



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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Number 10

3<sup>rd</sup> Session

34<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2019 Fall Sitting

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

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

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

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

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

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Tuesday, October 22, 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. Mr. Silver:** I would like to ask all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly today to help me in welcoming some folks of the political nature, both present and past, here for the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wholly elected Cabinet. We have in the gallery Dan Lang. We have Val Hodgson, Doug Graham, Mayvor Graham, Patrick Michael, and Justin Lemphers.

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming some folks to the gallery today for a tribute that we will be doing. With the Mountainview ladies golf club, we have Sheila Vanderbyl and Heather McIntyre. From Run for Mom, we have Val Pike, Anneka Sarek, and Heather Milford. I would also like to welcome Ellen Andison. Welcome today.

*Applause*

**Mr. Hassard:** I would like all members to help me welcome someone else to the gallery today — Doug and Mayvor's little boy Richard is here with them.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I also noticed that in the gallery is Janet Moodie — if everybody can help in welcoming Janet as well.

*Applause*

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

## TRIBUTES

### In remembrance of Canadian National War Memorial and Parliament terrorist attack

**Mr. Istchenko:** I rise today on behalf of the House to pay tribute on the fifth anniversary of the deadly attacks that took place in Ottawa and Québec in October 2014.

On October 23, 2014, Canada witnessed an unprecedented act of non-partisan solidarity as Stephen Harper crossed the floor of the House of Commons to shake hands and embrace both NDP leader Thomas Mulcair and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau. It was a somber yet impactful day as parties came together the day after two separate and unrelated yet

deadly terrorist attacks took place against members of the Canadian military on Canadian soil.

On October 20, 2014, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent was killed while on duty in a deliberate ISIL-inspired hit-and-run incident in Québec. Vincent died of injuries sustained after a vehicle ran into him and a fellow soldier who survived the attack.

Two days later, on October 22, 2014, another terrorist attack took place, this time at the Canadian National War Memorial on Parliament Hill. Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a 24-year-old member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, a reservist infantry unit based in Hamilton, Ontario, stood by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, his ceremonial rifle unloaded in accord with the standard practice. Corporal Cirillo was fatally shot by a lone gunman who then charged into Parliament, where he was shot and killed by the House of Commons Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers and RCMP officers.

Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo were targeted for their service to our country. We are forever grateful to our brave men and women who sacrifice every day to protect our way of life. Today is an important day of reflection. This tragic anniversary reminds us that Canada is not immune to the threat of terrorism. We must continue to stand vigilant and ensure that we continue to fight against the threats to our security.

To quote former Prime Minister Stephen Harper from his national address to the nation five years ago — and I quote: “But let there be no misunderstanding: We will not be intimidated. Canada will never be intimidated. In fact, this will lead us to strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts and those of our national security agencies to take all necessary steps to identify and counter threats and keep Canada safe here at home...”

The Prime Minister went on the next day to say, during an address in the House of Commons — and I quote: “... we are here, in our seats, in our chamber, in the very heart of our democracy, and our work goes on.”

Today I want to pause and remember Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent in this great country that we call Canada. Let democracy continue to be our strength. We are all Canadians. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau vowed not to let those threats define Canadians. He said that they do not get to change us. Let us come together and stand against the threat of terrorism on our soil and remember that we are stronger together.

I want to close with the words of the former Leader of Canada's Official Opposition, Thomas Mulcair — and I will quote: “We will stand up and we will stand together. We will preserve, and we will persevere, we will prevail, because that is what Canadians have always done together. That is what we do best together.”

Lest we forget.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first wholly elected Yukon Cabinet**

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the first wholly elected Cabinet in Yukon. It is very hard for us to imagine a government not headed by people elected by Yukoners, but in fact it was 40 years ago today that Yukon's first wholly elected Cabinet was sworn in. Its members were the Government Leader Chris Pearson and four ministers: Dan Lang, Doug Graham, Meg McCall, and Peter "Swede" Hanson. Judging by the look of the two members who are in the Legislative Assembly today, they must have started their political career before their teens. They definitely have aged well.

This change represents a key development in Yukon's journey to self-government and to self-determination — a journey that did not happen overnight, Mr. Speaker. From the first wholly elected legislative body in 1909, it would take 70 years to transform what was essentially a colonial government to a responsible government accountable to Yukon people. This is not to suggest that Yukon politicians were either quiet or inactive in their quest for self-government. Many, many actively advocated for political change and greater self-determination here in Yukon.

There were some advances in the 1960s through the Advisory Committee on Finance. It provided an early opportunity for elected members to be involved in the development of budget estimates, for example. But the more significant change came in 1970, when Commissioner Jim Smith created an Executive Committee, including two Members of the Legislative Assembly.

While these members of the Executive Committee were nominated by members of this House, they soon found themselves defending government positions in the Assembly in the face of questions and criticisms from other members. Over the course of the 1970s, the elected component of the Executive Committee grew until elected members held the majority; however, the head of government was still the federally appointed Commissioner who continued to chair the Executive Committee and oversee the day-to-day operations of the Yukon government. This changed in October 1979 when Jake Epp, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, issued new instructions to the Commissioner. These instructions created the Executive Council, or Cabinet, with all the ministerial portfolios in the hands of elected members. Essentially, an elected Cabinet was responsible for the daily operations of this government.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it seems strange to think of a government being overseen by anyone other than elected people. Well, it is no longer an issue. We are all used to members of Cabinet being directly accountable to Yukon citizens and to this Assembly for their directions and for their actions — and so, in a democracy, we should be.

Over the past 40 years, all of the parties in this House have, at different times, been the government of the day. While we may differ in our views of the decisions and actions of various governments, I doubt that anyone here today would argue about

these decisions or actions being in the hands of a wholly elected Cabinet. So, we take this time to acknowledge an important development in our political advancement, and we want to thank those who advocated for greater self-determination here in Yukon.

*Applause*

### **In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I thank my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, for allowing me to do so.

I am sure that every single Yukoner has known someone in their life who has been affected by cancer. We are all affected. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Canada. One in eight women will be diagnosed in their lifetime. It is also the third most common cancer among all Canadians.

Many of us have loved ones in our lives who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. When you have something so life-changing impact you or your loved ones, you understand the importance of being vigilant. In Yukon, nearly 25 women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, but that number doesn't represent all the stories of Yukoners affected by breast cancer. Those are 25 Yukoners who have had their lives put on hold to start treatment. Each year, they show us their strength. That's 25 families providing support.

