back." So we're still dealing with that.

We have the issues even just within Yukon of how that works. A lot of people don't understand that if you travel outside of the territory and become ill, if you need to get home, you are stuck. P.S. — everyone get insurance when you travel outside of Yukon because if you are gravely ill in another jurisdiction and you want to come home because this is where you need to be and you cannot take a commercial flight, you will have to pay for a medevac flight and a medevac flight is tens of thousands of dollars.

There are all sorts of issues. I'm happy to know that this is going to be part of the review, but there are so many nuances about this. I think there are options and I appreciate that people said, "What is the answer?" I feel like if tourism companies can book blocks of hotel rooms for cheaper than the going rate, I'm sure the Yukon government can make some relationship-building exercises with hotels near St. Paul's or with someone who runs a rooming house. We have seen it happen in other jurisdictions for people coming from the Arctic toward Ottawa for medical travel. I think that there are options. I think that we can look at that.

From Vancouver right now — from the airport to downtown — you have the Canada Line, which is fantastic. Maybe we could send people down with a Compass card so that they are able to travel on the bus and on that line without the worry about cash. Even just knowing that the \$75-day only starts on day two, we have heard about the barriers. Lots of people don't know that there is a social assistance emergency fund that you can access for medical travel, but it's not an easy process.

There are all these things, but the last thing you want to hear is that someone got sent out of the territory for medical travel and has gone into debt trying to receive that medical assistance because they weren't able to afford it. I think that is something where we do a disservice to each other, if that is the case.

There are, as everyone has highlighted, a lot of issues. We can also talk about the successes, which are that, in this day and age, someone can leave the territory and get the surgery that they need or the help that they need and then come back well and that is fantastic. But I think that there are creative ways that we can look at bringing down the costs because this is a very large portion of the budget. The point is that we shouldn't put people at risk of sometimes very hard decisions as to whether they go or not because they can't afford — they don't have the resources to do it.

I look forward to that review. I look forward to the information. More than that, I look forward to creative ideas, whether it's a preferred rate at a hotel near St. Paul's or Vancouver General or the hospitals in Calgary and Edmonton or whether it's something that government is able to negotiate so the payer is government and it's at a substantially reduced rate.

I think that would ease people's stresses, whether it's a partnership with Easter Seals House in Vancouver or the Ronald McDonald House in Vancouver, which allows people to stay. I think there are options. It's just a matter of creatively figuring them out. I look forward to the review and, like everyone who spoke, we all have stories — well, we all have bad stories of what has happened with people with the medical system. I hope that, in 15 years from now, the politicians in this Chamber will be talking about the successes as opposed to their concerns for their constituents.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, for bringing forward this motion. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the government and the Third Party for this. I'm pleased that they have agreed to support the motion as worded.

I do understand that the government has indicated that they are prepared to agree to this and plan on doing the review as part of an overall health care review. I do just want to flag a small concern with that. I appreciate that it's being reviewed. I just hope that, as part of a review that seems largely aimed at cutting costs, that doesn't become part of the focus with this program. I would hope that the focus in doing that review is on assisting Yukoners, improving the eligibility and improving support to families and Yukoners under the medical travel program. That's my only concern with this.

I also just want to note that the rates that were set — I understand, as the Deputy Premier noted, there were significant cost implications to changes, which I certainly appreciate. As members may know, the timing of when these rates were actually last changed and when it moved from — previously, the Yukon government only started providing per diems for out-of-territory travel on day four of travel instead of on day two. I was Minister of Health and Social Services when we made the change and, even at the time — I believe it would have been mid-2006 — I would have liked to have gone further, but we were dealing with financial constraints and, as Minister of Health and Social Services, I was only able to go so far in terms of where we collectively, as Cabinet, had decided we could do in those areas.

We did provide a rate increase. I would like to thank officials who worked on this and figured out the way that, at the time, we felt struck the best balance in maximizing the dollars we had available in providing that increased support. But even back a little over a decade ago, as I noted, I would have liked to have gone further with this support. It did not then even cover hotel costs for people outside the territory. The change, of course, through inflation and other costs has grown since that time, but the funding itself has not.

I would also encourage government, in terms of looking at the amount available for people who require medical travel, to look at a few other areas related to that. That includes the issues related to coverage for medical escorts when a family member is approved for attending with someone and, in some cases, the challenge that can exist in trying to have a second medical escort approved when travelling with children.

