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HANSARD

Monday, April 15, 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

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

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Yukon Liberal Party

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

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New Democratic Party

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

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Monday, April 15, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me welcome a number of very special guests here for a tribute that we will be doing in a few moments. From the All-City Band Society, we have Keith Todd, musical director; Toby Moisey, musical director; Kim Friendenberg, president; David Musselwhite, board member; we have administrators Jennifer Ondrack and Tara Leenders.

We had the pleasure of having some really special musicians perform for us and bring music into our building. We have some of the performers who stayed behind for this tribute. Autumn Chandler, Selena Savage, Graeme Peters, Toby Moisey, Katie Clare-Ennis, Tara Cripps, Lucas Van de Ven, Donna Reimchen, and we also have guests' family members Judy Forest and Bruce Barrett.

I would also like to welcome a couple of members of my staff from Tourism and Culture: Sarah Marsh and Sophie Tremblay. Thank you very much, all of you, for coming.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is my pleasure this afternoon to introduce Doug Trim, his wife, Jan, and his daughter Sarah Marsh to the House today. As a surveyor with Public Works Canada, he was one of the hard-working souls who helped transform the dream of an all-weather road access to the Arctic Circle into reality. I would ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming Doug and, of course, thanking him and all of the others who worked on the Dempster Highway.

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of 20th anniversary of All-City Band Society

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I rise today on behalf of our Liberal government to pay tribute to the 20th anniversary of the All-City Band Society. Founded in 1998, the All-City Band Society was established to expand and develop performance opportunities and music resources for musicians and music fans of all ages across the territory.

The founding members had noticed a need for a cohesive hub around which to cultivate enhanced music education,

organized distinct ensembles, and present concerts. From lessons to music camps to scholarships and more, for 20 years the All-City Band Society has provided resources and scope needed to help unlock the full potential of budding Yukon musicians. As the society has grown, so too has its impressive roster of ensembles beginning with the Grade 8 band, moving through the junior concert band and the senior wind ensemble, all the way to the jazz band. It is here where master musicians hone their chops and share their talents under the guidance of knowledgeable leaders and band members achieve goals and learn fundamental life lessons.

Far beyond the simple joy of performance, All-City Band members earn the self-esteem that comes through dedication, discipline, and teamwork. That expression, in turn, fosters a general appreciation for musical performance in the community at large. Performing throughout the year and throughout the territory, the All-City Band provides a wonderful array of concerts that have become beloved seasonal traditions for Yukoners, from the Celebration of Music and Music for a Winter's Eve, Dessert and Dance, performances on the Rendezvous Main Stage, a Night at the Movies, Rotary Music Festival, and their upcoming season-ending extravaganza, Sounds of Spring concerts to Arts in the Park.

Dotted throughout the busy schedule are several concerts at various Whitehorse elementary schools, as well as an annual community tour. This year, the jazz band will be giving a series of performances for citizens of Old Crow. Over the past 20 years, there have of course been many notable highlights, but the All-City Band Society has really been hitting its stride these days.

There was the Senior Wind Ensemble's recognition as an outstanding community concert band at the 2018 international Kiwanis Music Festival, and at last year's Rotary Music Festival, each of the four all-city band divisions received gold level adjudication — the highest possible.

So it comes as no surprise that two of the all-city band divisions will be attending this year's MusicFest Canada nationals, held in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre, which is by invitation only. This is the first time Yukon All-City Band members will be attending, and we wish you the very best of luck and congratulate you on reaching this very special level.

In paying tribute today to this wonderful organization, we pay tribute to all the board members, teachers, mentors, organizers, and volunteers who have made the society the strong and positive organization that it is. We pay tribute to the parents and family members providing support at home and behind the scenes. Most of all, we pay tribute to the musicians themselves, whose dedication to their craft enriches our community and will continue to take them places, keeping them learning and growing for a lifetime.

Thank you to the All-City Band Society for keeping music and the arts in Yukon vital and vibrant, for the many notable performances over the past 20 years, and for many more to come. Thank you very much.

Applause

Ms. White: It's a great pleasure to rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus and the Official Opposition to celebrate 20 years of music and the accomplishments of the All-City Band Society. We celebrate 20 years of musicality, musician development, and friendship. There is something magical about sitting in an orchestra, a trio, or a small group — like we saw today — surrounded by instruments and sound. Working with those around you, each player with their individual part that adds to the whole — it's a feeling that is hard to describe. It's magical.

Not including volunteers and the support of families, there are four integral sections of the band. The conductor holds the attention of every player. You'll notice players take a breath as they raise their hand. The conductor sets the tempo, the volume, and the mood of the pieces that are played. As a musician, you learn to read them because of what they are asking you to do. You learn to trust them because they are able to hear the whole through the many parts.

The woodwind section is full of flutes, clarinets, oboes, bassoons, and saxophones. This section is both able to flirt with the melody and set the mood with the bassline. The brass section — best known for trumpets, trombones, French horns, and tubas — this is where I sat as a trumpet player. Nothing sounds quite like a crescendo from the brass section. The percussion section — drums of all kinds — timpani, xylophones, and a million other sound makers. The percussion section is like the heartbeat of the band. It keeps things moving and on time. When you hear all of these sections together, you are presented with a beautiful story.

We thank all of the past, present, and future conductors, players, and volunteers of the All-City Band Society for bringing music to the masses.

Applause

In recognition of the 40th anniversary of Dempster Highway

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise today on behalf of the Liberal government and both opposition parties to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Dempster Highway. It's a tough road through rough territory, built by hardy people. Anybody who has driven it knows that it takes you through some of the wildest, most beautiful country in a territory renowned for its wild beauty. If you are like me, the sharp slate chips on the road will have punctured your tires, leaving you with more than a passing familiarity with your jack and spare tire and the good folks at the Eagle Plains lodge.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this critical piece of northern infrastructure was the centrepiece of John Diefenbaker's roads to resources program. As the former Prime Minister often remarked, Sir John A. Macdonald envisioned a Canada that spanned from east to west. "Dief", as he was affectionately known, saw a new Canada — a Canada of the north.

While it took longer than planned, the first all-weather road across the Arctic Circle was eventually realized. The highway was named after the legendary RCMP officer Inspector William John Duncan Dempster. Known as the "iron man of the trail", he would patrol the hundreds of

kilometres between Dawson City and Fort MacPherson by dogsled — quite a transformation for a man who immigrated to Canada from Wales. It was Inspector Dempster who, in 1911, led the search party that found Fitzgerald's lost patrol.

Surveying work for the highway began in 1958 and would roughly follow the route that Dempster had travelled on that sorrowful journey. The initial construction started the following year.

As Doug Trim can undoubtedly tell you, work on the project was challenging even on the best of days. It was the most northerly highway project of its time, running through wilderness known largely only to the Vuntut Gwitchin, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and the Na Cho Nyäk Dun.

The hurdles that the crews faced were considerable. Heavy rains often caused washouts, which had to be fixed before work could proceed. Permafrost, as is the case today, posed particularly complex challenges. Soil that was as solid as steel when frozen would turn to sludge when disturbed. Through trial and error, it was eventually determined that a gravel roadbed nearly a metre-and-a-half thick — which had to be carefully laid so as to not disturb the subsurface — was necessary to stabilize the road.

Through it all, the crews persevered. They worked long hours in remote locations in harsh weather conditions, but they got the job done. The Dempster Highway was officially opened on Discovery Day 1979. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the southern end of the highway near the Klondike River bridge — a bridge that is getting fixed this year, Mr. Speaker. A number of dignitaries were in attendance, including northern affairs minister Jake Epp. There was one special guest, however, who couldn't make it: John Diefenbaker. The man whose vision had given life to the project had died just two days earlier. An empty chair was included on the stage, and the plaque that was to record his presence was unveiled anyway.

As local Member of Parliament and the Minister of Public Works Erik Nielsen said during an emotional speech at the ceremony, the Dempster Highway was named after a man who displayed the same kind of courage and determination the former Prime Minister had displayed in insisting that all Canadians not only be proud of, but be part of one country.

When we think of nation-building projects in Canada, Mr. Speaker, we usually think of the transcontinental infrastructure such as the Canadian Pacific Railway or the Trans-Canada Highway. The Dempster Highway is 740 kilometres long — just a little shorter than the trip through the Rockies from Banff to Vancouver. Like that vital last rail link to the coast that knitted Canada's two east and west coasts together, the Dempster is similarly important to the nation.

The project drew Canadians' eyes northward. The territories were usually thought of in romantic terms by Canadians in the south, providing much grist for music, literature, and art. The Dempster Highway started a shift in how Canadians view the north. Yes, we are a land of majesty and beauty, but we also have a very real role to play in driving Canada's future. The highway is also a testament to our ingenuity as a country.

As Canadians, innovation comes naturally to us — from the First Nations who built Canada's first communities to Samuel de Champlain and the other habitants who settled along the shores of the St. Lawrence to the millions more who joined them from around the globe to build their dreams, Canadians have had to contend with some of the toughest weather conditions in the world. To survive — indeed, to thrive — we have had to be resourceful. It is who we are, it is ingrained in our DNA, and it finds its finest form in people like Doug Trim and all the others who worked on the Dempster Highway.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my honourable colleagues to join me in thanking the hard-working Canadians who helped transform the dream of all-weather road access across the Arctic Circle into a reality.

Applause

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

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have for tabling the scope of the comprehensive health review for the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling a document from the Canadian Pharmacists Association dated March 12, 2019. It's the pharmacists' scope of practice in Canada.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 10

Ms. McLeod: I have for presentation the following petition:

THAT the citizens of Watson Lake are concerned about the safety of the travelling public, including pedestrians and people in motor vehicles;

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Minister of Highways and Public Works to start the work necessary to provide for, and proceed with, the installation of highway lighting on the Robert Campbell Highway from the junction of Ravenhill Drive and the Robert Campbell Highway to the subdivision of 2 ½ Mile.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by 373 people.

Speaker: Are there any other petitions to be presented?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work cooperatively with municipal and First Nation governments when developing residential lots.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) table regulations that are required to enact the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*; and

(2) enact the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* that was passed in this House in April 2015.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Demand-side management

Hon. Mr. Pillai: The future of energy management is a key consideration across the north, and Yukon is no exception.

At the most basic level, we need energy to heat our homes and power our businesses. We also need energy to diversify and develop our economy, bringing jobs, growth, and prosperity with it for Yukoners. While the Yukon uses water to generate most of the electricity available on the grid, fossil fuels such as diesel and natural gas are also used to produce energy when water resources are not available or don't meet periods of high demand.

The global use of fossil fuels has increased greenhouse gas emissions to levels where the climate is changing. We need to take action now — not only by generating new energy from clean renewable sources, but also wisely managing the energy we generate today and the demands we place on our energy resources. Our government is committed to supporting energy-efficiency projects to help Yukoners reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

The new innovative renewable energy initiative is a tangible example of our Liberal government's support for community-based renewable energy projects and the direct action we are taking to reduce Yukon's dependence on fossil fuels. Through this program, the Yukon Development Corporation has provided advice and financial support for community energy projects, for renewable resources such as biomass, small-scale hydro, wind, and solar power.

Today, as the Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation, I am pleased to inform Yukoners that a \$250,000 contribution from the innovative renewable energy initiative will go toward the residential demand response pilot program. This is a joint collaboration between Yukon Energy Corporation, Yukon Development Corporation, and ATCO Electric Yukon. This program will make the territory's electrical grid more efficient by equipping approximately 400 homes with smart devices that will allow Yukon Energy's system control centre to shift participating customers' energy demand to off-peak hours and meet Yukon's growing capacity needs in a cost-effective and

sustainable way, while reducing pollution caused by thermal power generation.

The Government of Yukon's contribution will be used to help develop the program and purchase and install Internet-enabled equipment, allowing up to 400 participating electrical customers in grid-connected communities across the Yukon to become virtual power plants, shifting space-heating and water-heating electrical loads off critical peak electricity demand periods. By shifting customer use of electricity to non-peak hours, we hope to reduce the amount of diesel and LNG needed to generate electricity during peak demand times, resulting in fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

If fully subscribed to, we anticipate a potential reduction of 4,600 to 7,200 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions over the two-year pilot program. The Government of Yukon is pleased to contribute to this unique public/private energy management collaboration — the first of its kind in the territory — which will help to optimize the demand for electricity across the grid. This is a pilot project which, if successful, could be scaled up to a full program. The lessons learned from the project can also be beneficial as more renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar, are introduced to the system.

This is just one of the many ways that Yukon is leading the way in energy management, and I look forward to hearing more as the project advances.

The project took a tremendous amount of planning and collective efforts of all the groups involved. So I would like to acknowledge Stephanie Whitehead, resource planning engineer from Yukon Energy, for all of her efforts and all of our partners.

Mr. Istchenko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond today to the minister's announcement about the residential demand response program, which he already made three days ago. This is a promising and unique initiative, and of course we support it on this side — the goal of expanding clean energy and the goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to help address climate change. We look forward to seeing the results of the pilot project.

As I mentioned, this announcement was already made three days ago. Mr. Speaker, as you know, we only have nine days left in this legislative Sitting. The Yukon Party had suggested an extended Sitting of 32 days so that we could spend more time going through the budget. This is the second time during this Sitting that the minister has used this House's time for a ministerial statement re-announcing something — along with some of the other ministers. In the interest of allowing the House to spend more time expanding on the details of this \$1.5 billion of government spending, I will cut my remarks short.

Ms. White: We are always happy to have the opportunity to support renewable energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives in Yukon. The Yukon NDP has long been advocating for increases in funding for demand-side management programs in Yukon. We are particularly

supportive of initiatives led by the utility that work to reduce peak load demands and, by extension, greenhouse gas producing thermal energy generation.