Sixteen years ago, on September 28, just before my youngest son's fourth birthday, I was one of those Yukon women diagnosed with breast cancer and it changed my life. Suddenly I was launched into a flurry of tests, treatments, and surgery. I was faced with decisions, the first one being about life itself. A cancer diagnosis absolutely forces you to reassess your life. Thankfully, I am one of the lucky ones. I am grateful that I am able to say that I was here to raise my two sons and to do so many amazing things in my career that make a difference in the lives of Yukoners every day.

We are lucky to have such dedicated health care professionals and volunteers in our community. They ensure that we are doing everything we can to reduce the risk of breast cancer in Yukon and to make sure that everyone is supported.

I would like to acknowledge and thank several organizations that help to reduce the risk of breast cancer in Yukon: the individuals who volunteer and make Run for Mom part of their annual Mother's Day celebration — thank you very much — and everyone involved in fundraising for Karen's Fund, which provides financial aid to women with breast cancer. Specifically, today I would like to acknowledge the Mountainview Golf Club Ladies League. They have hosted four fundraising golf tournaments in the last four years, raising \$20,000 for the local charity, Karen's Fund, which benefits women in Yukon and northern BC who have been diagnosed with breast cancer — thank you.

The Yukon Hospital Foundation tirelessly worked to fundraise for the cancer care fund — a fund that provides a comprehensive range of care and is better able to support cancer patients closer to home. The Yukon Sexual Health Clinic and

Yukon Women's MidLife Health Clinic offer health care and easy access to information for women to address many of their health needs.

This is an issue that touches everyone deeply. We are so fortunate to live here in a place where people are always willing to help out at times of need to make sure that everyone is cared for and looked after.

Work has been done to increase the rates of detection and new technologies are being employed by Whitehorse General Hospital, meaning that we are able to diagnosis people earlier and give them a better chance at life. I encourage Yukoners to get screened. Early detection can be life-saving.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

There are so many types of cancer affecting people around the globe, and none is more or less important than another to recognize, educate people about, and promote awareness of. Of the more than 100 types of cancer that are known to affect humans, the one with the highest rate of diagnosis and arguably one of the easiest types to detect for many is breast cancer.

Breast cancer makes up approximately 25 percent of diagnosed cases of cancer per year in Canada, affecting 26,300 women in 2017 alone. Of course, we know that breast cancer does not discriminate, as over 200 men are diagnosed each year as well.

This fall, the fourth annual HOPE calendar was released, featuring breast cancer survivors from the Yukon to raise funds to directly support those battling the disease here at home and to be dispersed through Karen's Fund. Fundraising efforts that help Yukoners directly are to be commended. The financial stress that goes hand in hand with battling cancer is immense, and every dollar helps.

I would like to take a moment to thank those who work tirelessly in our community to raise money and awareness year after year for breast cancer and for other causes that hit close to home for all of us. You are champions of the cause, and your continued dedication helps Yukoners in their cancer journeys year after year.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to acknowledge October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We can all celebrate the science behind mammograms and the role that they play in early identification of breast cancer. We all agree that the Yukon community is supportive and loving, and we're grateful for our local champions. But today, I want to talk about density, Mr. Speaker — more accurately, the density of breasts. This is because this has been a new education for me.

The denser the breast, the higher the risk of getting breast cancer. Having dense breasts is a greater risk factor for breast cancer than having a family history of breast cancer. Although mammograms are a highly effective tool for women with fatty breasts, mammograms alone are not enough for women with

dense breast tissue, and that is because mammograms alone miss 50 percent of breast cancers in dense breasts.

Using both, a mammogram and ultrasound together have an 80-percent sensitivity to detect cancer, while using both a mammogram and an MRI raises that detection sensitivity to 83 percent. Experts recommend that women with high density breasts should be put into a high-risk group and offered supplemental screening, similar to the way that other risk factors are considered. British Columbia was the first province to mandate that women and their doctors receive information about breast density after mammograms. In making the announcement, the BC Health minister stated that the decision was based on evidence. In Alberta, radiologists report density to primary care providers who then decide the next course of action for women in the higher categories. It is important to note that supplemental screening is covered in Alberta.

The lack of federal recommendations means that breast density is treated differently according to where people live. This brings me back to Yukon, where we don't currently have a breast-screening program for dense breasts, which means that Yukon women who are at a high risk of breast cancer are having to look elsewhere for the screening that they deserve, and that is just simply not good enough.

Today, in honour of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I urge us to do better and to make the changes required so that all who require additional screening for breast cancer are covered under our existing system.

*Applause*

### Point of personal privilege

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** On a point personal privilege, I would just like Hansard to reflect that my tribute today was not on behalf of just the government but also of all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker:** Thank you for that clarification.

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 22 of the *Yukon Development Corporation Act*, I have for tabling the 2018 annual report for the Yukon Development Corporation.

As well, I also have for tabling the 2018 annual report for the Yukon Energy Corporation.

**Ms. Hanson:** I have for tabling today a letter dated August 2, 2019 from Dr. Floyd McCormick.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** I have for tabling screenshots of messages from the Premier to a private citizen.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue the process of updating the legislative regime for animal protection and dog control by introducing amendments to the *Animal Protection Act* in the Legislative Assembly.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Improvements to north Klondike Highway

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Our Liberal government is committed to making strategic investments to build healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities across the territory. We are making great progress toward a diverse, growing economy that provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way. An important aspect of our work is upgrading Yukon's aging infrastructure to prepare for a prosperous future.

This summer, I was proud to join Yukon's Member of Parliament, Larry Bagnell, to announce major improvements for the north Klondike Highway, one of the Yukon's busiest highways. This is a long highway that links the vital tourism and mining districts of the Klondike and Silver Trail to the rest of the territory and ultimately to the south. It is also an important link to the interjurisdictional Dempster Highway corridor.

Since becoming Minister of Highways and Public Works, I have heard from residents and commercial and political leaders of Dawson about how important the road is and how important it is to reconstruct it, and so we were pleased when the federal government agreed to contribute \$118 million through the national trade corridors fund. The Yukon government's contribution will be \$39 million over the next eight years. A total of \$157 million in funding will go toward reconstructing, rehabilitating, replacing, and resurfacing critical portions of the highway between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway cut-off.

