



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 121

2nd Session

34th Legislature

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## HANSARD

Thursday, March 7, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Spring Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

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

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Thursday, March 7, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

I would like to begin the 2019 Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly by respectfully acknowledging all Yukon First Nations and also that we are meeting on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council.

We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

### INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

**Speaker:** It gives me great pleasure to announce that the following students will be serving the House as Legislative pages for the 2019 Spring Sitting. They are: Brianna Heal and Emily King from F.H. Collins Secondary School; Amelia Wallace, Greta Gladwin and Cooper Muir from Vanier Catholic Secondary School; Donald Halliday, Annie Li and Gregory Poltorasky from Porter Creek Secondary School; and Louve Gouaillier from École Émilie Tremblay.

Today we have with us Annie Li and Greta Gladwin.

I would ask members to welcome them to the House at this time.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** The Speaker also has a lot of housekeeping here, so bear with me.

### Withdrawal of motions

**Speaker:** The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they are now outdated: Motion No. 47 and Motion No. 117, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge; Motion No. 174, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre; Motion No. 232 and Motion No. 379, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King; Motion No. 360, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek North; and Motion No. 368, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they relate to a bill that has now passed this House: Motion No. 104, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party, which is related to Bill No. 24, entitled *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; Motion No. 165, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North, which is related to Bill No. 23, *Lobbyists Registration Act*; and Motion No. 342, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, which is related to Bill No. 27, entitled *Coroners Act*.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as they are similar to a motion adopted by the House: Motion No. 63, standing in the name of the Member

for Porter Creek Centre, which is similar to Motion No. 253, adopted as amended on March 21, 2018; Motion No. 106, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, which is similar to Motion No. 313, adopted as amended on October 3, 2018; and Motion No. 128, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt North, which is similar to Motion No. 229, adopted on March 7, 2018.

Also, the following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motions have been taken in whole or in part: Motion No. 60, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King; Motion No. 122, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South; Motion No. 235, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre; and Motion No. 243 and Motion No. 285, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane.

Finally, Motion No. 135 and Motion No. 173, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, have been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

### DAILY ROUTINE

We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Introduction of visitors.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I ask my colleagues to help me to welcome a number of guests here today.

We are happy to see all of you who have come out today to be here for the first day of the Spring Legislative Sitting: Paige Galette from Les EssentiElles; Teresa Acheson, who is the chair of the Public Service Alliance of Canada Women's Committee; my good friend Gina Nagano; Marguerite Roberts from Yukoners Concerned; Heidi Marion from Yukon Status of Women Council; Barbara McInerney from the women's transition home; Helen Allan from the women's transition home; Diane Petrin from the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre; and Shannon Luft and Aja Mason from the Yukon Status of Women Council — I also saw Charlotte Hrenchuck come in. This is the list I have. I see many, many faces here today. Again, I welcome all of you here today and thank you very much for coming.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There are a lot of folks here today. I will recognize a few more and I'm sure others will be recognized: past MLA and constituent Lois Moorcroft; past colleague Bob Van Dijken; Max Fraser and Arlin McFarlane; JP Pinard and Sally Wright — I love JP's shirt by the way — and Rob Wills. I don't see Grant Allan, but I saw him outside. Also here are Justin Lemphers and constituents Rob and Mary Ann Lewis — if we could welcome them, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Ms. Hanson:** I also join my colleagues across the way in welcoming to the Legislative Assembly here today a number of people who are here not only for the tributes on International Women's Day but also in support of non-governmental organizations. I want to hold up my hands

especially to those staff of Many Rivers who are here with us today, including — and I cannot remember all of your names, so I am sorry, but they are here in that top row there. We owe them a debt of gratitude after 11 very painful weeks on strike — to be without a job. I hold up my hands to them — Brandon and others, to Tom Amson, Lillian Strauss, Lynne Pagot, Paul Johnston, and to all of the people here, I welcome you to the House on our behalf.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** My introduction today is to the bringer of cinnamon rolls. I would like to welcome to the gallery Mike McPhee.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I would like to welcome to the House this afternoon a friend and constituent Melissa Craig.

*Applause*

**Mr. Gallina:** I would like the members to join me in welcoming Steve Rose, a constituent of Porter Creek Centre and long-time Yukon public servant. Welcome, Steve.

*Applause*

**Mr. Adel:** I would like to ask my colleagues in the House to welcome constituents of mine — though already maybe introduced — Don and Marguerite Roberts.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I would also ask my colleagues to welcome two individuals here to the Assembly today: Chris Bedford, who's here supporting some individuals, but also is a good friend, constituent — and who has advised me coming into this job; and also please help me welcome Mr. Tom Amson, who is a close friend, teammate, and has given me very valuable personal advice over the years. It is good to see Tom here today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to help me welcome a fellow who has been here quite often — Mr. Jonas Smith.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further of introductions of visitors?

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of International Women's Day

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** International Women's Day is celebrated annually on March 8, and today I am proud to rise on behalf of the Liberal government to mark this occasion with Yukoners. The first International Women's Day was held in 1911 to recognize the economic, political and social achievements of women and to acknowledge the challenges they continue to face in the quest for gender equality.

This year's national theme is "Innovate for change". This theme recognizes the important contributions women have made in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, while also calling to reduce barriers for women in these fields. It complements the international theme "Balance for better", which calls for a more gender-balanced world.

Here in Yukon, we celebrate a long history of women leaders and innovators seeking to balance out traditional male-dominated fields. Among them are: Kate Carmack, who was recently inducted into the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame; Stephanie Dixon, a Yukon Paralympic swimmer who was recently appointed to the Order of Canada; and Betty Irwin, founder of Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.

This important international celebration came just before another important milestone in the history of women in the Yukon. In 1919, 100 years ago, women in the Yukon obtained the right to vote and seek elected office through an amendment to the Yukon territorial act. The right to vote was spearheaded by the Yukon Women's Protective League, which called for equal rights to all and a special privilege to none. While they were ultimately successful on behalf of a select group of women, the manifesto of equal rights for all was actually exclusive to many, with racism and colonial attitudes prevailing.

It was not until 1960, over 30 years later, that indigenous people in Canada were finally granted the right to vote in federal elections. Despite the challenges and inequalities at that time, it is still important to recognize a constitutional and crucial expansion of the Canadian electoral — with a huge impact on democracy and the evolution of our country and our territory.

Since gaining the right to vote and run for public office, Yukon has been home to a series of firsts and significant achievements for women in politics. In 1935, Martha Louise Black was elected to the House of Commons, becoming the second woman in Canadian history to do so, and in 1985, Margaret Commodore was the first indigenous woman in Yukon to become a Cabinet minister. In 1989, Audrey McLaughlin, the New Democratic Party MP for Yukon, was elected as the national NDP leader, becoming the first woman in Canadian history to lead a national party. In 2000, Pat Duncan, leader of Yukon's Liberal Party, became the second woman in Canada to be elected Premier through a general election, and she is now a senator.

Just last year, for the first time in Yukon history, we surpassed gender parity in the 2018 municipal elections, and that is an amazing accomplishment for Yukon.

So whether in politics or in science, math, technology and entrepreneurship, Yukon women have a lot to celebrate as we continue to challenge the status quo and build a more equal tomorrow. The first Yukon Women in STEM report was released at the Yukon College in December 2018 and makes several recommendations to Yukon College, as well as the governments of Yukon and Canada, to improve our progress.

I hold my hands up — absolutely hold my hands up — to the dedication and I know the tireless work of equality-

seeking organizations, NGOs, individuals and allies that have ensured that we keep moving forward in our territory.

On International Women's Day, I encourage all Yukoners to break down workplace and educational stereotypes together and support women and girls to embrace science, technology, politics, math and entrepreneurship. Together, let's envision a more equal future and innovate for change.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize International Women's Day, which takes place tomorrow, March 8.

On this day, we recognize the significant achievements of women around the globe and the impact of women on every aspect of society. We have the opportunity to use our voices here in the Legislature to celebrate accomplishments and also to bring attention to the gender-based injustices and hardships that so many women face around the world.

International Women's Day started in 1908. It highlighted the continuing struggle for women's rights, including the right to vote, independence and equality. Today the fight continues for equality — equality in jobs, in rights, wages and more. Women have the vote, and the encouragement is there for women to become involved in politics and any other field that may have historically been considered a man's field.

The theme for International Women's Day in 2019 is "Innovate for change". This theme brings focus to women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and it highlights the importance of opportunities for women and girls in these critical fields.

There's no denying that science and technology have taken off in a big way in recent history. By giving our children a strong start in life, we give them a wonderful chance for a future in any field that changes our world for the better every day.