Without getting into specific situations that might compromise personal privacy, I just want to make reference to a concern brought forward by a constituent relating to travelling outside the territory for specialist appointments involving more than one child, and the difficulty she faced in terms of the eligibility for a second escort. In the situation she was dealing with, the specialists being visited only wanted the parent and one child in the room at a time and didn't want to have other children present.

Ensuring that there is coverage for those types of cases so that someone is not left without childcare for an underage child who is Outside — when they're travelling with more than one — is something that I would encourage government to ensure is looked at as part of this review.

I have also heard concerns from constituents where, in one case, someone was denied a medical escort despite a physician recommendation that they have one.

I want to make it clear for the staff who deal with this that I'm not intending to criticize them for applying the rules that are in place. I'm simply noting that I understand the travel for medical treatment regulations is very prescriptive. There is some discretion available, but not a great deal in certain areas. The overall structure has not changed significantly in quite some time.

Even when we amended the regulations back in, I believe, 2006 to increase the rates — and I believe there was one other section of the regulations where we made a minor amendment — there wasn't widespread structural review. There wasn't a comprehensive look at how the program was working. Some of the issues that I mentioned, and a few others I'm going to get to in a moment, were not part of the review that was done at that point.

It's incumbent upon all of us — and I would hope the government would agree — to structure the program in a way that provides Yukoners the assistance they need when they need it, and to do so in a compassionate manner, while recognizing the need to effectively use taxpayers' dollars and be responsible in doing that. Ultimately, regardless of party stripe or caucus, I think it's fair to say that probably every member of this House shares a desire to ensure that our health care system meets the needs of Yukoners when they need it, and does so in a compassionate and effective manner.

I mentioned the issue of travelling with multiple children to different appointments. One possibility that government may potentially wish to look at is that the current per diem structure is based on the patient travelling, but it wasn't really adjusted to deal with the situation of family travelling, and the costs may be somewhat different.

In some cases, because of the use of a hotel room, it may lead to those overall costs being reduced if there is more than

one person travelling when looked at on a per-person basis. Some of those issues around ensuring that it is available for families when they need it, that there is not a discrepancy between, as my colleague from the Third Party, the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, mentioned — the case of social assistance emergency funding being available for people who needed it and were unable to pay for some of the costs being faced when travelling outside the territory. As she noted, that is not necessarily a quick or easy system in which to access that funding. As well, it should be noted that there are many — particularly senior citizens in this territory and others — who are proud of the fact that they have never been on social assistance. In saying that, I am certainly not attempting to create any sense of stigma for those who do need it but, as members know, there are people who are quite proud of that and would accept assistance from the medical travel program, but, if it was suggested to them that they go to social assistance, they would not be willing to do so on a point of pride.

It is about recognizing that and being compassionate, especially to seniors and elders who view things in that way. I think that we should ensure that, in providing support, we do so in a cost-effective way, not unnecessarily placing another administrative burden on patients who need support.

It should also be noted that the issue of the current program — as my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, noted — the structure is prescriptive about the cities to which the out-of-territory travel applies. It does not include Kelowna or others that potentially could be added through additional routes from local carriers, and I think there is an opportunity to look at that. There is — as well as the issue that my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, mentioned — the fact that in some cases, because of the current policy that medical travel does not cover travel outside the territory if the service is available locally — the issue of wait times should be looked at in considering that aspect of policy. I would argue that getting people access to the treatment they need in as timely a manner as possible is an important part of improving our health care system and improving health outcomes. The costs that can be associated with someone not receiving treatment in a timely manner can be financial, they can be emotional, and they can also place a great deal of hardship on someone's life. As has been noted in some national studies, there is actually — for procedures that have been studied — in some cases, an increased cost to the taxpayer as a result of delaying procedures beyond the medically appropriate timelines through efforts usually of cost control or due to availability of procedures.

But ultimately, that leads to the conclusion — in my view at least — that if services are not available within a timely manner in the territory and there is an out-of-territory option that would provide that service to a patient when they need it, that the program should be flexible enough to allow for that support. It should also allow for some flexibility in patients going to specialists not listed in the prescribed cities in a case where their physician believes that it is appropriate. I would just note, without going into too much detail, that for certain

more complex procedures — as members may know, there are certain hospitals in Canada that may be leaders in the field of dealing with some of the more complex medical procedures. If, for example, a certain surgery is only available in Toronto and if that is the appropriate care and the physician is recommending it, there should be enough flexibility that there can be common sense on the part of medical providers allowed for within there and sufficient flexibility to permit it when it is appropriate.