Starting in 2020, these improvements will make the highway wider and improve safety. It will improve the road's capacity, reducing weight restrictions and the length of time that they are imposed. The new road will be more resilient and will incorporate innovations in erosion control, including oversize culverts to handle changing precipitation and runoff. The new service will also be easier to maintain, and it is expected to reduce maintenance costs by one-third.

The size and scope of the project will make this the largest single capital project in the territory's history. It will benefit communities in north Yukon and the Northwest Territories and connect Yukoners with an increasing number of economic opportunities, including Yukon's resource sector.

I spoke to construction companies, engineering firms, tourism outfits, retailers, municipalities, First Nations and their development corporations, miners and contractors, and their enthusiasm for the project cannot be overstated. This is in addition to the millions of dollars our Liberal government is

investing to improve Yukon's road transportation network. The new Nares River bridge is nearly complete — the first project to use our new value-based procurement method, which includes criteria for First Nation participation and northern experience and knowledge. We are also working together with the Teslin Tlingit Council to construct a safer, more reliable and more sustainable Nisutlin Bay bridge that can accommodate increases in traffic while also improving access for pedestrians and cyclists. Mr. Speaker, we are proud to be working with our partners to invest in these roads and bridges that keep our communities connected and help grow our economy.

**Mr. Hassard:** I would just like to thank the minister for the re-announcement of the re-announcement from last week of the announcement from June. But before the minister finishes his victory lap, maybe he could stop long enough to tell those construction companies, engineering firms, tourism outfits, retailers, municipalities, First Nations, development corporations, miners, and contractors just how many times he is going to re-announce this project before work actually begins. Mr. Speaker, we are curious: When will we actually see a shovel in the ground? It is unfortunate. I don't think that the Liberals realize this yet, but governing doesn't stop when you take the photo opportunity and eat the cake. You actually need to deliver as well. An example of that is the almost half-billion dollars that the Liberals jointly announced with Prime Minister Trudeau back in September of 2017 for the Gateway project. We've seen zero progress there. Forgive us for being a bit sceptical about the Liberals' ability to actually deliver on these promises.

The minister also referenced the national trade corridors fund in his statement. In March 2018, he stated that the government submitted seven applications to the federal government for this fund. Among those applications were \$116 million for the Alaska Highway, \$64 million for the Campbell Highway between Ross River and Faro, \$39 million for other parts of the Campbell Highway, \$70 million for airports, and, of course, the Klondike Highway application. We continue to hear about the re-announcement of the Klondike Highway application, but we would like to know what is happening with those other applications as well.

We have asked multiple times in this House for the government to provide us details about what they were requesting as part of these applications and they have refused to provide that information. We have also asked them for status updates on these applications, but again, they have refused to provide that information as well.

Just yesterday, this same minister delivered a ministerial statement where he said that he believed that government should be open and transparent so that Yukoners know what their government is doing. Yet, for a year and a half, they have refused to provide us with information on all of these applications for millions of dollars to the national trade corridors fund. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money. I think that Yukoners have a right to know what the government is doing.

We are left wondering when the Liberals will finally live up to their commitment to be open and transparent and provide us with the details on these infrastructure applications and whether they will tell us if these applications have been accepted or rejected by Ottawa.

**Ms. Hanson:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party in response to today's ministerial statement about next year's proposed funding for improvements to the north Klondike Highway. The highway improvements that were announced this past summer, then again in this fall's throne speech, then again during debate last Wednesday, and again today will not begin until next year. Thus far, this spending has been re-, re-, re-announced — like a Russian nesting doll or like Leonardo DiCaprio trapped in a dream within a dream within a dream. Each announcement sets us down a path to another. At our current pace, a north Klondike Highway improvement announcement will re-occur every 22 days. If this pace keeps up, we can count on six more announcements before this Legislative Assembly is even presented with a budget appropriation related to this project. It truly represents a sea change in the potential for government photo opportunities and speaking engagements. As for this re-announced project, of course the NDP supports proposed investments in the north Klondike Highway. The Yukon NDP has always supported investments to improve Yukon's highways and roadways.

Mr. Speaker, governments are increasingly endeavouring to view major infrastructure investments through a climate lens. Recently, the Government of Canada began applying a climate lens to major government infrastructure projects. The climate lens has two components: a greenhouse gas mitigation assessment which measures the anticipated greenhouse gas emissions impact of an infrastructure project; and a climate change resilience assessment which employs a risk management approach to anticipate, prevent, withstand, respond to and recover, and adapt to climate change-related disruptions or impacts. This lens is intended to encourage improved choices by project planners in both the amount of greenhouse gas emissions a project will emit and how resilient it will be to increasing changing climate.

In speaking to the media about this project, the minister indicated that this investment would improve north Klondike Highway climate resiliency. We are curious: Due to the inclusion of such a substantial federal investment, has this project had a climate lens assessment conducted on it? If yes, could the minister share that assessment with this House?

Mr. Speaker, the work that we do in this Legislative Assembly is important. Using a ministerial statement to re-announce a project for the fourth time displays a deep disregard for the vital work we are charged to do on behalf of Yukon citizens.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I'm a little disappointed with the tone of the members opposite, but that's all right. I'm glad we are talking about it this afternoon on the floor of the Legislative Assembly and outside of debate.

The members of the Yukon Party have asked for more information about a bunch of hypotheticals, and yet when they have a concrete proposal in front of them, they don't ask any questions about that. It's always about the next thing. They're always — it's the next thing, the next thing; the grass is always greener on the other side of the road or something. But we're dealing with a tangible project right here: a \$157-million investment in north Yukon. It's a conduit for industry, retail, business, tourists, and our citizens who are travelling between communities and who have complained about the state of that road, and we are making tangible efforts to improve it, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, on the floor of the Legislature we are providing information, and yet on the other hand, they complain about the lack of information being provided. I can't really square that.

The New Democrats, I'm very happy to say —

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

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** — and I hear them on the other side now chiming in on this debate — are supportive of improvements to our highway network. I hope that includes brushing, Mr. Speaker. I hope that includes brushing in the future, but this is a tangible improvement to the north Klondike Highway in terms of our roadbed. We are working very hard in developing these roads, bridges, and culverts to mitigate the spread of invasive species. In building this new roadbed, we are going to be lowering the cost of maintaining that road, requiring less work. That in turn will help lower the greenhouse gas emissions because it will take less work to maintain the road. That is one of the things. We're also building climate mitigations into the project, which is another reason why we're going ahead with this and why the federal government is actually supporting this record-setting capital project in the territory. So, we are very pleased with this project.