We have seen very recently in current events here in Canada the strong women that we are fortunate to have had as top federal leaders in our country who have chosen to stand by their core principles and values. We should celebrate the women in our country who lead by example and continue to support the principles that drive them.

Let's take a moment to recognize the amazing women in our own communities — recognize their accomplishments and their struggles. Let's continue to make International Women's Day significant around the world, and let's continue to empower our girls and all of our children to be the best that they can be.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women on the eve of International Women's Day. Women's organizations and the work that they do in Yukon go back decades. The Yukon has a long proud history of strong women — women who recognize the needs and shortfalls in their communities and have organized to

address them. It was women who understood the complexities of violence and safety and created women's shelters. It was women who organized the first public transportation system in Yukon. It was women who recognized the need to heal from the wrongs of residential schools and offer each other support.

C'étaient les femmes qui comprenaient l'importance de la représentation dans leur langue maternelle.

It was women who recognized the need to create platforms for indigenous women to come together. It was women who understood that without introducing young women to trades early, those professions and industries would feel unattainable.

Simply put, Yukon women persist in organizing and providing services and are advocating for change, because despite the fact that, over the decades, the responses of those in power have moved from open hostility to soothing words, full gender equality for women — whether it's here in the Yukon, across Canada or the world — still has not been realized. As legislators, we have a role to play in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure that respects diversity.

The 2019 theme for International Women's Day, "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change", is a clear signal to us in this Chamber that treating the essential work done by and on behalf of women as nice but not really necessary needs to be called out for what it is — dangerous and wrong.

Yukon women's non-governmental organizations have led the way on many fronts. For years, they have struggled against insurmountable odds and government indifference to be able to continue to provide critical services and support. Many of these organizations are on the verge of burning out their dedicated staff and volunteer boards. It is time for all of us to hear the voices of those who have served on the front line and who bear witness daily to what only statistics in this Chamber that we hear — and to finally think equal — by voting to provide sustainable and sustained levels of funding to those community-based, volunteer, non-governmental organizations that pick up where government cannot and will not go.

*Applause*

### In recognition of Arctic Inspiration Prize laureates

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I am very pleased to rise today to pay tribute to the 2018 Arctic Inspiration Prize laureates and the winners of Canada's largest prize dedicated to the Arctic and Canada's north.

Last month here in Whitehorse was the first time in the prize's seven year history that the awards ceremony was held here in the north. The ceremony was an incredibly powerful and moving night — not a dry eye in the room, I might add — with five teams receiving more than \$2.5 million, all for one purpose — and that is improving the lives of people of Canada's north.

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is a team award designed to enable breakthrough and transformational northern initiatives. This prize is also about advancing reconciliation and

strengthening northern communities by creating real, relevant, direct and positive impacts.

While all of the laureate teams deserve hearty congratulations, I am honoured to pay tribute to one of the winning teams here in the Yukon — a brilliant partnership between Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon College's Cold Climate Innovation group. The team won one of the three \$500,000 AIP category awards. Amazingly, the team also worked to secure another half-million dollars from the federal government's climate change preparedness in the north program. They will use that \$1 million to build a first-of-its-kind cold climate greenhouse and create a community agricultural space that will provide experiential learning opportunities for Yukon's youth and Dawson City residents for up to 10 months of the year.

This is a project and another example of how Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has been working very, very hard to revitalize a deep connection to settlement lands through the practice of modern agricultural practices. In the simplest terms, this project is about growing more food locally and strengthening food security in the north by reducing reliance on costly imports.

Mr. Speaker, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Dawson City residents are not alone in responding to this imperative. The facts remain that indigenous households across Canada experience food insecurity at nearly twice the average rates for non-indigenous households.

I want to thank Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in — and I want to thank the Yukon College as well for doing your part — for moving the needle and also for advancing the Arctic Inspiration Prize mission of transforming knowledge into innovation, action and creating lasting impacts for the north.

I would be remiss if I did not say that I was extremely proud to be the nominator for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in firm's application to the Arctic Inspiration Prize, but the real credit — on the application side, anyway — goes to ECO's very own Ben Horowitz. Within a very limited time frame, Ben's dedication to public service and his commitment as a Yukoner to our communities has earned him the respect of the TH firm's staff, the chief — Chief Roberta Joseph — and my community at large and all the communities as well. Again, it wouldn't have happened without his hard work and dedication. Thank you to Ben. Thank you to the TH firm and to everybody who works there as well.

*Applause*

**Ms. Van Bibber:** It is an honour for me to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party to pay tribute to the Arctic Inspiration Prize, or AIP, winners.

On February 12, 2019, the AIP award ceremony was hosted north of 60 for the first time. The fact that Whitehorse was chosen makes us equally proud. This is truly the Nobel Prize of the north and the largest single award of its kind in Canada.

Arnold Witzig and Sima Sharifi, who hate being the centre of attention but have given the bulk of their wealth for

their dream to make others' dreams come true — “By the north and for the north” is their phrase. It is wonderful to see how the award has evolved since its inception in 2012 when I was one of the founding committee members.

I want to say that handing out a million bucks sounds fun and easy, but it was not. To choose between some amazing projects was very difficult at times — from splitting a cool million to various groups for the first two years to the third, when one project, FOXY, won the whole million, which finally caused a ripple in awareness of the AIP award. Fast-forward in its evolution to the money moving from the S. and A. Inspiration Foundation to the Rideau Hall Foundation, who took on the trust fund and shoulders all the administration costs for the award. AIP has gained close to 70 sponsors or partners, and that number continually grows. Each of their funds contributes a steady stream to the funds. This ensures that the trust fund is long lasting and sustainable. With the growth of the trust, the awards are given up to \$3 million each year. It is exciting to watch the anticipation of the finalists as they wait for, “Maybe our name will be called.”

A category for youth and the prize of up to \$100,000 was awarded to a group from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, with their project, “From Scrap to Art”. Learning how to weld and produce interesting art pieces from scrap metal and junk has taught them skills and given many young people a focus. It has saved many lives, and the young men who accepted the award said just that.

A youth arctic ecology land camp program won \$466,000. This, again, is a land-based, hands-on science education program designed for Nunavik youth. Again, it was a winner because it gets youth involved in outdoor activities, healthy living, environmental studies and developing skills they can always use in the future. Traditional techniques, tweaked to galvanize indigenous northern artisans — \$500,000 to create an association that enhances economic development for artists in the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in settlement areas.

The big Yukon winner was the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Teaching and Working Farm extended season greenhouse construction, which won \$500,000. Then there was a surprise as the Yukon Member of Parliament Larry Bagnell came on stage to match with federal dollars the same initiative. They came out smelling like roses with \$1 million. Good work and kudos to the success of our Yukon project.

The final award of the evening is the awarding of \$1 million from AIP, which went to Pirurvik: A Place to Grow early childhood education centre in Pond Inlet, Nunavut. The concept is that children learn at their own pace, and the prize money will augment current programs for infants and toddlers aged three months to five years in seven communities across Nunavut.

Each project that works through the process of making an application has a chance. Although it can be a daunting process, as with any amount of research and paperwork, with the right partners it can be done so your project moves on to the national selection committee.

The Yukon Arts Centre was the venue, and the hosts were Juanita Taylor from CBC *Northbeat* and Luke Campbell, member of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. It was a mix of cultures from across the Arctic.

Throughout the evening, the centre rocked with music by a trio of northern women: Elisapie, Leela Gilday and Yukon's Diyet. Also, Wesley Hardisty, a 2012 winner of the Aboriginal Peoples' Choice Award for best fiddle CD was highlighted. Congratulations to all of the past winners and to the 2018 winners, especially Yukon's Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in farm project. Work hard to make this a success so that Arnold and Sima's dream of impacting northerners' lives will be realized. It was truly an Arctic evening, and I personally know that my friends Arnold and Sima were very pleased. It has become such an integral part of our northern life.

*Applause*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I wonder if we could please welcome to the Chamber Mr. Peter Turner from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mike Pemberton, who is the chair of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, and also Councillor Tara Wheeler from the Village of Carmacks — which celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, by the way — and who is the president of the Association of Yukon Communities.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further introduction of visitors at this time?

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Speaker:** Under tabling returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling a report from the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on the absence of members from the Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees dated March 7, 2019. This report is tabled pursuant to the direction of the Members' Services Board.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

**Mr. Hassard:** I have for tabling a letter to the Hon. Premier from the Hon. Bill Morneau.

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

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have for tabling this afternoon a legislative return responding to a question from the Member for Watson Lake.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I have for tabling a legislative return that relates to matters outstanding from discussions related to an appearance of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board chair, president and CEO from Committee of the Whole on November 15, 2018.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**Mr. Adel:** I have for tabling the 12<sup>th</sup> report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees dated January 31, 2019.

