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HANSARD

Tuesday, April 10, 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

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

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

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New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
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Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Tuesday, April 10, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Denim Day

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing today, April 10, as the second annual Denim Day here in Yukon. Today marks the end of a month-long campaign organized by the Yukon Hospital Foundation that raises money to support the Yukoners cancer care fund.

Since 2014, this fund has helped more than 140 Yukoners who are fighting cancer. It helps cancer patients and their families cover some of the out-of-pocket costs that can be incurred while receiving cancer treatment. The \$1,000 grant can also be used for daycare, rent or mortgage that must be paid, no matter if one is fighting cancer.

Throughout the campaign, Yukoners are encouraged to purchase and wear a \$5 Denim Day pin to show their support for the cancer care fund. On April 10, we are encouraged to wear denim to work to further show our support. While we don't usually wear denim in the Legislative Assembly, some of us are today, and we are recognizing that it is to show support for all cancer care patients and recognize that it is very important for all of us to become educated and aware.

As I said last year at this time, cancer touches all of us. It has touched everyone in this Assembly in some way. In Canada, cancer is responsible for 30 percent of all deaths. In 2016, it was estimated that more than 202,000 Canadians were diagnosed with cancer, and 140 of those were in Yukon.

Less than a year ago, our government released the report called *Cancer Mortality Trends, 1999-2013*. This report is the first comprehensive analysis of cancer mortality in the Yukon. It tells us that cancer is the leading cause of death. One in three deaths is cancer-related. This is really important to me, because right now, I have three relatives who are in Vancouver — an aunt and two cousins — being treated for cancer.

Last year, in my small community of Old Crow, the statistics for a small population of 300 were really significant because we had three deaths in my community last year alone from cancer. It affects all of us; it affects us in this Legislative Assembly very dearly and personally. The report is a way for us to continue to move forward with a coordinated approach that includes close collaboration with the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations.

This report tells us that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and that two major risk factors for lung cancer

are tobacco and exposure to radon. That is why we need to continue to work with all Yukoners to look at elimination of radon and the effects of radon in our homes and in our care facilities. For this reason, we continue to provide Yukoners with a range of smoking cessation programs and initiatives and to educate people about the dangers of smoking.

To protect our children, we are making radon testing and mitigation a licensing requirement for daycares and day homes, which will make us the first jurisdiction in Canada to have this requirement. I am very pleased about that.

Today, I will close by thanking all Yukoners who supported Denim Day again this year. I would like to thank everyone at Canadian Tire, Angelina's Toy Boutique, Climate Clothing, Seasons Galleria, 3 Beans Natural Foods and the Yukon College bookstore for selling buttons — if you are in those vicinities, please extend your appreciation as well — and, last but not least, the Yukon Hospital Foundation for its continued work to enhance the quality of health care for Yukoners. I would like to thank all the members of the Hospital Corporation and, as well, the Hospital Foundation for your presence today. Mahsi'.

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to Denim Day and the Yukoners cancer care fund. The Yukoners cancer care fund just turned five years old and we have discovered that, for such a young fund, it is very active and very much needed.

The idea was to help families who have cancer in their homes with a gift from other Yukoners. A small group of volunteers met, organized and approached the Yukon Hospital Foundation, which agreed to take our fund under its umbrella. The goal is to assist with expenses when cancer hits a family. Whether the gift of \$1,000 was used for parking, food or bills, it is meant to alleviate a bit of stress. As was mentioned, the bills don't stop coming when one gets ill, and not everyone has the luxury of company insurance or savings to deal with extras that will surely come their way. Even non-insured benefits don't cover all medications and patients might have to choose not to take their medication.

To date, the fund has helped over 150 families and, at \$1,000 per gift, it has us helping Yukoners to the tune of \$150,000 in the past four years. It might not seem like much, but we have heard testimony that it has been so appreciated — heartfelt stories that people have been willing to share, saying that they did not feel so alone and the money did help.

Denim Day is a simple idea: buy a pin for \$5 and support those who have cancer. Picking a day, such as we did — April 10 — allows us to focus on a goal. With this Denim Day campaign, that goal was \$12,000, but we are very pleased to say that we have raised approximately \$7,000 — every dollar helps. So watch for our campaign next year because each year we do a new pin. Make sure that you get involved, if you are a collector, because there will be a new design to add to your collection.

A huge thank you goes out to the Yukon Hospital Foundation as all of the money goes to Yukoners. Kudos go to

Karen Forward, the president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation, who puts in countless extra hours and worry getting our campaigns moving. Words are not enough to salute our poster models/survivors who put a local face to cancer: Joe Iles; Ciara Stick; Hank Karr, who could not be here today; Cathie Archbould, who, again, is away; Stuart Van Bibber; and the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Thank you very much for all of your support.

Not only was Cathie a poster model, she donated her photographic skills and studio to capture the beautiful images used for the campaign. Thank you. She is so awesome. Thank you to the amazing folks who volunteered to sell the pins at Canadian Tire and the Canada Games Centre on Saturdays for the past month. Thanks also to Canadian Tire for donating a spot for us free of charge.

We continue to find new and innovative ways to raise funds and, with cancer numbers so high, the fund is constantly in need of refilling. We estimate that we need about \$50,000 to \$60,000 in this next year just so we are able to continue to help, at the rate we are seeing cancer diagnoses.

To anyone who would like to make a donation — even \$10 or \$20 a month will help. As Karen said, “Little by little, \$5 becomes a lot.”

I leave you with a quote from Anne Frank: “No one has ever become poor by giving.” Thank you to all who supported Denim Day 2018.

Applause

In recognition of Dawson City Music Festival

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the Member for Klondike, I am very proud to rise today to pay tribute to the Dawson City Music Festival. For four decades, the Dawson City Music Festival Association has presented an amazing weekend each summer. That’s right — this year’s festival marks the 40th anniversary, which is an impressive feat that deserves acknowledgement.

Well known across the country for its unique location, legendary hospitality and creative lineups, the festival remains rooted in the grassroots spirit and puts on some of the best concerts north of 60. I remember my very first year in Dawson City seeing the bull gang crew setting up the large tents of the weekend festival, and I wanted in. The bull gang is the group of community members who volunteer their time to do the heavy lifting and the physical aspect of setting up the main grounds of the festival. It takes a lot of teamwork — and a good truck or two — to turn a ball field into fun and safe festival grounds. I am proud to have served for many years on bull gang, starting out on dance floor construction and moving up to running the crew with my good friend Jonathan Howe. Unlike a lot of the bull gang folks, though Mr. Speaker, I do not have a tattoo to prove that I was on bull gang.

Years of volunteering are not uncommon — in fact, it is very much the lifeblood of DCMF. From the bull gang to billeting to merch to meals, transportation to tech and so much more, the festival is truly a community effort. Many teams of volunteers make all of the behind-the-scenes magic happen. I know the association is endlessly grateful for the volunteers

and their contributions. The association has a volunteer board, which is led by one trusty staff person, who is joined by an assistant in the summer. Beyond that, the festival is made possible by countless, passionate, dedicated volunteers. DCMF also has greatly appreciated sponsors, partners and public funders that help make the music and the magic happen every summer.

I would like to make a note to the associative partners — partners with Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, which serves as a free venue accessible to everyone on the banks of the Yukon River. This venue has a special place in my heart, as I have served as the sound technician with Carol Coote as my stage manager for many, many years.

The festival isn’t just enjoyed by locals, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware. Visitors from many locations join Dawsonites to enjoy the music under the midnight sun.

Of course, in addition to music, visitors also engage with local people and businesses over the weekend. Indeed, the festival is a boon to the Yukon’s and Dawson City’s economy.

DCMF has brought incredible musicians north and it is a festival with a reputation of being one of a kind, as far as artist-centred experiences, that make it a desirable booking for many bands across the country and internationally as well. The festival presents an eclectic lineup each year including well-known names and newcomers as well just starting to make waves in the music scene. It also serves as a launching pad for many Yukon musicians who get the opportunity to work with more established artists throughout the weekend in collaborative workshops, which always prove to be very popular. A highlight for me, personally, as a musician, was getting the opportunity to be in a band that opened up for the Constantines at the “Pit” in Dawson. I’ll never forget that experience, brought to you by Dawson City Music Festival.

It’s about more than just a summer festival. The association works year-round to develop and to support the education and the aesthetic qualities of the performing arts in Yukon. They do this by supporting and promoting musicians in the territory and, in particular, in Dawson City. Throughout the year, the association presents a number of other activities, including the songwriter-in-residence program, a concert series, fundraising events, the RPM challenge and the Dawson pop community choir.

I would like to especially acknowledge the addition of Yukon Girls Rock Camp, which provides amazing learning experiences for youth, who identify as female or gender non-conforming. Girls Rock Camp joined the impressive Dawson City Music Festival roster for activities a few years ago and has grown at lightning speed. In a weekend leading up to the festival, participants learn to play instruments, they form bands, they compose original songs — and if that wasn’t enough to keep them busy, they also learn about a wealth of topics surrounding social justice. The camp culminates in a performance at the Dawson City Music Festival main stage, which sees a large and enthusiastic crowd of festival-goers.

The first music festival took place in 1979. It started with a whole bunch of friends in West Dawson joining together in a weekend jam session, followed by a dance at Diamond

Tooth Gertie's. It grew to include a much larger group of friends in the ball field and multiple venues around town.

Dawson City Music Festival is the highlight of the summer for many Yukoners and visitors alike, and this year's 40th anniversary festival promises to delight and entertain as always. The Government of Yukon is a proud supporter of DCMF, providing annual funding through the arts operating funding from the Department of Tourism and Culture. I encourage everyone to purchase their festival passes at www.dcmf.com to secure your spot at the music festival this summer.

In closing, the festival has evolved over its 40-year history but, just like the false-front build of the buildings and the unpaved streets in Dawson, some things remain perfectly the same. After all, Dawson City Music Festival is still, as *The Georgia Straight* put it, "Canada's tiny, perfect Festival".

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the Dawson City Music Festival — 40 years of bringing people together by their shared love of music. This year, the festival takes place from July 20 to 22. It has come a long way since its humble beginnings, when a small group of local musicians — and maybe a headliner or two — played in the field for friends, family and visitors.

Today, bands and musicians hope for a chance at hitting one of the spots to play on Dawson's many stages and venues. The chosen musicians perform for patrons who head north for not only the music, but the culinary and craft vendors who descend upon Dawson as well. Workshops and kids' programming ensure something is always going on for the whole family. It is a well-rounded weekend.

Organizers select performers who will cover the musical taste of every festival-goer — wildly diverse music, from rock, blues, country, bluegrass to every genre you can name. Of course, our Yukon talent and First Nation artists are part of the successful festival. Artists are selected from around the globe. Volunteers hit the festival in droves as well — many local, but many who travel just to be part of the festival.

Forty years is an incredible milestone for the music festival. One highlight that I remember was in the 25th year. The festival organized a Yukon River trip for their Outside entertainers, from Whitehorse to Dawson City. Karen Dubois and her amazing crew made an overnight stop at our campground, Minto Resort, and we had an evening that blew us away. We provided a steak dinner; then their guitars came out — and songs and harmony around a campfire. How good was that?

Some of the alumni of the Dawson City Music Festival are: Buffy Sainte-Marie, Bruce Cockburn, Blue Rodeo, Jane Siberry, Natalie MacMaster, The Jerry Cans, as well as our own George McConkey, Boyd Benjamin, Kevin Barr and so many others.

The growth that has taken place over 40 years to make Dawson City's the best little music festival in Canada is a testament to a lot of hard work — the festival organizers,

volunteers, past talents, local businesses, supporters and festival-goers who all have a true love for music.

I would like to thank all who had a hand in creating and nurturing the festival, and I give special thanks to the Dawson City Music Festival Association and their board of directors. Kudos to Andrea Vincent, the current executive director for the Dawson City Music Festival, who hails from the east coast, where she organized festivals for seven years in St. John's, Newfoundland, before coming north. Her passion and drive is heading into its second festival and, being such a huge milestone this year, it is guaranteed to be a good one. I am sure anyone attending this year will be delighted and it will be another outstanding showcase of Yukon hospitality, and, hopefully, sunshine abounds.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: As Leader of the NDP, I'm happy to join in paying tribute to the 40th anniversary of the Dawson City Music Festival. The question is where to start.

As we look forward to the 40th anniversary of the Dawson City Music Festival this July, it is difficult not to be flooded by memories of so many magic moments at what is really one of Canada's premier musical events, an event staged by an army of volunteers from Dawson City itself and from across Yukon and beyond.

The Dawson City Musical Festival is many things to many people. For my family and for me, it has always been about the generosity of spirit of the community of Dawson City. Having attended musical festivals across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, one gains an appreciation for how very special Dawson is. It has become almost trite to suggest that an event is world-class, but I believe that DCMF has earned it.

The volunteer board that has been at the core of the DCMF's success has repeatedly delivered on honouring volunteerism as a core value of the festival. Over the years, it has been amazing to watch and to occasionally join in and help out, knowing that the sound man in the main tent who delivers spectacular clarity of music is, in his day job, a senior public servant, or the sound technician at the outdoor venue in front of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in cultural centre had a day job as a teacher and maybe now has one as a Premier, or the server in the beer garden is Yukon's MP, or the head of security is, by day, a park ranger and a volunteer fire chief — to name a few.

DCMF is also renowned for its hospitality. Community members have become well known for their culinary contributions to keeping the visiting musicians so well fed and happy.

When my family and I moved back to the Yukon in the late 1980s, the DCMF became the highlight of each summer. It was an annual pilgrimage, often with families and friends from across Canada in tow. The sense of community and inclusivity created an atmosphere that allowed parents to enjoy the big tent, knowing that their kids were safely playing in the adjacent playground.

One year we floated down the river with three little girls who hatched a scheme on the raft to set up a booth at the

festival to braid hair, and so they did. It was that kind of place. Kids could wander about and see an unknown band called the Barenaked Ladies playing on the lawn in front of the seniors residence or see their favourite Raffi or Fred Penner up close and personal.

DCMF is also famous for presenting Canadian artists shortly before they develop into household names. When I think of some of the festival alumni we saw over the years, I am amazed at how many have gone on to receive the highest national and international accolades.

It's the unique nature of the venues that comes to mind most strongly — the sweltering hot upper floor of St. Mary's Church for a scorching concert by Blackie and the Rodeo Kings. The heat in that church was so intense that, when my daughter stood, the fabric of her skirt separated and left an imprint of her then-little bum on the church pew. The next morning, coming back to that venue for a stirring gospel concert, that blue imprint was still there. There was the surreal experience of watching Buffy Sainte-Marie from a box in the Palace GrandTheatre. The intimacy of the concerts at St. Paul's Anglican Church where one might see Basia Bulot, Jane Siberry, or Ndidi Onukwulu, or a musician from the Rheostatics, because eclecticism is a hallmark of the Dawson City Music Festival — or sitting in the sun by the riverfront gazebo, watching a young guy improbably called Old Man Luedecke. One cannot forget the unforgettable thrill of wandering into the Pit after the main tent and other venues had closed down to see a stray member of a well-known group, or a whole group, joining the band.

Mr. Speaker, the DCMF has celebrated its milestones in many ways. As the MLA for Porter Creek North mentioned, the anniversary boat tour with musicians like Bill Bourne and Lennie Gallant floating down the Yukon River and performing at Minto en route — it was so cool to see them there and so cool to join them later in Dawson.