The issue, as the Member for Takhini-Kopper King noted, people Outside who are dealing with gaps in coverage in some cases — and I want to mention again, without compromising specific details of the situation, constituents I heard from who faced difficulty when they were outside the territory temporarily, visiting and staying with family members in BC. They faced challenges in getting coverage to travel from a location in southern British Columbia to an appointment in Vancouver because of the specific terms around eligibility. In a situation for someone who is normally resident in the Yukon and is outside the territory temporarily, I think that it is important to take a look at ensuring the program is flexible enough so that they are not put in a situation where, effectively, they were told that if they were to fly back to the territory, they would then have their flights down and back paid for, but if they were to drive there, it would not be covered.

Again, there are some areas where I think there needs to be a bit of a structural review to ensure that we are not always choosing the cheapest options, but choosing the options that make sense for people and, in some cases, recognizing that the more common-sense options would actually be cheaper than what the regulations specifically lead staff having to conclude and cover.

I have heard from quite a number of constituents about this. I want to acknowledge concerns that I heard at my last public meeting about this from constituents who referenced the importance of the medical travel program. I have also heard concerns from constituents about the difference between the travel assistance that is provided if someone is a government employee on government business versus what is covered if you are a citizen and a taxpayer who is not out of the territory on government business. I recognize the challenge of making those identical, but I just wanted to bring that point forward on behalf of constituents who have expressed that concern.

I would note also that one other issue that I would like to mention and put on record on behalf of a constituent who raised it with me a while ago is ensuring that if someone is going out of the territory with coverage for medical travel, that they don't lose that coverage by virtue of the fact that they plan to, at personal cost, tack on an additional trip, whether it be to an adjacent city or a short flight somewhere else, or a longer flight somewhere else. In those situations, government employees in a similar situation — the typical practice is that as long as there is no cost to the taxpayer from a change that they make and they pay all costs associated with

it, they are not prevented from adding on travel to see family or whatever the appropriate case may be.

I apologize to constituents if I have missed any of the specific issues. I did want to recognize those specific concerns that I have heard from several constituents to ensure that their voices were heard and put on record. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up my remarks.

I hope to see this pass this afternoon and I hope to see a situation in the near future where this program is changed with enhancements made that better support Yukoners by providing them with the care and the assistance they need when they need it and ensuring that no Yukoner suffers undue financial hardship while in the process of seeking the medical treatment they need.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I thank all the Members of this Legislature today — in particular, the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward — and for all sides of this House for talking about this. I, as well, have had conversations within my riding and with constituents about medical travel and heard those concerns.

I wanted to add a few pieces of information — just following up with the Member for Lake Laberge's comments. I thank him for his comments about medical travel needing to be compassionate. I think, as well, that he was talking about the ability for it to be flexible enough to deal with the situations that citizens find themselves in. He also talked about taxpayers' dollars.

So let me just add for the record here that current costs for the 2017-18 fiscal year have been just shy of \$11 million — \$10.86 million for medical travel. We have assisted just fewer than 3,000 Yukon residents with over 5,700 trips. I think it was the Member for Porter Creek North who was talking about comparisons to other parts of the country and I think it is important, when we do that, that we take a look at them. It is not just what the amount of money is, but what are the costs — so the amount of money against what it costs. That is why I believe that the Yukon does have a very progressive amount of money going to medical travel. But I am very happy that we are reviewing it and looking to see what we can do to improve it.

I thank the Member for Takhini-Kopper King for talking about successes — or hoping that, a year from now or whenever it is, we will be talking about some of the successes. There are a few that I think are worth noting. Telehealth has been improved in the territory — and I know, for example, that the Minister of Health and Social Services and I also talked to the francophone community about a telehealth system that is in French; orthopaedic surgeon, pediatrician — we have had some successes.

I will talk for a moment about — the Member for Lake Laberge talked about the importance of where real costs lie. There are times when, if you delay medical treatment, that will increase costs. It's also true that, if we have local services here, it's always possible that we can find cost savings as well, if we can avoid people having to travel out and if we can provide those services here. There are times when it makes

sense to invest somewhat locally. We have had examples of that over the years. I know we have certain tests that we can now perform here.

What I will add on this subject is that we are looking forward to finalizing the new territorial health investment fund. That has sometimes been referred to as THIF, but just for our citizens, so they understand, we're talking about this agreement in funding with Health Canada. It is not concluded yet, but we understand how much money we have negotiated with the federal government. It's \$6.4 million per year over the next four years, for a total of \$25.6 million.

Within that agreement, there's an additional \$2.1 million per year to be allotted to medical travel — that is good news. \$4.3 million per year will go toward innovations aimed at strengthening the health system and improving health outcomes for Yukoners. In that way, I hope we're also able to find ways to ensure that the health and wellness of our citizens, as much as possible, will be provided here in the territory as often as it can be.