**Mr. Hassard:** I have for tabling the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts dated February 27, 2019.

**Speaker:** Are there any further committee reports to be presented?

Petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### Petition No. 6 — received

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 6 of the Second Session of the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Lake Laberge on November 22, 2018.

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

**Speaker:** Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 6 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. 6 shall be provided on or before March 20, 2019.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 210: *First Appropriation Act 2019-20* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 210 agreed to*

#### Bill No. 208: *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19* — Introduction and First Reading

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that Bill No. 208, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 208, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2018-19*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 208 agreed to*

**Bill No. 209: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2019-20* — Introduction and First Reading**

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that Bill No. 209, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 209, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 209 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills for introduction?  
Are there any notices of motions?

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fulfill their commitment to investigate the possible elimination of daylight savings time in Yukon by:

(1) immediately launching territory-wide consultations and community engagements; and

(2) committing to report the respective findings to the Legislative Assembly by fall 2019.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with citizens and community partners through the LGBTQ2S+ public engagement process to address concerns regarding the practice of conversion therapy and address them in a Government of Yukon action plan.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to immediately provide an update to this House on the current status of the health and social services review, including the target date for completion, with specific reference to consultations or engagements that have taken place with Yukon non-governmental organizations.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Whitehorse and parents to continue to improve road safety around our schools.

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

THAT this House urges the Minister of Health and Social Services to ensure that there is appropriate funding to address the needs of women and children fleeing abusive domestic situations, including providing sufficient funding to:

- (1) Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse;
- (2) Help and Hope in Watson Lake; and
- (3) the Dawson City women's shelter.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ban the sale and distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags in the Yukon.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to include funding in its 2019-20 capital budget to develop communications infrastructure in rural Yukon and work in partnership with the private sector to expand cellular phone coverage to people without service in areas including Grizzly Valley, Deep Creek, Fox Lake, Ibx Valley, Junction 37, Mendenhall and Champagne.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2019-20 capital budget to add a walkway to the Takhini River bridge on the Mayo Road to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and other users.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to use its 2019-20 capital budget to address the needs of Hidden Valley Elementary School for additional room by acquiring a portable classroom unit.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to take action to improve Takhini River Road, including doing engineering work to prepare for a major upgrade to the roadbed, road service and ditches.

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

This then brings us to Question Period.

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**Question re: Fiscal management**

**Mr. Hassard:** This government's track record over the last several years is this: grow the government and squeeze out the private sector and the NGO economy. In the first two years as Premier, he has grown the size of government by nearly 500 FTEs, and while he's busy growing the size of government, he's adding more red tape, making it more difficult for businesses to grow, and freezing the funding of NGOs and in some cases, forcing them to fail. All of these things are going to hurt businesses and hurt NGOs, and the Premier's only response is to put his head in the sand, spend, spend, spend, and grow the size of government. It looks like the Premier won't stop until government is the only employer left in the territory.

What is the Premier doing to alleviate the pressure on the private sector and on NGOs?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question.



I guess I will start with the concept of growing the government. In the Yukon government, we do provide services that are necessary to Yukoners, and demands for services are increasing, especially as our population grows. At present, there is no private sector alternative for many services, and that's how government grows.

We do have another 160 FTEs that were added to the 2019-20 main estimates to provide a variety of programs. The majority of the increases were in Health and Social Services, with an additional 121 FTEs, and Highways and Public Works added 22. The remaining 17 FTEs were distributed across other departments to support programs for students within schools, animal health and also French Language Services. Monitoring FTE numbers themselves — well, that might not be the best measure of the appropriate size of government.

With the introduction of new budgetary systems, the Yukon government will reassess how it accounts for personnel who provide these services as well. These changes will further our government's transparency and also our accountability.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think it is important for the Premier to understand that demand also grows for NGOs, not just government.

As we have said, the Premier has grown the size of government by at least 500 new FTEs. The Premier would also have you believe that he is good at financial management. The Official Opposition has obtained a letter from the federal Minister of Finance, dated December of last year, telling the Premier that territorial transfers for this fiscal year will be some \$32.7 million more than last year's budget said they would be. The Premier underestimated how much money he was getting from Ottawa. Maybe it was to make sure the financial picture looked worse than it was — we're not sure — but his budget needs to be looked at through that lens.

Last year, he was predicting that Yukon would be in a \$6.9-million deficit this year, so with the extra money from Ottawa in this year's transfer, we should be able to run a \$25-million surplus. Why did the Premier hide the fact that Ottawa increased the size of the transfer?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite should know from his experience over in government that forecasts are exactly that — they are forecasts. They are used based on the best evidence at that time. The member opposite should also know that these budgetary transfers are based upon complex algorithms and so, again, the best information at the time is used.

I will go along with the FTEs because we do have an interesting dialogue from the Yukon Party as far as the numbers and why we are growing government. Again, our government is making necessary and significant progress on cost-saving and efficiency measures. We want to make sure that we are not making cuts to services, but also we're making sure that we are looking at things efficiently because we do have to fix the fiscal situation that we were left.

The new FTEs provide service supports directly to Yukoners, and many of the new positions are short term or recoverable under other governments as well. That is really

important to mention as well, and I don't think you will get that information from the members opposite, respectfully.

The largest increase related to short-term needs would be for the old Centre of Hope building. That is accounting for 40 FTEs in that as well. As we work with NGOs and we work with community stakeholders, we want to make sure that we are working in the most efficient possible way to make sure that programs and services do not suffer as we find efficiencies.

**Mr. Hassard:** So here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has told us that his budgeting was way better and more accurate than the previous budgets. Last year, he predicted the 2019-20 fiscal year would have a \$6.9-million deficit. In December, he found out that he was going to get an extra \$32.7 million from the federal government that he hadn't previously accounted for. Despite knowing this since December, he hasn't said a word about it to Yukoners, leaving us with the impression that he was hiding it. This means that whenever the budget is tabled, it should show a sizable surplus, and I am sure we will find out soon enough. Regardless, we know that none of this has anything to do with sound fiscal management by the Premier. It is all because his cousins in Ottawa are cutting him a cheque to help him pay off his credit card.

So can the Premier tell us if the purpose of him hiding this information about the increase in the transfer from Ottawa was so that he could take credit and pretend he is a sound financial manager?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will start by thanking the cousins in Ottawa for more money for programs and services. Thank you very much for that.

"Why are we still running deficits?" is the question, Mr. Speaker. So we're continuously spending more money on services and capital spending than we receive in revenues and recoveries in order to meet Yukoners' needs. That is a fact. This is why we continue to see deficits in recent years. Yet our economy is still forecasted to grow at 3.3 percent, and we have the strongest growth of any jurisdiction, really. So as the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel stated, over a period from 2007 until 2016, our real per capita spending grew at a rate of 50 percent higher than the rates of growth of revenues. So that simply was not fiscally sustainable and has resulted in our current deficit position.

Additionally, we need to make ends meet with the problem of a growing population and a growing economy. Yukon has a fiscal strategy to meet this challenge based upon the solutions that were raised by the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel and endorsed by Yukoners to close the gap between a growing need for services and revenue, and that's what we're doing.

So this government is working to find operational efficiencies and improved effectiveness, getting out of the business of doing business, undertaking a health and social services review and also reviewing fees and fines. This is the good work that we're doing for Yukoners.

**Question re: Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services**

**Ms. McLeod:** For nearly three months this winter, the staff at Many Rivers Counselling were on strike. Many Yukoners were impacted negatively as they found disruptions to this important and critical counselling service. A concerning development throughout this entire issue was the complete silence from the Minister of Health and Social Services. At a time when the minister should have been showing leadership and stepping up to help resolve an issue concerning critical health services such as this, she was nowhere to be seen.

Now, even though the strike has ended, Many Rivers has unfortunately had to lay off staff, further negatively impacting mental health services for Yukoners. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us what she has done to help resolve the issues at Many Rivers since the strike began in November of last year?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I'm happy to rise to speak first, and then I'm sure the Minister of Health and Social Services will get up to talk about how we are working to support Yukoners and provide access to counselling. It is incredibly important.

I want to discuss first the question of the strike. This was a labour dispute between the workers and the board at Many Rivers, and it would have been inappropriate for us to intervene. It is not our jurisdiction to do so. I talked to the head of the union. I asked that question directly. It was clear that was not our role.

The role that we undertook was twofold. I'll speak to the role that we undertook with respect to the societies registrar. There were several complaints that were lodged, and the societies registrar has been working promptly to take action where we have jurisdiction. It is the registrar's authority to determine compliance, and we have remained accessible throughout to hear the concerns.