Once started, the flood of great memories that are the Dawson City Music Festival is difficult to staunch. The electric atmosphere in the big tent when Bruce Cockburn performed, or Fred Eaglesmith rocked the joint. DCMF has excelled at featuring both big- and no-names and introducing as-yet unknowns alongside Yukon musicians. It is a key element of the magic at the festival.

The Dawson City Music Festival has grown and evolved over the past 40 years, which is why it has the enduring power to pull people back, year after year, and entice those who have yet to experience the festival under the midnight dome to follow the lead of so many who celebrate this annual gathering of Yukon northern Canadian and international musicians. We salute the volunteers, some of whom have been doing this for the whole 40 years, and we thank the citizens of Dawson City and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, who so graciously and exuberantly welcome us to Dawson City. We look forward to next July.

Applause

Speaker: Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the members opposite for their excellent tributes. I am now on the memory lane trip as well.

I would like to start by recognizing our MP, Larry Bagnell. Why is he here today? Well, I cannot remember a music festival where Larry has not volunteered in some capacity, whether in the hospitality lounge or working with us at tech from midnight. I don't know if you know this or not, Mr. Speaker, but every Sunday, we have to take every drum, guitar, light, amp — you name it — off that stage and put them into a transport truck, and then off it goes. Larry is there every year helping out the techies with that.

Also in the gallery today we have Carol Coote, stage manager and part of the tech crew, who I have the privilege of working with every year at the cultural centre in Dawson City. Also with her is Brian Farrell. He was a stage manager with the tech crew on the main stage for years, and still is. We also have Steve Philp, who was a sound technician for many years — he is here with his wife Marie. Thank you for joining us today.

We have John Bailey as well, who is a former tech director for the Dawson City Music Festival, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention my executive assistant Emily Farrell. For years, she was stage manager at the Palace Grand and also a producer of the music festival as well. Thank you for all being here today.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I have a group who I would like to introduce. I did mention several names in my tribute, but I would first like to ask them to stand as I say their names — Karen Forward, who is the president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation; Jason Bilsky, CEO of Yukon Hospital Corporation; Ciara Stick, one of our model survivors — thank you, Ciara; Joe Whilles — thank you, Joe; Stuart Van Bibber — thanks, Stuart; the Minister of Tourism and Culture — even though she is not in the gallery, she has to be recognized as one of my models; Arjay Hill, who is a new resident of Yukon and a volunteer extraordinaire — thank you, Arjay; and Rebecca Fenton. Thank you very much for all you do.

I would also like to introduce David Laxton, a former Speaker, who has supported Denim Day.

Philip Fitzgerald — how did I forget you? Thank you.

Applause

Hon. Ms. Frost: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to acknowledge the really great work of the Yukon Hospital Foundation. I know how hard you work and I know how dedicated you are to the cause. I would like to acknowledge Jason Bilsky, CEO of the Hospital Corporation, for his dedication, as well as Philip Fitzgerald's work as a chair. I have seen you at the festivals, working so hard — and others who are here from the corporation.

I wanted to just take this time to acknowledge a very dear friend to my family and my community, Joe Whilles. I just want to honour you today and recognize your presence here. I

want you to know how much we appreciate you and to acknowledge your contribution as well to Yukon and to the community.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling the Yukon Judicial Council's annual report for 2017, which is tabled pursuant to section 37(1) of the *Territorial Court Act*.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling today a legislative return in response to questions regarding the Watson Lake library.

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

Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 2 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 2 of the Second Session of the 34th Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Kluane on April 9, 2018.

The petition presented by the Member for Kluane meets the requirements as to form of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 2 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, "The Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been deemed read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation."

Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 2 shall be provided on or before April 23, 2018.

Are there any further petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to develop regulations concerning the use of smoking vapourizers, including:

- (1) sale and supply to minors;
- (2) sales where tobacco sales are banned;
- (3) vaping where smoking is banned;
- (4) vaping in indoor public spaces and workplaces; and
- (5) authority to ban prescribed flavours.

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

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Prior to proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will make a statement regarding events that occurred in Question Period last Thursday, April 5, 2018.

During last Thursday's Question Period, in response to a question from the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Government House Leader prefaced her response with the following: "I appreciate that it is not always absolutely necessary to tell the truth in this Legislative Assembly, but I at least hope that we aim to do so."

In fact, it is necessary for members to tell the truth during our proceedings. Members may have different understandings of what constitutes the truth in different circumstances; however, it is expected that members will tell the truth as they know it. Of equal importance is that the House will accept that members are telling the truth as they know it.

In this vein, annotation 494 of the sixth edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms* says: "It has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted. It is not unparliamentary to temperately criticize statements made by members as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident."

Later in Question Period, the Leader of the Official Opposition said of the Minister of Highways and Public Works: "We know that this minister has a history of issuing press releases that misrepresent the facts..."

As mentioned, it is not out of order for one member to question the factual basis of statements made or press releases issued by other members. However, to suggest that a member "has a history of issuing press releases that misrepresent the facts" approaches questioning the character of the member rather than disputing the factual basis of what the members have written or said.

The Chair will, therefore, draw the attention of members to specific rule 8 of the Guidelines for Oral Question Period, which says, "A question must adhere to the proprieties of the House in that it must not contain inferences, impute motives or cast aspersions upon persons within the House or out of it." This principle also applies to responses to questions.

Members must remember that they cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. Therefore, musing about the truthfulness of statements made by a member, even without referring directly to that member, can still be disorderly.

The Chair will conclude his remarks by reminding members of this fact: The role of the Chair is not to police a specific list of words or phrases; the role of the Chair is to maintain order during the proceedings. As such, the Chair will exercise this authority when it is needed, even if the words that give rise to the disorder have been used in the past

without intervention or without points of order having been raised.

The Chair thanks all members for their attention.

We will now proceed to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Internet connectivity

Mr. Hassard: Mr. Speaker, regarding the diverse fibre optic link, which is referenced in this year's budget and is, in fact, given a line item of \$11.8 million, we know that the government has made the decision on which route to go with. On March 6 the Premier told the media, and I quote: "We're very excited to be announcing further details on this in very close due time."

That was a month ago. Can the Premier now tell us on which route this \$11.8 million identified in the budget will be spent?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: What a great opportunity to touch on the fact that we are moving forward on this long-awaited project. We will have an opportunity to have some further discussion concerning some of the details of our economic development budget this year, but at this time part of our challenge has been the fact that we have a number of governments involved in this particular project. Through these bilateral discussions there are certain protocols that need to be followed.

We are very excited about the fact that we are going to be able to deliver redundancy to the territory. I think that is very important to business and to all Yukoners and it is something that we have campaigned on. As we move through — I apologize to the House that we are not ready — nobody wants to make this announcement more than our government, but at this particular time, we are respecting the other parties and moving in a disciplined manner to put a very important project into place here in Yukon.

Mr. Hassard: It is interesting that the minister chooses to use the words "we are moving forward with this long-awaited project," yet we don't appear to be moving forward.

The Premier is asking all MLAs in this Legislature to vote on this budget, so we certainly are hoping that he would at least be able to tell us what the money in this budget is being spent on.

The Premier has also told media he guarantees work will be done on this project this summer, but we have not heard of a route being selected. We haven't seen a YESAA application on any diverse fibre route and we haven't seen any tenders on this seasonally dependent work as well.

I'm wondering if the Premier still stands by his guarantee that the work will start this summer — and when will the government submit the YESAA application?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I appreciate the question and no one better to ask the question than the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. He certainly held this file for a number of years and communicated to the public at different times exactly where this was and committed to this project openly to all Yukoners.

Some of the challenges though — there wasn't as much work as we thought done at the time of taking on this

responsibility. Certainly there was a project. That project was, I think, at that time, a project that was to be owned by a third party. The price that was identified — much more work had to be done. That price is now actually — taking on this role, I found out that price was actually double the price that Yukoners were told, so not \$40 million, but almost \$80 million. We felt as a government that it was important to look at ownership of this line and to really ground truth both the southern and northern routes and to do it in a very accountable manner to get the best possible information. I don't think it's "interesting".

Moving forward — there is a tremendous amount of work. I will take this opportunity to thank the staff at Economic Development who have taken their time to appropriately look into all the options. I really want to thank them for their disciplined approach to this project. I look forward to speaking about this much more. There is a lot of work that can be done this summer because, out of the gates, we are going to have to have a lot of discussions with stakeholders.

Mr. Hassard: In the budget briefing with officials, we were told that the total amount of money earmarked for this project was \$11.8 million in year 1, \$35.4 million in year 2 and \$31.5 million in year 3 — so a total of \$78.7 million. Can the Premier or the minister confirm that the government expects to complete construction of this second fibre optic link within the next three years?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Once again, I would like to thank the officials, not only of Economic Development, but also at Highways and Public Works. I was remiss not to thank them for the great work they have done. I have great respect and confidence in the ability of those officials who, as it was just identified by the member opposite, have rolled out a multi-phased three-year project management approach to this. The belief is that the project can certainly be accomplished within that time frame.

Within these discussions, sometimes there can be delays in ensuring we meet the guidelines, principles and values of any third parties that you negotiate with. We never want to take for granted negotiations and conversations that are yet to happen, but certainly we feel that this is a project that Yukoners want to see. We're excited about delivering it, and the time frame that has been identified seems like a very realistic time frame that we can accomplish.

There is more to come on this file, but we're really happy to be able to bring this to Yukon and ensure that we can grow our economy in a diverse way.

Question re: Infrastructure funding

Ms. Van Bibber: On March 12, I asked the Minister of Community Services about how infrastructure projects are funded in the territory. Specifically, I asked the minister if any changes were being contemplated regarding the cost-sharing of infrastructure projects involving the federal government, which have traditionally seen Canada cover 75 percent, while Yukon covers the other 25 percent.

In response, the minister highlighted three pots of funding: the clean water and waste-water fund, the small communities fund and the upcoming Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. The minister implied that the cost-sharing agreement would remain the same. However, we have obtained a document from Community Services that states that nearly \$155 million of the Investing in Canada infrastructure program — this government is expecting municipalities to pay the 25 percent. This appears to contradict the minister's comments last month, so I am wondering if he can clarify.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for the question and I will definitely clarify. What I said then and what I will say today is that the agreement with Canada is the same. It is 75 cents from the federal government and 25 cents from the Yukon.

We are having conversations with both municipalities and First Nations about the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. We have considered that roughly one-third of that funding would be money that would be allocated more directly to partners — both First Nations and municipal governments — with the notion that they can self-direct that money, based on them coming up with the 25 cents.

The information that I gave in response to the question last time — I was thinking that the member opposite was asking me about the monies that were coming from the federal government, which is exactly what I stated and what I state again here today. When it comes to how we are funding the 25 cents here internally, we are looking at options, working with our partner governments on a portion of the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan. I'm sure I will get more into it here as we do supplementaries.

Ms. Van Bibber: The document that we have obtained is pretty clear, and it really does seem to contradict what the minister told us last month when he implied that there would be no changes. It states that — and I quote: "Individual municipal and First Nation governments will contribute the 25 percent of eligible costs for all projects selected for this bucket."

Part of the reason that the previous government covered the 25 percent was because we knew that, for many infrastructure projects, the smaller communities didn't have the financial resources to cover this portion.

How will the minister ensure that our rural communities aren't left behind?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Great question. First of all, I just stated in my last response — and I hope it is clear that I am not changing anything in what I have said. This is how the money is flowing.

To get to the point — how will we make sure that our small communities will not be left behind? Two-thirds of that money — when you add the 75 percent and the 25 percent going in — will total just under \$400 million and is going around to all communities, including municipalities and First Nation communities — where we are supplying the 25 percent.

We expect that there is a great deal of money that is going to all of our communities. I am excited about that. This year, we have projects going from Burwash Landing to Watson Lake, from Old Crow down to Whitehorse. We are investing in all communities. I will continue to respond to the member opposite about how we are supporting all communities.

Ms. Van Bibber: It appears that designing the fund to be distributed this way does favour the city over rural Yukon. Will the government make exceptions to ensure that this money is equally distributed throughout all communities and not just to Whitehorse?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The money is going to be distributed across the territory. This is an opportunity for our communities. The volume of spending that we're talking about here in the territory — there is additional money that we have looked at that we are not sure, with our debt cap, that we will get at. So what we are doing is we're making this money available to our communities. We will work with all communities to make sure that they have access to these funds. That is part of the negotiation that we have with the federal government. We will certainly work with them to ensure that.

It is not going to Whitehorse. The notion is that it will roughly match the same amount of money that exists under the gas tax. Of course, with the gas tax, it is distributed to all municipalities, all First Nations and all communities. We expect exactly the same with this.

As I said, we're investing across the territory — from the Ross River suspension bridge to the Carcross Nares River bridge, from the Carmacks arena to the F.H. Collins track and field. We are investing in all our communities.

Question re: Political party fundraising

Ms. Hanson: Yesterday, I asked the Premier about last December's fundraiser organized by the Yukon Liberal Party, held in a private suite at the Rogers Arena. The *National Post* had reported that the Premier had said that the Liberals don't hold out-of-territory fundraisers. The Premier indicated that he wouldn't comment on an article without having read it. Hopefully, he has now had time to read it.

Can the Premier explain why he told the *National Post* that his party does not hold out-of-territory fundraisers when he did just that four months ago?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thanks to the member opposite for the opportunity to speak clearly to this. I still have not read the *National Post* article, but I will be able to clarify things a bit here.

On October 18, 2017, I did an interview with the *National Post* where we did discuss out-of-territory fundraising. Now, at that time, the Yukon Liberal Party did not take part in any out-of-territory fundraising and we shared that information with the reporter. Now, following that interview, we did have a fundraiser in Vancouver in December. I appreciate that the story was only published recently, but we cannot control when newspapers publish these articles.

The one main point of distinction that I was trying to make with the *National Post* and that I will make here, as

well, is that, instead of inserting fundraising into a government-funded work trip — as members of the Yukon Party did — the Yukon Liberal Party financed its own fundraiser independently. It's a normal practice for political parties to fundraise and we will continue to do so in an ethical manner.

Ms. Hanson: That's interesting. The fact that corporations were given special access to the Premier and Deputy Premier in a private suite at the Rogers Arena may be shocking to some, but what is even more disturbing is the Premier's admission that his travel down to a Liberal Party fundraiser in Vancouver was paid for by the Yukon government. Yesterday, the Premier said — and I quote: "... we paid out of Yukon Liberal Party caucus funds to go down on a separate event..."

Caucus funds are funds of the Legislative Assembly. All caucuses receive funds to pay staff to do research and outreach for MLAs, but certainly not for partisan fundraising events. The Premier has been in the House long enough to know this, yet he went down to Vancouver for a private fundraiser and his way was paid with a Yukon government cheque.

Will the Premier reimburse the Legislative Assembly for the cost of travelling to his fundraiser at the Rogers Arena?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will have to take a look at the Blues. If I said "caucus", I did not mean caucus. To clarify, the money that we paid to go down to a fundraiser for the Yukon Liberal Party was paid for by the Yukon Liberal Party, and if I did say "caucus" in the Legislative Assembly, I am truly apologetic.

I will check the Blues to see that. It was not my intent to mislead. Again, that money was paid for by the Yukon Liberal Party, not by the caucus, not by the taxpayers.

If we are heading down to Roundup, for example, none of our meals, plane tickets or hotels should be paid by the taxpayer. If we then, at that time, decide to do a fundraiser for our political party — what we did was — outside of any of those conferences, we went down and invited members of the mining community and business community to a fundraising event, which is normal for political parties to do. Our political party paid for that; absolutely.