We believe that these programs can and should be taken further. Electric thermal storage units, for example, would allow Yukoners to access electricity when it's at its lowest demand and then heat their homes throughout peak load. ETS units are at their best when they can be paired with time-of-use rates that reward customers for decisions that save the utility money and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

While we understand that YEC has considered time-of-use rates in the past, we have still not seen them. Time-of-use rates are an excellent tool to reduce peak load as they incentivize power use when demand is at its lowest. The minister said that this project will empower Yukoners to be mindful about consumption. YEC and this government could further empower Yukoners by incorporating time-of-use rates into this project.

This brings me to my next point: Last year, the Yukon Utilities Board ordered YEC to cease most of its demand-side management initiatives and denied requests for approval for further DSM initiatives. The YUB stated that the Yukon government was already carrying out demand-side management initiatives and argued that it is better to leave DSM projects to government rather than have ratepayers fund these projects. Earlier in this Sitting, we raised this issue to the Minister responsible for YDC, and he said that he is aware of the issue, that YEC was appealing the decision, and that he would share further information with us at a later date. So far, we haven't received an update on YEC's appeal of the Yukon Utilities Board decision, but based on the announcement last Friday, it would appear that this decision is no longer an issue — or at least we hope it isn't.

Can the minister confirm that the Yukon Utilities Board decision is no longer an issue and that Yukon Energy Corporation's demand-side management programs are no longer being restricted?

While we are on the topic of the Yukon Utilities Board, it is high time that their mandate is updated to reflect the reality of climate change. The Yukon Utilities Board was simply following the terms of their mandate when they denied Yukon Energy's DSM program. Their mandate only makes reference to cost and, unlike many other utilities, does not require the regulator to consider the environmental and social impacts of their decisions. There is absolutely no reason our Utilities Board should be hamstringing the Yukon Energy Corporation's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change. The Yukon NDP will continue to push for a review of the mandate of the Yukon Utilities Board to ensure that its decisions no longer jeopardize Yukon's efforts to combat climate change.

Recent announcements have made it abundantly clear that we are not doing enough to combat climate change. Last week, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation announced that they would be declaring a climate change emergency, with the chief likening climate change to watching a nuclear explosion in slow motion.

Mr. Speaker, we can and we must do more. We are supportive of this announcement, but we encourage this government to go further and treat climate change as the emergency that it is.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to first address the comments from the Official Opposition. We have heard this on a number of occasions. Members and ministers come into the Legislative Assembly and provide information for the archival record that goes into the Legislative Assembly's historic records through Hansard. I believe that is something that is important. I believe that this is respect for this Assembly. The fact that we may share information from time to time with one or two media sources, I think, still means that it is important work. I think that this is just overall respect for the House.

When we hear Members of the Legislative Assembly, from all three parties, go back and refer to specific comments that have been made historically, there is a reason. They are there in the public record and they have the opportunity to go back. If we don't put these comments into the public record, we miss out on really doing justice to the work that is truly being done by the public servants, who do all of this extremely hard work — specifically, in this particular case.

I want to thank them again for their work. As much as my critic will say that this may be a waste of time, I don't believe that it is a waste of time. I think that giving justice for the work done is very important.

As for the comments from the Member for Takhini-Kopper King, I appreciate the support for the project and the support for demand-side management. I do agree. It has been something that the Third Party has brought up. In an exchange between me and the Leader of the Third Party, we talked about some of the tools that can be used, such as an OIC, to direct the Yukon Utilities Board. We are still in a process at this particular time. The Legislative Assembly will have an opportunity on Thursday when the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation are here to discuss that. We are still waiting for a response from the board, but I have directed the Yukon Development Corporation to look, as we wait, at all of the tools that are available so we can ensure that things such as demand-side management are taken into consideration as an appropriate cost to go to rates. This is a fantastic project. It will have some very significant impact if we have all 400 individuals signed up.

I urge Yukoners to seek, as this information comes out in the early fall, information from Yukon Energy Corporation. We will do a full-scale campaign to ensure that people on the grid understand the opportunity that is in front of them.

In closing, I believe that we do, as a party, understand the urgency that is here. I have a colleague who sits two seats down from me who grew up in Old Crow and has represented her constituency very well. Of course, we understand the work that is being done. Whether it is the work that we are doing on adaptation or our energy policy, these are things that are important. That's why we picked up some of those pieces that

did not get put together, and we are making sure that the independent power production policy is in place. That's why we are making sure that we are using the funds that are available to us to have a multitude of projects — wind, solar, and small-scale hydro — but also that Yukon Geological Survey is doing the good work that they do as they go out and do preliminary work on geothermal.

I commend the staff from all of those departments. Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving us a chance to share this important news today.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Lakeview Apartments in Watson Lake

Ms. McLeod: Last week, Yukoners found out that the Lakeview Apartments building in Watson Lake was being shut down due to fire code violations. According to the Fire Marshal's Office, the problems include a non-functional fire alarm system as well as emergency lighting that doesn't work. This will result in 11 residents being evicted from their homes.

Can the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation tell us when she first became aware of these issues at the Lakeview Apartments building in Watson Lake?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will say that the Fire Marshal's Office has been working with the Town of Watson Lake and their fire services. I will have to go back to find out exactly when we first heard about it. As soon as we did hear about it, we, of course, got in touch with the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; we had conversations with the municipality; we had conversations with the Liard First Nation.

It has been an issue for some time. At first, there was work to see if the issues could be remediated. In time, it proved to be that the costs for remediation were significant, and so the choice was made at that point not to invest. When that happens, that sort of cascades everything, Mr. Speaker — because at that point, if you're not intending to go forward with those repairs, then the order that comes from the Fire Marshal's Office becomes more definitive at that point.

I will go back and find out the date on which we first heard. It has been, I think, several months where we have been in conversation. I will have to find out for sure, and we will get that for the members opposite.

Just to say — as soon as we heard, we of course had a conversation with the municipality and the First Nation.

Ms. McLeod: Last week, the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation told this House that her government quickly mobilized a team to get to Watson Lake to address the issue.

I'm trying to get a sense of the timing of when the minister first became aware of these issues so that we can understand just how quickly she mobilized a team. If she can answer that if she gets up, that would be much appreciated.

As I have said, these fire code violations will have the result of 11 residents being evicted from their homes, and

anyone losing their home is a big concern. I'm glad that some action is being taken to address this.

Can the minister provide details on what actions have been taken? What is the expected cost?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would be happy to respond to the question for the Member for Watson Lake.

When this first came to light, it didn't really have anything to do with the safety — the issue around the safety of the building. It really came to light when the Town of Watson Lake put forward a proposal to take over the facility as a result of non-payment of taxes, so that became a priority.

At that point, when the Liard First Nation brought to our attention that the Town of Watson Lake was proposing to take the facility over, we then had to have a conversation with the Liard First Nation to clearly look at opportunities to find accommodation for the residents of that facility. It was not as a result of fire safety issues; that came to light after we had ended discussions with Liard First Nation. We tried to better understand where the priorities lie and what is it that we needed to provide with respect to support to the clients. So I'm very happy to say that as soon as we were clear on first, of course, the relationship between the Liard First Nation and the Town of Watson Lake around the taxes that were due with foreclosure — that meant that we had to start looking at options.

At that time, we realized that the Town of Watson Lake did a review of the facility and then deemed it to be unsafe; therefore, we triggered of course the necessary safety measures and ensured that the clients who were in the facility were well-supported.

Ms. McLeod: Ottawa is also a partner in supporting and providing housing for the Liard First Nation — so obviously once these concerns were raised, one of the first steps the minister would have would be to reach out to her federal counterpart to make sure that they're living up to their responsibilities.

Can the minister tell us if she has reached out to the federal Minister of Indigenous Services to ask him to take action to ensure that we can come up with a long-term resolution for the housing needs of Watson Lake and for the Liard First Nation?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am certainly happy to speak to that, given that I have chaired the FPT meetings for the last two years. It has always been a priority — around equity and transparency — and that is what I raised during Question Period and during Committee of the Whole on housing. It is about the whole issue of “catch up and keep up”, historical costs, and how First Nations have not been supported historically by any government, let alone ensuring that they have adequate housing. I am very happy to say that we are working very closely with Liard First Nation and I am happy to announce that we are working with the First Nations, but also the tenants of Lakeview Apartments.

I want to just commend the staff at Health and Social Services and the Yukon Housing Corporation for re-housing all of the clients who work in that facility. Health and Social Services put in place a fire watch 24 hours a day for the last

three months to ensure that the clients were safe. The staff have gone above and beyond, and I am really quite pleased with the work that they have done.

Of course, the relationship with the Liard First Nation — we are ensuring that we support them as much as we can. We of course advocate on their behalf as well, and we do that in collaboration and in partnership.

Question re: Electoral reform

Mr. Cathers: The Premier is facing a growing list of people who are criticizing the Liberals' one-party-decides-all approach to electoral reform. No party should be allowed to stack the deck or gerrymander the system. The Yukon's democracy belongs to all Yukoners, not just to the Premier and his Liberal Party. The Liberals formed a majority government by a slim margin. As one editorial pointed out, in the 2016 election, eight seats were decided by 50 votes or less.

The Premier does not have a mandate to unilaterally change our democracy. It is unreasonable for him alone to set the terms of reference and pick the members of the commission for something as fundamental to our democracy. We urge the Liberal government to take a step back and work with us and the Third Party to reach agreement on terms of reference and a collaborative process for appointing the commission.

Will the Premier agree to do that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I will continue to work with the members opposite on this draft terms of reference, as I did last week. Electoral reform is an extremely important issue to Yukoners and to other Canadian jurisdictions as well. We heard this often when we were campaigning, and we take those concerns of Yukoners very seriously. We committed to them and we are going to commit to striking that committee — we are continuing that on electoral reform — to consult with Yukoners on possible changes to how Yukoners can cast their ballots, and we are doing just that.

This will be a non-partisan commission of three Yukoners. I did meet with both opposition leaders. We had these conversations. I did not have terms of reference on any iPad. I went down there with my ideas — I shared ideas — and I am still willing to take input from the opposition members on that. I committed to coming back to them with a list of names for that three-party committee and I will do that as well.

We are not going to pre-judge the work of the commission, Mr. Speaker. We will let them do their work and we will see what they come back with.

Mr. Cathers: In fact, there is nothing non-partisan about the Premier's approach. I think that all Yukoners see that the reasonable action here is for the Premier to abandon the one-party-decides-all approach and sit down with all parties to develop terms of reference for the commission. Right now, the process seems designed to stack the deck in favour of the Liberals. The Liberals get to write the terms of reference. Only the Liberals get to appoint members to the commission. A representative of Fair Vote Yukon said to the media last week — and I quote: “I think the premier has taken

too much onto his shoulders. He doesn't need to be a dictator."

Over 60 percent of Yukoners voted against the Liberal Party in 2016 —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am always loath to interrupt Question Period, but the comments being made by the member opposite have crossed the line into imputing false motives. I think the word "dictator" and the comments about "stacking the deck" et cetera are improper in this House and I ask that he withdraw them.

Speaker: The Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, I was quoting what a member of the public said in the Assembly. I think that, considering that the terms of reference are the way there are, it was fair criticism on her part.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: In my view, it is not the imputing false motives section; it is more in the nature of insulting language. If it were not permissible, it would be by virtue of the fact that a member, of course, cannot do something indirectly by virtue of a quote that they could do directly.

It is insulting language — I grant you that — but I will take it under advisement. I don't, at this time, see it as a point of order.

Member for Lake Laberge, please.

Mr. Cathers: Over 60 percent of Yukoners voted against the Liberal Party in 2016. Even people who voted Liberal did not vote for the Premier striking an electoral reform commission that appears to be stacking the deck on electoral reform. For the committee to be legitimate, terms of reference and guiding principles need to be agreed upon by all political parties in the Assembly.

Now that the Premier has had a chance to rethink his one-party-decides-all approach, will he take a step back and actually work with the other parties in this Legislature instead of acting undemocratically?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Maybe the Leader of the Official Opposition has not told the Member for Lake Laberge, but we are working with the opposition parties on a draft terms of reference currently. That is exactly what I committed to and we will continue to do it. We met on, I believe, Monday. We answered questions from the members on Tuesday. We committed to getting a short list back to them on the members of the committee, and we will do that.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear from the Member for Lake Laberge. The last time that an issue like this was examined was under the Yukon Party in 2004. The MLA for Lake Laberge was part of the government at that time. They appointed a one-person panel with no input from the

opposition at all. He was paid \$120,000 to produce a report that said that there was no appetite for electoral reform, so it is interesting that the member opposite will now sit here and criticize me and my team as we work with the opposition parties to have a non-partisan approach to something that they considered only in a partisan way.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of clever spin and excuses from the Premier. Now we see revisionist history, but we have not heard any good answers. The simple fact is this: The Premier cannot come up with a single good reason why he should have sole control over the terms of reference for the electoral reform commission in appointing its members.

The Yukon has a history of taking an all-party approach to considering changes to elections laws. In 2015, we reached unanimous agreement on changes to the elections laws — unanimous agreement on 68 pages of legislation. Surely, it's possible to agree on terms of reference for a commission if the Premier actually tried. The Premier has had two years to work with us. Instead, he invented a one-party-decides-all approach to get his way.

There is a very simple solution: The Premier can take a step back and work with us and the Third Party to reach agreement on the path forward and he can recognize that Yukoners should have the final say by committing to holding a referendum before making any changes to our democracy. Will he agree to do that?

Hon. Mr. Silver: When it comes to the referendum, there is language in the draft terms of reference that I am working with the opposition on to allow that committee to do so and work in that manner. I'm not going to prejudge what they're going to do as far as their recommendations. I see that the Yukon Party wants me to prejudge that and they want to put their own political spin into how we're going to move past this committee.