In the meantime, I am happy to leave the questions about how we have addressed support for Yukoners' access to counselling for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Ms. McLeod:** The Public Service Commission pays for the employee assistance program for Government of Yukon employees, and this is subcontracted to Many Rivers. Can the minister confirm whether Many Rivers is still subcontracted to provide these services? What has the minister done to ensure that there is no interruption in service?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the question because I'm sure Yukoners are looking for responses with respect to services.

We have clearly taken the priority for ensuring that we have mental wellness services for all Yukoners. Accessibility is surely at the forefront of everyone's minds. When Many Rivers interrupted the service delivery with their strike, we mobilized and we reached out to work with our partners. We worked with the increased services and supports to the Yukon chapter of the Mental Health Association here in the Yukon. We worked to increase services to our mental wellness hubs. We are in the process of currently hiring additional staff. I

would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Friends of Many Rivers for reaching out to come forward with some positive recommendations. I know that collectively we are all looking for solutions, and we truly value the services and supports that are readily available at this moment in time for Yukoners. We will continue to ensure that this continues from a health perspective — ensuring that the process for hiring additional staff to support Yukoners and to support rural Yukon communities is there and it's readily available to those who require it.

**Ms. McLeod:** Many Rivers has offices in Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Dawson City and, of course, in Whitehorse as well. There have been labour disruptions involving Many Rivers going back to the beginning of November. The work that Many Rivers has been doing in the communities has been critically important to supporting Yukoners who are outside of Whitehorse. As I have mentioned, the minister's silence on this issue has been deafening. It's time for her to come up with the solution.

What will she do to support Many Rivers and end the service interruptions to mental health support in our Yukon communities?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I am very pleased to rise today to speak about the progress of the mental wellness hubs and the supports that have been established over the course of the last 24 months. We have worked really hard in our Yukon communities to ensure we provide necessary services — essential services — that were not there previously — did not exist previously. We are working with our partners. We now have four mental wellness hubs and one situated in Watson Lake, Haines Junction, Carmacks and Dawson City. We have mental wellness supports in every one of our communities. We have increased and expanded a scope of care and practice — a collaborative care model that ensures we have opportunities for happier, healthier lives for Yukoners, accessible programs and services supporting their mental wellness. We will continue to do that as we evolve as a government but also with the great work of Friends of Many Rivers, with the great work of Yukoners who have come forward with solid recommendations and feedback on what they see as essential services and ensuring that we have the accessibility available as they are required.

**Question re: Government support for non-governmental organizations**

**Ms. Hanson:** We had with us in the gallery today many hard-working volunteer board members and staff of non-governmental organizations. These NGOs provide essential services throughout the Yukon. They fill the gaps where government cannot or will not go.

Last fall, this government described how they would be working collaboratively with their NGO partners to complete a review of all services as part of the health and social services review. Six months later, NGOs are still waiting to find out when they will be brought into this collaborative engagement process and what the terms of reference are.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we agree that it's appropriate for government to review the services for which it provides funding. What is not appropriate is to make announcements and set expectations, then not follow up. These volunteer boards and their staff are still waiting. Why have non-governmental organizations been kept in the dark with regard to the review of NGOs?

*Applause*

### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The Minister of Health and Social Services can sit down for a second, please. The gallery is not participating in the debate. I will allow some latitude in your responses, but you're not participants in the debate that is occurring — so just a guideline.

Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services, please.

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to start by speaking about what was committed to in the Financial Advisory Panel recommendations around efficiencies and supportive services, recognizing that Health and Social Services has some 33 NGO groups that we manage. In total, there are some 700 that exist — in excess of 700 — across the Yukon that the Government of Yukon is responsible for.

What we really looked through — and the recommendations that came back from the Financial Advisory Panel and their determination, which is an independent process to look for efficiencies in the health care system — part of the health care system review encompassed reviewing efficiencies and services of many of those NGO groups.

Now what I want to highlight is that none of the NGO groups' funding has been cut. We've stabilized the funding. We're working with the non-governmental organizations to align with that model of efficiencies and looking at performance updates.

What we have done through the comprehensive health review that was established — an independent process — the review is seeking ways to manage historical expenditure growths in order to provide sustainable health care, and we'll continue to work with Yukoners in an open and transparent fashion.

**Ms. Hanson:** Let's be clear. The Yukon government does not manage NGOs — volunteer boards do.

It is now March, and NGO funding agreements come to an end March 31. These organizations run by volunteer boards and their employees are waiting for agreements that describe their services and lay out funding to be provided. For the third year in a row, this government has forced NGOs to accept one-year, rather than three-year, funding agreements. This government talks a lot about efficiency and improving management, so why can't they understand that one-year agreements make it difficult, if not impossible, for NGOs to focus on the work they need to do to provide these essential services? NGOs are left wondering how they will continue to offer their services to Yukoners in the coming months. Employees worry about their jobs. All this leads to employee,

board and volunteer burnout. When can NGOs expect to see their contribution agreements signed, and when will this government negotiate beyond one-year funding agreements?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** What I will commit to is that we will work with all our partners. We will ensure efficiencies for Yukoners. We will ensure that we align with the compliances that have been established through our funding agreements, and we will continue to do that. As noted earlier, we ran into some challenges with a particular NGO. We are working to resolve some of these issues that are outstanding. The accountability of taxpayers' funding that's provided for the services is really essential. It's essential that we ensure all of our policies and services coordinate for better alignment for services for all Yukoners.

I can assure the members in Yukon and the members in the gallery that we are working for efficiencies and effectiveness, and we will continue to do that in good faith and cooperate with the NGO groups to work through the coming years to address growth in their organizations and growth of services that perhaps expand beyond the scope of the original agreement that was signed off in good faith, so we will continue to do that. We've committed to do that. We will link it back to the efficiencies around the comprehensive health review.

Some of the NGO groups have received longer term funding of three years that we have not had major concerns with. We've committed to the cost-of-living adjustments, and we will work with those currently — the small number — that have perhaps some efficiencies required. We will continue to do that in good faith.

**Ms. Hanson:** I said again that we have been clear that we agree that the review of services funded by government is a good idea, but government defining what those efficiencies are and government imposing those efficiencies is not acceptable. What we do not agree with is the disrespect shown by this government toward our NGOs by not communicating what is happening in this review. What we do not agree with is leaving NGOs in the dark about future funding and leaving NGOs unsure if they will have funding to continue past the end of this month.

Last fall, we asked for clear terms of reference on this broad review of health and social services, but this government has chosen not to share that information in this Legislature with NGOs or with the public.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services clearly indicate where the review of NGOs is at, whether all work to date has been internal to government, which departments and agencies have been involved and what the terms of reference guiding the process are?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I would like to begin by thanking all of the many non-governmental organizations across this territory — 700. I thought the number was closer to 800. It's a huge number, and I know that they do amazing work to create healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities across the Yukon. They are invaluable.

We just heard the question before the one that the Leader of the Third Party is posing was about Many Rivers. There is

an example where we received complaints. When we received those complaints, there were questions about what was going on, both within my Department of Community Services and the department of the Minister of Health and Social Services. Should we then have signed a longer term agreement, or should we seek to make sure that the spending of dollars is handled responsibly? I think it is our job to make sure that, when we are giving out agreements to these NGOs — which do amazing work — we also ensure that there is some way to measure the value of the work that they are doing so we can be accountable for the tax dollars that we spend.

**Question re: Kaushee's Place funding**

**Ms. White:** It was a proud Yukon feminist, the late Kaushee Harris, whose efforts led to the first women and children's shelter in Whitehorse, and it is proud Yukon feminists who continue to provide those same services. Today they fill our gallery on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kaushee's Place, but not to celebrate — to let us know that their organization and the services that they provide are in crisis because of the inaction of this government.

Kaushee's Place has not had a funding increase since 2011, despite repeated requests. They have been offsetting funding shortfalls by dipping into their reserves, but Kaushee's Place is in desperate need of immediate and long-term funding. Without an increase in funding, Kaushee's Place will run out of money this fiscal year and will be forced to shut down.

Mr. Speaker, the government says that funding reflects priorities, so when will they increase Kaushee's Place funding and make refuge for women and their children experiencing violence a priority?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to correct the record. Kaushee's Place has received the funding increase. The member opposite may have misspoken and said they haven't received an increase since 2011.

What I would like to note is that the funding in 2011 was \$1.132 million. Currently the funding is at \$1,474,000. The request that we have received was, as noted, to look at increases in supports for staffing, and we will continue to look at that with Kaushee's Place. As we indicated to them in recent telephone calls and in recent meetings, we are giving them the funding they have requested for this year. We will work with them to look for efficiencies in terms of funding increases if that is what is required.