Ms. Hanson: I asked another question yesterday that the Premier somehow forgot to answer, so I will ask it again: Who paid for the private suite at Rogers Arena? Was it the Liberal Party or was it a corporate donation?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I don't have that information at my fingertips, as the binders in front of me are from the government. What I will do is I will endeavour to get back to the member opposite on that.

Question re: Canada housing benefit

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday, the minister responsible for housing was in Toronto for a meeting with her federal and provincial colleagues. The communiqué that the minister signed states that the Yukon now has an opportunity to co-develop, cost match and deliver a Canada housing benefit based on a Yukon context. The communiqué goes on to state

that it will protect against inflationary impacts of housing costs.

Can the minister update us on this Canada housing benefit? Will it be given to individual Yukoners, and how will it protect against inflation?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The meeting of the ministers and Minister Duclos that took place yesterday — I'm happy to report back to the Legislative Assembly and to Yukoners that we now have a multilateral framework agreement that was pending. None of the jurisdictions across the country have signed off on their bilateral agreements, pending the decision and the recommendations that all jurisdictions had agreed to, and that was signed off on yesterday. We all committed to doing that; we will now go into bilateral negotiations.

If members opposite would like more detailed information, you can refer to the federal minister's budget announcement that details, at great length, the resources that are made available — significant resources for the north. We will get into our bilateral negotiations quickly now that we have the framework agreement. We will then work out the fine details of the funding allocation and what comes to the Yukon.

What I can report on is that we have secured, in our base, \$24 million for the next 10 years — base funding that doesn't have strings attached to it. Those are flexible resources for Yukoners.

Ms. Van Bibber: The communiqué that the minister signed also states that Yukon, in a bilateral agreement with the federal government, will develop mutually agreed-upon targets for increasing the supply of social housing.

What are the Yukon's targets?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The targets have been defined with our partners.

We have a homelessness strategy that good Yukoners and our NGO groups and our partners in the community have drafted and participated in. We will continue to review and analyze that and identify key priorities.

We have the housing action plan. The housing action plan defines processes. We're now pleased to look at implementing aspects of that plan. We have resources set aside in this budget. The objective was to align it with federal resources so that we can start looking at service delivery for Yukoners — affordable housing for Yukoners and affordable housing in rural Yukon.

As well, I'm happy to note that we have created some new funding initiatives here in Yukon recently to do just that. That is to address housing pressures in rural Yukon. We have done some really great work already with the Da Daghay Development Corporation. We have a list of new housing opportunities that have just come online. We have worked with the Dawson development corporation and we have worked with a partner in Watson Lake. The municipal matching grant continues — the list goes on.

Ms. Van Bibber: As has already been discussed, the social and senior housing waitlist has skyrocketed under this

government and we have been asking the government to tell us how many new units they are building.

When we saw the minister sign a communiqué that referenced that there will be specific targets for the Yukon, we were hopeful the minister would share this information. We hope that we don't have to wait too much longer for the government to be in a position to make decisions and start sharing this information with Yukoners.

The communiqué also states that the territories will receive targeted funds to address their distinct needs. Can the minister let us know how much she is expecting Yukon will receive in targeted funding for our distinct needs?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be very happy to respond to the question. As the member opposite knows — and the members of the Opposition, from being in government — once you sign off on a formal agreement with the federal government, you then go into bilateral discussions to seek the resources that are required. We intend to do that very quickly here.

We also have really addressed some unique circumstances in the north. We know what those unique circumstances are, as the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin — Ross River Dena Council, for an example; First Nation housing opportunities; remoteness factors; challenges around climate change — all of the factors.

Others have participated in the exercise in their constituencies and really worked hard with their communities to identify key priorities. So the resources that have been identified in the budget and in the initiative that we just signed off on spoke about remoteness factors and spoke about the unique circumstances of the north. We have significant funding that was allocated to the north and that is what we are working toward.

What does that look like? Building in communities that don't have resources — land, for an example — significant opportunities that we really look forward to. We're very pleased about this new funding agreement that we have just signed.

Speaker: Order, please.

Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School sports field

Mr. Kent: I have some questions for the Liberal government about the new sports field at F.H. Collins. In the budget highlights that were tabled March 1, the project was estimated to cost \$6.8 million. However, on March 15, in a joint announcement with Canada, the project was up to \$8.1 million.

When I asked the Minister of Education in Committee of the Whole about the discrepancy, she said — and I quote: “I do appreciate the figure of \$6.7 million, and I have a question about that myself that I have not yet had the opportunity to ask...”

Can the minister now tell us if the budget documents or the news release was correct? If it is the news release, why did the project budget increase by \$1.4 million in just over two weeks?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can say is that the budget has not increased over a couple of weeks. The work of the department has been ongoing. We first identified this possibility last year when I discovered that there was remedial work happening to F.H. Collins' existing track and field. I went and had a look at that field. I saw that the shape of the track was incorrect and I could understand right away that it was because it was bounded by the power lines. The department began some conversations with ATCO Electric and those proved to be fruitful. I then sought to see whether we could get infrastructure funding that would allow us to leverage this project and get a much better track and field out of it.

That work has been ongoing with the Infrastructure Development branch. We have been looking at it as a whole area there, starting from the skateboard park and running all the way over to the upcoming French high school.

I will endeavour to try to get some answers about the specifics of the project, but the numbers are not new. They are due to deep work from the department and I will get further on supplementaries.

Mr. Kent: For the Minister of Community Services, the budget documents that the Premier tabled — the budget highlights — say \$6.8 million on March 1. The joint announcement with our Member of Parliament two weeks later said that the project was coming in at \$8.1 million — so that is an increase in the budget over a two-week period.

During that same debate in Committee of the Whole, the Minister of Education mentioned — and I quote: “... and it is important to note that this project will be funded over two years.”

However, when contractors look at the tender forecast, this project was to be tendered yesterday, with bids closing on May 15. It states that construction is expected to be completed on October 31 of this year.

This doesn't provide much certainty to the contracting community. So is the minister correct about this being a two-year project or is the tender forecast correct in stating that it will be completed later this year?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will go back to the department and clarify all of these things, just to make sure that the information that we're giving here is correct. I have always known this to be a two-year project, but it is a phased project. There is groundwork which will take place first. That will happen this year. Then we will complete the project in 2019.

So it always has been intended to be a two-year project from the get-go. So there is no new information there. So the part that I will just have to confirm for the Member for Copperbelt South is that the tender that went up was for this portion of the work. I will just confirm that for him.

Mr. Kent: I look forward to receiving that information from the minister.

In a June 2016 e-mail obtained by the *Yukon News* through access to information, the now-Minister of Education — at the time, the co-chair of the F.H. Collins school council — outlined — quote: “serious concerns” about the francophone high school being built next door to F.H. Collins.

She stated — and I quote: “The F.H. school community deserves a school building project that is fully completed before another phase of construction is undertaken.”

So, given the serious concerns raised by the minister during her time as school council co-chair, did the government consider other locations for the sports field? If so, which locations did they consider?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will just refer back to the answer that I gave the first time I stood up, which was that — or maybe it was the second time, pardon me — but I just said that when we identified that there was remedial work that was happening to this field, we sought to capitalize on that opportunity. So there was a chance. Over time, I have met with many sports groups that have talked about sport needs across the territory, including for sport tourism — with the Minister of Tourism and Culture — and opportunities that we might have. Here was a chance where I could take the work which was already going to be invested in this track and field and leverage it to get a track and field that would provide us with greater access to sports and that will help all our other fields.

So we began this work with the Minister of Education to talk about how we will remediate all of our other grass fields — because when you get an artificial field, one of the problems is that when we get on our fields so early in the spring, we kill them. So this gives us a chance to have a place to go and play field sports early in the season and late in the season. That will help us to get all of our fields in better shape.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice of opposition private members' business

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, April 11, 2018. It is Motion for the Production Papers No. 9, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

Mr. Kent: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, April 11, 2018. It is Motion No. 271, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2018-19*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Order, please. 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 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Yukon Development Corporation

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Chair, first I would like to invite to the Assembly the president of Yukon Development Corporation and the chief financial officer, Mr. Justin Ferbey and Mr. Blaine Anderson.

I will just start with a brief introduction. It is a fairly concise budget layout and framework. Certainly, we wanted to ensure that it came to Assembly today, and that we had an opportunity to provide any additional information or insight that was required.

Mr. Chair, honourable members and visitors, I am pleased to rise today to table Yukon Development Corporation's operation and maintenance and capital budgets for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Yukon Development Corporation is playing an active role in ensuring that Yukon residents and businesses have sufficient access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy that will support the building of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. We in Yukon are fortunate to have over 95 percent of our electricity provided by clean, renewable sources of energy. This is an excellent starting point, but we must ensure that we invest now in additional renewable generation capacity, both to support the continued growth in population and business in the territory, as well as to reduce our dependence on diesel-based generation facilities.

Our operation and maintenance budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year is \$6,125,000, and we have a capital budget of \$1.5 million. These funds are targeted at supporting community-based development of renewable energy generation and ensuring that Yukon residents and businesses continue to have affordable access to electricity across the territory.

The vehicle for encouraging community-based renewable energy generation is the innovative renewable energy initiative, which was launched at the end of the 2017-18 fiscal period. This \$1.5-million fund will support the development of renewable energy generation projects across the territory. We will be encouraging both public and private sector investment in such technologies as wind, solar, biomass and small-scale hydro generation. Not only will this program help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels, but it also allows communities to develop capacity in emerging technologies that can provide both economic and environmental benefits. In addition, it will contribute to our overall energy security by increasing the diversity of our energy generation facilities in the territory and increasing local control and management of energy generation.

We are also continuing to ensure that the rates that our electrical service consumers pay remain competitive through the interim electrical rebate and the Mayo B ratepayer support programs. Together, these programs represent an investment of over \$6 million that goes toward making sure that Yukon remains an attractive destination for people and for businesses. Together, these initiatives will work toward building healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities by providing clean, sustainable energy alternatives and maintaining a competitive cost of energy across the territory. It will provide a solid foundation for the sustainable development of all Yukon communities. We will contribute to the creation of economic opportunities in emerging and important sectors and will promote environmental stewardship, helping to ensure a bright future for the territory.

I will leave it at that — just a basic introduction — and I will move to questions.

Mr. Istchenko: I do want to welcome the president and chief financial officer here today. It's good to see industry knowledge being provided for the minister.

Before we get started, one of the first questions that I wanted to ask is — I just want the minister to please confirm a little bit the status of the IPP.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Energy, Mines and Resources is really the department that has been leading the discussions on IPP, although we certainly have input which is appropriate from Yukon Energy, ATCO, Yukon Development Corporation, and stakeholders such as that and more external stakeholders. Right now — with my Energy, Mines and Resources hat on — we are looking at the end of the calendar year as the time period.

I really hope we can move more quickly. We do seem like we are getting some efficiencies in our planning process, but that is the commitment that we have made to Yukoners to have that by Q4 of the calendar year ready to go.

Certainly with the many organizations that are seeking the clarity that is needed — of course, the Member for Kluane does a fantastic job representing his constituents. There is a good project there that was started by the previous government — but also, even within the Whitehorse region and some of our other communities, there are some very

significant projects. The clarity that will be needed is the IPP. Before you finish building something or get into the bulk of building a project or infrastructure, you certainly need to understand what your revenue sources are and what the magnitude is, so that's the commitment we have made to Yukoners and stakeholders.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for the question. I think the minister, when he stated the clarity needed with the IPP — it is for any project that is going to move forward in Yukon. When it comes to energy, there are a lot of options that we have for the Yukon. I guess I would like the minister just to explain: Is there anything being ruled out with the IPP, such as coal, LNG, diesel — energy opportunities to build energy?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just for individuals — my colleague had just identified to me — to ensure that people are aware, "IPP" is government-speak, but, really, it is the acronym for "independent power production".

I love having the opportunity to talk about energy and to talk about our power and energy future, but today, I think I will move a little outside that because I want to be respectful to the members and talk about some of our vision and approach. Really, the part that is not as exciting is that we kind of have three lines to talk about, but we will do our best to make three lines seem more exciting. They are three important lines and a few other additional.

The one piece I would say is that we're dealing with the 2009 energy policy, and what we've tried to do in our work now in our ministerial working group that we have within government is to ensure that the key players — Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Development Corporation, Environment, Highways and Public Works, Community Services. All of the players are at the table to define that future. What we inherited was the 2009 plan, which is intriguing because when you go back to that — the Member for Takhini-Kopper King had asked me some great questions in the fall concerning coal. It speaks to coal there. Then, of course, running in the election, we identified in our platform that we would not use LNG as a fuel source for independent power production, and that is our prerogative today. We are not budging on that. That's how we feel — that we're not going to look at having that as a potential fuel source. That could bring some challenges in the Kluane region, but right now, as we move on the projects out there, certainly that is our perspective. Nothing has changed and we're really continuing to look at the stable of potential projects that we have. I will leave it for more questions to go deeper.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member — my fellow colleague — for bringing that up — the independent power production. I know we use acronyms in here, but most Yukoners are like, "What was that?"

Anyway, we have seen some discussion of independent power production in relation to the Haeckel Hill wind energy project. Its feasibility really does depend on the independent power production and it being finalized.

I will ask a couple of questions about it, I guess. Has the corporation or the minister had any discussions with the

proponent to keep them apprised of the independent power production development, and does the minister know if the plan is still for the project to proceed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Absolutely. The key to ensuring that the multitude of projects currently in the planning stage continues to move in a successful manner is for our team to ensure that we're communicating and that we are providing as much information as we can to ensure that we can support their planning process. We absolutely have met with the proponents for the Haeckel Hill project. They are in a joint-venture relationship right now as well with Chu Niikwan Development Corporation, the Kwanlin Dün development corporation. We have learned from them, and they have learned from us in the process, about how we can feed in appropriate frameworks and models for independent power production.

Part of what is really the groundwork for all these conversations is — as you'll see in the budget — the innovative renewable energy initiative, which is the \$1.5 million that we tabled. Those dollars are dollars that we can, in turn, inject into projects such as this. We are starting to work through agreements with these groups. Our understanding is that — we'll call it the Haeckel Hill project — it is continuing to move forward, and, of course, that IPP work is so important.

That is the same with the work that is continuing to be done in Kluane country with the wind project, and, of course, the well-documented solar project in Old Crow is — and there are others I should say as well, but all of those projects move forward.

I have to say — I will commend the federal government for at least two of those projects — and projects as well in the Pelly-Nisutlin region. We have seen really significant cash injections from the federal government here at the end of the fiscal period — at Q4 — and that certainly has moved those projects along. We are committed, not only with our expertise, but we are committed financially to support these projects. We're now trying to identify exactly what the needs and the gaps are, taking into consideration some of the increased expenditures that we have seen into these projects.

Our understanding is that Haeckel Hill, Kluane and Old Crow — projects such as them — all continue to move forward and our obligation is to ensure that we get there.

The challenge has always been — and the members in the opposition would understand — there are certainly a couple of the members here with us today who have had the responsibility that I have right now — that, within the independent power production — and I might misspeak here, but certainly the president can inform me if I have to edit my comments.

Some of their draft work really spoke to the fact that we needed to do it. There was the need, but there were also some caps on how much, potentially, independent power — but also to the fact that we were not to negatively impact the ratepayer.