I think I heard some support from the New Democratic caucus, and I thank them for that support. I'm not entirely sure if the Yukon Party supports it or not. I know they support a lot of hypothetical projects that haven't been awarded yet and they want information on hypotheticals when there are applications in place. I don't know what to tell the members opposite on that front, but I will say that this is going to be a great boon to the territory — especially the north Yukon — and we look forward to starting that. To the Leader of the Official Opposition's point, we look forward to starting that project next year.

As well, just to clarify the point — Gateway — he keeps talking about Gateway. Gateway is in progress, Mr. Speaker. Again, next year, there will be \$25 million spent on Gateway alone, and we're working on other projects as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, more to come — I will have more statements in the future on those.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Queen's Printer Agency and Central Stores services

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Liberal Cabinet instructed all government departments to find up to

two-percent cuts to their operation and maintenance budgets. Now we know the Liberal government has made cuts to Queen's Printer and Central Stores. Employees found out just minutes before the announcement was made public and contractors had to find out from us in the opposition — short notice to the employees. The minister does not even have the guts to meet with the employees to deliver the news himself.

We have now heard that employees who are wondering what's next for them are being told, "Don't worry. Just wait." We have heard that employees who are wondering what the timeline is for answers are just being told, "Don't worry. You'll know eventually."

This is unacceptable management and it is not leadership. Can the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission tell us why the Liberal government is showing such little respect to those public servants?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I'm happy to address this issue on the floor of the Legislature this afternoon.

I would like to begin by respectfully correcting the member opposite. There are no cuts involved here. We are very deliberately and very carefully supporting and respecting our employees and the work they do. The people who work for this government are one of our most important assets. Their experience, their professionalism, their skills, their general service to Yukon citizens is absolutely one of the most important resources we have in this government.

I cannot state that clearly enough, which is why, in dismantling an archaic and now virtually obsolete service to the government, we are making sure that those employees are looked after and respected. We are working with the employees' union to make sure that they are well looked after. We have had meetings with the union. We have worked and informed them — as soon as the decision was made — of our intention. We worked with the union and then with the employees. We are doing it in a respectful way and we are making sure that there will be no job losses or impact to our people as a result of this change in service.

**Mr. Hassard:** I think the member opposite maybe should find a dictionary and look up the word "respect". We know that the Liberals have instructed all departments to find two-percent cuts to their operation and maintenance budgets. The minister yesterday claimed that the Liberal cuts at Queen's Printer and Central Stores are going to save government \$1.6 million per year. So we asked the minister to provide us with evidence or the analysis showing how this is possible. We are especially interested in how it is possible to set a net saving for government if, as the minister claims, there will be no job losses. But as we know, Mr. Speaker, the minister's claims don't always stand up to fact-checking.

The minister refused to provide the evidence yesterday, so we'll try again today to see if he will actually provide that evidence to this Legislature.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Change is always very difficult. Restructuring and shedding archaic means of serving both our clients within government and without comes with a certain disruption that can be very, very difficult on people. I understand that — I truly do. That is why, in going through this

process, as soon as the decision was taken by this government, we reached out to the union and we started working with our partner in the Yukon Employees' Union to make sure that our employees were cared for in accordance with the collective agreement, which we signed and recently ratified just this last year.

Mr. Speaker, that is very, very important to this government. Our civil service — the people who serve the citizens of this territory — is one of our most precious resources, and serving and making sure that they are looked after is absolutely key to this government.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this change in service, we are actually getting rid of positions but not people — because the people who have served this territory for sometimes decades have a wealth of knowledge that we have to keep and keep within our walls.

**Mr. Hassard:** We certainly didn't get any answers there, so we'll try this again.

Yesterday, when we asked the Liberals about their political direction to all departments to find two-percent cuts to operation and maintenance, the Minister of Highways and Public Works made an interesting comment. He spoke about how the Liberals have started implementing the cuts and stated — quote: "We have done what we said we would do. We kept Highways and Public Works to two percent". Now those are his words, Mr. Speaker.

That two percent works out to about \$2.8 million in cuts. According to the minister, the cuts to Queen's Printer and Central Stores only amount to about \$1.6 million. We are left wondering: Where is the additional \$1.2 million going to be cut from? Is it Fleet Vehicle Agency? Is it the travel desk? Maybe Property Management?

Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell us who is next on the chopping block?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It's becoming a theme, Mr. Speaker, about hypotheticals and fearmongering.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to respectfully correct the member opposite. We are not laying anyone off as a result of the restructuring of Queen's Printer and Central Stores. We are not cutting positions. We are not cutting people, Mr. Speaker. We are restructuring our government so that we start to provide modern services.

This government is restructuring, modernizing, and getting rid of archaic services that no longer serve the modern society that we live in, and in doing so, Mr. Speaker, we are looking after our employees — our long-serving talented people — who are going to be used within the civil service in new positions and will continue to serve the citizens in the territory in a way that is both meaningful and respectful.

#### Question re: Energy retrofits

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, on October 14, 2016, the Minister of Community Services promised Yukoners that the Liberal government would invest \$30 million per year in retrofits to buildings. His exact words were — quote: "We are talking about investing significantly, right — \$30 million a year." After three years of a Liberal government, that should



mean that they have invested \$90 million in total in retrofits by now.

Can the minister confirm whether the Liberals have lived up to this campaign commitment — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I would really love to get that quote, because that is not what I recall saying. I actually wrote to the members opposite asking them if they could please supply that quote to me. I remember talking with the media that day. I remember saying to them that we were going to invest heavily in retrofits. I remember saying that our goal was \$30 million and that we were going to build toward it.

I am very happy to say that part of that work that came out and was announced in the throne speech is within my own department to look at how it will help Yukoners with their private residences and commercial properties — getting to retrofits — because we really do need to invest. The good news, Mr. Speaker — and the progress that is being made — is that as those dollars get invested, it lowers our citizens' costs as well. It lowers our retailers' costs as well, because they will have to spend less on heating. It's good for all of us. I am so happy that we are moving toward \$30 million. I now ask again, publicly: Can you please share the quote? Because I don't recall saying that. I recall saying that we were working toward \$30 million, as is in our platform.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Mr. Speaker, it was a commitment that the minister made to the media during a press conference. There is a video of him saying this on Liberal social media, since he seems to have forgotten.