We have committed in good faith to do that, and I will stand to be corrected if necessary, but I am committing, as a minister, to work with all of our NGO groups to ensure that they have the resources available that are needed to support Yukoners, and we will do that in an efficient and effective manner in cooperation and in partnership. We will tie that back to the comprehensive health review.

**Ms. White:** I think the minister might find that the funding increase was tied to the opening of Betty's Haven, so they are not working with more money. It opened in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and thus far the government's actions are clearly saying that the

services that Kaushee's Place provides are not a priority. The lack of funding isn't the only issue at stake here. Kaushee's Place, like all NGOs in the Yukon, is again being funded for a single year. The structure makes strategic planning impossible and puts Kaushee's Place in a difficult position when it comes to implementing their collective agreement. Forcing an organization to continually jump through those hoops, especially one as important as Kaushee's Place, demonstrates the lack of respect that this government has for the services that they provide.

Mr. Speaker, will this government commit to increasing Kaushee's Place funding and extending the length of the funding agreement so that they can have the certainty necessary to continue to provide the essential services that they offer?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Just going back in the notes here — we have committed to working with Kaushee's Place to help them better track the supports that they have to better align with the service needs. We have increased their budget by two percent. We will continue to work with them. If more funds are required, we will continue to ensure that services that Yukoners require are better aligned with all of our NGO groups, and we will continue to do that and not work with one particular group. We have many — as noted by the Member for Watson Lake.

We have a women's shelter in Watson Lake; we have a women's shelter in Dawson City. We want to ensure that we have broad supports across the Yukon. We work currently with our Whitehorse emergency shelter. We have a Housing First initiative happening. We are looking at a broad spectrum of care for women and women who require support. We will ensure that we continue to do that in good faith, and we will continue to fund and support vulnerable women in Yukon, including supports for enhanced childcare programs, enhanced supports for mental wellness, enhanced supports for any of the addiction services that are required, any supports that are required for shelters — we will continue to do that. We will ensure that non-governmental organizations that come forward with a business model that supports efficiencies and effectiveness will be supported.

**Ms. White:** Ignoring requests by Kaushee's Place for funding for over two years and then calling them today and offering \$26,000 on the morning they plan to fill the Assembly is not only offensive — it is inadequate. Kaushee's Place's expected shortfall this fiscal year is over \$520,000.

It is not lost on those in the gallery that this Chamber, on the eve of International Women's Day, is lauding the accomplishments of notable Yukon women while, at the same time, they are refusing to take action as Kaushee's Place marches ever closer to closing. This government has come to rely on NGOs to provide essential services that the Yukon government would otherwise have to provide. This government needs to stop treating the Kaushee's Place shelter as though the services it provides are optional, and instead, fund it like the essential service that it is.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again: Will this government commit to increasing Kaushee's Place core funding and increasing the term of the funding agreement?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** The member opposite raises great points, and I want to acknowledge her, acknowledge members in the gallery and acknowledge the supporters who are out there but also acknowledge that we are working with Kaushee's Place. I stated that earlier, and we will continue to do that — to look for efficiencies within their program core area, and if there is a requirement for enhanced services and supports, we will provide that accordingly.

We have increased their budget for now to align with some of the pressures they are experiencing, and we will continue to ensure that the collaboration continues to happen in the days and weeks to come.

#### **Question re: Mining sector development**

**Mr. Kent:** Two years ago, Barrick Gold made a significant commitment to the Yukon with a potential deal worth \$63.3 million with a junior company operating north of Keno City. In December, it was announced that this agreement had been terminated. When the deal was announced in the spring of 2017, the minister made the odd move of announcing the deal on the CBC even before the company had. We couldn't find any public announcements by the minister on the termination announcement.

Since Barrick has made their announcement, has the minister spoken with them to understand why they are pulling out of this project?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I think that what we are seeing in the mining sector at this particular point is a lot of moving on amalgamations and acquisitions of different companies. I believe that their move to focus their activities on western Africa has to do with their new partnership in acquisition of another company — it's a bit smaller — Rangold. I believe that's the reasoning. I have heard from their joint venture partners — which is ATAC Resources — that they felt that the Yukon was a great jurisdiction to be in. They felt that the project that they had been partners in was a strong project, but it was an overall global corporate strategy that has led them to focus in another part of the world.

**Mr. Kent:** In January of this year, on the eve of the Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver, Newmont Mining discontinued its plan to earn a 100-percent stake in a property east of Mayo that they had been active on for a couple of exploration seasons. In fact, in 2018, they embarked on what at the time was called an "epic drill program" at that site.

I know the minister had plans to meet with Newmont in Vancouver at Roundup. Did he get any indication why they are no longer interested in this property?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I had brief conversations with Newmont, mostly focused on the fact that they are still extremely excited about the Yukon. Of course, we are seeing pending decisions that are in place right now on a shareholders' vote, so that would be the potential of an acquisition around Goldcorp Inc.

At this particular time, there is a lot of excitement. I am glad that the member opposite has brought this topic to the Assembly today. We were happy to see, collectively, the industry, the service sector, all of the many hard-working Yukoners — to see that the Yukon had been rated in the top 10 jurisdictions in the world out of almost 100 countries that were looked upon and then had moved up into the top three in the country when it came to investment attractiveness.

There are a lot of good things. But really, all that means at this particular time is that we all have to continue to work harder and to not be complacent. The ability and the availability of capital are very difficult. It is really focused around the fact that there are other industries now where that money is going.

It was a very positive week that I will look to share over the next coming weeks.

**Mr. Kent:** It's unfortunate that Newmont is no longer excited about that particular project east of Mayo.

In the spring of 2017, the minister stated — and I quote: "Now with Barrick we have all the major players that are working in Canada... in the Yukon... It should be a very exciting exploration season."

With these two announcements I just mentioned in my previous two questions, mineral exploration in the Yukon is going to be taking a fairly large hit over the coming months. We know that the minister was just in Toronto at the annual PDAC conference. Did he get any indication there what exploration numbers might be this year?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think that what we're seeing across the sector is a constriction in capital in the junior markets. I know that they're forecasting tight budgets right across, and certainly we will come back to report that.

I do appreciate the fact that the Member for Copperbelt South touched on this last year. Of course, it was a very substantial year. I think a lot of our service sector and our drill companies saw those big numbers — if you take into consideration capital spend — around a quarter-billion dollars. People feel it's going to be tougher, but of course we're also excited because we're looking to see Yukon's largest ever gold mine looking to be open. That has really been the big driver. That's why the Yukon economy and our unemployment numbers — we have had the lowest unemployment in the country for the last two years at about 2.8 percent. That's why people are spending more; that's why our businesses are making more money; that's why our property is worth more and that's why — although it means that we have to work harder because of the pressures that economy brings — but that's why the Yukon's economy looks to be maybe the strongest in the country.

Once again, it just means we have to work harder and continue to improve what we do.

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

### Speaker's ruling re question of privilege raised on November 22, 2018

**Speaker:** Before the House proceeds to Orders of the Day, the Chair will rule on the question of privilege raised by the Member for Lake Laberge on Thursday, November 22, 2018, the final sitting day of the 2018 Fall Sitting. The member raised the question of privilege in response to a Government of Yukon news release issued while the House was in session on November 22. At the time the news release was issued, two government bills were before Committee of the Whole, and one of them, Bill No. 207, *Second Appropriation Act, 2018-19*, was under active consideration.

The news release issued in the name of the Premier was entitled "Key legislation passes as fall sitting ends". The opening sentence of the news release says, "Significant legislation focused on modernization, openness and inclusivity will pass as the fall sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly ends today."

In raising the question of privilege, the Member for Lake Laberge said that — and I quote: "... in issuing that press release, the Premier has violated the privilege of every other member of the Assembly..." The Member for Lake Laberge based this conclusion on the fact that included in the list of legislation cited in the news release were the two bills before the Committee of the Whole, Bill No. 207 and Bill No. 25, *Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act (2018)*.

In support of this proposition, the Member for Lake Laberge cited a ruling that Speaker Geoff Regan delivered in the House of Commons of Canada on June 19, 2018. In that case, Speaker Regan ruled that a prima facie case of breach of privilege — specifically a contempt of Parliament — had occurred with regard to a bulletin placed on an RCMP website. The bulletin spoke of a government firearms bill as if it were law when, in fact, the bill was still before Parliament.

Following Speaker Regan's ruling, the House of Commons adopted a motion that referred the matter to its Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee is still studying the matter.

The Member for Lake Laberge concluded that the Premier's news release — which presumed that certain bills would pass the House — crossed the same line as the RCMP bulletin and so likewise constituted a prima facie of breach of privilege which, as in the case before the House of Commons, would be a contempt of the Legislative Assembly.