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

**Ms. McLeod:** I appreciate the comments from those who have spoken today on this motion. The minister made reference to some changes that were being made within the system now by the staff of Health and Social Services. I want to applaud their effort in that regard for any changes they're making to provide a service to Yukoners, while still managing to save some money.

If the department is able to make some changes now without a review and overhaul of the system, then I'm hopeful that some more tweaks could be made in favour of Yukoners, in the absence of a full-blown review.

I'm happy there will be a review. I would like to see this portion of the health review take a little higher profile — I guess we'll see how it works out.

I am a little concerned that we do not know when the health review will take place, who will do it, when it will wrap up, nor if we are looking at years before any changes are made. I guess we will maybe get some more questions on the record in the near future on that one.

I just thank Yukoners for their patience on this. Yukoners can be patient, and I just want everyone to remember that their patience is not endless.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

## Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

## Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

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

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.  
*Motion No. 45 agreed to*

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

## Point of order

**Ms. White:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker — pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the Assembly to move Motion No. 252, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party.

## Unanimous consent re moving Motion No. 252

**Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** There is unanimous consent.

## Motion No. 252

**Clerk:** Motion No. 252, standing in the name of Ms. White.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to live up to its assertions of openness and transparency by informing Yukoners and this House of the decision already made regarding the route chosen for Yukon's second fibre optic link.

**Ms. White:** It's my pleasure to rise to speak to this motion regarding a second fibre optic connection to the Yukon.

I don't believe the need for the second fibre optic loop is in question at all. The regular outages and the slow speed we experience in Yukon are issues that every Yukoner is familiar with, and the consequences for the business community are well-known. That's without speaking about the barriers that this represents when it comes to strengthening our IT sector and diversifying our economy. This is all well-known to everybody in this House, and to Yukon as a whole, I would suggest. We have already had the discussion in past years and, quite honestly, that is not what this motion is about.

This motion is about government transparency. The Premier and his ministers keep saying that they want to have it open and transparent, yet in the past six years I have spent in this Legislative Assembly, I have never seen a Premier or minister purposely withhold information about a decision that has already been made from Yukoners or from this House.

In Question Period last week, the Premier was asked by my colleague, the MLA for Whitehorse Centre, what the plan is for the \$11 million allocated for a second fibre loop. The Premier stated in no unclear terms that there was a plan; that a route had been picked, but he was just as clear that he was not prepared to tell Yukoners about it at that point.

So we have a decision that has been made, we have money that has been allocated and that we are debating in this House, and a route has been chosen, yet we don't know where it's going. We have asked the question and we haven't had an answer.

Is this really how an open and transparent government acts? Is this really what we would hope for?

This puts us in a very strange situation. The Premier has acknowledged that the decision has been made. I don't think I need to remind anyone that the territory is small. We have one provider right now, and that's Northwestel. We have people who live in communities and we have people who do different jobs. Between the people who work for the federal government, for the territorial government and for Northwestel, you have a whole bunch of people who actually already know what this decision is, yet the public, whose tax dollars will be paying for this project, is being kept in the dark.

Mr. Speaker, I have no illusions that this motion is going to pass as it's written, and that's okay, but what I really want to know is: Where are we going to put the second fibre line? Where is it going to go? You can pull up media reports quite easily, and this has been discussed. This is one of those well-talked-about topics — as to whether it was going to go north up the Dempster line, or whether it was going to go south toward Skagway. There are numbers; there are all kinds of numbers. There's \$12.3 million for a private company to start with a grant to do it; there's \$80 million to go north — so there's all sorts of information, all sorts of speculation, but there's only one group that knows the answer.

So Mr. Speaker, all I want to know is where it's going to go. If I can't get told that right now and, more importantly, Yukoners can't be told that answer right now, then I guess I want to know: Why can't that information be shared, and when will that information be shared?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to have the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to the motion put forward by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. The building of a second fibre optic link, or diverse fibre, is certainly a project that has been floating around for several years before our Liberal government was even elected. I would highlight that it is another project that the Official Opposition promised to complete and a project that we will get done.

It is an achievable project that ties in nicely with the goals laid out by the Premier in my mandate letter. It was also a campaign commitment. It is a key consideration for those currently working in the Yukon and for those contemplating future business operations in our territory.

This is something that I heard about from investors and parties interested in the Yukon as a potential location for future opportunity when I worked in the private sector. An innovation and knowledge economy is reliant upon diverse fibre, and we look forward to delivering on this.