Again, he is criticizing me for taking a one-government approach. It was his government that did the one-person panel with no input from the opposition. He was on that Yukon Party team. We are doing something different. We are working with the opposition. We have draft terms of reference out there. As opposed to the criticism of the actual system, I would ask the member opposite to work with his leader. Again, I want to thank the Leader of the Yukon Party and of the NDP for their input into this process. We took those things into consideration before we put a draft out there. That draft, which does have the considerations from the two opposition leaders, is out for the public to comment on. Maybe the unofficial leader of the Yukon Party, as he keeps just criticizing the process — it actually looks exactly like the process that his government did — his criticisms are, anyway.

It is simply not the case. We are working with the opposition where the Yukon Party did not.

Question re: *Pharmacy and Drug Act* regulations

Ms. Hanson: Mr. Speaker, exactly four years ago, the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* was passed in this Assembly. It was hailed as bringing robust and modern pharmacy legislation to

Yukon. It was meant to regulate the operations and licensing of community pharmacies and rural dispensaries. Four years, Mr. Speaker — and Yukoners are still waiting. Four years, and pharmacists and those operating rural dispensaries are still waiting for regulations.

Can the minister tell this House when the regulations for the *Pharmacy and Drug Act* will be brought into force?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you very much to the Leader of the Third Party for the question. What I can say is that we expect this spring to have the pharmacist regulations to come forward under the *Health Professions Act*. What we did, in working with the pharmacists, was to split out the pharmacist portion and the pharmacy portion. We are still working on the pharmacy portion.

What I can say is that when we landed, we saw a lot of legislation that we were working to bring into force by introducing regulations. We are certainly committed to Yukoners on modernizing the legislation as we have been doing in the House, and we are working hard on the regulations.

We met with pharmacists last summer. Our detailed stakeholder engagement went through to the end of the year. We are looking forward to getting at the pharmacist regulations. I will provide more answers for the members opposite in supplementary responses.

Ms. Hanson: I believe that is an encouraging response, and I am just going to pursue it a little bit more. It is important that this act and the corresponding regulations be enacted, as I understand the minister is saying, because it wasn't passed in this Legislature. This was not simply about playing in the fields. There was a lot of hard work put in by public servants, by the Yukon Pharmacists Association, and an advisory committee.

Another piece of these legislative changes, which, as he has mentioned, govern the pharmacists and rural pharmacists, would outline the modern scope of practice. I want to know if we are talking about a modern scope of practice which currently does not allow pharmacists any prescribing authority or the ability to offer vaccines or flu shots, lab tests — no regulated pharmacy technicians, no ability to make therapeutic substitutions.

Can the minister confirm that when we see these regulations this spring under the *Health Professions Act*, they will clearly outline an expanded scope of practice for pharmacists in this territory?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I completely agree with the member opposite, and they will include an expanded scope of practice. I am sorry that I don't have with me here today exactly what that entails and what it doesn't. It was done in dialogue and collaboration with the pharmacists. We asked them which model they liked best. It was the Alberta model — is my recollection — that we were working from. There are certain things where we have to deal with the size of the Yukon and what we are able to do and not, but it's definitely an expanded scope.

It is about focusing on the well-being of Yukoners. It's about investing in health and making sure that we're able to

utilize our professionals to the best of their skills. These pharmacists know how to do this stuff, and we really want to put them to work because we think that it will improve the health care system overall.

We took the step to divide the pharmacists from the pharmacies because we saw an opportunity to get to the pharmacists a little sooner. I know it's taking time. I wish that there had been more work done previously. It takes a tremendous amount of work to get these regulations right. I want to thank all of the pharmacists for their involvement and work, including the rural permit-holders in Watson Lake and Dawson City. We have been working with them. I am happy that it's coming forward.

Ms. Hanson: I want to say that it's a pleasant diversion to actually have an answer that says it's going to answer the demands of the Yukon Pharmacists Association, who have been pressing for many years for the expanded scope of practice. I understand that we will see those regulations with expanded scope of practice for pharmacists this spring.

Can the minister clarify: What is the intention with respect to the regulations that are required for the pharmacies and the rural dispensaries? When will those be in place?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thanks to the member opposite for acknowledging the work that is happening and the importance of it. I agree that it's important that we focus on the well-being of Yukoners and invest in health in order to build our communities.

The pharmacist regulations — the last I heard, which was last week — are still targeted for this spring. So that work is ongoing. Still hopeful — I spoke with the president of the Yukon Pharmacists Association just a few weeks ago to update her on the progress. I will have to look back to ask about — I know the work for the pharmacies was ongoing as well and is in a different stage of development. I will have to check on what the targeted timeline is for that. Of course, it isn't just that timeline because we have many other pieces that we are working on — midwifery, for example — several things that we are working on with respect to regulations. I will get an update for what our targeted timeline is and the range of that work and what we are looking for.

Overall, what I want to say is that we are committing to Yukoners to modernize this legislation and to get it working for all Yukoners.

Question re: Health and social services programs and services review

Ms. White: During the April 1 budget debate on Health and Social Services, the minister discussed work that the now-defunct tiger team had completed. The minister said that the team, which has concluded its work, to — and I quote: "... look internally at any inefficiencies — with the eye and the vision to really look for efficiencies and then collaborate on making sure that we can implement those very quickly."

The minister went on to explain that this separate review by an internal "tiger team" found 14 inefficiencies, but could not describe all of that but would be happy to provide all 14 recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us: What are those 14 inefficiencies? Where we can find the recommendations that address them?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am happy to work with the members opposite and provide more clarity around the recommendations as soon as I am able to get the summary back from the department and of course work — I just put on the table today the scope of the review for the independent expert panel — out of that, we will define the scope. I would be happy to do that.

At the moment, the department is working on that, and so we are prepared to provide some more clarity around that and share that information.

Ms. White: We always look forward to further information.

Earlier in the Spring Sitting, the minister explained that they would be implementing policy changes. Some of the examples that the minister shared have been recommendations that have already been made in the past and should have been implemented long before now.

The minister mentioned that individuals receiving financial assistance must come to the office to pick up their monthly cheque. As recently as last week, one of our staff had to help a constituent by going to the social services office, picking up an emergency cheque for that person who had been medevaced to Vancouver, and then take it to the bank and deposit it for them. Imagine the stress caused by this one well-known inefficiency.

Mr. Speaker, when will we see this one inefficiency addressed and direct deposits for social assistance clients become a reality?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to take a moment to talk a little bit about the performance and the performance outcomes of Health and Social Services, with all of the issues that — all of the plans and all of the priorities that have been set for Health and Social Services and clearly looking at the mandate. Rather than looking at inefficiencies, we looked more at what can we do better. How can we work with our partners and really look at interim ways that we can make our department more effective to serve Yukoners better?

Part of that is ensuring that we work with our Hospital Corporation around the Meditech system. We have some really great initiatives that we have been working on to eliminate some of the pressures, such as a screening and awareness campaign on colonoscopy processes and looking at take-home naloxone kits. Say, for an example, the social assistance providers in our communities — we have been effectively ensuring that we reduce the pressures there — but trying to make better alignments with fast service delivery so that we can case-manage more effectively — working with implementing a program at Kwanlin Dün on child care services and supports. Those are efficiencies. Those are some of the things that we were able to do very quickly to address the client needs without having to do some comprehensive adjustments.

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, five and a half months ago, this government announced the formation of an expert panel

to provide strategic advice and expertise as part of the Health and Social Services comprehensive review. We asked then — and again and again and again earlier in this Sitting — for the terms of reference for this whole review. We were told that it was up to this panel to develop the terms of reference and we were also told that we would be seeing those terms of reference. We're not sure what the minister tabled today — the scope of the health care review — is the terms of reference, because we haven't been able to see that document yet.

Can the minister confirm that she has indeed tabled the terms of reference for the comprehensive health care review? If she has, can the minister confirm that the terms of reference have clear timelines? Can she tell us when Yukoners will see the final report?

Hon. Ms. Frost: We will of course be sharing that publicly, as I tabled it today, so Yukoners will be better aligned with the scope of what we are doing. I have always said that the independent expert panel is very much that — they will define their scope of practice, their scope of review, and we will support them.

The tiger team or the internal support group that teamed together to look at the efficiencies and alignments within Health and Social Services around practices and of course data analysis — all of that led up — they defined the scope of the review — oftentimes referred to by the member opposite as the “terms of reference”. We can call it “scope”; we can call it “terms of reference”. What it does — it really clearly lays out a structured process with timelines and of course the recommendations that came from the review committee on what it is they are going to be focusing their efforts on.

I believe the member opposite has more to ask, so I will take my seat and allow him to do just that.

Question re: Highway lighting

Ms. McLeod: Today I tabled a petition signed by 373 people and the petition urges the Minister of Highways and Public Works to start the work necessary to provide for and proceed with the installation of highway lighting on the Robert Campbell Highway from the junction of Ravenhill Drive and the highway to the subdivision of Two and One-Half Mile.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, that was signed by 373 people. According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, that number would represent approximately 25 percent of the entire population of the Watson Lake area.

Will the minister commit to listening to these Yukoners and commit to installing highway lighting on this stretch of road — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As members opposite know, I am not afraid of yes-or-no answers, but in this case, I think a little bit more nuance is necessary.

As the Member for Watson Lake knows, we have been corresponding back and forth on this issue, now going on for about two years. We have done many studies about the road and the lighting along the highway. We have had requests from the Leader of the Official Opposition questioning why

we didn't do this study in the summertime — and that was basically because there are no lights needed in the summertime. We have gone over that before.

We have done the most recent studies, Mr. Speaker. They show that there are very, very few pedestrians along that stretch of road, but the Member for Watson Lake has brought that issue forward in writing to me. Again, I have responded. We have committed to doing another study to see if lighting along the stretch of road is warranted, given the parameters that she outlined. So I will go back.

Of course, as the member opposite knows, we have a period of time to respond to the petition. It was just tabled today, and if it is found to be in order, I will certainly meet that timeline.

Ms. McLeod: This is a government that is suffering from paralysis by analysis. The minister has been aware of this issue for over two years now. I first wrote to him actually on January 6, 2017, so he has had plenty of time to study it.

Mr. Speaker, 373 Yukoners have signed this petition asking the minister to take action and install lighting on this portion of the highway. Budgeting, as we know, is about priorities and while the government has found money to give the Premier a raise and increase the budget of the Cabinet office, they did not find money to make this important highway safety issue a priority. Will the government commit to not lapse any unspent money from other capital projects and instead reallocate it to provide lighting to this portion of the Robert Campbell Highway?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: As I said in my first response, the member opposite is of course correct — we have been corresponding back and forth on this matter for a long time, which really does predate my term in government. This is an issue that has persisted for a long time. We have studied the issue over the wintertime to see how many pedestrians will use the roadway at a time when it's dark outside and when lights would be necessary. We are finding that the numbers are exceptionally small. I have already committed to the member opposite that we will look at this again. We will do so, and I will respond to the petition in due course.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the minister has already delayed taking action on this for over two years. I first wrote to him asking him to take action on this specific issue on January 6, 2017. Instead of delaying, he can take action today.

Since he has indicated that he will not take action today, can he tell us when his study will be completed and will Yukoners have to wait another 2.5 years before he actually makes a decision?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I want to say that we have had several visits to Watson Lake. I have been there with the Minister of Highways and Public Works, and I've been there with other ministers. I am happy to talk about it, but there seems to be some misunderstanding about the words "lapsing funds". I heard questions — I think last week — about this, so I got some numbers. Over the past two years, we in Community Services spent \$74.7 million on infrastructure. The previous four years, there was \$81.5 million spent on

infrastructure. We have nearly doubled this. We are not lapsing any dollars from the federal government.

There are times when we get more spending done in a year than others, obviously. There are times when we will move those dollars around to maximize their benefit across all of the communities in the territory. But we are not lapsing any dollars from the federal government at this point. I hope we don't do so in the future. That's one of the ways in which we are working hard to deliver this investment for Yukoners across the whole of the territory.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 29: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 29, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am pleased to rise today to be able to speak about the government's first *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*. As many members of this House know, miscellaneous statute acts are used for housekeeping changes to legislation like fixing numbering errors, language errors, or inconsistencies such as where one word is used interchangeably with another in an act and needs fixing to maintain consistency, to correct references to other acts, or for consequential legislative change omissions and other such changes.

In the fall of last year, the Department of Justice placed a call for small amendments that met the test that I've noted above for inclusion in a miscellaneous statute law amendment act for this Spring Sitting 2019 Yukon Legislative Assembly session. This call, together with items that had already been identified by the Legislative Counsel office, indicated items that needed to be fixed in legislation, and they make up the contents of this amending act.

This kind of legislation is introduced periodically as resources are available, and some members may be aware that there is a corresponding process for regulations. Since the changes are not of a policy nature, the Minister of Justice is the minister who brings these kinds of bills forward on behalf of the government, as it is my responsibility to ensure accuracy of legislation on behalf of the Government of Yukon.

Questions that are of a more substantive nature — those that have policy questions around them — are more appropriate for amending legislation or to be included in small technical amendment bills if there are more small changes to other acts from the same department. That is how that process is done. As I have described in the opening remarks, these are often referred to as “housekeeping changes” — fixing things like numbering, language errors, et cetera.

I look forward to answering any questions that the members may have during Committee of the Whole with respect to the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*.

Mr. Cathers: Having gone through the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, I have noted that in the corrections and typical housekeeping changes, many of these corrections are quite minor in nature. They include corrections to clause references, and some are quite literally punctuation or even a one-letter typographical error. The Official Opposition has no concerns with the content of this legislation. It is clearly just correcting minor errors in legislation, so we will be supporting its passage and we have no questions.

Ms. Hanson: I too rise to speak to the *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*. As the minister says, this enactment is correcting some editorial errors and what look like some out-of-date provisions and making some other minor changes.

We will be supporting it because we think that this kind of scrutiny and ensuring that our legislation says what we mean and what we intended it to mean — but when we go through it, Mr. Speaker, in Committee of the Whole, I will just have a couple of questions because curiosity got the better of me and I actually went and looked at the sections of the act that these were referring to. That won't take long, but they are a couple of questions.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on second reading of Bill No. 29?

Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

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

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for second reading of Bill No. 29 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please.

The matter now before the Committee is Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*.

Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 29: *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*.

Is there any general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I just have a couple of comments. I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak to this bill today. I will quickly remind members that miscellaneous statutes acts, for the record, are used for housekeeping changes to legislation like fixing numbering errors, language errors, or inconsistencies. I am happy to bring this before the House today.

I am not sure if there are any questions. I think there are questions from the Leader of the Third Party, which I am happy to try to answer today. I will also note, out of importance for the record, that this latest version of the miscellaneous statute law amendment act is quite large; it amends 37 separate pieces of legislation.

I look forward to the opportunity to have unanimous consent on passing this bill today, following questions.

Mr. Cathers: As I noted at second reading, the changes here all look minor in nature and of a housekeeping nature. We don't have any questions regarding them.

Ms. Hanson: I don't question the legal drafters. I am just curious, so I have a number of questions to assuage that.

Under the *Summary Convictions Act* — there is an amendment to section 32 that amends the *Summary Convictions Act*. In the third point under section 32, it says that in subsection 26.02(5) — when I read through that, section 26 deals with warrants for arrest. I guess I was just trying to understand — it deals with: “Where the court makes a probation order, it shall cause a copy of the order and a copy of section 22.4...” to be replaced with the expression of “26.05”. I just found this confusing because I looked it up — at what section 22 is covering. It looked like it was covering a different subject matter. I was just wondering if the minister could clarify that.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I am happy to try to answer the questions for clarity for the member opposite. What I don't think I should venture into is providing context for the legislation without having a full review of the sections. What I can say is that section 22.4 is the incorrect number. Let me just say it this way: The reference is that a change will be made to section 26.02(5) of the *Summary Convictions Act* and it references currently a number involving 22.4, which is the incorrect section, when it should reference section 26.05, which is about a breach of probation order. It is clearly a typo. That's probably why it doesn't make sense. I don't think 22.4 relates to probation breaches or probation orders. That is incorrect; it looks like a typo. It will be changed by this legislation to reference 26.05 in that section, which refers to breaches of probation orders.

Ms. Hanson: That does make sense. If we look down at the next area — the *Workers' Compensation Act*. During the break, I had been trying to get a clarification — where it says, “In subsection 78(4),” — it would be nice to have an instant command on these things — “the expression ‘established by the board of directors’...” — here are a number of language changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act* here.

This is a whole section on figuring out the statement and estimate of earnings of a worker who is eligible for workers' compensation. Section 78(4) says that all earnings paid to workers shall be reported to the board, but the employer is not responsible for a worker's assessment in excess of the maximum rate established by the board of directors. That expression is “... established by the board of directors” is repealed, and I am wondering: Is it redundant? Is that a grammatical kind of thing? It seems weird that they would take out the board of directors.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again, without reading the entire section in context, it seems to me that the reference there to the maximum wage being established by the board of directors is what is incorrect — that the maximum wage is probably otherwise defined in the act and the reference to that being established by the board of directors is probably not

exactly what happens. Therefore, by removing those words “established by the board of directors”, that sentence will end at “maximum wage rate”. I don't have the answer about whether it is defined elsewhere, but it seems to me that this is what is being corrected here. I can follow up with the member opposite as well if that is not satisfactory in her reading of it.

Ms. Hanson: I am just trying to appreciate the minister's response. She is reading it as a lawyer and I am not reading it as a lawyer, so I would take her read on it more readily than I would take my own. Mine is just a layperson trying to understand — and I hope we are trying to get our laws into somewhat plain language.

The minister and I had a brief chat about the *Health Professions Act*, which is on page 5, and trying to clarify paragraph 27(1)(f); it talks about “paragraph 3(t)”. It is replaced with the paragraph 3(1)(t), but I don't see where there's a “3(1)(t)” in the list. I am just curious. Maybe I am just misreading the subsequent paragraph — so that is (3) under 16, the *Health Professions Act*.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Chair, I wonder if the member could provide me with the reference in the bill and which paragraph she is querying. In the bill, I think she is asking about 16(3) — is that right?

Ms. Hanson: Actually, what I'm referring to is in the bill — in the actual *Health Professions Act*, it is section 27(1)(f), which is dealing with actions by a discipline committee, and then it goes on. In that paragraph 27(1)(f), which talks about fines, there is a reference to a paragraph 3(t), which is replaced by paragraph 3(1)(t). I don't see a “3(1)(t)”.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I agree with the member opposite. The reference to 3(t) and 3(1)(t) is not immediately obvious, so I will need to read in context some other sections where we are in this particular part of the act to determine what reference to 3(t) it is, but I am happy to find that out and respond to her.

It's clearly referencing something under paragraph 3(t). I assume it's section 3(t) of the act, but I haven't gone back up to section 3, so I will take a look and see if I can answer that as I prepare for her next question.

Ms. Hanson: That may well be, and I hadn't been able to do that tracking, so if the minister is able to do that, that would be great.

The next one has to do with the change made in the *Hospital Act*. It says in subsection 11(3) of the *Hospital Act* — and this is the application of the *Human Rights Act* and *Financial Administration Act*. Specifically in this part here, what they're amending is in 11(3) — subsection (1). Sorry, Mr. Chair. I actually figured this out myself. They made a mistake. They had the reference to the *Human Rights Act*, and they meant to reference the *Financial Administration Act*. I believe we need to ask the minister that one.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm going to go back one question, just because we found it.

It is the *Health Professions Act*. It is a reference to actually section 3(1), and then there's a subsection (t) under

that. It's the actual section 3 of the act, and the title of that is: "Powers and process for designation of health profession."

It doesn't immediately look like that because it's a very small "3" and a "(t)", but it should be properly numbered as 3(1)(t).

Now the question about the *Hospital Act*. Section 11(3) — if I could just have one moment, I will take a look.

Ms. Hanson: The minister doesn't need to go there. I actually figured it out. It was an error in terms of referencing the *Human Rights Act* when they meant to reference the *Financial Administration Act*. That became clear, saying it out loud.

On the amendment to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* — that's page 8 of this legislation — it says in section 1 — they talk about the definition of the "chief industrial safety officer". I don't see where there is that definition of being designated by the board. I didn't see that in the definitions. Perhaps I missed that in trying to do this rather quickly. It has to do with somebody being designated by the board or the president of the board.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The definitions section is also, often in legislation, considered the interpretation section. It is usually at the beginning of a piece of legislation and it defines a number of things. I am sure the member opposite is familiar with that, but there is one listed in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* under section 1, which is the interpretation section. The second definition is noted to be "chief industrial safety officer". The bill before the House will amend the legislation by replacing the expression "designated by the board" with the expression "designated by the president of the board".

In the current act, I am reading that it is "designated by the board", but once this bill is passed, it will be "designated by the president of the board". My recollection is that there are two pieces here where the words "president of the board" is inserted so that it's more specific to designate — in this case — the chief industrial safety officer.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate your patience. It would be nice if you could just sort of point at the screen and have the subsections of these acts come up.

The final one that had jumped out at me was with respect to the *Oil and Gas Act*. In this one, "In paragraph 34(4)(b)..." which is talking about the right to renew a permit, there are a number of subsections to that. They have "... the expression 'subsections 35(1) to (3)' is replaced with the expression 'section 31.01.'" — so 34(1) talks about "Subject to the regulations..." It has a whole series about "subject to". That whole section is replaced with the expression — section 31.01, but when I look up — I guess my question is: Does that make a material change, in terms of what is being done there?

There was a whole series of conditions, it looked like, under that paragraph 34(4) — and now we have a series of seven conditions under section 31. The minister may extend permit terms in this section, whereas it sounded to me like there was a bit more finality in the other one.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate that this is a complicated one. I had a bit of trouble with it myself when we

were looking at it earlier. I think it is a really big typo, to be frank, Mr. Chair.

For the record, I will say that paragraph 34(4)(b) of the *Oil and Gas Act* makes reference to subsections 35(1) to 35(3) when it should have made — and will make, with this new legislation being passed — reference to section 31.01. So subsections 35(1) to 35(3) won't come out. They refer to something else, while the reference in section 34 should have been to section 31.01, which is about the minister extending permits. It is confusing to read because it takes you to section 35(1) to 35(3), which doesn't reference the extension of permits or the concept of permits. That is the error that is being corrected here.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the collaborative effort of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Community Services for getting us through that.

Chair: Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 29?

Seeing none, we will proceed to clause-by-clause debate.

On Clause 1

Clause 1 agreed to

On Clause 2

Clause 2 agreed to

On Clause 3

Clause 3 agreed to

On Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to

Mr. Cathers: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all remaining clauses and the title of Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, read and agreed to.

Unanimous consent re deeming all remaining clauses and title of Bill No. 29 read and agreed to

Chair: Mr. Cathers has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all remaining clauses and the title of Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

Clauses 5 to 36 deemed read and agreed to

On Title

Title agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, without amendment.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Chair report Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, without amendment.

Motion agreed to

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

Chair: The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to welcome officials from the Department of Tourism and Culture — Deputy Minister Val Royle and the director of finance with Corporate Services, Philippe Mollet. Thank you very much for being here today.

Mr. Chair, it is my pleasure to introduce the Department of Tourism and Culture's main estimates for the 2019-20 fiscal year and highlight some examples of the outstanding services that we provide for Yukon and Yukoners.

The Department of Tourism and Culture plays a central role in shaping and delivering a strong Yukon economy through tourism and culture, cultural industry revenues and employment, and support for the arts, culture, heritage, and tourism sectors. The department oversees resources for the arts, museums, First Nation cultural centres, as well as historic sites and heritage properties, visitor information services supporting tourism development and marketing the territory as a year-round travel destination, archaeology and palaeontology sites and collections, geographical place names and the management, development and interpretation of Yukon's heritage and historic sites and Yukon government's archival programs.

As minister responsible for this portfolio, it is my duty to help sustainably develop Yukon's tourism industry while protecting and promoting Yukon's rich cultural heritage, its history, and the diverse forms of artistic expression enjoyed by visitors and our residents. Our work plays a key role in supporting the government's enduring priorities of taking a people-centred approach to wellness, building healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities, working government to government with First Nations, fostering reconciliation, and diversifying and growing the economy.

Our continued commitment of support for historic sites, cultural centres, museums, and the arts contributes to the well-being of Yukoners. Our funding of community festivals and events, the operation of our six visitor information centres

across the territory, and our investment in capital building projects help to grow vibrant and sustainable communities.

We work with First Nations and community organizations to make innovative investments that will lead to a stronger economy and thriving communities. We recognized that First Nation culture, knowledge, and language are an important part of our history and we support revitalizing, maintaining, and celebrating knowledge, culture, and languages and promoting First Nation art, which contribute to the full expression of life in modern Yukon.

Tourism is a key component of our economy, and we are seizing new opportunities to expand this sector year-round. We are also committed to ensuring that tourism development occurs sustainably and responsibly, always with an eye to fiscal responsibility and the protection of Yukon's rich heritage. This budget reflects the many programs and activities the department delivers to achieve this vision and to maximize the economic and socio-cultural benefits for Yukoners and visitors. I am pleased to say that the department has made and continues to make great strides in these areas as we let it be known that Yukon is a place the world wants to be.

I would like to highlight just a few of the department's achievements from the last fiscal year, many of which were in partnership with other departments, governments, organizations, and stakeholders. Beginning with the headway made toward the ambitious and exciting new *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy, 2018-19* was a banner year in Tourism and Culture. Our goal was to develop a strategy for Yukon, a vision for tourism in which all Yukoners could see themselves. We are confident that we have received a strategy from the steering committee that will deliver.

After the department's largest public engagement effort to date, the 10-year strategy that has emerged lays out the goals, values, and strategic actions to realize a tourism vision developed by Yukoners for Yukon. Through this strategy, we will ensure that the development of tourism in the territory is a vibrant, sustainable component of Yukon's economy and society for the benefit of future generations.

The year also marked the unveiling of two mummified animals found in the Klondike region in the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Because they are so well-preserved — with hair, skin, and muscle tissue intact — these incredible finds continue to draw global media attention. What I personally found so exciting about this project was the chance to showcase Yukon's unique history from both the scientific and cultural standpoint. Researchers will be able to study these animals to learn more about the ancient mammal species that roamed Beringia. The public can connect with something relatable to the species we have in the world today, making the realities of the Ice Age era that much more tangible. From a cultural perspective, turning to our Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in partners with whom we co-manage these significant discoveries, we build on our knowledge and share the stories of this fascinating ancient land.

Yukon stories are also brought to life with our diverse and high quality art. The department was especially proud of

this year's exhibition of the 2018 acquisitions of the Yukon permanent art collection, entitled *A Closer Look*. The exhibition showcased a diverse range of art forms including carving, sculpture, beadwork, and jewellery and a blend of traditional and contemporary techniques, styles, and themes. The new works were created by five indigenous artists from five different Yukon communities, and the well-attended event was held in partnership with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation at their beautiful learning centre, marking the first time that the annual unveiling of new acquisitions for the Yukon permanent art collection has been held outside of Whitehorse, a trend we hope to continue with future exhibitions.

To begin a more detailed look at the main estimates for the Department of Tourism and Culture, I will outline the overall amounts to be appropriated. For 2019-20, the Department of Tourism and Culture is requesting \$31.6 million. This is an increase of 0.64 percent over the last fiscal year. The amount requested includes \$28.5 million for the overall operation and maintenance budget and \$3.2 million for capital. Included in these estimates are \$875,000 in time-limited funding for the implementation of the Yukon tourism development strategy and \$75,000 for the development of a creative and cultural industry strategy.

In addition to ongoing capital projects, the department has allocated \$1 million to three major new initiatives: \$400,000 for the planning and design phase of the heritage resource centre; \$400,000 for the replacement of the elevator at the Yukon Archives; and \$200,000 for improved storage capacity at the Yukon Arts Centre for the Yukon permanent art collection.