In response, the Government House Leader argued that there was no prima facie breach of privilege and that the two cases were "... distinguishable on the basis of the facts."

The Government House Leader also asserted that nothing in the news release "... in any way interferes with the members of this House discharging their duties and responsibilities."

At the time, the Chair ruled that the Member for Lake Laberge had raised the question of privilege at the earliest opportunity, thereby meeting the requirement contained in Standing Order 7(4)(b).

However, the Chair reserved his ruling as to whether there was or was not a prima facie breach of privilege in this case.

As the Chair said at the time, "Questions of privilege are complicated matters, and the rulings are of great importance to the House; therefore, the Chair will take the question of privilege under advisement and provide a ruling when the House next meets."

The Chair will provide the ruling shortly. However, before providing the ruling, the Chair will outline the process for dealing with a question of privilege.

First, it is not the Chair's role to rule that a breach of privilege has or has not occurred. Only the House can make that determination. The question for the Chair to decide is whether there appears to be a prima facie — or apparent — breach of privilege.

Pursuant to Standing Order 7(4):

"When the Speaker has ruled that

(a) there appears to be a prima facie case of breach of privilege, and

(b) the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity any member may either immediately propose a motion or, not later than at the conclusion of the next sitting day, give notice of a motion calling upon the Assembly to take action thereon or referring the same to a Committee of the Assembly."

Once such a motion is called for debate, all other business before the House — with the exception of the Daily Routine — will be set aside until debate on the motion is concluded.

The Chair will now briefly summarize the nature of parliamentary privilege. According to the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* at page 57: "Parliamentary privilege refers... to the rights and immunities that are deemed necessary for the House of Commons, as an institution, and its Members, as representatives of the electorate, to fulfill their functions. It also refers to the powers possessed by the House to protect itself, its Members and its procedures from undue interference so that it can effectively carry out its principal functions which are to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account. In that sense, parliamentary privilege can be viewed as the independence Parliament and its Members need to function unimpeded."

The Yukon Legislative Assembly and its members enjoy similar rights and immunities as the House of Commons and Members of Parliament. These rights and immunities belong, first and foremost, to the Assembly. Members get to exercise their individual rights and immunities, such as freedom of speech, in parliamentary proceedings because they are members of the Assembly.

One of the collective rights of the Assembly is the power to discipline its own members and other persons who are guilty of breaching the Assembly's privileges. As mentioned, the matter raised in Speaker Regan's ruling and referred to by the Member for Lake Laberge in his question of privilege was raised in the House of Commons as a contempt of Parliament, which is a type of breach of privilege.

The third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* at page 60 describes contempt of Parliament as: “Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House, even though no breach of any specific privilege may have been committed... Contempt may be an act or an omission. It does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a Member; it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results.”

In finding that the RCMP’s action constituted a prima facie contempt Speaker Regan said, “Parliament’s authority in scrutinizing and adopting legislative proposals remains unquestionable and should not be taken for granted. The Chair is troubled by the careless manner in which the RCMP chose to ignore this vital fact and, for more than three weeks, allowed citizens and retailers to draw improper conclusions as to their obligations under the law.”

He added: “The work of members as legislators is fundamental and any hint or suggestion of this parliamentary role and authority being bypassed or usurped is not acceptable... As Speaker, I cannot turn a blind eye to an approach by a government agency that overlooks the role of Parliament. To do otherwise would make us compliant in denigrating the authority and dignity of Parliament.”

The Chair notes that this is not the first time that the Legislative Assembly has dealt with the issue of government news releases and questions of privilege. On April 7, 2005, Speaker Ted Staffen ruled on a question of privilege raised regarding a series of news releases that announced the government’s spending plans in advance of the introduction of the main appropriation bill in the Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Staffen concluded that there was no breach of privilege in that case. However, he ended his ruling with the following statement: “The government should take care in how it announces its intention for spending money that the House has yet to appropriate. In researching this ruling the Chair noted that not all government news releases acknowledged that such spending was subject to the approval of the Legislature. The Chair believes this statement should be included in all such statements to ensure that the Assembly’s authority is respected, its dignity is protected and the public is properly informed.”

Does the Chair conclude that there is a prima facie breach of privilege or a contempt of the House in the matter brought to the attention of this House by the Member for Lake Laberge? The Chair does not. All things considered, the Chair does not believe that the actions of the Government of Yukon, in issuing the news release, rise to the level of a contempt of the Legislative Assembly.

As mentioned, a contempt could be “Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House...” The authority of the House is not at issue, as no matter what was contained in the news release, the bills mentioned in it still had to pass the House before they could become acts.

What is at issue, then, is the dignity of the House and the extent to which it might have been offended by the news release. The news release was presumptuous. It was also confusing. Though it spoke of legislation that “will pass” the

Legislative Assembly, most of the bills mentioned in the news release had, in fact, already passed the House. Those bills were awaiting assent by the Commissioner, which is a different step in the process by which a bill becomes law.

The Chair therefore concludes that what occurred was an error based on a misunderstanding of the legislative process and the relationship between the executive branch of government and the Legislative Assembly.

Also, this error did not have the same potential impact on Yukoners as the actions referred to by Speaker Regan. Yukoners may have been, for a short period of time, misled about the status of certain bills before the House, but they were not put in a situation where they might — to again quote Speaker Regan — “... for more than three weeks draw improper conclusions as to their obligations under the law.”

Though the Chair concludes that the action of the government on November 22, 2018 does not rise to the level of a contempt, the Chair agrees that the news release should not have been worded as it was.

Further, the Chair believes that those who draft and authorize the release of government information have an obligation to ensure that they accurately describe the proceedings of this House. To quote former Speaker Staffen, this should be done so that “... the Assembly’s authority is respected, its dignity is protected and the public is properly informed.”

Therefore, having now addressed this issue, the Chair cannot be expected to extend the benefit of the doubt should this occur again.

The Chair thanks the Member for Lake Laberge for raising this important issue and also thanks the Government House Leader for her submission regarding this question of privilege.

The House will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### **Bill No. 210: *First Appropriation Act 2019-20* — Second Reading**

**Clerk:** Second Reading, Bill No. 210, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I move that Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is my privilege and pleasure to rise today to deliver our government’s third budget, the main estimates for the 2019-20 fiscal year. For our government, the development of this budget has offered an opportunity for reflection, to look at the distance travelled since we embarked on this path a short time ago, to evaluate the resources that we have gathered and the conversations that we have had with Yukoners and take stock.

I am proud of the team that we have and of their deep sense of service that they each bring to their roles. Each member of our team is deeply rooted in their community and takes to heart their duties that they have undertaken. We have approached this budget with a vision based on those values and with the responsibility to Yukoners now and for generations to come.

It is a strategic budget that supports the programs people value, invests in Yukon's future and sets a sustainable financial path forward. This is a budget for Yukoners. It represents the needs of all industries and considers all communities. We have embraced decisions not for the sake of political expediency, but rather with deep consideration and long-term focus. Our thinking needs to extend decades into the future — anything less would be a disservice to Yukoners.

Our government's approach has been methodical. We have examined, discussed and tested our ideas. We have taken a whole-of-government approach and engaged with our First Nation partners and municipal governments. We have most of all engaged with Yukoners.

We know good ideas come from all corners of the territory — all of that without prejudging the outcome. Gather the facts, listen to the perspectives and opinions, measure the possible results and then decide. It's a simple formula, but it is one that takes time and takes patience. We have also shown the willingness to deeply examine issues that have been left untouched in the past. We have made much needed changes to our access to information and privacy legislation, rewritten antiquated laws and made progress on modernizing our legislation and policies to make them non-discriminatory and inclusive for all Yukoners. In other words, Mr. Speaker, our government is working to ensure that our laws reflect a modern Yukon.

Some may suggest that it's risky to tackle difficult questions that others might have sidestepped. To us, this is part of the mantle that we have taken on — the responsibility for issues that matter to Yukoners, including the ones that it would be more convenient to ignore. It is the simplest of approaches: do the job right, lay a solid foundation, and you can build something great. It is within that spirit that we have built this budget.

Our government believes in sound fiscal management. It believes in taking a long-term view. Only in this way can we put the territory's finances on a sustainable path. We are committed to budgets that accurately forecast our spending on an annual basis. This budget delivers on that commitment. This year, the government's operation and maintenance expenses will be \$1.2 billion, an increase of 1.9 percent over the 2018-19 forecast. This is well below the 6.3 percent average growth in the last 20 years. Our spending on capital projects will be stable compared to last year at \$288 million.