The officials within the departments of Economic Development, Highways and Public Works, and Community Services have and continue to work diligently toward the day when the final announcement can be made. The work completed to carry out our due diligence on this project has been extensive. I would like to speak to some of this effort at this time.

Over the years, starting in 2014, there have been a number of studies undertaken with major engineering and telecommunications consulting firms, such as Planetworks Consulting Corporation, Stantec and Ernst & Young Canada. These companies have produced reports assessing the options, feasibility, costs, models and engineering for a redundant fiber optic line for Yukon.

The result of this due diligence was the identification of two possible routes for the link: one connecting Whitehorse to Skagway, and another connecting Dawson City to Inuvik. To speak further to these details of the due diligence during the evaluation process, the consulting firms were asked to assess the viability of the options in terms of (1) the possibility of federal and other partnership support for each route; (2) the potential for job creation and contracting opportunities for Yukoners; (3) the potential overall costs to the Government of Yukon of the construction and operation of the line; (4) the ability for each route to offer redundancy at the necessary quality; (5) the ability of each route to offer the bandwidth that Yukon needs, now and into the future; (6) the possibility to introduce competition and its effects on broadband pricing in Yukon; (7) the physical security risks associated with each route; and lastly, (8) the operating risk.

Mitigating this last element, operating risk, was identified though the process as one of the key issues to ensuring the selected line would be financially viable. Identifying a viable operator for the line that could give us assurance that future operating costs related to the selected line were less likely to fall to the Government of Yukon became the next step in our due diligence process.

To address the risk, we issued expressions of interest for both of the identified routes in order to gauge the private sector's interest in operating such a line and determine the financial viability. We received expression-of-interest responses for both of the identified routes, and these responses were then incorporated into our analysis.

Combining the results of the operational risk mitigation through the expression-of-interest process, with the results of our earlier due diligence on economic impact, security of service, potential partners and overall cost to Government of

Yukon, we have come to a conclusion on the best route option for Yukoners and Yukon's economy. This conclusion and our analysis have also informed our budget estimates for the diverse fibre link.

The next step in the process, which we are currently undertaking, is to conclude with Canada the details on the federal investment that will, in combination with our own resources, bring this project to life.

For this reason, I would like to amend the motion put forth by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

*Amendment proposed*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I move:

THAT Motion No. 252 be amended by:

(1) removing the words "live up to its assertions of openness and transparency by informing" and replacing it with the word "inform";

(2) removing the words "of the decision already made"; and

(3) removing the word "second" and replacing it with the word "diverse".

**Speaker:** I have had an opportunity to review the proposed amendment with Mr. Clerk and I can advise that the amendment is in order. There is one grammatical word change, but other than that it is in order.

It has been moved by the Member for Porter Creek South:

THAT the amendment to Motion No. 252 be amended by:

(1) removing the words "live up to its assertions of openness and transparency by informing" and replacing them with the word "inform";

(2) removing the words "of the decision already made"; and

(3) removing the word "second" and replacing it with the word "diverse".

The proposed amended motion will read:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to inform Yukoners and this House regarding the route chosen for Yukon's diverse fibre optic link.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** The motion as it now reads is, of course, as we just stated:

"THAT the House urges the Yukon government to inform Yukoners and the House regarding the route chosen for Yukon's diverse fibre optic link."

To summarize, the decision on the route for Yukon's second fibre optic link has been made, as stated today. The completion of this project will ensure fibre optic redundancy in Yukon, which means that any break along the line will not disrupt the territory's telecommunications traffic. This project will provide diversity and security of service and offer economic opportunities for all Yukoners —

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

**Point of order**

**Speaker:** The Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

**Ms. White:** At this point in time, we are only debating the wording change for the proposed amendment, and I believe right now, the Minister responsible for Economic Development is actually talking to the larger debate of what it would be if the amendment passes. I would just ask him to keep his comments to the amendment.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** I guess the narrow interpretation of the motion is that all it is doing is urging the government to "inform" about something. If the Minister of Economic Development wishes to wrap up his comments with respect to the proposed amendment — if he has any further comments.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I will take a different course. I don't know if I am ready to wrap it up on this point, but I will speak to it. I think it is important to touch on a couple of points that are made — in some cases, insinuating to some extent inappropriate motives by the motion that was put on the table. First and foremost, what we have tried to do is: (1) take the work that was previously undertaken by the opposition —

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

**Point of order**

**Speaker:** Member for Takhini-Kopper King, on a point of order.

**Ms. White:** This is a different issue. I sat with it for a second. I didn't appreciate the term "inappropriate" — now I've missed it; it's going to be in the Blues. But it imputes a false or unavowed motive. It's also not particularly flattering. I disagree with the statement.