In presenting the main estimates for 2019-20 by branch, I will begin with Cultural Services. This year, the branch has \$13.1 million identified in O&M and \$2.6 million identified for capital projects. The Cultural Services branch has several program areas, including arts, archives, historic sites, museums, and heritage resources, which include palaeontology and archaeology. These programs help to revitalize, maintain, and celebrate Yukon's culture and heritage and promote First Nation arts as vital components of the rich cultural tapestry of Yukon. To that end, the department has initiated the development of a creative and cultural industries strategy to better define how government will support the growth of arts and cultural industries in the years ahead.

The creative and cultural industries sector encompasses the creation, production, promotion, distribution, and commercialization of cultural goods, as well as the labour force and the institutions required to support it. At last count, cultural activities contributed \$56.1 million to Yukon's GDP, amounting to 2.1 percent of the total territorial economy and 857 jobs. This is lower than the national GDP attributable to culture of 2.8 percent. We want to develop a focused strategy that will strengthen and support the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution, and commercialization of cultural goods.

We want to hear from those currently participating in the creative and cultural industries to help us develop the

subsequent engagement process and action areas to focus on. We will engage with the creative and cultural industries sector, bringing in an inclusive and diverse array of perspectives. It will provide us with the opportunity to listen to the needs of these sectors, re-examine existing programs, create a plan that guides our future investments, and lend support to advance the industry and the Yukon economy.

My department will work closely with the Department of Economic Development in a one-government approach to this work. As in past years, the government also holds fast to its commitment to the Yukon Forum, where we continue to work closely with First Nations to explore other collaborative management models for stewardship of heritage in the territory.

Yukon's historic sites are another crucial component of showcasing our territory's fascinating past. Under the *Historic Resources Act*, Yukon has nine territorial designated Yukon historic sites, while the Yukon historic sites inventory has more than 4,000 records of places with historic significance.

The department's historic sites unit is allocating just under \$2 million in O&M toward its mandate to promote research and preserve, develop, and interpret the territory's history and culture and numerous historic resources. Over \$460,000 is allocated in government transfer payments for the research, preservation, and interpretation of historic places with First Nations, property owners, and non-governmental organizations.

In partnership with First Nation governments, the department co-owns and co-manages important sites, such as Conrad, Fort Selkirk, Rampart House, Lapierre House, and Forty Mile. Included in the total figure for government transfers is: \$116,000 for the historic properties assistance program, which assists property owners to undertake preservation, development, and/or interpretation of their historic properties; \$15,000 will be put toward the Canyon City historic site in Whitehorse; and \$20,000 for the research, interpretation, and development of heritage trails throughout the territory. By working government to government with First Nations in these and other heritage management planning activities, the department is making significant contributions toward fostering reconciliation with First Nations. Our goal, as ever, is to protect these sites, properties, and areas, add to the responsible interpretation of their history, and respect their traditional and current uses.

Projects slated to be undertaken this year include the planning and construction of a footbridge at the Conrad historic site, the first phase of restoration at the Robinson Roadhouse, repairs and maintenance of the train crew house along the Whitehorse waterfront, and the preservation of the Yukon Sawmill Company building in Dawson City. These account for \$461,000 in the 2019-20 capital expenditures for historic sites. An additional \$50,000 will be put toward the construction of crew facilities at the Fort Selkirk and Forty Mile historic sites. The department has earmarked \$90,000 to go toward the scenic drives program, which encompasses the planning, construction, and maintenance of interpretive points of interest along Yukon's travel corridors.

In pursuit of our mandate to celebrate and develop the territory's arts and artists, as well as managing the public art collection for the enjoyment and benefit of Yukoners and visitors, the Arts unit is receiving \$4.5 million. This includes nearly \$3.9 million in government transfers to various funds and awards and administrative support of Yukon artists and festivals.

Again this year, the arts operating funds represent \$825,000 toward Yukon arts organizations. Through the Advanced Artist Award, funding in the amount of \$150,000 will be made available for the development of individual Yukon artists. Professional artists and groups looking to present their work to new audiences outside of the Yukon will be eligible for some of the \$100,000 from the touring artist fund. A further \$100,000 is budgeted through the artist in the school program, which supports the introduction and instruction of various art forms in our schools by local artists. The \$500,000 arts fund provides organizations throughout the territory with support for community-based art development projects. The department also supports the operation of many arts organizations through government transfer agreements, including the Yukon Arts Centre, the Dawson City Arts Society, the Northern Cultural Expressions Society, and programming held at the Old Fire Hall and along the Whitehorse wharf.

The 2019-20 estimates commit \$45,000 toward the support and appreciation of the Yukon multicultural communities through the new Canadians event fund. The fund applies to events and festivals hosted by organizations with a multicultural mandate that helps new Canadians transition into life in the territory.

The capital budget for the arts section in 2019-20 is a total of \$230,000. This includes \$200,000 to address the expansion and upgrades of the storage space for items from the Yukon permanent art collection. The additional \$30,000 will go toward the acquisition by the Friends of the Yukon Permanent Art Collection of new artwork of significance to be included in the collection.

Also contained within the Cultural Services branch is Yukon Archives. The Archives' role is to acquire, preserve, and make available Yukon's documentary heritage, including Yukon government records. To deliver on this mandate, the Archives have allocated \$1.7 million in O&M funding. This sum includes \$75,000 in support of the Yukon Council of Archives community archivists project. This project's consultants and specialists are engaged to provide advice on records and archival management in archives throughout Yukon. On the capital side, Yukon Archives' main estimates for the 2019-20 fiscal year total \$670,000. These funds will go toward four major projects. Maybe I will just not go through each one of those.

Yukon museums and First Nation cultural centres preserve Yukon's historical legacy and bring it to life for our present and future generations. As these institutions are operated by not-for-profit societies, municipalities, and Yukon First Nations, we are proud to contribute financial, collections management, and conservation support to this invaluable

network of 19 museums and cultural centres throughout the territory. In addition to our partners at Yukon's eight First Nation cultural centres, three municipal museums, and eight not-for-profit museums, Government of Yukon also owns and operates the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre.

I will sit down and wait for some questions, and perhaps I will just continue running through my notes.

Mr. Istchenko: I want to welcome the staff here today — the deputy minister and director — and also I want to recognize the staff who are back in the offices, listening on the radio to provide information to the minister. I thank them for their hard work.

I am going to start my line of questioning — I don't have a whole bunch here today — about the tourism development strategy. The minister just announced the next phase of the tourism development strategy, and it includes kicking the can down the road and launching another committee. My question is: What is the outcome that is hoped for by changing from the department to a Crown corporation or special operating agency?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: It's too bad that I didn't get to the end of my notes. I would have gone a little bit deeper into that; however, I am happy to stand to answer the question around the task force that we recently launched.

Where we are at with the Yukon task force — their job is to look into different options that may be considered. We have appointed seven people to this task force from various different backgrounds to provide us recommendations and to research different options. Their work will come back to us by September 1. At that time, we will look at the report that is brought forward and will move forward after consideration from within Cabinet.

I am looking forward to this work. I am very thankful to the individuals who stepped up. We have an independent chair who is working on this. No decisions have been made. We are waiting for the work of this task force to be completed.

Mr. Istchenko: Both the steering committee and the task force have had membership made up of senior deputy ministers from Government of Yukon.

Is the input that has been provided and is being provided by the deputy ministers in this process being done independently of the minister and the Cabinet, or is their input representative of the minister and Cabinet?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: The work of the task force is absolutely being done without the minister's input. I do not sit with the task force nor the implementation committee — other than to start the process when we were launching the tourism development strategy — I attended one session, which was the first session, with that committee.

Again, going back to the work of the task force — changing government structure is a serious decision, Mr. Chair, and not something that this government will take lightly. We have given very clear terms of reference to the task force and they will be going about their work independently, providing the best advice — well-researched advice — to us as Cabinet members.

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

Last session, the minister told us that the idea for the creation of a new government agency came from the steering committee. So can the minister confirm whether this idea came from the Government of Yukon representatives on the steering committee?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Mr. Chair, this recommendation did come from the steering committee. The Tourism Industry Association of Yukon recommended a Crown corporation to the steering committee. After hearing a lot of questions when the first draft was tabled with me, they went back and changed the recommendation to forming a task force to look at recommendations around a new governance model. So this actually came from the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon directly.

Mr. Istchenko: Can the minister answer: What position have the Government of Yukon representatives on that steering committee taken with respect to the creation of a new government agency?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will go right into some items within the terms of reference that we made public the day the task force was launched. The mandate of the task force is to assess tourism destination governance models against a set of criteria, rank these models based on their ability to achieve the vision, goals, and values of the Yukon tourism development strategy, and recommend a ranked list of models for consideration by government.

Government officials have not taken a position on this. They have worked as a collective with the steering committee and they will work as a collective with this new task force that has just been launched. The task force will assess tourism destination governance models against the vision, goals, and values of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. Everything will be looked at through that lens — accountability to the diversity of interests within the Yukon tourism sector and the Yukon public, revenue generation and capabilities, performance-pay funding models, flexibility and agility to respond to marketing conditions, competitiveness, stakeholder involvement in decision-making, something fit for Yukon, and our other criteria as deemed appropriate by the task force.

Mr. Istchenko: Just to confirm from what the minister said — the Yukon government representatives on that steering committee did not have a position or take a position with respect to the creation of a new government agency?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: That is correct.

Mr. Istchenko: We do look forward to the work that is going to be done and that the minister will get on September 1. I hope that she will table everything in the House — open and transparent, one-government approach.

I have some questions about the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre. As the minister knows, the visitor information centre in Watson Lake is moving over to the Watson Lake Recreation Centre for a two-year period. Can the minister tell us why this is happening now? What does the minister expect to get done in the next two years to replace the visitor information centre?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: As this House knows — because we have talked about it in the House within my mandate, and I know it has been discussed in previous mandates of other governments — the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre is at the end of its life cycle. It was really very unfortunate that, to further add to the woes of the visitor information centre in Watson Lake, there was a flood that happened during a cold period of weather in Watson Lake. Pipes broke, causing flooding within the visitor information centre and extensive damage.

We had to reassess and look at other options, so we worked with our stakeholders in Watson Lake, came up with an immediate and viable option, and worked with the Town of Watson Lake to move the visitor information centre into one of their facilities. They have identified the Watson Lake Recreation Centre, which is right next to where the visitor information centre is currently located and has been located, right by the Sign Post Forest.

We have entered into a new contract with them for a two-year period. As we continue the planning around the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre — we have had many discussions along the way, looking at different options around the building of a new Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre — the replacement of it. We will continue to work with our partners in Watson Lake to advance those discussions. I can assure Yukoners that visitor information services will continue in Watson Lake, and our staff have done very good work between the Tourism and Culture department and Highways and Public Works to put this arrangement in place for the upcoming season.

Mr. Istchenko: We notice that it is not in this government's five-year capital concept. I wonder if the replacement will be in their five-year capital concept. Also, the minister talks about partners, but who is the minister currently consulting with on these plans?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: In terms of the first part of the question around the five-year capital plan — we will have to determine where we are going with this. We have certainly been in discussions with our partners in Watson Lake, which include Liard First Nation, Watson Lake Chamber of Commerce, and the Town of Watson Lake. There is consensus right now to work together and explore what this looks like into the future. There are a lot of options that are being talked about. Once we know what our role will be in the development of a visitor information centre in Watson Lake, we will then bring that back to our Cabinet colleagues — I will bring that back to discuss with Cabinet to determine the next steps in the Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre development.

Mr. Istchenko: Can the minister please confirm if the government has plans to demolish the current visitor information centre building this year?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Right now, Highways and Public Works is determining next steps with the facility, and I would be happy to bring information forward to the House — once I have it — in terms of those next steps. At this point,

Highways and Public Works is the lead on that aspect of this facility.

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

Watson Lake has also started a conversation about a community strategic plan, of which the visitor information centre of course would be a part. As the visitor information centre replacement should be a community-driven process, does the minister intend to be part of this discussion prior to the advancement of this project?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: As I have indicated to this House many times, I am very committed to communities throughout the Yukon. I have been to Watson Lake a number of times. I have met with the partners. I absolutely will be part of discussions around planning and any strategic developments that the community is undertaking. I would be happy to be a partner in those discussions, and I look forward to them. This is a community that has great potential, Mr. Chair. It is one of our tourism gateways and we recognize that — but more than that, we think that tourism can be a social driver as well and a way of moving toward even greater self-determination for the community.

I absolutely look forward to those discussions.

Mr. Istchenko: On May 3, there is a public engagement taking place on the development of what is called a “creative and cultural industries strategy”. The minister has spoken about this. Can the minister tell the House whether this is part of the overall *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, or is this a separate strategy?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. What we determined when we were going through the consultation and looking at what we heard from across the territory is how deeply rooted the creative and cultural industries are within tourism. It came up over and over and over. What we determined, as we were going through, is that Yukon is absolutely at the right place to advance this area of our industry. It relates very, very closely to tourism, but it enhances the well-being of our communities. I am convinced that our communities are ready for this stage of development. This will be a distinct strategy, but it will be related. We are taking a one-government approach as we move forward — which is bringing in Economic Development, having Education involved, and having Community Services and sport involved.

It is certainly going to be a one-government approach, and we are looking forward to the first roundtable to determine next steps and to work with the sector on May 3 to determine a pathway forward and work from the onset of this to determine the very best way to achieve a strategy that will work for Yukoners. I am very excited about the work that is going to start. There is a lot of momentum being built out there in the Yukon right now, as we speak.

Again, we haven't had a strategy like this and we are really looking forward to working with all of our partners, but all of our communities as well. This is such a great opportunity for rural communities to participate in the economy in ways that we haven't seen before.