Again, this year we are tabling with this budget a five-year capital plan. We introduced this innovation last year to be transparent with Yukoners about what capital projects are planned for years to come. Governments then have more time to plan projects that meet the needs of Yukoners across the territory. The private sector has a better opportunity to plan

their activities well in advance of our short construction season. Good planning means that we come up with reliable solutions for our northern environment and build infrastructure that works. This year's capital plan has been refined to provide a more focused look at capital projects related to education, health and housing — all key priorities in this budget. Overall, our total investment spending is \$1.5 billion — up slightly from the \$1.48 billion forecasted for 2018-19. Anticipated revenues total \$1.43 billion, which includes recoveries of expenses. That is an increase of \$65 million or 5.5 percent over the forecast for last year. With the rise in the average household income in the territory, we are expecting a 4.5-percent increase in revenue from personal income taxes compared to the 2018-19 forecast. Overall, income tax revenues are expected to total \$89.8 million this year.

This year's budget also shows the first accounting of the federal carbon levy. All revenues will be rebated to Yukon households, businesses, municipal and First Nation governments, with the first rebates to individuals beginning in October.

Mr. Speaker, as we have committed to do, our government is releasing a fiscal and economic outlook with our budget. It shows our economy is performing well. Our labour market has been strong and continues to thrive. Employment is high, and we are experiencing record low unemployment rates. Wage earnings have increased, and levels of consumer spending have also risen. The outlook for Yukon's mining sector is positive. We anticipate Victoria Gold Corp's Eagle Gold Mine will go into production this fall. Two other mining projects, BMC Minerals Kudz Ze Kayah project south of Ross River and the Goldcorp Coffee project in the Dawson region, are all moving through the permitting process.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon is a safe and friendly place for the mining industry to do business. To ensure effective promotion of the industry, we have committed to a new multi-year agreement with the Yukon Mining Alliance with increased funding worth \$1.2 million over three years.

Yukon's tourism industry also continues to perform well. 2017 was a record year for the industry, and it is expected that 2018 will also prove to be another record year, with increases in overnight stays, air arrivals at the Erik Nielsen International Airport and internal border crossings into Yukon. Further increases are projected in the next three years. The new Yukon tourism development strategy, developed through the efforts of hundreds of Yukoners across the territory, has set a bold goal in the next 10 years to double revenues to Yukon businesses attributable to tourism from \$262.9 million in 2016 to \$525 million in 2028.

This year our government is initiating work on a creative and cultural industries strategy. These industries involving our artists, our actors, our writers, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, fashion designers, crafters and others are a distinct, important part of culture in Yukon and direct contributors to our economy. A unified approach to support these industries presents the opportunity to make tangible and measured



strides in both economic and social development. In keeping with our commitments to build healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities, the best time to focus on diversification is when the economy is strong. That is why our government partnered in creating NorthLight Innovation, the first community innovation hub north of 60. NorthLight supports our vision of an innovative and collaborative economy where the exchange of ideas and expertise fosters individual success and collective strength. Already this facility has become a significant accelerator for our digital economy. We are looking forward to our economy remaining strong over the coming years as the territory's existing industries expand and we intensify efforts to diversify the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the territory is growing. Its population recently surpassed 40,000 people. People have been drawn to our territory for the quality of life, for jobs, for excellent access to services and for our amazing wilderness. People are staying in our territory or returning home after their studies because of our strong economy and progressive lifestyle. The strength of the partnerships that we are building across the territory and Yukoners' collective resolve to bring about positive change all point to a promising future.

At the same time, we need to prepare for the added pressures of a growing population. The trends show continued growth in our territory, and we need to be equipped to meet the demands that a larger population will have on our systems and services.

We are working to meet this challenge with investments in key services for Yukoners. Yukon has also become one of the most desirable parts of the country, something that comes as no surprise to any of us in this room or in the Yukon. We all know that Yukon is an amazing place to live.

At the same time, our growth has increased demands for residential lots and for housing. Most of us know a young couple looking to purchase their first home or a professional who has moved up here to pursue a new career and is hunting for somewhere to stay or someone who needs a place to live but lacks the means. Our government is working hard to address these needs. We are intensifying efforts to make residential lots available.

\$19 million is allocated to develop lots in both Whitehorse and rural communities in the next five years. In the coming year, we will be releasing 240 lots in the Whistle Bend subdivision of Whitehorse, including 19 multi-family lots. About 20 new lots will also be released in various communities across the territory, either through the development of small subdivisions or the release of single lots.

While the Government of Yukon has been the territory's main land developer for decades, our government wants to increase the private sector's role. As an initial step, we will be releasing several parcels of land in Whitehorse to gauge the private sector's interest and capacity in developing lots for sale. At the same time, we are continuing our work with First Nations and municipality governments to ensure that land development takes account of their interests and priorities.

Partnership with First Nations, municipalities and the private and not-for-profit sectors are fundamental to how we are addressing housing needs in the territory. Last year, we launched the new housing initiatives fund, designed to support innovative housing projects and to meet local needs. Ten projects are now underway as a result of the 2018 call for proposals. They will create 110 new affordable units, increasing the housing supply in Whitehorse, Carcross, Pelly Crossing, Haines Junction, Teslin and Carmacks.

This year's budget contains \$3.6 million for the housing initiatives fund for the second year of this five-year program. The call for proposals from First Nation governments and development corporations, developers, contractors, community organizations and the general public was issued in January. This year's budget also includes \$1.5 million to assist First Nation governments and development corporations in Yukon to build or retrofit existing housing in 2019-20.

This will bridge a gap between the national housing strategy and the completion of the national strategy on indigenous housing that might otherwise have caused some projects to be put on hold.

We are also coordinating the distribution of the First Nation energy efficiency program in Yukon. It identifies anticipated funds from Environment Canada's low-carbon economy fund toward assisting the construction or green retrofit of housing for First Nations.

We are providing \$4 million this year to the Challenge Disability Resource Group toward the construction of its cornerstone housing project in Whitehorse. The cornerstone project will provide affordable and supportive housing for people with disabilities, people in need of affordable homes and those experiencing barriers to long-term housing options. The 53-unit building will include 46 affordable one-bedroom units and several affordable condo-ownership units, as well as commercial space on the ground level.

This funding builds on the \$750,000 toward the purchase of land and the \$1.15 million toward the development of the project provided last year.

This year's budget also contains \$300,000 in planning money for community housing in Old Crow and another \$300,000 to plan and design two new housing complexes, each with 24 units, that will be built at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Jeckell in Whitehorse.

In addition, the budget includes \$800,000 to complete the territory's first Housing First project and \$1.4 million to convert single-unit facilities owned by the Yukon Housing Corporation to duplexes. These conversions allow for more efficient use of facilities that the government already owns while increasing available housing throughout the territory.

Our government is pleased with the work done across the country to develop a national housing strategy — the first of its kind. We are proud of the work that has been done to foster a stronger relationship with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

We have signed a 10-year funding agreement that will create long-term stability for further housing projects in Yukon. The national work on housing is allowing us the

flexibility to design housing solutions that meet Yukon's specific needs. We firmly believe that the best solutions are local solutions to local problems.

Mr. Speaker, our territory is rich in resources, and our most precious resource is our young people. Throughout the territory, we have students who will one day become scientists, artists, engineers, skilled trade workers and leaders or who will step in careers that have yet to be imagined. The path that they take will be one that speaks to them, but it is up to us to shine the light on opportunities for the future. The seeds of a successful life are planted by the investments we make and the education of young Yukoners.

The goal is simple: improve educational outcomes for our youth. To do this, we are modernizing education with new facilities, new curriculum and new post-secondary programming. Our five-year capital plan includes several projects, including two new schools.

This spring, construction will begin on the new French first language secondary school in Whitehorse. \$19 million has been set aside for the project in 2019-20, and we are eager to continue our collaboration with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the francophone community to help students thrive.

This year's budget also includes \$1.6 million to begin planning for a new school in Whistle Bend. This new school facility will help to address a growing student population and provide capacity for future school replacements in Whitehorse. Through capital and maintenance planning, we are working with school communities to meet the needs of students now and into the future. This includes managing and rearranging current learning spaces, renovating to create more modern learning spaces and making use of modular classrooms. The budget contains \$2 million over the next two years for the construction of portable classrooms.

In the communities, we are investing \$50,000 this year to continue our planning with the Kluane First Nation to relocate the Kluane Lake School from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing. This is something the community has been seeking for more than 100 years. In Ross River, we will be spending \$1.4 million this year to continue stabilization work for the community school.

We know that our investments in education must go beyond bricks and mortar. Just as important as where students learn is how and what they learn.

Implementation of a new curriculum centred on students and reporting on outcomes continues so that our students are equipped with the skills and the knowledge that they need for their careers and lives in the Yukon and beyond.