**Speaker:** Minister of Economic Development, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I felt that the language being used — the language stating that we were not being transparent — could also take the same tone, and I felt that was inappropriate toward what we are speaking about today. I wanted an opportunity to lay out the process that we have undertaken to ensure that we have been transparent and to add some other information to the Legislative Assembly.

Once again, I would just like to get on with explaining the process, and we'll leave it to Yukoners to feel if we have lacked any transparency, and explain what this process is to the members opposite and see if it helps at all.

**Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** To repeat what I said a number of days ago, generally speaking to the points made by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King — section 19(g) of the Standing Orders will very rarely apply as a point of order, as what it actually refers to is allegations typically of conflict of interest. So that's not generally the appropriate concern or point of order raised pursuant to section 19.

The rest of the exchange between the Minister of Economic Development and the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, in my view, is more a dispute about the facts about characterizing communication methods, style and tone. I don't believe, subject to reviewing the Blues, that it raises to a point of order.

Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe my frustration with the original wording is based on the fact that the Department of Economic Development and members of Community Services and Highways and Public Works have undertaken an extremely disciplined process to get to a final answer. They have done a tremendous amount of work and, throughout that, it has always been about ensuring that decisions that are made are the right decisions for Yukoners. It's ensuring that we have the opportunity to explain a process in a very transparent way, so that Yukoners understand that we have made the right decisions along the way and have undertaken the right due diligence.

Speaking very frankly, we are in a position where, first of all, coming into this process, there was work done. The Member for Pelly-Nisutlin had undertaken some good work in ensuring the original engineering process was completed.

What we had to do — speaking of openness and transparency — is ensure that, as we took that work and built on it, every step of the way, we did the best that we could, knowing full well that part of the role is that inevitably, I would have to stand here in front of the Official Opposition and the Third Party and answer to the decisions that are being made. In order to do that, we have done a tremendous amount of work to ensure that we have looked at every possible option.

Because this government is taking a transparent path, there are dollars identified in this year's budget. This government, like practices in other governments — and I'm not saying it's the previous government, but in other jurisdictions — could have held on any decision and come back at a later point. That was not the right thing to do. We felt that there was work that could be done in this fiscal year — we had hoped it could be done. We felt that we needed our other stakeholders that we're working with, as I stated in my words — you can go back in the Blues — such as the federal government and other departments that are having discussions with the federal government. When those discussions are concluded, it gives an opportunity to explain to Yukoners what decision has been made.

Now, I think that is a very transparent process. There are numbers in the budget — yes. Would I rather stand here today and have a dialogue and debate what the final decision is, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely. But with respect to the stakeholders involved — and the member opposite can drill me after the fact if I have done something that does not make sense in this process. After the fact — absolutely — the Member for Takhini-Kopper King can hold me to it. But upon meeting the requirements that we have on a bilateral level and concluding the final work that has to be done, we will make that

announcement and it will be a good day for all Yukoners when we do that and we can begin the work.

Yes, you're right. It's a small community and I'm sure that there could be things being said by many groups. There have been things said since the day I started working on this project. If the member opposite wants to inform Yukoners on that, that's fine, but I just want to state for the record: This is not about in any way trying to hold something, in an inappropriate way, back from Yukoners. We want to have this discussion. No matter what the decision is, there will be lots of spirited conversation, but at the end of the day, I think that changing the language still adds to the fact that, yes, I know there is an obligation to speak to Yukoners, but please — out of respect to the people in Economic Development, Community Services, Highways and Public Works and all the people who worked on this with their tremendous amount of work to make sure they did the right thing, I can't stand by with shots at our government concerning transparency.

I will leave it at that. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this today and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly.

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** I just wanted to clarify.

Generally speaking, all members should confine their comments to the subject of the amendment. However, the wise Mr. Clerk pointed me to section 35(a) of the Standing Orders. I will just read it into the record: "When taking part in a debate on an amendment to a motion: (a) the member moving an amendment has the right to speak both to the main question and the amendment in one speech". The mover has that special status. Every other MLA should — under section 35(b) of the Standing Orders: "a member, other than the mover, shall confine debate to the subject of the amendment."

So the Minister of Economic Development found himself in the situation as the mover and moving the amendment. That's the situation that he found himself in. There you go — just to answer your first concern, Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

**Ms. White:** I congratulate my colleague across the way for bringing it back so well to the amendment that is before us now.