In many cases, the challenge becomes that, if you can't offset the cost of capital and you then have to go with this model and lever debt in order to build your project — you

have to go borrow money to pay for it — you then, in turn, have to have a fairly appropriate rate coming back. The reason that we do things like we have talked about today — the interim electrical rebate — is to ensure that we try to stabilize those rates. We are going down a path where we want to have consistent processes in place where we go to rate — as they would say. When I took on this role, I think we had not gone to rate in four or five years. That is always a nice thing to wake up to as well — taking on the role — where things that were being paid for now need to be rightsized. What we want to do is have a process in place — business loves certainty — that can't be affected politically. There is always going to be oversight, but every two years, per se, we are working on the framework with that — where every couple of years we are going to rate — that is good for ratepayers — but also that we have an independent power production policy that also doesn't negatively hit ratepayers — but still balancing the values that renewable energy is the right way to go.

That has been the challenge. I think that, at the end of the day, you sit down in this role, and people put policy framework — but I think for my colleagues who have been in this position, at the end of the day, it is about who is paying. Who is paying the price? Is it the ratepayer? Is it the government?

The way the policy was written, it certainly said that the government was paying. I am not going to belabour the financial framework or the financial realities of the Yukon government at this point, but certainly there are some strains. Because of those strains, it makes it even more difficult to ensure that you can have an appropriate rate because, in turn, you are going into a deeper situation of pressure financially in order to do that. We are trying to get creative. We think we have some good solutions. We think that some partnerships and leveraging other dollars that could be in place and being smart about how we build models and infrastructure models — maybe there are ways for us to reduce capital expenditures and therefore we can have a more competitive rate. Those are some of the things that we are thinking about, but certainly Energy, Mines and Resources — and I want to thank Shane Andre and their team who have committed to working through this, as well as with our ADM, Shirley Abercrombie, and Stephen Mills. That is stuff that we should all come to a good finality on this year so we can start to ensure that these projects have the right information to go forward.

Mr. Istchenko: I will definitely concur with the minister on the hard work from the department officials who work there. They did do a wonderful job.

The minister spoke a little bit about the \$1.5 million in innovative renewable energy. Some of the projects that he was explaining to me are kind of ongoing projects that Yukoners and we on this side would know about. The last question that I have is about the independent power production — there is always new technology coming out. If somebody wants to provide power for us at a cheap rate, that is a good thing. Has the minister been in any discussions with organizations, groups or development corporations for opportunities to feed the grid?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is a series of conversations and projects that we have embarked on — some early discussions. Certainly we're going to have an opportunity to further these discussions, I think, even as early as tomorrow in some debate, but we'll have an opportunity to talk about some of those.

I guess we look at it in kind of two different suites of projects. There are projects that are being driven in community by development corporations. Some of them are legacy projects from when my colleagues across the way were in government, that being the Kluane project. Coming into the role there was already basically \$1 million that was put in place for the Kluane wind project as part of the previous work and it was just really once again waiting on the IPP, and then planning could be done. We're continuing those discussions.

In the Pelly-Nisutlin region, we've had some great work that has been underway and moving. That's previous work, as well, in the sense that I think that the previous government created that conversation on the opportunity in Teslin and now the infrastructure work and stuff that we have undertaken while we have been in government supports the buildout. In that case, they're certainly on the biomass side.

I think there is going to be a tremendous amount of conversation about biomass in the Yukon over the next number of years and I have an opportunity — I was invited to speak with the Yukon Wood Products Association at their annual general meeting, which I will attend. I spoke with Myles, their executive director, this morning and have been speaking in general with our Forestry branch and will continue to work with them to look at this. There is a ton of opportunity, but the Member for Kluane also knows, and I think would concur with me, that there is a lot of feedstock — I will put it that way.

We're also in a position where we have an economy right now where people have choices. I think that when you look at the Yukon — one thing I will put on the record is that when you think about when the best time to access woodlots are, really you're looking at specific times of the year. Some of those times of the year aren't the friendliest times of the year to be out in the bush. People have choices and I think that we have to ensure that we can identify a workforce that can be in a grassroots situation and who can go out — and want to go out at minus 30 or minus 28 — and run a saw when they have an opportunity to do something else that might even pay more. I trust the work of Myles. There are a number of people who are going to go out and do that. There are a lot of people who love being in the bush and there are a lot of people who have a history of doing that type of work, whether it be in the Kluane region or southeast Yukon or other areas of Yukon.

I think we're going to get that right really because we want to ensure we have a vertical element to this industry, not just like the Northwest Territories, where we're essentially buying pellets and driving them in from Alberta, but how do we ensure that we use a chip technology here or a chip source that can provide numerous impacts to our economy, not just halfway through that cycle?

The Carcross/Tagish First Nation Montana wind project is another one that certainly is a technology — of course, it's wind technology — and we're in a position to fund them. There is about one more year of wind data, I guess you would call it, that needs to be touched upon.

One thing that is interesting, actually, when the member opposite touched on development corporations, out of all our projects, almost every project is being led by a development corporation or in conjunction, where we have seen groups come to government and then they have come in these strategic partnerships.

Certainly that is something that we are excited about. Today, I had the opportunity this morning to speak with an individual who has done a lot of work previously with Yukon Conservation Society — has moved away from that role, but really knows a tremendous amount about energy.

We are also looking for people in the community who can come to the development corporation, whether it be from the Lake Laberge riding or from Whitehorse Centre, and groups of people can get together and say: "We believe that renewable energy is important and we would like to ground truth out our own infrastructure." Maybe a community group can bring it forward. We have seen the Yukoners Concerned group speak about some projects that were driven by community-based organizations. We are also open to that concept and we want to see many different approaches.

Not to belittle the technologies that are key — and we still have a lot of work to do, whether it be wind or really getting into bigger scale solar or even some of hydro — but these are things in Yukon that people have been aware of. Have we looked at other things? We do have some groups — there are new technologies that are out there. What we are trying to do as new technologies come our way, is either to guide those organizations toward Yukon Energy or to the Cold Climate Innovation Centre as some of them are in the research stage, so have them partner or speak with the college. There is new technology on aluminum oxide; there are new technologies on different types of pressure and there is flywheel technology. On the storage side, we are really trying to — not so much technology, but optimizing technology that is in place in the storage side. Through Energy, Mines and Resources and I believe Yukon Development Corporation support, the storage work — we have a specialist coming in just in the next couple weeks who is going to have discussions with Yukon Development Corporation, Yukon Energy, Yukon Conservation Society, Cold Climate Innovation Centre and I think Yukoners Concerned — a renowned specialist in the storage field. We are going to continue to also have those conversations.

I have to say, what we haven't done — and I think myself and my colleague, the president, have said this — what has been tough is we haven't had a good time telling this story. I might get a hard time from the Opposition on this. The team has been doing a ton of work. Geoff Woodhouse, our senior policy analyst — and before that, Blair Hogan — worked extremely hard to ensure that we have a series of things happening. The board did a great job and our chair, Joanne,

did a great job. We had to build a policy around this because if you look at the mandate and you go back to the order-in-council, it really lays out the work of the Yukon Development Corporation. We had to add a bit. We wanted to get the policy piece right and then that gives us a base and a foundation to roll out some of the dollars.

Any new technologies — to answer that question — we are willing to have a discussion, but we are putting it out to the technical specialists to ground truth it.

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

The minister mentioned — and I brought it up again — about the renewable energy initiative. Can you explain a little bit about what the initiative is and its benefits, and maybe how long that funding will be in place? I see \$1.5 million, but how long will it be in place and is it annual?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The innovative renewable energy initiative will support locally driven projects to increase renewable energy generation and lower dependence on fossil fuels in Yukon. Current proponents of renewable energy have identified funding and capacity development as key obstacles to bringing renewable energy projects to fruition. This initiative will provide support to address these areas — so, once again, identifying funding and capacity development as key areas of challenge.

The response from First Nation communities and the private sector has been very quick and positive, as six projects from across the territory have already submitted applications and four more are in the process of doing so. Current projects include solar, wind, biomass and run-of-river hydro energy generation — all of which will help to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

I believe that right now we are looking at — I think it's identified for three years right now. That is our hope. I'll have to go back and look at the budget, but this is something that we're looking at consistently rolling out over the next number of years as an initiative. Beyond that, I could be growing turnips after that. At this point, this is something we want to commit to doing and we think it's a great project.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that.

Can the minister please provide a status update on his commitment to studying the feasibility of connecting our grid to British Columbia in order to tap into site C? Can he also confirm the amount of funding being allocated to this second feasibility study — when the work will begin, I guess, and then when will it be completed?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will continue to expand the scope of today's undertaking because I think it's fair to have an opportunity to answer these. The Member for Kluane and I have not had a lot of opportunities to have discussions in his role as critic — we haven't had a lot of energy discussions in the Assembly, so I think it is appropriate to use the time.

Right now, really, what we have undertaken when it comes to the grid connection — the Member for Kluane has appropriately identified on a couple of occasions, not just the grid connection to BC, but I think early on was the Skagway conversation — maybe in the first session there was a

question — because it was identified in our platform as revisiting that.

The Skagway connection has a couple of key points that relate to it. First, it is looking at a market within the Skagway region really focused on tourism. It has been touched on here — I think the Member for Copperbelt South might have also spoken to this. But really, it is about offsetting the diesel use in the summertime because there are some real negative impacts to the community there. But that really also has to focus on projects such as the Moon Lake project, which has been talked about before.

It is a very significant project, but very capital-intensive — very expensive also — but a very intriguing project.

There have also been discussions with the Carcross/Tagish Management Corporation and our work in funding them at this point on their wind data. Part of their model is not only the ability to feed into our grid and potentially provide energy from Carcross or Montana Mountain into the grid, but also they're looking at new potential markets. That would be the first piece.

On the BC grid conversation, the Yukon Development Corporation has reached out and hired Midgard Consulting. I think I spoke to that in here or maybe in other questions. I think that the expenditure on this report is about \$75,000. It is not completed yet, but we are hoping to see the finished product pretty soon.

This has been a discussion. My colleagues, the Premier and our team have given us enough support in this role and with YDC to ground truth or to discuss this. There are a couple of key components. We knew that there was the potential opportunity for some ample source in British Columbia and that was being communicated nationally by the Premier of BC. As well, there was previous work done. The members opposite would have undertaken very significant — I think part of it was the next generation hydro. I think next generation hydro due diligence costs were about \$4 million, spent previously looking at sites that were potentials and then taking into consideration 10 sites that could be — sort of the top 10 list.

Part of that work talked about looking at the feasibility of a grid going out. Part of that was the idea of the source going south as an output, but what wasn't contemplated was taking a look at that in contrast. That is what we have wanted to do. We are not in that \$4-million range in planning. We are at \$75,000, and we think that is a good use of a high-level, desktop study. It is a challenging piece to look at, certainly when you take a look at existing infrastructure, new infrastructure and challenges. This is something about which the resource sector — people who are very committed to as much clean energy as possible — are concerned. From the standpoint of our relationship with other jurisdictions, is this something that could be helpful in our northwestern Canadian jurisdiction? Also, people who are investors in the Yukon who also have great investments in northern British Columbia are certainly commending us for having this discussion and taking a look at this.

Really, across the country, we are now seeing this as an opportunity — what can this do for Canada, I guess. The member maybe shouldn't ask me this one. I think this is exciting.

We have to take into consideration — if you look at the whole conversation that is happening in this country and globally right now, as people talk about — and we have been asked this before — where we are moving on clean energy and also why are we moving on electric capacity when it comes to transportation? My colleague, the Minister for Community Services, has done a great job and I have learned a lot. He always focuses on transportation and heating. When you talk about the transportation side, when you look at what's happening at a global level — not just in Europe, but also in North America — and you take into consideration the growth that is going to happen in grid as well as in the amount of electricity that is going to be used by each household, in Europe they're — I apologize, I can't reference the exact study but within our discussions and research — looking at a possibility of a one-third growth in household use, with the addition of an electric car. All of those things — the grid as well as the technology for the car — everything is going to be using, in many cases, copper. Well, guess what, as we all know, we have an endowment of copper that is absolutely phenomenal — so where do we play a role as well?

When you start to look at these projects having the ability — not just in Quebec and Manitoba, but in the Yukon — to do extraction of a commodity that is needed to grow a new clean tech economy and being able to fuel that extraction with clean energy seems to be something that excites people. Certainly as we see more challenges with the use of fossil, this seems like a good conversation to have. We're not looking at this in one segment, but taking into consideration the complete holistic approach to: How do we have an economy? How do we diversify? How do we have those values that really focus on the cleanest possible economy, all the while respecting our environment, our partners and the values of our partners? That's why we're looking at this.

I think it's appropriate that, as we move forward, it will be a broader conversation. It's a conversation I want to have with the Member for Kluane about this idea, but I think I have an obligation as well to be able to provide the Member for Kluane with more information than just what I have today. That is something that we can do, but we will have to conclude the research that is currently underway and certainly — just touching on that again — it is very early days on this discussion, but it is a discussion we feel is important.

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

Something that is I think near and dear to a lot of Yukoners — probably most Yukoners, when they find out what it's going to cost — has the government done any analysis or has YDC done any analysis on how the carbon tax will impact the costs of any future YDC projects? There are a lot of conversations out there and a lot of work has been done when it comes to these projects. We know it's going to make infrastructure projects more expensive in the future, but we're

just wondering if this is being looked at and if the minister has any comment on that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: From a technical perspective, there will be a great opportunity to directly ask Yukon Development Corporation when they're here in the Assembly, but I will say that I want to commend and thank Yukon Energy for how they have done their forward-looking thinking, planning and forecasting.

We had an opportunity this weekend — I want to also thank Yukon Energy, Yukon Development Corporation, the members from the Department of Finance, the members from the Executive Council Office, Aboriginal Relations and Economic Development and individuals who came together. We had an all-day session on Saturday in Carcross where it was a bit historical. We had not brought all of the players into the room, as far as I know — and historically, that seemed to be the case, altogether. There were bilateral and there were trilateral discussions, but it was really important that all of the different entities understood the priorities of the others. Within that is the good work of individuals like Andrew Hall and his CFO, who have taken it upon themselves to use a model on their future planning and costs where they have integrated — and they can clarify — and considered the cost of carbon moving forward.

What they did say on Saturday was that the cost of carbon and the pricing models that they have done took into consideration a bit of a higher price than what has been identified, but certainly that is something that the president of Yukon Energy can take into consideration. On our side, at the Yukon Development Corporation, really what we are doing on our planning is trying to be a catalyst. We are trying to provide a situation that incubates these community operations and opportunities. These are questions, of course, where we use the challenge function in our conversations with potential partners to ensure that they are taking into consideration any impacts that may come into place — then as we move through the planning stage, how a rebate system could or could not affect the work they do.

Those are some of things that will continue and I think that is a great point by the Member for Kluane.

Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the minister for that. I look forward, when we see the witnesses, to having that conversation and getting into it a little bit more.

During the election, the government promised to expand the mandate of the Yukon Development Corporation beyond energy and establish a \$10-million economic infrastructure investment fund through YDC to benefit economic diversification and innovation. I am wondering if the minister can update us on this initiative and also if the minister can answer if the Yukon Development Corporation is playing any role in this diverse fibre project.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The financial realities of the Yukon Development Corporation have restricted the flexibility in providing some of our ability to expedite some of the funds or the projects, but we remain committed to looking at that \$10-million expenditure on innovation and grow the scope of the work that the department does.