We want an education system that reflects this place, weaving Yukon First Nation cultures, languages, histories and knowledge into what and how students learn in all grades and in all subjects. Throughout our Yukon First Nation curriculum working group, we are collaborating with First Nation governments and elders to make the curriculum more relevant for Yukon students. Our government is also working with Yukon First Nations and communities to give rural students more opportunities. This includes more course options and

training in trades, improved bandwidth for digital learning and local hands-on learning experiences and credits for cultural experiences.

For post-secondary students, our government is committed to ensuring that we have more options closer to home. We are continuing to work with Yukon College in its transition to Yukon university, supporting our mutual goal of providing programming to meet the diverse needs of our communities. This fall, we plan to introduce legislation to create Yukon university, the first university in northern Canada.

Health care is important to all of us. It is vital to the government's commitments to a people-centred approach to wellness. Investments in our health care system are key to healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. Operation and maintenance spending on health and social services is on the rise, growing by \$25 million — an increase of 6.2 percent over the 2018-19 forecast. This is by far the biggest expense in our budget.

With our growing population, the demand on our system is only going to increase. We need to address this steady upward trend in costs and align it more closely with our ability to pay while improving services, delivery and outcomes. This is why we are in the midst of a comprehensive review of health and social services programs, services and deliveries as suggested by the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel. The purpose is simple: look at what you do, how you do it and what steps we can take to offer Yukoners better access to health care services.

It is also about investing wisely and getting the best value for money. The government has already identified several opportunities to achieve efficiencies through an internal review across the Department of Health and Social Services. Some of these will be implemented in the coming year. Although these process changes will not be visible to Yukoners, any improvements to efficiency will strengthen the services that we provide. Let me mention some examples: coordinating the procurement of drugs and other medical supplies more efficiently across the Department of Health and Social Services, modernizing payment options and models for client services such as direct deposit for people who receive social assistance and preauthorization debits for continuing care residents, and improving online service supports for Yukoners.

We also want to explore the opportunities that are available to us as a smaller jurisdiction to do things differently and to find ways to enable innovation in programs and service delivery. This spring, as part of a comprehensive review of health and social services, we will begin to engage Yukoners on a broad discussion on how to improve Yukon's health and social services. We are confident that these conversations with Yukoners will yield new insights and opportunities and will strengthen our health and social services system.

One area that will be discussed is collaborative care. The best care and support that we can offer Yukoners comes from a system that is integrated, one that does not isolate each means of support from each other, but instead combines them

— health, social and continuing care — as a comprehensive system that matches services to needs.

One of the keys to this is better communication between providers. This is why, in 2018-19, we are providing \$1.2 million to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to upgrade Meditech, a modern records system. We are providing \$3 million in this budget toward this three-year project. It will allow collaboration between providers and enable authorized individuals to access patients' records in a way that has never before been possible in Yukon. This approach will benefit anyone seeking care, regardless of where they are or what they need. It will also allow us to eventually offer a patient portal for clients to easily and securely access their own health records online, giving Yukoners more insight into their own care.

This budget also provides \$1 million for a larger secure medical unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital and \$750,000 to begin the work on replacing the Old Crow Health Centre.

Other major capital investments in health care this year include \$2.6 million in renovations at Copper Ridge Place and \$2.7 million to complete work on Whistle Bend Place, both in Whitehorse.

Strategic investments in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, build healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. Our government is working collaboratively with Yukon First Nations and municipalities to strengthen community infrastructure across the territory.

By engaging with us, these partners have been instrumental in identifying priorities. This, in turn, has been crucial to our success in advancing projects for Yukoners. Work is complete in many communities on replacing old water and sewer infrastructure and improving water and waste-water treatment. Further work will occur this year toward ensuring communities have the quality services needed for their residents.

Investments in community infrastructure also mean jobs, particularly in rural Yukon. Consider the Nares River bridge in Carcross, for example. It was the first project begun under our new value-based procurement process and included a requirement for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge. The contract ensured benefits for the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. These are factors that were not considered before and are now a permanent consideration in our procurements. It is part of a larger objective to improve procurement that we have committed to on the onset of our mandate. The Government of Yukon is implementing a new procurement policy as part of the comprehensive overhaul of how it buys goods and services. Our aim is to make it easier for businesses to access contracting opportunities while increasing consistencies and allow more flexibility in sourcing goods and services. The new procurement policy revises the definition of a Yukon business, providing more clarity for local firms. It adjusts timelines for tender forecasts and allows for higher thresholds for competitive tendering and new exceptions that respond to trade agreements. The changes will help the Government of Yukon optimize the impacts of its spending on the local economy and be in the best position to

support opportunities for regional economic development across the territory. This is a major undertaking, one that is long overdue. Future projects, such as paving of the runway at the Dawson City Airport and improving the Mayo aerodrome, will be undertaken under this improved framework, as will the first phases of the Yukon Resource Gateway project, which will begin this year with work on the Carmacks bypass.

When planning infrastructure projects, our government wants to give contractors the best opportunity to take advantage of the construction season. This year, we are issuing tenders worth \$58 million for seasonally dependent projects, well in advance of when the ground must be broken.

As infrastructure is built and maintained, we need to give greater consideration to the impacts of climate change. We are integrating climate change risk assessment in government development projects and measuring how climate change can affect physical infrastructure. Climate change also heightens the risk proposed by wildland fire. This budget includes funding for individual work on the new air tanker base in Whitehorse to ensure that we are in a better position to respond to these risks.

Work is underway on developing new strategies to address climate change, energy and the green economy. This strategy is aimed at making our communities more resilient and reducing greenhouse gas emissions while planning for Yukon's energy needs and economic future. A new fund worth \$50 million over 10 years will be dedicated to renewable energy projects in Yukon. This new Arctic energy fund will complement and build on the steps that we have already undertaken on projects to make the territory less reliant on fossil fuels.

Mr. Speaker, I have outlined key areas of focus for this year's budget. Our government is listening to Yukoners — Yukoners who want affordable homes and reliable health and social services, Yukoners who want quality education to give their children the best future possible, communities that want well-maintained roads and well-functioning infrastructure that meets the needs of their citizens. This budget responds to these needs and aspirations. We have taken the time and effort required to map the terrain, to make preparations and to chart our course. You can see that confidence in this budget. There is no extravagance here. There's no adornment to distract — just a singular vision and purpose to deliver for Yukoners. This is our north star. None of this would be possible if not for the hard work of all of the Yukon employees of the Government of Yukon. To all of them I say thank you.

Everything that I have discussed in this speech has been a result of their hard work. From the groundwork they have prepared for new initiatives to their commitment and long hours and unceasing diligence across every department, many staff have come forward with ideas on how things could be better in their departments and in our communities. They have collaborated across departments to achieve greater results.

The cannabis legislation, for example, required a number of departments to work together on a complex file with a very tight deadline. The work completed is some of the best in Canada. When we work as one government, it results in

valuable products, programs and analyses that benefit all Yukoners. The passion and dedication of our public service is matched by the passion and dedication of the people who call Yukon home.

Yukoners share an unwavering sense of community and a commitment to make this territory a better place. I want to thank them for bringing their ideas, their perspectives and their approaches to discussions on how we can move forward together to realize the potential of this place.

Fellow Yukoners, together we are on the right path. At times it may be rougher underfoot or take longer to get to our destination than we might have hoped, and the winds of world economics can sometimes slow our stride, but we can take the necessary steps with confidence because a methodical, steady pace and a clear-eyed path will get us where we need to go: a prosperous territory that offers incredible opportunities and supports its residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Mahsi' cho. Günilschish.

#### **Motion to adjourn debate**

**Mr. Hassard:** I move that debate be now adjourned.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition that debate be now adjourned.

*Motion to adjourn debate on Bill No. 210 agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

*The House adjourned at 3:04 p.m.*

#### **The following sessional papers were tabled March 7, 2019:**

34-2-86

*Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (March 7, 2019) (Speaker Clarke)*

34-2-87

*Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees Twelfth Report (January 31, 2019) (Adel)*

34-2-88

*Standing Committee on Public Accounts Third Report (February 2019) (Hassard)*

#### **The following legislative returns were tabled March 7, 2019:**

34-2-180

Response to Written Question No. 34 re: electric vehicle charging stations (Frost)

34-2-181

Response to Written Question No. 31 re: Robert Campbell Highway traffic study (Mostyn)

34-2-182

Response to matter outstanding from discussion related to the appearance of witnesses from the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board before Committee of the Whole on November 15, 2018 (Dendys)

#### **Written notice was given of the following motion for the production of papers March 7, 2019:**

Motion for the Production of Papers No. 15

Re: timeline for the health and social services review (Hanson)