Mr. Istchenko: I have a question about the memorandum of understanding supporting indigenous tourism that was signed. We see an additional \$300,000 allotted to the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association. So is this project specific, or is it so that they can expand their marketing? I am just looking for a little bit more detail than that.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. That is true; we signed a memorandum of understanding with Indigenous Tourism Canada and the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association. I will advise the House — potentially members may not be aware — that the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association are in the process of developing a 10-year strategy that will absolutely align with the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. Within the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, there is a pillar that is dedicated completely to the development of indigenous tourism in Yukon. This \$300,000 that we have allocated is subject to their action plan and their strategy being developed. They will work with CanNor to leverage more funding. This is part of the matching funds for their CanNor application.

I would like to say as well that when Keith Henry was here — when we signed the memorandum of understanding with those two partners — he indicated that there are no other regions that have done this — that have actually committed a pillar within a strategy to indigenous tourism. Our aim is to build Yukon into a premier indigenous tourism destination. That is one of our high goals. Our partnership with the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, along with Yukon First Nations and development corporations throughout the territory, will help us achieve that. This memorandum of understanding is a foundational piece to how we will work together, what we will do together, and how we will support that development. That is why it became part of the first round of implementation dollars for the tourism development strategy.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for those remarks. I agree wholeheartedly about First Nation culture being in the tourism industry. I was a part of the tourism industry as a guide for many years, and there are many great businesses in the riding of Kluane that promote that. The tourists just love seeing that.

I am going to switch gears a little bit and head up to Dawson City, to the museum. It's getting an addition of \$250,000 over the next two years for a new exhibit. Is this revamping their current space in any way or just changing the way things are displayed? Just a bit more detail on that, please.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I do want to go back to the last question, because I didn't answer all of it — I just realized that. He had asked about the marketing and whether the \$300,000 was to market. Yukon Tourism will continue to do the marketing and we will continue to work with Destination Canada around the marketing; primarily, the work that Yukon First Nation culture and tourism will do is around visitor experience development. That is where we are lacking in Yukon, so that is a really big part of the work that they will do

to the enhance visitor experience, to build that part of indigenous tourism, and to work with all of our partners.

On the Dawson City Museum exhibit renewal, we have \$250,000 for each of the next two years — so a total of \$500,000 has been allocated to this. This is multi-year — again, it will take some time, but it is about the exhibit redevelopment at the Dawson City Museum. They are going to be redoing all of their exhibits, and this will align with their anniversary. Highways and Public Works is doing extensive work as well with the Dawson City Museum to address some challenges. Again, they will be doing the permanent exhibits in the museum which require updating or replacing. Archival storage has exceeded its capacity and its offices are very inconveniently located on the second floor. To address the challenges, the museum is planning a renewal of the offices, archival storage, the exhibits, and the gallery spaces.

At this point, Government of Yukon has committed the \$500,000 over the next two years — so 2019-20 and 2020-21 — to the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society to assist with its renewal project. The Department of Tourism and Culture staff continue to work very closely of course with the museum to identify other possible sources of funding. I know that they are working with the federal government on funding applications. All of this work will align with the anniversary that is coming up in a couple of years — the 125th anniversary of Dawson City.

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

As we know — I will switch gears again and head out to Kluane country — there is an economic development forum later this month. The minister has made comments about increasing the GDP in tourism in 10 years — doubling the GDP in tourism in 10 years. I am just curious — when the minister is out there — I know that the minister, the Minister of Economic Development and I and some other keynote speakers will be there. I am just curious as to some of the remarks the Tourism minister will have on the subject — as she's the tourism minister — on how they are going to grow the GDP in the Kluane area.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I am absolutely excited to be going to this economic forum. It is true that the Minister of Economic Development and I will both be attending. My focus of course will be on the new *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, and I will also be talking quite a lot about the creative and cultural industries strategy.

I just want to clarify one comment that the member opposite made about doubling GDP in reference to the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — our goal is actually to double revenue in the next 10 years. That is something that I am happy to stand and talk about.

When we did the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — as it was developing, we heard from Yukoners about all of those values that they identified as being very important to them and the caution around over-tourism. The doubling of revenue is not in reference to more visitors in Yukon. We already have 450,000 visitors a year coming to Yukon. The types of markets that are interested in coming and visiting our Yukon Territory are markets that we can market to stay longer

and spend more. That lines up really well with what Yukoners expect and what will help them to feel good about tourism in Yukon. What we found is that most Yukoners were really quite happy in sharing Yukon, but were not interested in having those numbers double or triple in order to gain more revenue. They are interested in having people come and experience Yukon under the values that they hold very closely to them — that we are proud of our territory and that we love our natural beauty and want to protect it. Many other jurisdictions and many other parts of the world are absolutely looking at how to achieve sustainable tourism, and we actually have a plan in Yukon. We are ahead of the curve here, having the whole Yukon come together to develop a strategy that has an eye on sustainability, that has an eye on ensuring that we protect our environment while sharing our Yukon in the best and most authentic way that we possibly can.

I am very excited about the session in Kluane. I am looking forward to talking to all of the participants about how we got to the end results of this new *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — how Yukon government is one partner in that strategy and that we have many partners around the table who are from industry and from not-for-profits — we have everyone around that table and every region around that table.

I am absolutely looking forward to helping to shape what tourism looks like in the Kluane corridor, and I am excited to have the conversation with the community there. I know that there are a lot of really exciting projects that I have heard about and that are under development. We hope to see them come to reality.

Mr. Istchenko: I thank the minister for that. I just want to go back — the minister had spoken about the tourism development strategy, the steering committee, and the task force. One last question: Is the minister saying that the government members on the steering committee and task force are providing all of their advice and input without any discussions or input from the minister or Cabinet? I am not sure if I had asked that.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I did say that the work that the tourism steering committee did was independent and that they had no direct influence from the Cabinet office. That is what we set out to do, and that is what we achieved, I think. What you see is what you get. There was no hidden agenda to direct, in any way, how this developed. That was my very, very clear direction from the very start of this — that we wanted to develop a tourism plan that wasn't a Government of Yukon plan — that it was a *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* plan that brought all the partners together — which we did — and we were but one partner in that, to create an ethical space in the middle where we can work together and support bringing tourism to the next level in Yukon.

My mandate letter clearly said — and our platform said — to increase the number of visitors in Yukon. We listened to Yukoners. The result was different from what was in my mandate letter and what was in our platform. We absolutely listened to Yukoners. They said, "No, this is something that is important to us." They gave us those values. We now will

look through those values in every single decision we make as we go forward and develop tourism.

My direction was very, very clear to the staff who worked on behalf of Government of Yukon in that steering committee — and as they go forward on the task force and as they go forward on the implementation — that we are one partner. We are not an island. The world does not revolve around one government. The government system in Yukon is much different. We have modern treaties. We have many partners who sit around that table. That was clearly articulated, embraced, and followed by the staff who sit on those committees on our behalf.

Mr. Istchenko: Then this begs the question: Who gives the Government of Yukon members on the steering committee their mandate as to which issues to raise? Are they just on the committee as individuals, or are they there as deputy ministers?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Our deputy ministers are there as deputy ministers. They represent government. Again, I will emphasize that we are but one partner at that table. This is not something — there are certainly aspects of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* that clearly fall in our lap to make decisions. One of them is the governance structure. That is not a decision that we are going to take lightly. When the recommendation came forward to form a task force to look at options around governance, we endorsed that, and we are doing it. We will gather the evidence, the committee will bring forward the recommendations to me, I will then bring it forward to my Cabinet colleagues, we will have the discussion, we will assess, and we will move forward on next steps.

Mr. Istchenko: I guess we look forward to the work when everything comes forward here, when it's all finished.

That ends my questioning for the day. I want to thank the minister, and I do want thank the staff who are here today. I will turn it over to the Third Party. Have a wonderful day, everyone.

Ms. Hanson: I welcome the officials here today as well. I just want to start, perhaps, with a few questions.

Picking up from the Member for Kluane speaking about the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* — first of all, I want to step back and say that I think it is good to see the putting in place of the basis for a planning exercise that, if I look at — and I am hoping that we are going to see it populated over the next year or so with each of these — there is a number of action plans that are articulated with a number of sub-points to them and, most importantly, an appendix that talks about and establishes both the measurement of goals and the principles for measurement of goals. That's going to be vitally important in terms of the accountability for this exercise.

I just want to clarify with the minister — when I look at the Department of Tourism and Culture's 2019-20 budget — when we had the briefing — on the briefing document, there is an indication that we have \$875,000. This relates to the 0.9-percent increase in the tourism budget from the previous year — so \$875,000 for the implementation of the *Yukon*

Tourism Development Strategy. Further down, we see another \$375,000. This is the line that says the increase of \$240,000 from 2018-19 is mainly due to the implementation of this strategy, but the \$875,000 says it's for the implementation of the tourism strategy.

Are we talking about \$875,000 plus \$375,000? That's \$1.25 million, plus the \$50,000 recently announced to establish the task force on governance, and the \$70,000 for cultural and creative industries strategies. How much is in fact being spent on strategies related to Tourism and Culture this fiscal year? Am I correct that it is \$875,000 plus \$375,000, or are there a number of little bundles of strategies all over the place? If I can get one breakdown of the strategies and the cumulative total, that would be helpful.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. To clarify, the \$875,000 is for the implementation of the strategy. The creative and cultural industries are on top of that. It is a different line item.

I will just quickly run through them: \$300,000 to support the indigenous tourism aspect, which we have talked about through questions from the Official Opposition; \$150,000 to improve signage; \$75,000 to support experience development; \$25,000 to support the extension of the steering committee — so that's the continued work of the implementation steering committee; \$50,000 to support the governance task force — that is the one that we talked about a few moments ago in terms of the work they will do and complete by September 1; and \$50,000 to establish a sustainability framework — this is something very new; we have not had that previously. One of the goals of the strategy is to build this so that we can measure and really make sure we are on track in terms of working toward building tourism in a sustainable way. There is also \$25,000 to conduct a resident survey. This will form the basis, again — one of the goals is to achieve 80-percent Yukon satisfaction around tourism in Yukon, so we need a starting point. We need a foundational assessment of that, so that is what it is for. There is also \$200,000 to support the two positions to assist in the strategy's implementation and sustainability framework. So that is what those two positions are for.

I will sit now and we can continue on with other questions around that, if the member opposite prefers.

Ms. Hanson: Can the minister outline in a bit more detail how the \$150,000 to establish a framework that measures the sustainability of tourism development — what are the guidelines that are being used, who is it being carried out by, and what are the kind of metrics that are anticipated to be used here?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will just go back. The steering committee has agreed to stay on for the next 12 months — I know that it is a little bit off, and I will get to the question — to oversee the implementation of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. One of the tools that they are using is the United Nations sustainable tourism framework, so it will be very much based on that. We will have a person internally who will work on that framework specifically. Again, this is not a tool that we have had in the past, but we wanted to make

sure that we had a way to measure and ensure that we are on the right track, and utilizing the United Nations sustainable tourism framework is a well-established view on this whole area of work.

I'm not sure if that fully answers the question. Perhaps the member can just ask again.

Ms. Hanson: If I understand correctly, the minister is indicating — and I was asking specifically about the \$150,000 to establish a framework that measures the sustainability of tourism development in Yukon — that part of that will be referencing — and maybe an underpinning of it would be the United Nations sustainability parameters, but what I was asking about was: Is this being done internal to government? Is this a contract? Who is doing the contract? When is it going to be completed? When will this framework be in place?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: We have hired a person internally for the next 12 months. This person just started two weeks ago. The sustainable tourism advisor position is responsible for developing the sustainable framework. This is a one-year term. The advisor will monitor the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* goals and support the resident survey and the development of the action plan metrics. That is \$100,000. For research and engagement necessary to develop the framework, we are allocating \$50,000 — so that makes up the \$150,000.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for clarifying that.

When I looked at the press release for the development of the options around a governance model on tourism, I was very curious as to — I can understand why the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture would be involved, because they are the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture. What I was less clear about was the intention — or even the appropriateness, quite frankly — of any role of the Public Service Commissioner vis-à-vis a review or development of a governance structure. I say that because, if we were looking at a major review — say for Health and Social Services, which has hundreds of employees — regardless of the number — the 110 full-time employees for tourism — the Public Service Commissioner is not a deputy minister. I say this again in this Legislative Assembly: They are not a deputy minister. They have a wholly different responsibility for the public service as a whole.

So I would really like to have, for the record, a very clear indication of what role, if any, the Public Service Commissioner will play vis-à-vis this governance review.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will just be clear that the two official deputy ministers who are a part of this task force are the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture and the Deputy Minister of Economic Development. The Public Service Commissioner is there as an advisor only, as they explore different options and different models. The advice will be around — as they are looking at different models, if there are implications from the Yukon Employees' Union collective agreement — and in terms of just making sure that we would have compliance with that. Really, it is around advice, not an official role other than that role — to give advice to the task force as they do their work so that they are fully advised —

because it is very complex, as the member opposite knows — in terms of the implications that could arise from different models. That is really what the role of the commissioner is there.

The Minister of Highways and Public Works will be in Committee of the Whole later this week, and he will be able to answer questions at that time as well.

Ms. Hanson: We have a whole-of-government approach and we have another major review of Health and Social Services going on — which, if we follow the implications and the recommendations of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel, you would similarly think you would have an advisor role for the Public Service Commissioner there. So yes, I will be pursuing this with the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission at a later date.

I wanted to come back to a couple of things. One is the — this minister will not escape — with respect to websites. Man, I cannot believe this. I know that there are a lot of surveys done by tourism and their officials, but you know it is frustrating as all get-out to go to the new yukon.ca site and pull up today the tourism statistics. The most recent one says it was updated February 8, 2019, but it is for 2015. Seriously? We have no more relevant data than 2015? I am convinced that I saw people out on the road doing statistics this summer — there were reports being done. I know that if I scroll through umpteen-dozen other places, I will find more recent ones.