Even the IREI work is a broader scope to some extent that we were playing role in. It probably parallels some of the previous work, but I think what we have seen in the past is things such as Stewart-Keno planning or the next generation hydro planning being done and then Yukon Development Corporation playing a role within the financing, I guess you would say, of projects.

Now with this policy, it gives us an opportunity to really look at renewables and to partner up, so I think we have. Part of that work is innovative and is stimulating the economy. Even the IREI program at \$1.5 million is actually in many ways identifying and checking off those priorities, but I think we still have that commitment that we have made to grow the magnitude of the fund.

Step one for us — first, I came into the Assembly, and the members opposite have the responsibility on behalf of Yukoners to ask those tough questions. The first thing we said in year 1 was, “Where is the fund?” We committed to a fund and we needed to get the policy work right and so we did that and I commend the Chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board for getting that work done.

Now we’re in year 2, and we are flowing that \$1.5 million and certainly those dollars are now out there and they are activating these opportunities. So now we have to build on the magnitude of the investment and the allocation of the investment — continue to research and invest in innovative projects — and then we’ll be able to move on the broader part. So, yes, we see ourselves as an organization looking at that.

The second part of the question — there hasn’t been discussion per se for the Yukon Development Corporation concerning diverse fibre. I guess the only element — to be open and transparent to the Assembly — is that I happen to have a president of the Yukon Development Corporation who happens to be the Deputy Minister of Economic Development. In the other role and responsibilities that he undertakes, he would be working on fibre, but we don’t see a role for the Yukon Development Corporation, and I don’t think our board does, in the world of fibre.

Are there other opportunities? Sure. There is a sordid history that I have been educated on at Yukon Development Corporation. I think the people in the past have certainly had the best intentions to use and work with Yukon Development Corporation as an entity that could drive diversification of the economy, but because of the history, it is a sensitive subject. On anything we undertake, I want to ensure that I’m ready to be challenged — which I will be — in this Assembly. Certainly I will be re-educated on the history and the follies of the past, but we want to ensure that any lines of business that we start to undertake that are outside of that standard scope is stuff that we feel is good for Yukoners — something that we can stand behind, something that we can do in a very accountable way, something that we can ensure we do a risk assessment on and something that is a good undertaking. Looking at options — sure — you know the imagination is wide. There are lots of things we could undertake, but right now we’ll get this one right first and then we’ll look at some other opportunities.

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

With this promise to expand economic diversification and innovation through Yukon Development Corporation, I am just wondering whether it will require any changes in orders-in-council or legislation.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: That’s a potential. Depending on how you expand your line, it’s a potential.

Right now, we are looking at an order-in-council — and I bet the Member for Lake Laberge knows this — from, I think, 1993, which lays out the scope. If there is drastic change, it is pretty broad when you look at the language. It is really about reliable energy, ensuring that you have that basis, stability and foundation for industrial growth, but if we look to do something, I would confer with our policy people. Then, of course, we always follow the appropriate structure of governance in government to ensure that if we change the work that we do, we are following the right protocols. This goes back again to the Yukon Development Corporation chair and board and bouncing some of these ideas.

Our OIC today is really confined to energy, and I think that is where the member opposite was going. What is true is that the investment in energy is expanding, even in innovation. It is something we touched on with the innovation hub opening. We felt we were on the right track. We started to do our due diligence on other models of organizations and entities that are trying to drive the economy.

One thing we have seen — and it is more US-based — outside of large urban centres is one such company: Google. What they have now undertaken are hubs. The first one is being launched in Vermont. It is a former state senator who was also head of rural development for Google. It has now expanded to look at diversification of economy, but one of the main lines of business within that is the ability to invest in renewable energy. The other part of it is redundancy in fibre. That is something that became an international conversation after the bright people at (co)space had come up and the Yukon Development Corporation board had done the work. We felt that if that was going to be the new approach by Google to have a footprint in rural America and we are ahead of them on it — I think we feel we are on the right track. We also feel that one of our biggest opportunities in the Yukon, when it comes to innovation in technology and investment in economic diversification, is having our community partners and development corporations play a role in the energy sector. That is something that we are committed to doing. I know the members opposite will keep me in check, and as we look at doing new potential lines of business, we will follow the appropriate protocols with the utmost of respect.

Mr. Istchenko: Switching gears a little bit, I am curious about the current rate hearing involving the Yukon Energy Corporation. I am wondering if the minister has any numbers related to the costs associated with going through this process, as well as a bit of a time frame.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: That particular undertaking I will leave completely to our representatives from Yukon Energy Corporation. I have to say that I do not have any numbers that

I can speak to today about what their costs have been. I think that, as they enter the process, from the standpoint of a broad discussion, the Energy Corporation representatives have sort of given me an understanding of normally what that undertaking takes.

The context of that conversation was, when we began the process and they went into the rate hearing — and for those listening, that's when you undertake a process where you would then — I would use the word “rightsize” your expenses. But it's really where the Yukon Utilities Board has an opportunity to take a look at how you've spent your dollars and then what expenses would then be integrated into rates. I'm sure there are others across the way who could speak to that much more eloquently than me, but that's the bottom line. It's to rightsize on what you've spent.

Because there was such a delay in the amount of time that we were incurring cost, maybe that has affected the overall magnitude of the work that had to be undertaken in order to efficiently and appropriately go to rates. I'm not sure. I don't want to put anything out there without saying — but, certainly, I look forward to us having the opportunity and the members opposite appropriately having the opportunity to speak to any anomalies, challenges or expenses. I would say on the floor of the House today — and maybe getting myself into trouble — that I'm not aware of any anomalies to date, but I know that there is back-and-forth. Other than that, I think, right now, we're looking at about nine percent over two years — 2017 and 2018. Those are the numbers, but we can get that clarified as well when they come to the House.

Mr. Istchenko: I do thank the minister for that. We will definitely have some questions for the witnesses when they come in the House here.

I want to also get on the record today — I should have probably said this before we got started — some of the questions that I will be asking about projects or meetings that the minister has had with different organizations. I understand that a lot of this stuff can be confidential. There is a lot of money involved in a lot of these projects, so I'm not looking or asking for the minister to release anything that would be confidential. I'm just quizzing at a high level with projects, just for those who are listening and those companies that might think otherwise.

There was just a press release that we just read — that Yukon Energy and Victoria Gold signed a power purchase agreement. With respect to the project coming online to the grid, is the Yukon Development Corporation looking at spending or doing anything with respect to expanding generation capacity or covering any costs?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I'm going to go through some of my prepared comments to this, and then I will try to provide some additional information. The Yukon government provided funding to complete the permitting and engineering necessary to upgrade the transmission line between Stewart Crossing and Keno City to improve reliability and to ensure that there is sufficient transmission capacity for future growth. I want to thank the former ministers who were in charge for undertaking that work. Having that work completed and in

place is exceptional. It really provides a great starting point — as we had waited to see if we were going to have our project come to fruition.

On the front end, I will say that I will certainly leave the power purchase agreement to Yukon Energy to sort of speak to any detail on that.

We take into consideration, as we start to discuss these projects, what we feel is the responsibility of the proponent, and I think that Andrew Hall can speak to this in detail — or the chair as well.

I think that the important thing to touch on — and I think the Assembly would want to know — is: Where do we go next? This is the key. This has been a conversation that has been on hold in many ways for a long time. The good work was completed, and I think we all were excited to see the Victoria Gold team get to a point where they were ready to start moving.

I do want to congratulate them today. We received some pictures this week — 100 people on-site and moving forward on their project, and that is quite good news.

Now comes the internal discussion, looking at existing funding. Part of the questions that were asked of me previously were looking at funding that existed and that the federal government would potentially have in place. The deputy minister, the president and I were in dialogue going back to March 2017, and Chief Roberta Joseph was in attendance in those discussions with us. It was part of our introduction to the dialogue with federal ministers and with our First Nation leaders, just discussing infrastructure in general. At that point, what was talked about was the potential for a very extensive fund — it was about \$2 billion and it was a northern fund.

We waited to try to see how we would look through an application process, but all the while looking at every other fund and Mr. Ferbey did a great job of continuing to have bilateral dialogue with the officials in Ottawa. At the same time, Minister Streicker and his team were working through some of these infrastructure funds. What has happened is that we have infrastructure funding from a series of pots being allocated on an annual basis. Some of that is funding that we can have flexibility with and it could be used toward transition retrofit or transmission. At the same time, we have continued to discuss this with the government.

As the members opposite will know very well, there was a series of scenarios that could be used. I usually say that there is the LADA — and I am not going to use a Chevy or Ford because that might upset somebody by using the wrong brand, but anyway there are two or three different models. There is the moped, then there is the LADA and then there is another one, so we have to figure out which process we are going to undertake, which piece of infrastructure we are going to look at, what we can afford, what is responsible and what is smart to take into consideration now — but also looking at our future — and, at the same time, take into consideration how this impacts Yukoners.

Those are the questions that are being asked internally. Once again, I want to commend the previous individuals who

were in this role for getting that work done — thank you — because it really helps everybody, as we make decisions, to be able to go back to that framework.

We're going to be in a situation very quickly here where we'll be coming to a point where the government will have an understanding of how they want to move forward and what we are going to look at as well.

I do want to also add though that I think Victoria Gold — mostly being led by their vice-president, Mark Ayranto — is being really innovative, as is Goldcorp in their work on the Coffee project. These individuals are all out there looking at other types of energy sources because they want to see that, on their projects, a significant portion of their energy envelope is clean.

I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Istchenko: The minister is correct about this project. The industry has been interested in it. I know the local First Nations have expressed interest in this also — in the upgrades that need to happen to the existing transmission line.

The former government had definitely been pushing this project along, and we had submitted a funding request to the federal government in 2016 for it to be included in their budget. I'm not sure where this current government is — and the minister alluded a little bit to some other funding opportunities. I think this is a good one because it is a shovel-ready project. This is one of the good things that we have here.

If the minister could maybe elaborate a little bit more on where we are — and maybe what funds the minister is looking at applying to for the upgrades to this project.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that would be an appropriate discussion to have with the previous minister — just about the funding application, because certainly there wasn't a yes or a no that came to our organization. I think for the good of the mineral industry — I know that the members opposite, and certainly the minister who would have been in place in 2016, have always been huge supporters of this project — certainly there is something that we can discuss on that.

What we are looking at is the green infrastructure fund. That is the fund. That is what we are looking at as a potential. The challenge with the green infrastructure fund is that there are a lot of pressures on the green infrastructure fund to help in many ways. That is a fund that would be a potential, but also we're looking at, I believe — I can go back, but I thought it was like \$24.7 million on an annual basis. I might be wrong. Anyway, we're looking at over \$20 million — but a lot of different pressures for those dollars.

I will say that we continue to discuss with the federal government the importance of looking at some of this transmission work. What I can say is that the Minister of Natural Resources Canada — part of the discussion has been, at least at the energy and mines ministers table as of last August, and then again this year — the meetings were in Iqaluit — there has been, and rightfully so, a huge focus on northern infrastructure as well as northern mining. Of course, individuals such as the leader Pierre Gratton at the Mining Association of Canada and members with the PDAC, the

Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, are all ensuring that these conversations are front and centre.

I will just state for the Assembly — maybe this, to some extent, would give me a little bit of flexibility in our conversations with the opposition concerning a BC grid connection. For many, you can do a search. About two weeks ago, one partnership — a partnership of First Nation governments teamed up with Fortis Inc. Fortis, of course, is a Newfoundland-based energy corporation. It just acquired \$1.6 billion in a grant for the new transmission line that is now moving into the Ring of Fire. It's a grant of \$1.6 billion. There are 15,000 people who are living at the end of that line. There are some significant mining opportunities — but certainly First Nations with Fortis.

I know the Member for Watson Lake — this is of interest to her, I would assume. How do we ensure that we can build, not just infrastructure for transmission into Yukon, but how do we ensure that communities like Watson Lake also could potentially have upgrades? Those are the types of things — if we have a federal government that feels that this is a priority to them, then I think we should be having the conversation. It's a conversation, I think, that is important enough that — if there is anything that we can do as an Assembly — the Assembly has come together on a couple of occasions, and I think this is one that would be important for us to come together on.

The total of the green energy fund is \$276 million and it's over 10 years. So it is \$27.6 million versus \$24.7 million. Hopefully, that gives you a bit more information. Of course, we will still need to provide the Assembly with a full model of how we're going to look at paying for the Stewart-Keno line, moving forward.

Mr. Istchenko: Thanks for the answer. I'm not sure if the minister has had any discussions with any of the mining companies that we know will be joining the grid in the future or are planning to join the grid. Would he be able to give us an idea if there have been any other discussions that he has had on the future demand that we're going to be expecting when it comes to power?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The Member for Kluane is putting me through the paces here, and I thought we would have a concise day today.

The Yukon Energy Corporation, through the integrated resource plan, has looked at three separate scenarios. There is a lot of flexibility in those scenarios. I think the things that we have touched on today — the general approach by individuals and how they've changed the way they live. We look at places like Whistle Bend where we now have really significant, fast-paced growth. The Minister of Community Services has had to fast-track, in many ways. The departments have really increased their pace of looking at land development in some of these areas.

We talked about it this weekend with the Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation. When you drive through Whistle Bend, you don't see a lot of smoke in the air. Primarily, individuals are using electric. That is a huge draw. Part of what we are looking at is ensuring that on the

demand side, it is a big part of the conversation. That is really where Energy, Mines and Resources and the work — once again, to be respectful to the opposition, there are good programs in place helping with that. I know that the Third Party touched on this and had appropriately challenged us about how we look at that. I think what we feel is that there are some good programs. The framework is in place. Now maybe we can increase the magnitude of those programs or the available resources. That can make big differences. Demand side is going to be key.

Also, as appropriately identified, it does give us the opportunity and others the opportunity. There are opportunities within this increase of need, and that goes back to that earlier discussion a few points ago, when you talk about diversifying our economy — where the opportunities are and why Yukon Development Corporation's conversation about innovation and looking at economic diversification — why this comes front and centre. What a great place for people to play a role in the full circle of energy.

I think that the technical specialists can speak to what we look at for potential draw. To let your imagination go — it certainly frustrates the people I get to work with when I do this — but we have a lot of projects out there. I think this is an appropriate venue to do this. We are here to debate and discuss ideas and to challenge each other. There are projects that the government and we, as government, have looked at for a long period of time. I am going to specifically talk about mining where we have taken into consideration — and these projects are going to have an independent power source. Do we have to rethink that? Is it appropriate to rethink that? Depending on what federal programs exist, certainly the one I just touched on where you see the commitment of \$1.6 billion into an area — into a jurisdiction — that is pretty significant.

I think that previously Kluane talked about projects that would have independent power production and maybe they could tie into the adjacent communities where their partners were. I think those are still the ideals, but I think we have to be flexible in taking those into consideration when we think about other projects.

I want to clarify that nothing has changed. This isn't a jumping board for challenging conversations later on. When we take into consideration Kudz Ze Kayah, Coffee and others, how should we look at them? Not as they move toward their early production — because, of course, these projects are now entering into the YESAA process and the elements of their applications are there.

Places like White Gold, where you have a generational or a multi-generational opportunity, maybe in those places we talk about larger demand, but, of course, we need to be able to provide it. Certainly when you talk about projects like Casino, which have been talked about, I'm sure, previous to my time inside the Assembly and projects that continue to be discussed when you talk about that level of demand — when you're talking about as much power as you are producing at this time and need to double that or whatever it may be.