Just as a sidebar, Mr. Speaker, there have been some changes. One could say there is a new sheriff in town and what applied previously no longer applies for the Standing Orders and the interpretation. I will take that into the future.

I didn't expect this to get through without an amendment and I am going to try to incorporate "diverse fibre optic link" into my vocabulary now as opposed to calling it the "second fibre optic link". Ultimately, it doesn't change my point which is: Where is it going to go?

**Mr. Hassard:** I am a little perplexed at the amendment to change the words because I think that at the end of the day, it's not such much about what the words are in the motion, it's the fact that the opposition and people — citizens of the

Yukon — are looking for the answer to the question. It's a little less about the words, a little more about the answer.

**Speaker:** Is there any further debate on the amendment?

*Amendment to Motion No. 252 agreed to*

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

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just very briefly on the main motion as amended — the point that is still here in this amended motion is that we wish to inform Yukoners and this House about the diverse fibre optic link. So that hasn't gone away from the motion. That's still there. I thank the members for bringing the motion forward.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to be able to rise today to speak to Motion No. 252 as amended, and I want to begin by stating that we are certainly in support of this government following through with their commitment to openness and transparency to Yukoners, particularly on this project.

We know that the Premier has mentioned a number of times now that they have made their decision with regard to the addition of a diverse fibre optic link, but they have simply told Yukoners to wait and see.

Simply put, we don't see why the government is further delaying making the announcement when the necessary work has been completed and the decision has already been made. Telling Yukoners and Yukon businesses to wait and see is certainly not giving Yukoners the openness that they deserve.

Over 25 percent of the Liberals' mandate has passed, and despite their promises during the election, their government doesn't seem interested in accelerating the completion of the diverse fibre optic project. The previous government had selected the Dempster Highway route for this project in 2015 and then began lobbying the federal government to provide financial support for this project, which included a detailed pre-budget submission sent to the federal government in February 2016. During the 2016 territorial election, the Yukon Liberal candidate for Copperbelt South promised voters that they would accelerate the completion of this fibre optic redundancy project but, soon after being elected in November of that same year, the government delayed this project by sending it back to before the decision phase. I want to point out that if this delay had not occurred, then Yukon could potentially already be into the assessment and approval process.

Further, the minister told Yukoners in June of 2017 that his government had submitted another application for federal funding, that they were looking at a September 2017 time frame to hear back and that they would begin looking at the procurement process for a redundant fibre link in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, here we are, over six months past the minister's own deadline, and we haven't heard anything on the status of this project.

If the government hadn't reset the decision process, Yukoners would be that much closer to having a redundant Internet connection to the south. We do recognize that this government has finally made a decision on this project. We don't know what it is, but they have made the decision. We are certainly happy to see this government finally make some decisions, but we share the same concerns as the Third Party with regard to the lack of transparency with the public.

You have to question — why tell Yukoners you have made a decision but refuse to provide any details?

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, she will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Ms. White:** There is no dispute here. We have been told again by the Minister of Economic Development that a decision has been made, and I don't think it could be more clear at this point that this government is more concerned with the stakeholders than it is with Yukoners.

I say this because there has been no challenge from this side about the work that staff have done. We appreciated the work they did in years previous, we appreciate the work they do now, and we appreciate the work that they will be doing in the future. But it doesn't change the fact that we've been told multiple times already that the decision has been made. What's not clear right now is why — when the minister spoke, there was no mention as to why he couldn't tell Yukoners. I'm unclear if it's that there are conversations happening in Ottawa about funding and that it would be guaranteed and then we'll talk about it, or if there were other reasons.

As it stands right now, we're still short on details as to why, right now, we still don't know where it's going to go. There's scuttlebutt all over the place.

The other part I'm standing by is that we're going to release this information soon, in the near future, weeks from now, months from now — whenever it's going to be. I'm still curious about where it's going to go.

I look forward to being informed as to where the diverse fibre optic line is going to go. I'm curious as to what that diversity and that fibre optic line is, but you can learn new things along the way.

It comes down to the fact that we have heard the assertions of both the minister and the Premier that the decision has been made. What we don't have is the location, which is really what we want to know.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Agree.

**Mr. Gallina:** Agree.

**Mr. Adel:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Mr. Hutton:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

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

*Motion No. 252, as amended, agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Hutton):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

### **Bill No. 206: *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

#### **Department of Community Services**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I would just like to welcome Deputy Minister Paul Moore and the assistant deputy minister of Protective Services, Dennis Berry, to the Legislature. It is a pleasure to have them here from the department.