I am not going to even ask that question. I'm just going to put it out there: Something has to be done. We cannot have good work being done and then have people not being able to access it.

I wanted to ask the minister questions with respect to — when I look at the government transfer section, it's notable that effectively the transfers — there has been a slight increase in expenditures in terms of human resources for the Government of Yukon in the Department of Tourism and Culture. Then there is quite a large number of non-profit organizations — historic groups and museums — whose funding, quite frankly, has flatlined. That doesn't speak to the actual responsibilities or the challenges that these community groups face. If I could, I would just like to look at a couple of these.

For example, over the number of years that I have been around, every time I have been in Dawson and run into people who are involved in the Dawson City Arts Society — and others like commercial artists and the general arts community — there is a lot of discussion about the Yukon sawmill. There has been an interest in developing a plan and making decisions about the ultimate disposition of this. Yet again, we have \$156,000, which is down from \$233,000 over the past few years. Again, as a whole-of-government approach — we talk about Economic Development being involved in tourism and the strategy piece. What work has been done to work with the business community and the artistic community in Dawson to realize the potential of this place? I remember that there has been some discussion not that long ago about a 3D workshop being created in that space. This is a prime location.

Again, we see a decreasing investment in this key heritage site in Dawson City. I am curious — I see, similarly, the Beringia — well, let's go back to the Dawson City Arts Society. It has flatlined — since 2017-18, at least — at \$425,000. That's not even the one-percent increase that we heard about in some of the other societies or non-governmental organizations in the health and social services field that have been held at no cost-of-living increases. We have the same with the artist in the school program. It's the same with the arts operating fund. Heritage trails dropped by \$25,000. Culture Quest, \$157,000 — flatlined — and Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association — also flatlined at \$160,000. The Northern Cultural Expressions Society — flatlined.

Mr. Chair, my point is that we talk a good game about the importance of these groups throughout the territory. In every little small community, there are these groups of people who spend an awful lot of time dedicated to trying to maintain some of these heritage places to attract interest to their communities. But if we don't invest in them, what good is it? My question is: Where is the translation of talk into walking that talk in terms of investment in these cultural services entities that receive funding? I know that every one of them are gratified when they get some funding, but man, it's really hard, when you're running a board, to know that you are going to be running exactly the same — now it's less because the value of the dollar is down.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: There was a lot there, and I will try to go through some of what I have heard. I will maybe just start with the last part of it and kind of work my way back a bit.

Tourism and Culture funds some 58 organizations, and we try to make the money go as far as we can. I know that there is never quite enough. Again, we are moving into a cultural and creative industries strategy. I am hoping that we will find some ways to really work closer together — maybe some of the organizations. I know that the work that is being done by these organizations is critical. It is really foundational to part of the well-being of our communities and of our individuals. It relates to mental health. It relates to a great many aspects of what we believe as a government.

Being the minister responsible and having worked very closely in my career in not-for-profit organizations for many years, I know how hard our volunteers work. I know how hard our various societies work to make that dollar go a little bit further. I have spent many hours sitting with some of these organizations, talking with them about how to link with some of the other planning that is going on — how to link with some of the work that we have done around the tourism development strategy, for instance, and maybe pivoting some of their work into that or into other areas — so taking the time to really have those conversations. They are very important conversations.

Again, our department, being one of the smaller departments — we have 58 contributions to various organizations and various partners with Yukon First Nations. When we talk about the work that is being done in historic

sites, we work with our partners at the First Nations. They help us to prioritize. They help us to say, "Well, this is the priority now." Our historic sites department works very closely with them to determine: "Okay, we have this much money, or we have some limitations around what we can do. What do you want to make a first priority?"

When you look at Fort Selkirk over the time that we have co-managed that with Selkirk First Nation — where we are today is outstanding. I spent quite a bit of time there last summer over Parks Day and just really immersed myself into that site. To see where we're at from a time when — many, many years ago, I remember being at that site and not having any of that development there. The partnership that has been developed with Yukon government and Selkirk First Nation has brought it to where it is today. I talked a little bit in my preamble about some of the investment that will be made into Fort Selkirk. We have a new plan coming out and we are working on implementing Conrad and we're doing a bit of work with Canyon City. Those are all new — Conrad and Canyon City are new.

The member opposite has also asked about the sawmill. We have done that work in incremental pieces — where we have to do the electrical, the fire suppression, and all of the various aspects to bring it up to a standard and a code so that when we do have something go into the Yukon sawmill in Dawson, it will be safe and it will have all of the proper plumbing, fire suppression, electrical, and all of those aspects. Working on a heritage building is much more complicated than when you are working on a regular building. You cannot just hire a regular contractor to do that work. So that has been a challenge. Our economy is doing so well that it is really hard to find contractors when you have such a hot economy and you are trying to hire folks and they are busy on big projects. When we narrow down to some of these smaller projects — especially this specialized — it is challenging.

On the Yukon sawmill, we did an expression of interest and we are working toward finalizing that work. We are almost there. We should be able to provide more information around what decisions will be made in terms of what will go into that building.

The member opposite also talked about — I know; I am going to drag up that issue around the website. I hear the member opposite's concerns around that. Fourth-quarter statistics just went onto the website today — these are from the Bureau of Statistics. This is the fourth quarter, and the visitor exit survey will be coming next. Last year, we did a massive project. We have never done statistics where we have used the visitor exit survey to do an entire year of collecting data from visitors. We did that last year, and those statistics are coming soon. We haven't done a visitor exit survey in six years in Yukon. This is the first one in six years, and we did the whole year. So we actually have data now that includes winter and all the seasons, rather than just the historical summer season. That data will come soon and I am really excited about that — to dig into it and to really analyze it.

Our department, Tourism and Culture, is all about evidence-based decision-making. We rely on it. We rely on it

at the Yukon level, we rely on it at the national level, and we rely on it at the international level. That is how decisions are made in tourism. That's how we determine our markets. That is how we determine where we are putting our dollars. We are very careful about how we invest, because we want to make sure that we are digging into the right market that is right for Yukon and that gives us the right type of visitors who are going to stay longer and spend more.

Really, that is what it is — it's about a higher-yield type of visitor who we are after in the Yukon. We will always have the road traffic; we will always have the highway traffic. But really, our market is destination travellers.

I'm just trying to unpack all of what I had heard. If I have missed aspects of it, I would ask the member opposite to ask me again and I will do my best to answer.

Chair: Do members wish to take a 10-minute recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture, in Bill No. 210, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Is there any general debate?

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for the responses. I want to clarify — to date, since 2017-18, it appears that there is about \$589,000 in capital expenditures for the Yukon sawmill. Based on what the minister was just indicating now, there has been an expression of interest put out for — what I would ask her to articulate — the expression of interest was directed at what and to which audience — to which target groups — in terms of potential utilization of the old sawmill? Is the \$589,000 that is reflected in these three fiscal years that we have before us in the budget document — is that the total amount, or are there additional resources that will be required to bring it up to code, as she had mentioned as being so important?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: At this point, that is the information that we have — that this will be the final work on the building. That being said, it is a very old building, and if something else comes up, we will deal with it at that time. At this point, we are hoping that this is final. Again, yes, there was an expression of interest. We are finalizing the work. That expression of interest went out to the public, so it was a general expression of interest. We are close to completion.

There will be another allocation of dollars for 2020-21. I will have to get the information about what that will entail.

But we are closer now to getting that work completed on the sawmill. The intent, at this point, is not to use it for government purposes, but to really enhance economic development in the community of Dawson City.

Ms. Hanson: When will the department be in a position to announce which has been the successful expression of interest?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I will have to get back to the member opposite. I don't want to put out dates or anything without being sure about that information. I know that we are close. This has been an ongoing piece of work for me, coming in as a new minister a couple of years ago. It is a high priority. Again, I want to just say that it has been a very specialized type of work. I want to see that building utilized as soon as we possibly can, but we want to make sure that it is safe, that all of the necessary work is done, and that it is not going to be at risk.

A bit more information — we are developing the space so that it will meet code requirements, as I have said. We want to make sure that safety is paramount for commercial or public use — that is achievable with fire code restrictions. The call for interest in the building opened on February 16, 2018, and closed on April 26, 2018, with advertising in the *Klondike Sun*, *Yukon News*, and *Aurore boréale*. An open house was held in Dawson City on February 26 and a tour of the building was provided on February 27. An open house was held in Whitehorse on March 9, 2018. The department received indications of interest. We are now working internally on a long-term leasing process. A tenant has not been confirmed at this time. However, it is preferred, as I have said, that the tenant will be of a commercial nature. The intent is to have the building contribute to the vitality of that Front Street area and be available to the public. The building is not yet finished; it is expected in 2021.

I did a tour of the building last year. I had a chance to go in and have a look at the space. It is incredible. I can't wait to see something that will enhance that whole Front Street area. I am really looking forward to some final decisions around that.

Ms. Hanson: We will look forward to seeing what happens. It seems kind of strange that the expression of interest concluded a year ago and we still don't know who is going to be the successful operator.

The issues in terms of capital and capital investment is one thing — and I would like to come back to the provision of funds to societies and non-governmental entities. Again, I would like to ask the minister what consultation — first of all, let's start with the bigger question: Has Tourism and Culture reviewed the base funding provided under Cultural Services to these entities that are listed on pages 17-13 and 17-14 with a view to determining whether or not there is a need to index the payments provided? How much of the funding is for basic ongoing functions? For example, if I look at the First Nations Cultural and Tourism Association — is that for their core funding, in terms of their operations? If it is, then how can an organization be sustainable if it has flatlined funding three years in a row at a minimum? That is not a catch-up/keep-up kind of situation. That is a fallback situation. We're creating a disincentive for these organizations. The backdrop question, first of all, is: Has the government department done a review of the basis for funding these entities? If not, is it planning to do so? If it is doing so or has planned to do so, what

communication has occurred between the Department of Tourism and Culture and these various entities?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: As we were talking about before the break, we fund some 58 agreements with various organizations. At this point, no, we have not done a review of each of these. We intend to work toward a broader government approach on this, as the member opposite is aware. There is a health review going on right now, which was our highest priority for this government. We will continue to support that work to happen. We will then move forward in other areas with other reviews and find ways to find those synergies.

There are a lot of organizations that operate throughout Yukon that do vital work for our communities and support the well-being of our communities. We recognize that. I think that potentially every member of this House has worked with or been involved with a not-for-profit at some point in time in their career. For some of us, it has been a big part of our career. We know the important work that they do, and I absolutely appreciate that. At this point, we are doing the best we can with the funds that we have to support this very, very important and vital part of our communities and our society, and we will continue to work with them.

Since the member has talked about the Yukon First Nations Cultural and Tourism Association — that funding was increased the year that I came on as minister. The \$160,000 that they receive is core funding. As part of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, we have allocated \$300,000 to help leverage other funds from other partner governments — specifically the federal government — and there is certainly some potential for the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to provide funding, and they have provided funding to that organization as well. So we are not the only partner to support these organizations and I think that is really important to note — that we are working with our federal partners as much as possible.

As Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, we had some discussion about how we have utilized the funds for the women's organizations and equality-seeking organizations to leverage those funds to access other funding from our federal partners. We are continuing to look for opportunities with our culture, arts, and historic associations and societies throughout Yukon.

A really good example of a change that we recently announced — it didn't get much — or maybe any — media coverage, but it is an important move. The Yukon Arts Centre previously administered the Culture Quest funding program. The Dawson City Arts Society is now administering that. That changeover happened at the beginning of the fiscal year and includes a \$30,000 administration fee. Those are extra dollars that will go into that organization.

Again, Mr. Chair, we are always looking for opportunities for other funding sources — something that I became masterful at in my previous work — in terms of finding ways to find new partnerships and to find new ways of funding. I absolutely committed to working with our organizations going forward. Right now, our government is focused on the health

review. We are focused on those societies that are delivering services in those areas — they are a first priority for us. We will determine what the next steps are we go forward.

Ms. Hanson: Using the last two examples that the minister gave us — if we take the Dawson City Arts Society, \$425,000 contribution funding and Culture Quest, \$157,000 contribution funding — great. Except, they have been \$425,000 for the last three years. They have been \$157,000 for the last three years. The cost of living has not been accurately or in any way reflected in the contributions. Even when you put it together, you are still putting together a lower value dollar contribution from the Government of Yukon.

So I guess my question is: What is preventing the minister from making the case that at least there should be COLA if these are important parts? I hear the language of vitality and contribution and stuff, but we have to start beginning to walk the talk as opposed to just talking the language of how important these entities are. I understand entirely when the minister talks about how challenging it is working at an NGO and cobbling together sources of money. It's exhausting. What we are doing is we are saying to people running NGOs — because they believe in them and they are passionate about them — "That's nice. We really appreciate you, but guess what: there is no more money." But they still have bills to pay.

So the question is: At what point is the investment going to be here? When I look at the artist in the school program — it's a really valuable program. Do we have less artists being able to be toured in the communities because we can't fund that program because \$100,000 four years ago is not the same purchasing power today? The question I'm still coming to is: Was there any consideration? Was there any attempt to build into these transfer budgets a COLA — a minimum?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: Thank you for the question. I will just reiterate. We are taking a systematic approach to this. We are focused on the health review at this point. We will complete that work and then take next steps. I committed to continuing to work with our organizations and to find ways — I know it's difficult — to do more with less. We are trying to do that as well, as a government, and make choices, make decisions. This is such a vital part of our community. Arts, culture, and heritage are foundational to what we do, but we also have a lot of other costs that continue to rise.

We are looking at this based on the work that the Financial Advisory Panel did, and our first priority is looking at health. I think that, at this point, the minister is doing a good job in terms of seeing this work through. Again, we are really happy to have — people who have come forward to be on this review hold a lot of credibility, and we are looking forward to the results of their work.