Those are all kinds of different conversations that we will be having as we move forward. We can talk specifically and

then, based on the new realities that are in place right now, we can probably give a real-time snapshot, but there is always going to be a level of flexibility that is needed and also taking into consideration — and the members who have been close to these files across the way will know this — i's use but it's also the peaks and how that plays out. What has really been our biggest challenge over the last couple years is that December time frame. What Yukoners need to know is that when we go back to December of last year — the year before last — and we had challenges at Aishihik, it was minus 12 or minus 10 or minus 16, I think, or something in that range, and we were lucky. We were all very lucky. Now we're at a point where, moving forward, we had some more serious peaks this year; we had the most usage we have ever had.

I will just put it out there respectfully to the members that, if you really want to dig into what's happening with our challenges, it's taking into consideration what's happening with water levels in your home riding, your home area. We're having historical lows when we take into consideration water levels in Mayo Lake. That's putting a tremendous amount of strain on our system, as we go into water licensing and a number of other issues. These are all things that I'm taking into account — what's happening with snow load. We felt I think in that case — I'll let Mr. Hall speak to it — but as he's conveyed, there's been pretty good snow for some reason. All of those things are putting more strain on our system.

We are seeing a growth in need and we're also looking at our own capacity and trying to figure out across the board how we can do what we need to do and go back to that 1993 OIC, which is about having that consistent power and also having the opportunity to increase and support industrial growth.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that answer. He did bring up Aishihik. I did have a couple questions so I think I will get into them right now. I know that Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Yukon Energy are kind of taking a co-management approach to the licence renewal process. I'm wondering a little bit — the water licence with Aishihik I think expires in 2019, but I just want to confirm. I know there is a lot of work that has been done. The website mentions that the process for the water licence renewal will involve input from a technical advisory group, which talks — we are probably going to have a little bit of information about water levels that the minister had alluded to from the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations community-based advisory group.

I want to put a little shout out to previous Champagne and Aishihik members and the previous MLA for a lot of the work that has been done on the Aishihik Lake over the years. I am sure the minister in his previous job would know a little bit about this too.

Does the minister have a bit more information on the advisory groups? Who would be on them, how would their input work and how will it be incorporated?

The member just mentioned the ice blockage at Aishihik. I would like a little update on that — just wondering if this problem was a bit of a one-off? I might actually have asked the minister this question before, but I just wanted to clarify

that and if there are some contingencies in place to prevent this type of outage in the future.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think it is probably most appropriate to provide the opportunity for Yukon Energy Corporation to speak to most of these questions.

First of all, technically, I am going to absolutely leave it to Mr. Hall to speak to the technical side of things with Aishihik and the blockage and what has been done and what has been undertaken to look forward and ensure as to the makeup — and also even on the Aishihik piece, because that was really co-developed by Yukon Energy and Champagne and the Aishihik First Nation. I would say that the member opposite knows as well as I that the people involved in that — I mean in the sense of where the real focus is, it is something that is near and dear to everybody's heart there, but a lot of the focus has always been individuals from the traditional Aishihik village and also people who have roots that are deep within the area. So they may live in Whitehorse or Haines Junction, but certainly families, grandparents, aunties and uncles are from that area. I'm just thinking of Mr. Brown and people like that who have passed on — amazing individuals — who have worked a lot on this file.

The one thing that is really intriguing — and I commend the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations for that — what has happened is because this has always been a really significant topic to them and to the nation and the impacts — historically, it is a pretty rough story going back to the days of the implementation of that project. It is also the fact that the capacity is extraordinary. You have a couple of individuals who are citizens that are now professional hydrologists and are part of this conversation, people like Nadia Joe who have worked for companies like Hemera who are now — I think it is appropriate to mention them — or Jocelyn Joe-Strack, who has won significant academic accolades from, I think, the University of Saskatchewan — and are now all playing a role in the planning part of that. Historically, we've got people who have always had a huge leadership role on the technical level, like Lawrence Joe, who was part of that, and Roger Brown, who has been a great leader within the Lands department, and continues to do this work, as well as Dixie Smeeton, who is new there, and their other team members. A lot of great people were working on this file, but I think it is important as well for the Legislative Assembly to hear exactly the approach that Yukon Energy undertook on this.

It started under the previous government. It was a very thoughtful, respectful engagement from the start. I only had the opportunity in my previous role to take part in one day, which was a trip to Aishihik Village with the senior leadership of Yukon Energy and, at that point — maybe in my previous role — I would challenge the Member for Kluane and some of his previous work — because it was a long, bumpy drive. It was about a five-hour drive from Otter Falls to Aishihik Village, but we went and spent some time with elders there. That was kind of the starting point, so I feel pleased — hopefully there is enough time when Andrew Hall is here to talk about it because there has been a tremendous — Michael Brandt, Andrew Hall and Goran, at a technical level, have

done a tremendous amount of work with the First Nation, understand the values of the elders and are preparing for the water licence hearing, which is upcoming.

I'll leave it at that, but, hopefully, that gave a little bit of context about some of the interaction. Certainly a lot of work on a weekly and monthly basis is happening between all the entities in place, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that. I can attest to the road conditions — my phone was constantly ringing.

The next question that I have would be about the review of mainly Mayo A and Mayo B there. Can I get an update on the review of Mayo A and Mayo B?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I am just going to seek some clarity on the term "review". Are we looking at water licensing, or what exactly? I'll do my best to speak to the question.

Mr. Istchenko: I think it was basically a life-cycle review that I was looking for. I think they were mainly concentrating on Mayo A.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Believe it or not, you will get a short answer from me on this one. I think I'll just leave it to the representatives from Yukon Energy to appropriately identify what they are doing, looking at the current infrastructure and long-term planning. They can touch upon their work with the First Nation Na Cho Nyäk Dun and what they see as future planning.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you to the minister and those are definitely a couple of questions that we will be getting into a little bit deeper when the witnesses are here.

Last spring, I asked the minister about a proposal of the Southern Lakes storage concept in Yukon Energy Corporation's future vision. At the time, the minister stated that the conversations on this were ongoing with local communities and that they were talking to local First Nations on this proposed project. I'm wondering if the minister has a bit of an update and any sense of what the people's views were on this project, and is the government still sort of looking at exploring this?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will start with the people's views — not that I get to speak — I can reiterate the views of some people. I certainly don't get to speak on behalf of all the people, but the people that I have talked to, who probably have talked to — I think the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has touched on this.

I would assume this resonates with the Member for Copperbelt South, who also has a connection to the area, as well as the Minister of Community Services. There has been a lot of concern — massive concern, of course, from the Carcross/Tagish First Nation and individuals who are living in the Carcross area. I have to say that I have not had direct conversations with individuals either living in Atlin, British Columbia, or from Taku River Tlingit, but I think I remember that there were some spirited discussions on this topic before.

When you look at the Southern Lakes — it gives me an opportunity to just maybe have people think about this project. There is a ton of resistance. Of course, it comes back to the fact that people who are living in the Southern Lakes are very fearful of the impacts and they're fearful of the impacts in the

same way that there are historical concerns in Aishihik or in Mayo or other areas. There is a fear.

The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has really tried to ensure that they take a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to studying the impacts, or potential impacts. The people who are working on this file undertake their work with integrity. They are trying to ensure that they use the best possible science available to move forward and provide factual information. That doesn't mean that people are any more comfortable. To be open and honest, I haven't seen the comfort-level gauge increase. People are still really concerned.

Part of that is that, when you do these types of studies — I will just quickly contextualize this a bit. You go into certain areas of the Southern Lakes and you do modelling. In the modelling, it will show, from one place to the next, how it would impact that particular area. Then you would have to put an accommodation in place to ensure that you supported the people who are potentially going to be impacted in that area of the Southern Lakes and ensure that you work with them in the future to mitigate any impacts. But that is difficult because your modelling — even though it might use the best expertise available, it is difficult for us to then go just down to another area of the Southern Lakes and explain to an individual or individuals that their area is not going to be impacted. That's what the science says, but people have had lots of challenges over the years in the Southern Lakes. The flooding that has occurred had major impacts on the people who live there.

The direction that we have had — and what I have said in the Assembly to date — is that, when I look at what has been spent to date on the project — it is pretty expensive — what our potential output is — and then respecting Yukoners. I have had the opportunity for different groups of Yukoners to come — and the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has sat with the constituents who he represents. Certainly, in those cases, we have heard their concerns and their fear. We don't want to put people through that. I don't think it's appropriate.

Of course, there are always tough decisions that you have to make on the energy side of things. There are impacts, and sometimes you have to weigh and balance the things that all come with this role that we have. But at this time, if there is anything that will be done — and I certainly leave it to the opposition to quiz and challenge our people — there could be further conversations. I think that could be important to do, but we don't see at this time any active work to undertake that.

Just to clarify — is it worth further research? We are certainly down the road, potentially, but that is not an undertaking, in my role in working with the president of the Yukon Development Corporation, that I see as a potential project that will provide an output that helps us with our short-term energy needs. It could be a longer discussion, and maybe there is a time and place, or maybe there is new technology or better information, but right now, it is a very sensitive subject. I will leave it at that.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that. Speaking of that technology, when it comes to the Whitehorse facilities, is there a possibility of any improvements to increase the output from the turbines at the Whitehorse dam, or are we at the maximum of what we can do there?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: We do believe that there are some potential efficiencies that can provide some greater output. That is some of the dialogue that we continue to have. There was some maintenance work completed last year. You can imagine that it was quite an exceptional undertaking by Yukon Energy staff — the team on the ground over there — the engineering team as well as our maintenance team. You can just imagine what the inside of infrastructure such as that looks like. That would be a good conversation to have to try to get a sense, technically, of what some short-term efficiencies could look like within the Whitehorse dam infrastructure.

Mr. Istchenko: Regarding the incredible solar energy project in Old Crow, it was reported this January that the project was in limbo because money had not yet flowed to the Yukon Development Corporation. I understand that the money may first have to come from the federal government and then flow through the Yukon Development Corporation. I am wondering if the minister can provide an update on this project. Has any money flowed yet? If not, is there a bit of a timeline on that?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Just to touch on the project, we have continually conversed with the community and the principals who are leading the Old Crow energy project.

Part of it is that we had our own money in place that we have committed to help to support, fund and work with the organization and the community. What has happened for this fiscal year is that we have our money in place, but through the dialogue, the federal government — I touched on this earlier in our discussion today — put a very robust package together. I'll touch on it. I could be wrong on this one and I could certainly be edited later, but I think it is approximately \$2 million. Maybe I should be checking with my colleague from Old Crow.

So what we have been told, in the short run, is that, right now, for what we need to get accomplished, we have our funds, but we need to ensure that, after this first tranche of dollars is moved and expended, we would look to touch on that, moving into the next fiscal year.

Just a couple of things as I get some assistance from our president here — I'm going to jump back just a second on something I had missed.

Once again, we'll talk on that Aishihik piece, but I'm going to jump back, just for the record. It was the first time. That is another one where, of course, as we see changes in climate, we see these anomalies. Once again, we'll let the team explain what some of the mitigation measures are, going forward. We'll be making a bit of a positive announcement on our relationship with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and our support of this project.

But it does go back, again, to the important questions that were asked by the members opposite on independent power. We have to go back to that again. That is a key component.

What has happened now is that we have the community — they are really going down the road to ensure that they feel good about their project. For them, they are risk-managing a bit as we define what revenue will look like. We're certainly committed to that. I think it has been a positive conversation.

Just to clarify, the media piece — I don't want to misquote anybody, but I remember that the substance there really talked about how they were waiting on the federal government, I think, as well. That could be a relationship with CanNor. I'm not sure. I think it was just after Christmas.

I mean, our discussions with the First Nation really were about the fact that they were contemplating potential success in an application process that they were undertaking. As the member opposite said, I'll leave it at that. I won't go outside the confidentiality of that. But they were looking at a potential process and there were some significant timelines, so we were trying to ensure that we could enhance their ability to potentially lever those dollars, and because of that, there was some crunch.

In the end, they didn't see the success that they wanted. So they have, in turn, picked a different route. That route is what we see today. We feel that, with the federal government, in partnership with us, and with the community, we're going to see the community realize their dream and a really important project, when you think about Canada. So we're excited to continue to work on that.

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Mr. Istchenko: Earlier today, there was a lot of discussion about federal funding and I just kind of looped it together during break here a little bit. It's all about getting northern communities off of the reliance on diesel fuel and other energy options and to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. It's also important for Yukon moving forward. I'm wondering, with the Yukon Development Corporation — have they been part of these discussions? Are they part of these discussions when the minister is in Ottawa — on that level in the meetings? If not, is there an opportunity for them to go and to be there?

With respect to other federal and infrastructure pots or initiatives that the minister spoke about a little earlier — I'm just wondering if there have been any other discussions with the federal government and corporations or the minister, for example. Are there any opportunities for the corporation to access any of these funding pots — just themselves — rather than going through the governments? That was what I was looking at.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like to thank our officials for coming back — Mr. Ferbey and Mr. Anderson. We continue to look at all of our options on this. Sometimes, the president of our development corporation will have direct conversations while we're on our bilateral trips to Ottawa. Certainly we have been lucky in the sense that, in some cases, the Deputy Minister of Economic Development also happens to have the responsibility as the president of the Yukon Development Corporation. That, therefore, gives us the ability to really maximize our time and efforts when we're in Ottawa. Certainly what we try to do at any point is ensure that we maximize those conversations, even if we're there talking about innovation through Economic Development.

Just to clarify, there is a series of funds. We talked about the green infrastructure fund today and a portion of that is something called the Arctic energy fund.

That one is fairly significant in the sense that it is really focused on ensuring that we have the ability to, off-grid, look at new sources of energy that would offset the use of diesel.

That is one particular fund, but where we're at right now is — usually what happens at the level — the members opposite would know this very well. You'll have the announcement — and it was touched on today by the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, and certainly, I know that the previous Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Member for Lake Laberge, would know that when you're doing something like the Canadian Agricultural Partnership — the CAP agreement. All of these agreements — you have a high-level discussion and you enter into a bilateral discussion on the details and then you sign off. Where we're at right now is in discussions concerning the green infrastructure fund — and in tune with that, the Arctic energy fund. Those are discussions that are happening, but, as we go to conclude the agreements, that is certainly work that is being undertaken by the Minister for Community Services. Then in turn, potentially we could work through a series of areas in government or with Yukon Development Corporation.

We are always on the lookout — for lack of a better term — to ensure that we are versed in the opportunities and the programs that are announced at the federal level. I think this is a great question for Mr. Ferbey when he is here representing the Yukon Development Corporation. We have tried to have a lot of dialogue, just in general. It's good, educational information about how the federal government really looks at their programs, but also when there are specific programs that come out.

What we touched on today, for clarity, are the programs that we see as the ones that we can lever, whether we talk about the Stewart-Keno or whether we talk about enhancing our energy opportunities with communities outside of Whitehorse.

I will just leave it at that.

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

We did talk about funding, and that could be for small hydro, wind, solar, geothermal processes and stuff like that. In the Liberal platform during the election, one of the things that they said they would pursue was federal funding for energy

research — so the upfront work. I'm just wondering if the minister could update us on this initiative.