On October 29, the Premier, in the midst of the election campaign, sent a message to a Yukoner claiming that the Yukon Liberals had already negotiated with the Trudeau Liberals that they would provide Yukon with \$30 million per year in green energy retrofits. I tabled those private messages here this afternoon.

So, Mr. Speaker, where is the \$30 million?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon has allocated over \$120 million in territorial government and federally secured funding to implement energy-efficiency initiatives throughout the Yukon. I would like to just take a moment to just thank the Energy branch, which has done a phenomenal job of taking a very robust budget, ensuring that they have the right capacity — that they have aligned to identify the projects and continue to move that forward.

Thanks to a joint investment with the Government of Canada, the Government of Yukon is able to dedicate \$30 million annually specifically for energy-efficient retrofits for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. Being more energy efficient is our first line of action in addressing increasing demands for energy. There has been good progress made on this and we'll continue to make good progress. This is why the Government of Yukon is offering retrofit incentives to making upgrades to insulation, improving window quality, and draft-proofing a home, commercial, or institutional building accessible and affordable.

I'll wait for question 3. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** So, I guess I will ask then: How much of the \$30 million is the Government of Yukon investing in retrofits this year?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, once again — lots of work being done, not only on the retrofit piece but ensuring that we continue to enhance on the microgeneration program as well.

Out of this particular program right now, we have —

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

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize — I'm being distracted by the shouting across the way.

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

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** But we're looking at — between 2019 and 2023 — \$23.7 million which goes toward homeowners, businesses, and municipal governments; First Nation governments — \$2.3 million; biomass retrofits, residential and institutional — \$1.2 million; \$0.2 million which goes toward First Nation municipal governments; residential retrofits, social staff housing, and First Nation housing — \$8.4 million; as well as with First Nation housing, \$6.96 million; building retrofits — institutional — \$50.5 million; community-based retrofit projects under small communities — which I work with my colleague in Community Services on — \$31.4 million. The total combined funding from the governments of Canada and Yukon — \$120 million.

#### **Question re: Climate lens policy**

**Ms. White:** Last week, we tabled the motion urging the Government of Yukon to develop a climate lens that would see the government assess the greenhouse gas emissions and climate change resiliency of all government infrastructure, policy and legislative decisions. In an interview on Friday, the Premier said that this is something that the government already does. That's great news, Mr. Speaker.

Taking greenhouse gas emissions and the potential impacts of climate change into account when making government decisions is the kind of action we need to tackle the reality of a territory in a climate emergency.

Can the Premier share the climate lens that his government uses to assess government investments and decision-making, and can he tell us when his government implemented this wide-ranging policy?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will comment on what I have spoken about in the media — but suffice it to say that, from the throne speech, we sent the message that if you take a look at our track record on our platform commitments and at our mandate letters, we campaigned to Yukoners that you can have the environment and the economy too and that all of our decisions would be made with both in hand.

**Ms. White:** A search of the Government of Yukon website returns no results for a climate lens policy or framework. What we are looking for is a government policy or document that guides the decision-making through a climate lens, which the Premier says that they already do. For example, the federal government has a 50-page general guidance document on how to assess infrastructure projects through a climate lens. When the Premier said that his government is

taking similar action — so we thought there must be some form of government policy that sets out how this action is being taken.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier said that they already make their decisions through a climate lens, was he speaking of a substantive government policy, or was he speaking of vague intentions without a guiding framework?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think if you take a look long term at the Yukon government and their ability to hit targets or not hit targets — we understand, as a Liberal government, that we haven't in the past done a great job there. So that is why we are moving forward on a new strategy for climate change, for energy, and a green economy.

When I speak to the opposition or when I speak to the media, this is what I'm talking about as well. In the last three years, we have developed a lot of forward, progressive thought when it comes to reducing our emissions in everything that we do. Now it is time to make sure that we formalize this process as well.

We are developing a climate change, green energy, and green economy strategy in partnership with First Nation governments, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities. The public and stakeholders will have an opportunity next month to review the commitments of over 130 concrete actions — 130 concrete actions, Mr. Speaker — that the Government of Yukon proposes to take toward a greener, more resilient territory.

I agree with the member opposite: We need to have a more formalized process. I believe that in the last three years, we have done a substantial amount of ground-moving in this initiative and with the input of First Nation governments, municipalities, and the public at large — and hopefully the opposition as well. We will add to that with these commitments of these 130 actions.

I really do appreciate the question from the member opposite.

**Ms. White:** So, what we are looking for is a policy or framework that guides all government decisions from this point forward, and that is what we are talking about. But it appears that this government has no government-wide policy in place and that the Premier was mistaken.

Fortunately for us, the federal government has already shown some initiative on this matter and implemented a climate lens that applies to a number of projects underway in the Yukon.

The federal climate lens assesses how infrastructure projects will contribute to or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will consider climate change risks and ways to mitigate them in the design and operation of the project. What sets apart the federal government's climate lens is that it assesses what impact infrastructure can and will have on the climate in the future.

Mr. Speaker, will this government undertake a study of the federal government's infrastructure climate lens with a view to implementing a similar framework specific to the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would like to thank the member opposite for the great suggestions. It is certainly something that

this government takes very seriously. With respect to climate change, we know that we have seen significant changes. We declared a climate change emergency just recently. We are working with our partners to address a climate change strategy. With the climate change lens, we are taking into consideration traditional observations as well as scientific assessments. As we look at building and building envelopes, we look at the direct, unique circumstances in the north. We are certainly working very closely with the Minister of Community Services.

The member opposite seems to have some more great information to share. We would like to hear that so that we can essentially tie that into our comprehensive discussions that we are having right now with Yukoners. We are going to look and continue to have stakeholder debate and discussions around efficiencies — efficiencies in building. We are looking at climate change and the vulnerability and doing the analysis. We will continue to do that, knowing that we have some unique challenges in the north and unique challenges in the Yukon. We will adapt accordingly, working with all of the departments within the government.