Rather than taking time for me to do introductory remarks about the budget, what I'm going to do is just sit down to try

to provide an opportunity for the members opposite to pose questions, if they wish, and then maybe we can go into question and answer, just noticing the time. I will provide that opportunity and then I will find some other opportunity to put some remarks on the record.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would like to thank the minister and officials. I welcome them both here this afternoon. I would just begin by asking a couple of questions in this area. I am going to start with a concern that has come up related to other jurisdictions that seems relevant here in the Yukon, which is the issue of forest fire suppression in national parks and what happens in a situation if there is a fire, who is responsible for fighting it and whether that is something that — what the process would involve and what federal involvement there might be in the situation of Kluane National Park.

I bring that forward on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Kluane, who had raised that specific concern. I would appreciate a response to that.

In a related area, as the minister and officials are probably aware, there was recently a speaker here in Whitehorse talking about the dangers of wildfire within municipal areas and — although I was not able to attend that — specifically speaking to some of the problems that occurred in Fort McMurray.

I know there is the long-standing FireSmart program, and the Department of Community Services has run emergency preparedness exercises related to this very possibility. But, in light of the concern being raised recently — I know it is on the mind of a number of my constituents and others — I would just provide the minister an opportunity to talk about what the government is currently doing in that area — if there are plans for any additional steps, whether it be through the expansion of the FireSmart program or increased efforts to encourage people to take measures around their own homes to reduce the fire and fuel-load risk; whether there are any plans to do more within the department's own resources or along with other partners to take initial steps in this area to improve public safety and what that might entail; last but not least, in a similar vein, as officials will recall back however many years ago — the time is blurring together this afternoon. When the Fort McMurray fire occurred, in the wake of that, I had heard from constituents who suggested that government take a look at helping people be better prepared for a situation like that in terms of how to respond to a wildfire in a community or in a heavily populated agricultural or rural residential area.

The person who raised it with me identified the fact that, while government provides training for wildland fire teams and government also provides training for rural firefighters, at the moment there isn't really training available for members of the general public.

The suggestion that came up — and I know there are some challenges around actually executing this into action. The concern was that, if we were to have a significant fire event, the normal rules don't apply. People are in a situation where they are pressed into service as volunteers either officially or unofficially, trying to deal with a wildfire problem within their municipality or rural area, but might be doing so without any training whatsoever in the risks around

the speed at which wildfires can move, and even what they should be doing, could be doing and also things that they definitely should not be doing.

In that regard, the suggestion was that perhaps government, either itself or working with others, could come up with some sort of basic education available to interested members of the public to prepare them for such a situation, so that we would not end up with — in the event of a wildfire — again the normal rules of only trained personnel being involved being suspended out of pure necessity, and people who are trying to respond to protect their farms, placer mines, houses — whatever the case may be — to avoid a situation where they are acting without knowledge of what they should be doing in that situation.

I have put a few questions out there. I will just wrap up that and look forward to a response from the minister regarding that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** As usual, I will do my best to try to respond to all of the questions, and watch the clock as well. If I do not get to all of the responses, I will follow up again once we rise again with the department in Committee of the Whole.

First of all, with respect to the first question, which was about forest fire suppression and it happening in our national parks, the wildland fire crews, or the folks who would take the lead — we work with Parks, and they have some resources and services that they bring to it. Then we would also work through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, which coordinates other resources — even nationally and internationally — to bring those resources to bear.

We are doing many things when we are working to address wildfire here in the territory and how we develop our emergency response plans. I will give a brief answer, and then I will look to fill that answer out for the members opposite.

There are several things that we should talk about, but the important thing to say is that Wildland Fire Management protects lives and the property in our communities, and so it is very important that we work on a continuous improvement process with both our wildland fire crews, but also our emergency measures operations, and how we deal in both training up for incidents and how we inform the public.

I will note that, just recently, the team was working to get push notifications out on our cell service, and someone came up to me a couple of days ago and let me know that there had been a trial push notifications that went out, so that work is ongoing.

We have offered, for example, to brief even the media to come up to the shop up the hill to help them walk through how that works.

With that, Mr. Chair, I apologize that we didn't have more time today. I look forward to answering further, but I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Streicker that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### **Chair's report**

**Mr. Hutton:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

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

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

### **The following legislative returns were tabled March 14, 2018:**

34-2-106

Response to oral question from Mr. Kent re: school replacement (McPhee)

34-2-107

Response to oral question from Ms. White re: affordable housing (Pillai)