If it doesn't necessarily fall under the portfolio — maybe it's under Environment or a different portfolio — he could point me to which one of his colleagues I could ask when they appear in Committee and we'll get one of the critics to ask. If he doesn't have any information handy on this — either any discussion with the federal government on funding or energy research or perhaps Yukon's plans for energy research — we would, of course, accept a conversation later. I'm just wondering if they have pursued federal funding for energy research — that upfront work.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Some of the key deliverables that were touched on — from the Member for Kluane — and that we just touched on — or other areas that were sort of mandated or touched upon in our platform — of course, things that I try to undertake as part of my responsibilities and obligations in the role — through our work looking at a knowledge-based economy and diversification, build platforms and catalysts for economic and innovation growth — that really is through research chairs.

We will come back with the exact framework and discussion, but we have at least one new position at Yukon College, which is really focused on this specific area and really delving into some energy innovation. We have that research chair, and I think as many of those positions as you can undertake. They are really key. That is part of the work that my colleagues are doing — the Minister of Education. When you look at a university, those research chairs are always key.

We want to be able to do research at Yukon College — moving toward a Yukon university. We want to be able to support Yukon Energy, which we are doing right now on demand-side management with some of our funding for Yukon Development Corporation. We are also ensuring that we can work with the private sector in particular situations to help them enhance — and also we are lucky that we have a lot of very passionate, bright Yukoners who have a lot of experience in the energy sector. They also want to play a part in the vision and energy future that we have. We are also funding, through the Energy Solutions Centre as well as through Yukon Development Corporation, focused seminar sessions on storage. That is really key because when you start to talk about wind or solar, part of our challenge is to ensure that we have the right storage capacity. We always say that if Aishihik goes down in December, how do you ensure that you can just go and turn the wind on? How do you make sure that you can turn the solar on if you have an ice jam? You have to always ensure, for the safety and health of Yukoners, that you have a good, consistent source while you continue to strive for a diversified, clean grid.

On the research side, we think there are a couple of different areas. Absolutely, we are supporting and financing where we can while we are supporting and leveraging with other areas of government that type of work.

The Energy Solutions Centre — not just the work that Shane Andre does, but the work that some of the team on the

ground do — they do a great job of leveraging money from NRCan. My experience, watching them in action, is that they really do a great job in the Energy Solutions Centre of working with communities to find pots of money to do feasibility studies, to ensure energy efficiencies on the demand side, but also how to integrate biomass and other work. They do an exceptional job. Of course, they have great relationships with the federal government on that work.

The other important thing to touch on is that, when we talk about our energy future — since we are digging deep today — we have a ministerial working group as well. That group is represented by Community Services, Highways and Public Works, Yukon Development Corporation — our key analyst, Geoff Woodhouse, is there and also the president, in his role as Deputy Minister of Economic Development, is at that table. It is a series of individuals. I want to commend the Climate Change Secretariat for being a huge driver, and the Minister of Environment.

This is really about how to get all of the right people in government in the room to ensure that you have the right information flowing into your new energy strategy — the revised energy strategy — but also we take into consideration where we move on government policies and priorities. That work is done, and it is the ministerial working group on climate change and energy.

Out of that, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, because it is very important in government that you have a perspective from the private sector. What we have been able to do is build a relationship directly with the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, which, in turn, brings the voice specifically for this low-carbon economy working group where we have quarterly sessions that we are helping to support and fund through Economic Development — but also organizations that they will work to represent in the Whitehorse chamber and a series of business chambers that are represented there. I know that the Yukon Conservation Society previously was part of that discussion — I am not sure, but certainly we can bring that back. What we felt was important is not just to go out and consult on these topics but to have a working entity that had a focus and a priority of ensuring that we had the best possible information on the perspective of the business community as we have discussions on the work being undertaken on carbon pricing and on retrofit and on renewables — all of these discussions.

What we have the opportunity to do is have this group meet on a quarterly basis. In turn, they provide information that can then be taken forward to Economic Development. In the role as Minister of Economic Development, I have that conduit into the ministerial working group. We feel that it is a very efficient and effective way to ensure that we have the voices — those very important voices of business and many other non-profit organizations and NGOs at the table. That's not to say that we wouldn't take the policy work back out for a broader discussion, but in the early stages, it is just our way of committing and showing that we have a huge respect for the work and the discussions that they have done. A lot of that

comes from the energy committee at the Yukon Chamber of Commerce.

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

We were talking about energy and research a little bit, and the minister had brought up Yukon College and a little bit about the innovation hub. Can the minister elaborate a little bit more on the setting up of the innovation hub? I understand that they are going to have a new office space, so I am wondering if there is a leasing arrangement for that building and what the terms would be — so just a little bit more information on the innovation hub.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: For Yukon Development Corporation, in the sense of the innovation hub — I believe we are using less square footage. We have 1,000 square feet. I think that our rental rate is — there is a bit of savings compared to what we previously were at. We are reducing our footprint. We were at about 1,600 square feet in the previous space and we are looking now to about 1,000 square feet. I think overall we are also reducing it.

As for this set-up of the innovation hub, I think that's a good conversation to have when I have the opportunity to speak to some of the work that we've done at Economic Development. Certainly with the Yukon Development Corporation responsibility, the move on the innovation hub was spurred by the fact that, for many Yukoners when you think about the Yukon Development Corporation — we touched on this earlier — there are the historical activities of the Yukon Development Corporation. In many cases, the business community and business people, when they look at the Yukon Development Corporation, have maybe heard of it. They kind of understand its role in our community, but it's usually in an office setting. It's not something that people can see, feel and touch. They try to understand.

We want to integrate it into the ecosystem so we can diversify our economy. This goes back to using the levers and tools that the policy from IREI has and then setting that in an ecosystem where there is the academic capacity, the entrepreneurial capacity, the non-profits, and really having it so that we can parallel all of those entities together and hopefully spur real economic diversification and growth.

I hope that gives a bit of an understanding of how that plays out. We will ensure that we have an opportunity to discuss this as well during Economic Development because of our support at Economic Development for the organizations that have been in a leadership role on the hub.

Mr. Istchenko: Thanks for that answer. I am going to switch gears a little bit to the life expectancy of the diesel generators that the Energy Corporation owns in Whitehorse, Mayo, Dawson and Faro. In the 2016 resource plan, the Yukon Energy operating and refurbishments are listed as one of the options going forward.

For those listening, operating involves replacing older components of generating equipment with newer, more efficient components. Refurbishing means major overhauls of existing facilities where many pieces of equipment are reacting to end of life. I'm just wondering if the minister could

update us on any of the plans for operating or refurbishing of the assets.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I will leave part of those discussions to the representatives for the Yukon Energy Corporation. The role of responsibility, I would say — I urge the member opposite to query the president of the Energy Corporation on the state of the infrastructure. I think the members opposite who have played a role in this will understand that we're dealing with — I'm not saying a lack of maintenance, but we certainly have a tremendous amount of infrastructure that is quite old, 40 years and over. In our discussions on the weekend this was key. We brought together that reality in discussion between Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation, and they do phenomenal work at Yukon Energy — and their exceptional detail on where they see their infrastructure and what they need to support their infrastructure.

It was a great opportunity to have the Finance department conversing with them about the realities and pressures of government finance, but at the same time we have to ensure the health and safety of Yukoners and, of course, that we have that reliable energy. Those are important conversations.

It's also key to understand that this is not a unique conversation in Yukon. This is a fairly consistent conversation across Canada. The two themes that may not be as comfortable for energy corporations or Crown corporations to undertake are that we're seeing consistent project overruns — very significant overruns — in projects in central and eastern Canada and we see that the maintenance requirements are really significant in all jurisdictions. This is pretty standard. The challenge of figuring out how to maintain and pay for it is also a pretty normal conversation when you're talking about this space.

Mr. Istchenko: I will get more into it when the Energy Corporation appears as a witness. Does the Yukon Development Corporation play any role in the government's plan to spend \$30 million on energy retrofits?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The simple answer to that is no. Really there are other departments that are taking a lead on that. Yukon Development Corporation through IREI, they're really focusing on new production of clean energy. We're looking more toward Community Services, Highways and Public Works and other areas to be there.

However, we are on part of that working group that we talked about earlier and certainly are privy to the conversations and to the demand-side of the conversation, which we're helping with and supporting in our packages to Yukon Development Corporation. I will leave that to my colleagues to speak specifics on the retrofit projects.

Mr. Istchenko: Another question on the Yukon Development Corporation — are they looking at anything around the possibility — I probably might be stealing a question from my fellow colleague over here — of providing opportunities or incentivizing the use of electric vehicles?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: There is no specific program or project to date that we're looking at. There is an interest. We have private sector organizations that are Whitehorse, Yukon-

based companies that we have been in discussion with that want to play a role in the establishment of the infrastructure that is required and they would like to see us potentially partnering with them on that undertaking and that, in turn — it is quite important to have that in place so we do have some of the research. We're undertaking a bit of it at Yukon Development Corporation, but what we're trying to gain flexibility in is our funding pockets.

We talked about the \$1.5 million that we have flexibility in, in the sense that we have defined our priorities and values and they are broad enough, but it gives our team and our board a challenge function and, again, a matrix that they can kind of look at to see if things meet the requirements. But when it comes directly to electric, it is something that we feel is important. Working with a local company would be an exceptional route for us and, if they are partnered with a community organization, a municipality or a development corporation — all those things are exciting to us.

But once again — part of our challenge is that we need to support that level of innovation and technology. At the same time we have to talk about the reality of how we're going to ensure that we have the source and the output for that, like we talked about. If we see Whistle Bend lots filled and bought and new houses going up and everybody is running on electric and at the same time, we get really aggressive on how we move into electric vehicles — I'm not saying that is not what we should do, but we have a lot of new challenges to take into consideration.

Are we going to be using thermal to ensure somebody can drive their electric car? Is that the right thing? That is not for me to say. What we're going to do is ensure that we support the right changes in behaviour and that we, in turn, are reactive — with a good plan though — to the needs and continue to have long-term planning in place.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you for the answer.

My final question today that I will have before I turn it over to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King is — I was intrigued a little bit when the minister mentioned earlier Google expanding its footprint throughout North America. I'm just wondering if there have been any discussions with Google or early exploration with Google to see what they would consider expanding into the territory. You know, the idea of looking at larger national or multinational companies to come here and hopefully create jobs and diversify the economy is interesting. Would there be something like IT positions placed here? Would there be incentives that we would have to provide in order to entice them to come here? Just sort of expand a little bit more on what he had mentioned about Google.

Before I sit down, I do want to thank the officials who are here today and I apparently look forward to having more questions next week. Thank you very much for your time.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: To answer the member's last question, for clarity, the comment on the Google piece was — but it does lever into an interesting conversation. On the Google piece, it was about the fact that the company was sharing information — I can table it in the House; we have the article.

It is talking about the innovation outside of urban centres and it is their ability to move into rural areas, as I touched on. So this is how they are expanding their footprint and some of their strategy. Part of what they looked at was a move into the northeastern United States — specifically Vermont — and into a community close to this size. Really, what they were looking at was to have a footprint where they would first ensure they focused on broadband and reliability, which happened to be what my questions were about today during Question Period — fibre redundancy — which is key.

Secondly, they were talking about how to spur entrepreneurship and innovation. Thirdly, they felt that the biggest opportunity was in the renewable energy field and sector in these areas. What I touched on was the fact that when that information started to flow and they were sort of putting it out into the ether, what we were touching on was that was the road that we were on. We were excited about the fact that we were moving down the same line of business. The innovation hub was somewhere where we had the opportunity to focus on entrepreneurship. We knew that with Yukon Development Corporation being a partner in that project, we had the opportunity to continue to use the IREI and look at energy.

When it comes to looking at companies like Google, would they put a tech person here? It is a different discussion. That is the work that we are more focused on out of Economic Development. What we have undertaken — and we can touch on that a bit more during the Economic Development budget conversation — but yes, we have already brought in and are supporting people who used to work for Google and who are here now. That is work that we are already supporting. We have had individuals who were formerly in their employ and who have now moved here and live here. That is what we want to try to do. We want to get that talent that has worked in Silicon Valley or Toronto or Vancouver and get them to move here. Then we want to provide them with a foundation and ecosystem in the innovation centre where they can actually start Yukon-based companies. That is part of what we can touch on a bit more during that discussion.

I can remember challenging a former deputy minister of Economic Development when I was in a different role to look at something along these lines. At that point, the feeling was that it just wouldn't happen in the Yukon. But when you have such a beautiful place — such amazing people and the ability to work in the sector, yet drive to Carcross to go mountain biking on absolutely amazing world-class trails or sneak out to Kluane and sneak into one of the secret fishing holes of the Member for Kluane — and still work all day in the tech sector, that is a great story. That is something that we are going to continue to do. We are going to seek guidance where we can. James Smith, who is the legal representative who brought Shopify public into the IPO, was here with our team and has given us a number of strategies and ideas that we will be entertaining on doing just that — bringing in more talent that will help us diversify our economy.

I thank the Member for Kluane for the questions. That was a thoughtful and appropriate exchange today on a multitude of topics for Yukon Development Corporation.

Ms. White: I thank my colleague from Kluane for his questions. I am excited to see the Yukon Development Corporation in a different capacity than normally when you guys are sitting right off to my left.

The first question I have is: Is the minister familiar with the Yukon Development Corporation website? Has he checked it out recently?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I don't know if recent — I have. There is a nice vista of — I think it is Horse Creek Road. It probably needs — I am going to get in trouble now with my president. I certainly think that a facelift potentially could be in order and there may be some information on there that is stagnant and needs to be updated. Now I think the next question I am going to find out just what we need to improve on and probably what information is there that is maybe not consistent with some of our dialogue today.

I will hand it back over.

Ms. White: The reason I ask is that if we're talking about reaching out as the Yukon Development Corporation and engaging people in conversation, I would suggest a website that is recent and current — including the list of board of directors — is an important thing. On the very home page, it still has a press release from next generation hydro, dated — just a second, it is slow to load as well — from probably 2016, I would guess.

The reason why I bring that up is that if we are talking about engaging different sectors of the community and looking forward toward the future, I feel like a website — especially when we want a fantastic staff — is the first step. I'll just leave that there and I know we have got talent coming toward it.

In 1998, the entire budget for Yukon government was \$437 million. Out of that, \$278 million came from Canada. At that point in time, \$16 million was invested through Yukon Development Corporation for green energy initiatives — \$16 million compared to our \$1.5 million this year — understanding that more than a billion dollars was transferred this year from the Government of Canada and that our budget is about five times higher than it was in 1998. When we talk about things like the innovative renewable energy initiative at \$1.5 million, I ask myself, even if we are matching that or trying to use that pocket of money to find other pockets of money, what exactly is \$1.5 million going to be able to do?

I know there was some discussion previously, but just compared to 1998 when it was \$16 million and the entire budget for the Government of Yukon was \$437 million — I just want to ask the minister if he has some thoughts on the comparison to 20 years ago at \$16 million to this year at \$1.5 million.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Concerning the website — I will touch on that one. I think that one of the discussions that we have had — earlier today I talked about how I don't think we have done as much proactive work in communicating the work and successes over the last year. Part of what we have

discussed — and I have directed — is for us to undertake a bit of communication work. I think and I appreciate — I think you are absolutely correct that we can maybe take a look at the scope and do an update on our website. I think that board members are there, but maybe it is not up to date, but certainly that is — and maybe not. I thought they were because I remember taking on the role and trying to figure out who the board was that I was going to be working with.

I think in the spirit of what you touched upon, which was ensuring that we engage, I think our biggest move right now is to really have the organization in a place where the Cold Climate Innovation centre, (co)space, YuKonstruct — all of these entities — they can touch and feel and see what the organization does and that is going to be really key, and I think that's part of it. That's going to help us as much — share with the Yukon Contractors Association, potentially maybe Women in Trades. I am going to have to check — but just a tremendous amount of people who will be out there.