#### **Question re: Health care review**

**Ms. McLeod:** As you know, the Liberal government is currently consulting on whether or not to bring in massive health care premiums and whether or not to limit medical travel for rural Yukon. This has been done as part of the comprehensive health review.

Last Tuesday, the comprehensive health review panel held a consultation in Watson Lake on their proposals. The only problem is that only one person from the five-person panel showed up for the consultation.

Mr. Speaker, how can Yukoners have faith in the consultations for the comprehensive health review if the panel that the minister appointed to conduct the review won't even show up to the meetings?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I do believe that was maybe a bit of an insult to the competencies — suggesting that they have not shown up. They are in fact showing up — very highly skilled, competent individuals who are going ahead to do comprehensive, independent discussions with Yukoners. We will allow Yukoners to provide that feedback.

I am glad to know that the Member for Watson Lake is very interested. Perhaps she will participate in the discussions in Watson Lake and give us some great feedback and some great recommendations so that we can essentially take that into consideration via the comprehensive health review panel. I look forward to further discussions and further debate. I also look forward to the panel's recommendations, because they are going to go into every Yukon community and provide us with some recommendations with the feedback. I am looking forward to that.

**Ms. McLeod:** I am sure the minister will be pleased to know that I have in fact attended part of the review —

**Speaker:** Order. One moment, please.

*Interruption — phone ringing*

**Speaker:** If the Clerks-at-the-Table could start the clock again, please.

The Member for Watson Lake, please.

**Ms. McLeod:** As I was saying to the minister, I have participated in the part of the debate going on in Watson Lake with this health review, and I have been trying to share those Yukoners' concerns and the government won't listen.

Mr. Speaker, the problems are stacking up for the comprehensive health review. The minister originally told Yukoners that the health review would be completed by the fall of 2019, but since then, it has been delayed five times.

Now the so-called "consultations" — 80 percent of the panel didn't go to the meetings in Watson Lake. This minister has been criticized in the past for showing up to a consultation and refusing to participate, insisting that she was there as a keynote listener. Now her health review panel won't go to their own consultations. That's hardly a meaningful consultation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, are the concerns that are being raised at these meetings being relayed back to the panel exactly as they are asked, or are they simply being summarized and watered down?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I would say that the members who make up the comprehensive health review are members of our community who have extensive experience in our communities, who are very involved in all of our communities, and who have had extensive experience working in our communities from all sectors of our society.

With regard to the meetings in Watson Lake and elsewhere — my understanding is that there were over 35 members at their meeting in Watson Lake. We are getting quite an uptake and response from all of our communities.

My understanding from the comprehensive review committee is that they are sharing that responsibility and they go out to the communities. There were five representatives available at those meetings.

So, I would not worry too much about them skimming over information. I think that comprehensive documentation is being put together and detailed analysis. Yes, I have gone out to the communities and I have listened to the communities. I don't go out to the communities — I sit and I listen and sometimes that might be qualified as a "keynote listener". Well, I listen and I hear what the communities are saying and we take that essentially into advisement and try to tie that back into what has not happened historically.

**Ms. McLeod:** Four years, Mr. Speaker. According to the documents that were revealed by the Third Party, the cost for this health review could be as high as \$2 million. I think that Yukoners would be very disappointed to learn that, for \$2 million, the health review panel won't go to the consultations. So, what are we paying for?

There are nine more public consultations scheduled for this health review. So, will the minister ask the entire panel to attend these consultations so that they can actually hear from and have a meaningful consultation with Yukoners on the future of our health care?

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I want to just clarify some of the comments that were made, because they were absolutely incorrect. For one, it is not \$2 million. We have never allocated \$2 million. The cost for the comprehensive health review is estimated to be \$650,000, and it is not four years. We have had this responsibility now for three years. I am very proud of the good work of Health and Social Services. I'm very proud of the work that we have done, and we have essentially delivered better services and better programming. We have specialized supports we brought to the Yukon. We want to ensure that we do that continuing into the future. That is the objective of the review. The biggest cost-driver in this government is health — health and social services.

We want to ensure that we provide efficient, effective services so that Yukoners can live healthy, happy lives within the communities they choose to live in. I would venture to say that the majority of Yukon communities have not been given the support that they require to do just that, and we will endeavour to do that. We will continue the good work, we will listen to Yukoners, and we will deliver on what we said we would.

#### **Question re: Radon testing**

**Mr. Kent:** Radon is a colourless, odourless, naturally occurring gas that can enter buildings through cracks and unsealed openings in basements and foundations from the soil. It is a health concern if there is prolonged exposure. In 2018, the Government of Yukon did testing of radon levels in schools. Those tests determined that, according to Health Canada's guidelines for indoor air quality, results for Christ the King Elementary School, Eliza Van Bibber School, and Holy Family School are slightly above Health Canada's recommended levels for radon.

The latest update on the government website says that the government will complete remediation work at Christ the King Elementary and Eliza Van Bibber within two years. It goes on to state that the details of this remediation work are being determined.

Can the minister tell us if the details of the remediation at these two schools has been determined yet, and has remediation begun or been completed at these schools?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I will endeavour to get an answer to the member opposite.

**Mr. Kent:** So, when we were in general debate on the budget in Committee of the Whole with departments that don't have votes, the Premier informed this side of the House that he has pigeonholed us into a half-hour Question Period where we can ask these types of questions. Normally, we would ask them with officials present so that we can get the answer, but unfortunately, we're not able to get any responses at all to these questions that are being raised by Yukoners and that Yukoners are asking us to ask. Hopefully the Premier reconsiders his stubborn stance when it comes to Committee of the Whole.

According to the government's website, the remediation system at Holy Family School was not ready until the end of the testing period in 2018. As a result, the school was going to be tested again during the 2018-19 heating season to ensure that

radon levels at the school are now below the recommended levels.

Can the minister confirm for us the results of the most recent radon testing at Holy Family School? Are radon levels now below the recommended levels?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Of course, the Minister of Education will get up and answer the member opposite's question in the third supplementary. But again, Mr. Speaker, we hear two different things. He's asking me during Committee of the Whole if we would answer questions. We are answering questions in general debate. We are endeavouring to get back to the questions that we do not have available for us at that time. Today in Committee of the Whole, answers to specific questions that remained unquestioned will get answered. Again, we are committing to answer the questions members opposite are asking. We will continue to do that in Question Period.