We will continue to take a systematic approach to the NGO review. As the minister responsible for this particular area of our government, I take it very seriously. I appreciate the work that they do. I know that it has a huge bearing on the well-being of our communities, including mental health and all aspects of a person's well-being. When you can fill yourself up with cultural experience — we are very rich in

this territory in terms of what we have and the commitment to continue to develop in this area. I am so looking forward to the work that is going to be done by the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association and the whole advancement of indigenous tourism and how it is going to come back into our communities. What is good for our visitor economy is going to be excellent for our citizens in Yukon.

I attend as many things as I possibly can throughout this territory. What I know is that there is a deep appreciation for what we have in the Yukon. We are incredibly blessed to have the artistic talent that we have in our territory and the possibility to really revitalize in so many ways Yukon First Nation culture and language. I am absolutely looking forward to seeing that unfold and some new partnerships. When we did the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, we saw the Yukon government as a partner, and I think that is the way we need to continue to look at all aspects of the work that is being done in our communities. How do we do more with what we have? I think there are ways. There are absolutely creative solutions to this. Getting people together to work together in that fashion is going to be a great way forward for this territory. I am proud of the work that has been done, including by my department along with all of those departments, to be able to work on a tourism development strategy. I fully expect that we will recreate that kind of synergy and that kind of momentum with the creative and cultural industries strategy.

I believe, personally, that culture is at the foundation of everything that we do. It guides us, so I am really committed to that work and committed to working with our NGOs. I take every opportunity to talk to them and to find ways to support. If I could do more, I would.

Ms. Hanson: Quite honestly, the arts and culture sector in Canada has heard for generations that they make a big contribution and that they are vibrant and an integral part of our society, but they are still the poorest segment of our society. There are very few artists and very few authors of any media who make the living wage, let alone a good wage. So when I raise questions about how we make decisions, what I am asking — and I asked the previous government time and again — is: What is our ROI? What are we looking for in terms of what we're putting into this whole sector? Unless we are willing to significantly invest in this, similarly to what we do for our non-renewable resources, how do you expect to get a return on your investment? When I see flatlined resourcing year after year, it says to me that we will talk and make people feel good, but that doesn't pay their bills.

The minister mentioned that there were repair and maintenance dollars for the Waterfront Trolley. What is being budgeted for that this year?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I did not say the trolley; I said repairs and maintenance of the train crew house along the Whitehorse waterfront.

I will just make some comments on what I heard in the preamble to that particular question in terms of investment into arts and culture. Again, I absolutely believe that it is so foundational to so much of the well-being of our communities. I have seen that work. I have actually seen that in health and

social programs and in many aspects of the work I have done personally in my life. Having culture as a foundation has been absolutely critical in terms of advancing things in a way that are really meaningful to our citizens. We are investing in a new strategy around creative and cultural industries. We have never done that, so this is a new economic driver.

I have talked about it in different forums and we have included this even in our submission on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls — we identified our tourism development strategy as one of the solutions to empower our women to have good paying jobs in their communities. It is a pathway to self-determination. I see the same with the creative and cultural industries strategy. Yes, we are putting in our time and effort and bringing those industries together to actually develop a strategy. We recognize that this is an area that can grow.

Tourism continues to be a good part of our economy and a really important part. It represents 4.4 percent of our GDP. Creative and cultural industries right now are 2.1 percent of our GDP. We can grow that.

I think that is where there are tremendous opportunities for these not-for-profit societies and for all of the partners that we will bring together to build something new and to look at how we can grow this part of our economy. I am very excited about it. Our government is obviously committed to it. They are supporting me, as the minister, to lead this work and to work with our partner departments in Economic Development and Education and Community Services to build something that we haven't seen before.

I am really excited about that work. I know that it is easy to go back to putting all the emphasis on government — well, if we are looking for government to solve every single problem in our society, we are not going to get there. We are part of it. We are part of the solution — absolutely, we are — and we are there as a partner. We are happy to lead this work. We are happy to start building a new path forward, but I believe that our societies are going to see that vision too. That is what we did with the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. I am not interested in developing a vision that is only our vision. I am interested in a vision that includes all Yukoners. When we move forward on the creative and cultural industries strategy, that is where we are going to head — in that direction.

Ms. Hanson: Under Action Plans 2.2, it talks about "Experience Development — Wilderness Tourism". What investments is the Government of Yukon making in wilderness tourism specifically? How does this particular part of the plan, on page 20 of their document — how does that translate into (a) investment and (b) return on that investment?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: When you look deeper into — and I know the member opposite has done that — to look at the back parts of the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*, we have identified 24 action plans. YG is not the lead on all of them, as I have talked a little bit about today. TIAY is leading the culinary tourism action plan, for instance; Sport Yukon is leading the sport tourism action plan; and the Wilderness Tourism Association is leading an action plan around that

specific area and they have just recently been approved by CanNor for funding. I don't have the exact numbers. We can potentially follow up or bring the information back to the member opposite as questions arise out of this debate — because I am not sure if we will get a chance again in this Sitting to debate this, but I would be happy to bring that information forward.

Again, that is the uniqueness of this plan. There is a lot of work that is being done as we implement it. Government of Yukon is not the lead on every action plan, which is fantastic. We are supporting it. We do have resources. We have people in place, as I have talked about, around the implementation. They will help support and bring resources together to support the development of these action plans, but our partners are working now. They have hit the ground running. That tells me, as the Minister of Tourism and Culture, that they are owning it as well. They are not waiting for government to lead everything. It was clear, when the tourism development plan was developed, that our partners would lead aspects of this, and that's what's happening.

I am very proud that is the way it unfolded. It is exactly what I had in mind, and here we are today — well on our way already. I am excited about the new numbers that are coming out around tourism. I am going to be excited to bring some of that information forward during this Sitting. I think that's it. Thank you.

Ms. Hanson: Can the minister outline for the House the trend over the last couple years with respect to visitors at the Tombstone visitor information centre?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: That particular area within Yukon is under the Department of Environment. They will have the specific numbers. I can say that visitation is much higher than what we have seen in the past, but I will leave it for the Minister of Environment to specifically answer questions around the numbers. It is, and continues to be, a really important attraction within our territory.

Ms. Hanson: I believe the number is in excess of 20,000 visitors. I raise that question because when I look at the tourism plans and the focus on infrastructure, it talks about roads and communities: "Safe, reliable roads and community infrastructure are important to Yukon residents and visitors. Maintaining current assets, while exploring opportunities for new and improved infrastructure..." — yada, yada, yada. When I look at this year's budget — and this is the whole-of-government approach — we are talking about tourism investment where we have \$1.9 million to upgrade a bridge at the beginning of the Dempster Highway and \$50,000 for maintenance — the balance of it.

It's a comment. I am not asking for the minister to reply, but I think it is something that needs to be taken into consideration. When I look at the pretty pictures in the government's tourism strategy, there is a heck of a lot of them that feature Tombstone.

With this unexpected — well, it's not unexpected; we've become used to the cyclical changes in weather. We are again seeing a very early spring. Most of us who have been out to the lakes around are seeing they are open. Usually it's

May 24. That means that people are travelling to the communities — whether it's Skagway or stopping in Carcross or other communities.

My question is: Will the community visitor centres be open earlier this year, especially — when I look at Carcross — given the fact that we have people out and about and wanting to access those?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I have spoken about this a little bit when I have had the opportunity around the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy*. We are absolutely committed to bringing a one-government approach to this. You couldn't find another department that is more poised to have a one-government approach. I have said this before — and will say it again probably at some time during my mandate — that the Minister of Tourism and Culture has to have a lot of friends around the table to accomplish a plan like this. It is not something that I can do on my own. I do not have the final say over budgets, but I work with my colleagues around ensuring that we are looking at all of the aspects of development and what is needed to have a healthy, vibrant tourism and visitor economy in our territory.

The Minister of Highways and Public Works has certainly outlined the fiscal investments into the Dempster Highway. For the fiscal year of 2018-19, the budget for the Dempster Highway was \$7.6 million, of which \$5.4 million is for operation and maintenance and \$2.2 million is for capital improvement. Going into the 2019-20 budget, the Government of Yukon has allocated approximately \$7.9 million for the Dempster Highway. That includes \$5.4 million for operation and maintenance — vegetation control; \$2.5 million to rehabilitate the Klondike River bridge; and \$50,000 for capital improvements at Chapman Lake. That has already been presented at different points.

The member opposite asked about the visitor information centres and opening them up based on the change in our weather. They will be opening on May 1, as planned. We have to give notice to recall staff, so we were not able to make that adjustment, but it is certainly something that we will look at, going forward.

One of the items — since no one has asked about it, I will bring it forward — is around the Condor flight schedule for 2019. Condor has shifted its 2019 season to begin and end one week later than last year's season. The reason that I am bringing this up is because it definitely plays into having our VICs open later. There will be a weekly Sunday charter flight between Frankfurt, Germany and Whitehorse. It will operate now from June 2 to September 22. They have extended their season, which means that we will have German visitors here for longer.

With more visitors travelling later into Yukon's fall season, there is an opportunity for a variety of services and experiences provided by Yukon businesses, Yukon government, and Parks Canada to be extended. So the department will work with Yukon's tourism industry to communicate all of these new opportunities, but we recognize that this is an area that we will have to address in terms of having the visitor information centres open later.

Discussions are underway with the Department of Environment and Parks Canada exploring the option of keeping some of the national parks, historic sites, territorial campgrounds, and visitor information centres open until the end of the Thanksgiving weekend, which is October 14, 2019. Currently, all territorial campground sites are fully serviced from May 17 to September 8, and 11 sites are fully serviced from May 10 to September 30. The Yukon visitor information centres — except for in Whitehorse, which operates year-round — are currently open from May 1. Again, as I explained, we are not able to open them earlier because we need time to recall the staff. We are looking to extend the Dawson VIC to the October 14 time frame.

This is certainly something we will look at. We know that the climate is changing and we are seeing longer summer seasons. We will work with all of our partners around the Cabinet table, particularly on this one with the Minister of Environment around the campgrounds. I will be talking to my Cabinet colleagues about extending those VICs to be more responsive to our climate change and to some of these really great opportunities that are coming to Yukon. When we see major airlines like this investing more flights into Yukon — again, it is good for our visitor economy, but it's also very good for our citizens of Yukon.

Ms. Hanson: Another aspect of infrastructure is outhouses — one of the key tourism experiences, good or bad. It can be very good and it can be very bad — and you hear about it if they are bad. So it's ensuring that the washrooms and outhouses along our highways in winter, in summer, and in shoulder seasons are maintained and clean and that they are accessible so that people can get at them when they need to. Can the minister outline how that work is coordinated between her department and Highways and Public Works?

What work is being done to ensure — one of the key things in terms of travel in other countries — in some other countries, there actually are public washrooms in every small community — publicly accessible washrooms. What we are seeing in Canada is less and less public accessibility. That is one of the issues that the chief medical officer of health made comment on. I raise this as a serious issue because it is a serious issue. I have no idea how much money is invested by the Yukon government with respect to outhouses — ensuring their cleanliness and accessibility throughout the year.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I thought I might get away without talking about outhouses, but not a chance, so we are going to. Thank you very much for the question. It is important — I don't mean to make light of it — it is something we have been talking about a lot. I will just go over, in terms of — it is not two departments, Mr. Chair — we have four departments that are responsible for outhouses in one shape or form.

The Department of Tourism and Culture is responsible for those that are in heritage sites and buildings; Community Services is responsible for public buildings; the Department of Highways and Public Works is responsible for the ones on the highway; and the Department of Environment is responsible for those in campgrounds. That is a little piece of information that probably not a lot of people know.

One of things that we are looking at doing and we have talked about doing — the House may be aware that we have done these sessions at the NorthLight Innovation centre, where we have brought different issues around different types of topics. So we are talking about some of the topics that relate to tourism and looking at doing “hacking outhouses”. So we are going to do a session, bringing a think-tank together to sort this out, figure out one — and again, this is a one-government approach. We will be bringing other topics as well to the NorthLight Innovation centre to help us to find innovative, modern, and new ways of thinking about things.

We are committed to ensuring that visitors have a good experience when they come here. Part of it includes the facilities. Again, what's good for our visitor economy is good for our citizens — so that people have those good experiences when they are travelling on the highways and they have safe experiences.

We are looking forward to having those types of sessions and working with all of our colleagues around the table to ensure that we are doing things in a good way for Yukoners and for our visitors.

Ms. Hanson: The minister opposite raises a really interesting point then. If a visitor to the Yukon is unhappy, and they go to yukon.ca — this is our front-of-house service — unhappy with outhouses at Carcross Desert, who is going to respond? Will they get a response?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: When the information comes to Tourism and Culture, we get it through our VICs. We also get it through travelyukon.ca.

I want to talk about travelyukon.ca. It's amazing. It's a new website that we launched about a year ago, and it is the envy of the country. It really is. It is the envy of other regions in Canada because it is so interactive, and it's based on seasonal planning. So a visitor can go into our travel website and plan all of their travel based on the season. It is interactive. You can book off of the website. It is certainly an advanced model, and it is working very well. When we brought up websites, I meant to go back there to talk about it, because I really want to hold up the work of the department because they have done an exceptional job. We have worked with Cossette, our agency of record. They have been really good at populating. We are buying new content.

I want to go back to something that the member opposite also said about the pictures that we utilized in the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* plan. Those were chosen by our partners. That is what they wanted to showcase in the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy* plan, so we went with that.

I encourage all members of the House to go to the new travel website — to look at it, go into it, explore it a bit, and recommend it to your loved ones or those who are travelling to Yukon, because it really is a phenomenal resource. I thank the department for all of the hard work that they have put into that. We do receive all of the feedback from our VICs. They are excellent in bringing forward the issues that visitors are raising.

Mr. Chair, seeing that the time is 5:25 p.m., I move that you report progress.

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 29, entitled *Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2019*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, 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. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

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*Comprehensive Review of Health & Social Services:
Scope of the Comprehensive Review (Terms of Reference)*
(Frost)