As for the financial piece, I have some good support here so I am going to talk about historical. What comes to mind is that we certainly feel as we move forward that the magnitude of the investment from Yukon Development Corporation into the clean energy or the renewable energy space is going to grow. We talked about that a bit today. We talked about first ensuring that we have the policy. I can tell you this, when we started — or at least in this role — we talked about the 1993 OIC that defined where we were going. I don't believe, and I could be wrong, that we had policy, because I don't believe we had policy that could lever or roll that money out, so that's the work we had to do. It was kind of intriguing when you say there was money back in 1998, but I think really what we're touching on is that, in 1998, the Energy Solutions Centre, which is even more robust now than it was in 1998 and it's flowing more money — I believe, I can go back and check, I'll have to check our budget — but that was the difference. That organization fell under Yukon Development Corporation and in turn that's where the \$16 million is. Now what we're doing is we have the Energy Solutions Centre doing all that good work we touched on, but we're going to move to historical highs on retrofit on the demand-side and then we're still undertaking some extensive growth in our ability to capitalize projects.

I guess my other thing I would say is — and I'm not trying to challenge, but if there were \$16 million on renewable energy projects in 1998, I'm trying to figure out — I guess maybe they would have gone toward Haeckel. We have this phenomenal portfolio of hydro, which is amazing, and I thank all of our predecessors for being so visionary. I know there is a lot of sticky things and a lot of challenges and wrongs that have to be looked upon in a more appropriate way, but I will say that I don't know that — if it was \$16 million a year I don't know how it was spent. I'm looking around for the legacy historical infrastructure of clean energy solutions. There are a few, but we're trying to engage in that now.

I do believe that we've committed to this. We're trying to do it right and we want to ensure that, like I said, policies are in place, there are appropriate expenditures and then we also

have to take into consideration the timing of some of our federal funds. We will come back as well. I think that tomorrow there is another opportunity and there might be some questions, but it might take us a little longer. We will provide — we will get some historical information and we have some good corporate knowledge that we can go through and maybe look at how that money was previously spent.

Ms. White: I think if you were to look into 1998, you would find that there was an election shortly thereafter where the Liberals were in government for a short number of years and then it was the Yukon Party, so we have a couple years to look at. There are some fascinating things.

When we talk about things like demand-side management — the minister referenced that earlier — in this 1998 report, they talked about doing a pilot project around a domestic hot water timer pilot project. When we talk about demand-side management — and it's true, new construction has straight-up baseboard heaters, even if you are talking about a super-energy efficient building, they all will flip on at the same time. There is no managing when that happens. The room drops below 21 degrees, they are going to flip on if it's minus 30 outside. They will work kind of in the same way. There are other options — there are things like electrical thermal storage units. Because I am really amped up about energy as well, I installed an air-source heat pump because of the efficiency that they are viewed as having.

When the Yukon Development Corporation had a broader spectrum, including with the Energy Solutions Centre, they did a lot of really interesting pilot projects, including the domestic hot water — like the timers. One of the hopes I always have is for the Development Corporation, when we talk about developing renewables or expanding demand-side management or looking toward things like that, is what kinds of future projects is the corporation looking at? What kind of aspirations do we have? If we're talking about developing renewables, we haven't had any real new renewable come online in quite some time, so what is the corporation looking at?

Let's start with demand-side management — energy retrofits, we get that, we understand. I am looking for something new, other than energy retrofits.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: On demand-side management, the way we are approaching any new initiatives — and you will have an opportunity with the Yukon Energy Corporation coming in as witnesses — we are funding the newest demand-side management and undertaking a program — so we're providing the funds to Yukon Energy and then they are executing the work, so I think it would be most appropriate to have their organization or to have the president or the chair speak to exactly that. That is part of our IREI funding.

To be open, we understand the importance — of course, the retrofits are equally as important an investment as renewables, but the Yukon Development Corporation understands that the demand side is important. We will provide funding, whether it is to organizations like Yukon Energy Corporation or other organizations and groups that have come to us. We have been back and forth with at least

one. We sat with, I guess, two key groups who have come to us — one being the Yukoners Concerned and then we had a subgroup of very passionate concerned and experienced Yukoners. We have been back and forth, trying to define a bit of a terms of reference and that is work that has been undertaken to support some of the new great technology — so we're trying, and some of those technologies have been used in other jurisdictions in similar climates, like Alaska.

On the other side, I think the storage piece has been key, and we are really trying to ensure on the storage side that we support it. Those are names that you know — anyway, I will leave the names — key individuals in the community. We have also been trying to reach out for other expertise on that. I think that when it comes to the demand side, with respect to the comment, we will park the retrofit. I think it is important that the Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, when we are sitting at the table with the ministerial working group, that Minister Frost has always continued to look at the potential for opportunities in that space — looking at innovation. Right away it was innovation in building, using the expertise that was there and bringing in new expertise. I am hoping that there will be an opportunity to speak to Yukon Housing Corporation. There are a few areas of government that are looking at that.

Right now, for clarity for the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, it's increasing retrofits dramatically, trying to look for where there is interest and expertise and seeing if we can fund new innovation, whether that is a type of energy production or different strategies — that is what we are intending to do. Some of the work that we just touched on I see as part of our mandate and some of it is outside of the current mandate of Yukon Development Corporation. That doesn't mean that we couldn't be convinced or a case couldn't be built by the Member for Takhini-Kopper King to look at it to potentially feed it in. But if there is another area of government that is doing it better or has the flexibility and the mandate to do it, that is probably where it will lie. I think overall that what we have seen is that we are just trying to ensure that the whole conversation is brought together within a one-government approach. There are a lot of different entities that are doing good work, but we are trying to ensure that they are not in silos. I appreciate the efforts by those individuals across government. They have all made enormous efforts to make sure that they are sharing ideas and information and aligning their priorities.

Ms. White: I had the opportunity, as I am sure others in the Chamber did, to see a presentation by a member of the Peace Energy Cooperative. The Bear Mountain Wind Park is just outside of Dawson Creek. It is a 103-megawatt installation originally started by a cooperative. It was invested in by community members, which I think when we talk about Yukoners Concerned, there is a subgroup looking at trying to start an energy cooperative because there is an interest in expanding Yukon's renewable energy, and I don't disagree. I am looking forward to the presentation on storage next week, I believe. I think that will be fantastic.

Today, in preparing for tomorrow's debate, I was looking online for different things. When it comes down to storage, that is the whole thing when we talk about renewable energy — it is the critical importance of storage. Wind blows and that is fantastic if you can use it, but if you can't use it, where are you going to put it? Is the Development Corporation looking toward other jurisdictions for their storage solutions? Are they looking at doing a pilot project, for example? I am looking at the minister's other hat. He is also responsible for the Energy Corporation, which also has the Energy Solutions Centre — or the Energy branch now.

I have a good friend there who has been run off his feet with solar installations, but instead of putting it back into the grid, if the owners of the solar installations were able to store that energy and use it at a later time in the day, that could be helpful. Is the Yukon Development Corporation looking toward storage solutions and are they looking at any kind of pilot project or any investment that way?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have passionate colleagues that know more than I and probably they are up there as I use inappropriate terminology. I know they are tapping their feet.

On storage, the Energy Corporation — and they will have an opportunity to speak — within the integrated resource plan, there is a potential for some battery technology to be used. The price tag on it is really significant; it is about \$22 million. The Yukon Energy Corporation has applied through a federal fund directly to the federal government to see if we can't offset the cost of that. It was part of our platform, but that was work that the Yukon Energy Corporation thought was important — to look at a battery storage opportunity.

What we have seen as the challenge is not the daily storage, but longer term storage. That is one we talked about earlier. When something significant happens, how do you ensure that you have that backup? I am certainly, in this role, encouraging our teams and our technical people to look at storage. We see a lot of different things happening globally. People call us — we have had individuals who are trying to ground truth it, not to say — renewable energy and storage is such an exciting area for many people that we get a lot of people reaching out to us.

There is an individual in Watson Lake who has had conversations with Tesla and they want us to look at a very significant piece of infrastructure there. We have had individuals who are part of a group here through Yukoners Concerned and then there are individuals — we have had former leadership from Yukon Energy and Yukon Development Corporation that really want to look at storage. We are absolutely supporting that. We want to find out what storage will work for Yukon and what storage we can use that is feasible for us, taking into consideration — because there is also a financial reality. There is also the reality of saving our planet, but we have to weigh all those things. I have to weigh all those things.

Yes, we are looking at a storage pilot project at Yukon Energy. I will leave it to them to speak about it further. We are trying to ensure we bring expertise in. One of the top companies in the country is based in eastern Canada. When

you see Yukoners — either Yukoners across the Yukon River, out behind Long Lake or Yukoners at Jackson Lake — who are on off-grid and are on solar, they have battery technology.

Many of them use Surrette battery. We have reached out. They have committed some of their experts to coming here to share what they know. We're also weighing the fact that some of that technology is older technology versus newer battery technology. I think absolutely that this is an important conversation.

We can also share with the member opposite that the individual who is coming in for the workshops — I'm trying to think of the exact date. It is on April 21. I have a breakfast meeting with the individual on the morning of April 19, I think, and so there are a couple of days when the individual will be here sharing their knowledge.

The start of the question focused on a wind project and a co-op and that's a great conversation. That's what we touched on. We touched on the fact earlier that we want to see cooperatives put together. We can provide expertise, capacity and potential funding for these cooperatives to grow and to build, but I would challenge the member opposite. If you have looked at the whole lifecycle of that project — so we had a community organization which came together. I don't know if the member opposite knows who owns the project now —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Mr. Pillai: AltaGas — exactly. So we have clean energy people coming together to build infrastructure. I want to ensure that, when we build infrastructure, the infrastructure that we build is sustainable.

I don't know the story. I don't know why AltaGas — most of their work was gas in that district. They likely undertook this because they wanted to diversify their own portfolio of energy, but also probably for reasons of corporate social responsibility. I'm not sure why they have acquired that. Whether it wasn't sustainable in the long run, whether the community organization took it on in a volunteer capacity and felt that they had done their job, and it was there and it was a great project — not taking away from the technology. But certainly I was intrigued to see who acquired it and who runs the project now.

I have to do my further research but I agree completely with the member opposite on the fact — we have stated it. I think I read it today in our highlights and in our values of IREI specifically building that program so that we can help community energy cooperatives, municipalities and others move into an area of renewable energy.

Ms. White: I will just correct myself; it's a 102-megawatt installation. I'm very familiar with it. I visited it a couple times because I think it's beautiful. I have researched how it worked. When the Peace Energy Cooperative sold it to AltaGas, it was so they could reinvest in other projects. Since AltaGas is one of the major providers of energy in the area — it's probably not as weird as all that.

The one question that I asked when asking about storage wasn't on the large scale. I was talking more about individuals. You mentioned Jackson Lake, which currently is in my riding. It's a fantastic spot. People are really well set up

with their solar systems and their battery packs. One of the things that I had mentioned was: With all the solar installations going around in the community, has YDC considered, for example, doing a smaller battery?

Tesla is the newest one on the market, being tested across — not even tested anymore. It's all over.

One of the fascinating things about energy and technology is disruption. Disruption is — when you reach a certain extent, then all of a sudden the price drops. Solar has happened to that. Solar is going through a disruption right now where panels that were purchased five years ago — you could have three or four times the amount now, just because panels are so much more accessible. Is the Energy Corporation looking at doing a pilot project with smaller storage so that individuals either on- or off-grid — probably on-grid because that is how you would feed it back in, because they could be managed, in and out.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I just was touching on not the larger scale, but even on the short scale — how we could use those strategies. I'm sorry if I inappropriately answered the question.

The work on that side — from what I understand — has been undertaken primarily by the Energy Corporation. I think that, in the short run, we are going to have a lot of dialogue as of next week. I know there has been previous work, but as we see technology improve very quickly, it gives us an opportunity to see where we can do work at a residential level or an independent level as well as on bigger scale.

Even when we look at the integrated resource plan, there is the demand side, which really takes into consideration how it plays a role — from what I can remember without having the complete resource plan here in front of me. But there were also other elements of our energy future, which we're not contemplating, such as biomass, under that work. I think that you have to go back and constantly look, revise and take into consideration the technology.

Just for the record, I think our Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation have individuals who are passionate about this. I think there have been great questions from the NDP on this topic, but I also believe that the previous government did great work on building some programs, and I think that we, as a government, are very committed to this.

I appreciate the fact that we have to look at these technologies — as the member opposite stated — going to northern BC and checking that out, and then we have to figure out how those technologies will play a role for us.

Same thing — I have had the opportunity to travel to the research and development facility for GM, and sit and go out with their lead engineer to take a look at — previous to this job — the Volt. It's a great story until you get to the end of the drive. You're like, "This will be great in the Yukon" — and then, "Whoa — not quite yet." There are some climate challenges and other things.

I guess what I will say is that the commitment is here. I know it's at Yukon Energy, and the commitment is here at Yukon Development Corporation. I know the Cold Climate

Innovation centre wants us to look at how we can do it, and I know that the leadership at the Energy Solutions Centre is continuously looking at new innovation and technology — and then how we can put it in a smaller — or micro — sense in how we can use what we have.

The member opposite had a good point. We see the highest per capita use of solar. That makes absolute sense. Are there ways for us — and is it feasible and appropriate for us — to support through Yukon Development Corporation, or is it better at Yukon Energy to figure out how we harness that — if it is there to harness, or how we can play a bigger role in that.

Those are all things that I think are important. I think there has been good use — and I could stand corrected on our programs when it comes to solar, because inevitably they are helping feed in. But looking at batteries and how we save it are all things — I think it's the same reason that very well-educated and technically sound engineers in the community have done a ton of energy work. They also feel it is important to bring in some of these specialists because they are trying to educate themselves. I think everybody in this sector — whether they are policy-makers or technical experts and engineers — are all trying to continue to increase their understanding. Once we understand what technology can be integrated into our reality, the next key is: How do we support it, how do we pay for it, how do we lever those opportunities and how do they play a role in our current reality?

Ms. White: This is the last question, and I will wait for the witnesses to appear.

I am just looking for the newest protocol agreement and the letter of expectation for — so we have a new chair — the Yukon Development Corporation. The last shareholder letter of expectation between YDC and YEC was dated 2016-17 — it is posted online — and the last protocol agreement is for the 2017-18 year — so I will just look for a copy of that.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: It is forthcoming and we can present it to the House. The chair for the Yukon Energy Corporation, who will be here — it will be her first visit. Certainly now that we have some of her other work in place — but I have no problem with that.

I appreciate the guidance on our communication piece from the member opposite and also the fact that — for us to be able to continue to focus on other elements of the work we are doing — and the battery and the storage. I think that is going to be a really important conversation as we go forward.

Thank you for the questions today.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation?

Seeing none, we will proceed to line-by-line debate, starting at page 19-4.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, to be cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, cleared or carried

Chair: Ms. White has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, cleared or carried, as required.

Is unanimous consent granted?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$6,125,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,500,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$7,625,000 agreed to

Yukon Development Corporation agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: Mr. Chair, I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Mr. Silver 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.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled April 10, 2018:

34-2-52

Yukon Judicial Council Annual Report 2017 (McPhee)

The following legislative return was tabled April 10, 2018:

34-2-121

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* (Streicker)