I just want to correct the record. When a question is asked with two different statements in it, we would like to answer both of those questions, so we will give the opportunity to answer the question about Committee of the Whole debate. The member opposite is incorrect.

When it comes to radon, we will absolutely have the Minister of Education answer the member opposite's very specific question.

**Mr. Kent:** Well, that was quite a ramble by the Premier attempting to deflect again — or not even attempting; he's strictly deflecting any of the questions that we asked. Normally, as I mentioned, we would ask these questions during Committee of the Whole debate when ministers are supported by their officials. When we got into Committee of the Whole debate on the supplementary budget last week, the Premier wouldn't even let his ministers answer or get into their briefing books. He just stumbled and bumbled his way through trying to answer our questions.

I will ask again. The Teen Parent Centre was also previously found to have radon levels above recommended levels, but remediation was not completed until after the 2017-18 heating season, so testing was not completed. The government had stated that they would test the Teen Parent Centre in the 2018-19 heating season to ensure that radon levels are now within recommended levels.

So, can the minister provide an update on the radon testing at the Teen Parent Centre and are those levels within what is recommended?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** As you probably know, radon is naturally occurring in the Yukon and does not pose immediate danger to health. It is only a concern where there is prolonged exposure to a high concentration over many years. That said, of course radon is of concern when it is appearing in some of our Yukon schools.

The Government of Yukon's radon management guidelines follow Health Canada's recommended guidelines. We are working with staff and planning for additional mitigation work at Christ the King Elementary and at Eliza Van Bibber School in Pelly Crossing. These schools tested slightly above the recommended range in recent testing.

With respect to the Teen Parent Centre and Holy Family School, testing has resulted in remediation work that has been completed, and both of those locations will be tested this winter, since that remediation work has been done.

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

### Notice of opposition private members' business

**Mr. Kent:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 23, 2019. They are Motion for the Production of Papers No. 3, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin, and Motion No. 18, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

**Ms. White:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 23, 2019. They are Motion No. 8, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre, and Motion No. 23, standing in the name of the Member for Takhini-Kopper King.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Hutton):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

### Bill No. 200: *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

Resuming general debate — Mr. Silver, 14 minutes, 54 seconds.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the opportunity. Just to pick up where we left off in general debate from the other day, I want to thank the Department of Health and Social Services for providing some answers that I endeavoured to get back to the members opposite on.

I am going to start with question 1 that was asked. I am paraphrasing here, but the member opposite spoke about hearing certain things in her community and that she would like to know if the minister would confirm whether or not all of the positions in each of the mental wellness hubs in the communities were filled.

On that specific question, Mr. Chair, since Health and Social Services committed to hiring 11 mental health professionals for the Mental Wellness and Substance Use hubs in May of 2018, we have been able to fill 10 out of the 11 positions, with further recruitment underway. We are still attempting to fill the mental wellness and substance use counsellor position in Ross River — that would be the one position that is still not there. We do have a mental health nurse living in Ross River and providing services to that community. We also have recently adjusted the hub model and have expanded the number of positions in Carcross, Watson Lake, and Dawson City. Staffing levels in the hubs are continuously assessed and adjusted to meet the needs of the community.

The member opposite also asked for the communities that don't have hubs — do the mental wellness and substance use workers visit and do they have a set schedule? In that particular case, the mental wellness supports are provided in all Yukon communities either through a hub location or by a mental wellness staff person living in most communities. The current mental wellness and substance use — or MWSU — staffing in communities — Dawson City, which is a hub, has three MWSU counsellors, one child, youth and family counsellor, one clinical advisor, and one mental health nurse starting in November 2019. We have recruiting for one MWSU counsellor and two support workers. Old Crow, for example, has one MWSU counsellor, one child, youth and family counsellor/MWSU counsellor — it is an alternate two-week position — two-week periods. An offer has also gone out to a specific MWSU counsellor, with a start date of February of the coming year, in 2020. Also, in Mayo, there is one MWSU counsellor there as well. Haines Junction, which is a hub — one MWSU counsellor, one clinical counsellor, one support worker, and one child, youth and family counsellor — or CYF counsellor from here on in — starting in November 2019 — currently recruiting for one CYF counsellor and one mental health nurse and one support worker.

Carcross — not a hub — one MWSU counsellor, one clinical counsellor biweekly from Haines Junction — with support there — one part-time support worker, currently recruiting for one CYF counsellor and one MWSU counsellor; Tagish — not a hub — that community has one MWSU counsellor and support worker from Carcross who visits regularly; Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, and Beaver Creek — staff visit those communities from the hub in Haines Junction either biweekly or weekly, depending upon need; Carmacks — which is a hub — has one MWSU counsellor, one

support worker, currently recruiting for one clinical counsellor, one MWSU counsellor, and one CYF counsellor; Pelly Crossing — not a hub — has one CYF/MWSU counsellor; Ross River — not a hub — one mental health nurse, one CYF/MWSU counsellor visiting from Pelly Crossing, and one MWSU counsellor visiting from Carmacks; Faro — also not a hub community — has visiting from Pelly Crossing, one CYF/MWSU counsellor, visiting from Carmacks, one MWSU counsellor, and one mental health nurse scheduled in Faro every two-week period; Watson Lake — a hub — is staffed with two MWSU counsellors, two mental health support workers, one CYF counsellor, currently recruiting one clinical counsellor, one mental health nurse, one MWSU counsellor, and one CYF counsellor; Teslin has one MWSU counsellor and one CYF counsellor visiting biweekly from Watson Lake.

Again, Mr. Chair — very specific questions that I didn't have at my disposal with my team, the Department of Finance, in general debate. But we have endeavoured to get back to the members opposite and answered the questions even though we heard even today in Question Period that we're not answering the questions. I would beg to differ. We're endeavouring to get back with the answers in a timely fashion.

I have to say — as we list all of these support staff workers for these hub communities in the greater Yukon area — it's a far cry from one mental health nurse for the north of Yukon and one mental health nurse for all of the southern Yukon and the rural communities. Trying to make that schedule, we know, came with a lot of trials and tribulations and, you know, a really insufficient amount of support for the mental health of our communities. We are endeavouring to fill positions that aren't filled, but we have a complement of mental health workers in all of those communities.

I do have other answers, but I would run out of time right now. I will provide a couple of answers now, as I'm on my feet, with regard to Many Rivers. We had a question asked about the number of positions created in communities to cover gaps left by Many Rivers. Mr. Chair, since the spring of 2018, the MWSU hubs have more than filled the gaps left by the closure of the non-governmental organization Many Rivers. Since the addition of these hubs, MWSU has seen an uptake in services being provided to children, youth, and families.

In many of the communities served, the mental wellness hubs — that model differs from services previously offered in the communities by Many Rivers — where you saw before that there were only two different support workers or support nurses — back in the previous days, where Many Rivers would have had to bear a lot of that extra need — the mental wellness staff live in most communities, which provides continuous and consistent care. Where Many Rivers only provided services in Dawson City, Haines Junction, and Watson Lake, the mental wellness hubs itinerant specialist services provide clinical practice and case management.

These hubs also provide pre- and post-care services and supports in Whitehorse, in collaboration with psychiatry as well. The mental health works in collaboration with families; they work in collaboration with schools on a whole-of-government approach. These mental wellness hubs broaden the

connectivity with Yukon First Nations and the Department of Education as well.

We were asked by the members opposite how the gap in services left by Many Rivers is being closed in Whitehorse and also in the communities. Mr. Chair, in Whitehorse itself, since March 2019, the combined efforts of the MWSU Whitehorse location and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Yukon division — that is CMHAY — have allowed drop-in counselling to be available on Mondays through Saturdays.

On August 23, 2019, we announced that, in addition to those services, Health and Social Services has retained the services of CMHAY in an expanded capacity as well as the services of All Genders Yukon Society in Whitehorse. These service providers will also follow the new service-delivery model being implemented in the MWSU community hubs announced in September 2019, which will mean that clients can more easily access family, grief, relationship, and marriage counselling services across the territory.

In light of the time, I will sit down at this point. I will try to thread some more answers to these questions in as we go through general debate.

**Mr. Hassard:** We have received a note, as did the government side of the Legislature, from the Clerk's Table saying that this was our opportunity to raise questions even of departments that do not have line items in the supplementary budget.

This Premier has talked extensively about finding efficiencies and the importance of the government being efficient — showing up in this Assembly prepared to provide accurate information to the Assembly. I guess my first question for the Premier would be: Does he feel that this is an efficient way to spend our time here in the Legislature, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Do I find answering the questions that the members opposite ask in general debate to be an efficient use of our time? I do. Yes.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am not sure. Maybe the Premier didn't understand the question or wasn't entirely listening. I would think that efficiencies would be having ministers available and having the staff available to assist those ministers so that the questions can be answered and then supplementary questions could be asked. I think providing three answers to questions that were asked last week — now, if critics want to ask supplementary questions to those responses — and we do appreciate the responses; don't get me wrong — they are going to wait another week for those responses.

So my question to the Premier was: Does he feel that this is an efficient way to spend our time here in the Legislature? Or maybe I should rephrase that, Mr. Chair, and say: Is this the most efficient way to be proceeding in the Legislature?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think again what we have here is a difference of opinion as to how we're supposed to spend the time on the bill. I would ask the member opposite — in the past, when his party was in government — if the member opposite would listen to the question; I can wait. At that time, was there ever an opportunity where Committee of the Whole and general debate offered ministers to answer those questions? I don't recall — in the five years that I spent in opposition, I don't

recall once having the past Premier offer up the ministers. We have. But again, we did that in a way that still dealt with the departments that were up for debate in the bills. I would ask again to the member opposite: Was there ever a time where the member opposite's team or party — when they were in government — offered up a department — a government department — for a bill, a budget, a supplementary — that wasn't a part of that supplementary budget? The answer again would be no.

The member opposite is saying that they're going to have to wait weeks to get answers. I'm responding right now in a timely fashion — in less than a week; in a couple of days, actually — to the very, very, very specific questions that the Yukon Party are asking and I am doing so gladly.

The members opposite would have you believe that I'm not. But again, we believe that we are offering more Committee of the Whole support than in the past here. Again, in my five years in opposition, I don't recall a time where a department was up that wasn't part of that supplementary budget. If I'm wrong, then I will apologize, but I don't recall that.

I do know that we invoked the guillotine clause quite a bit as a government. Our government does. The opposition — when they were in government, they did as well. My goal would be to have as much debate about the bills that are in front of us, and then if we do have extra time, we could have that conversation about what we would do with that time.

What I will continue to do today is I will continue to answer the questions that were asked — very specific questions in general debate. I guess it's a strategy to try to maybe get me to speak off of note, I guess, which is fine. It's a tactic and I understand what the opposition is trying to do.

But what I will do instead is — if I don't have that information at my fingertips here as we are debating very specific increases in infrastructure and the Wildland Fire Management supplementary budget — if I don't have those answers readily available, I will endeavour to get those answers.

I would say, as well, that the last time we stood in Committee of the Whole, we did answer a lot of the questions on the floor in general debate, and then whatever I couldn't respond to, we are getting back to the opposition with. I think that is an effective use of our time because — for one — we are answering as much as we can in general debate and then we are giving more information.

Another question that was asked the other day, which we didn't have a response for immediately: What are the current wait times for people seeking long-term recovery treatment at Sarah Steele? Again, an important question and one that we are endeavouring to get back to the members on as quickly as we possibly can, if those questions are asked in general debate. The wait time is approximately five weeks; however, those with urgent needs have access to day programs and groups, as well as rapid-access counselling as well.

Another question specifically about treatment at Sarah Steele, or other treatment, was: What are the wait times for treatment at Sarah Steele and other treatments? The wait time for intensive treatment is up to five weeks. The wait time for

rapid-access counselling is approximately nine days. There is no wait time for group therapy. There are no wait times across Yukon for child, youth, and family drop-in or rapid-access treatment.

For outpatient counselling, the wait-list in Whitehorse is approximately two months. For outpatient counselling in the communities, the only wait time is in Dawson City, which is less than six weeks.

There was a question also specific to — what has been put in place this year to support people who have received treatment and are seeking after-care, for example? Mr. Chair, there is rapid-access counselling. There are day programs and groups. As well, at discharge, patients are connected with a counsellor.

I'll leave it there for now and continue to field some current questions while I seed in some responses from this week.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe it would be easier if the Premier just tabled that document and then he wouldn't have to stand up and read from it every time.

Mr. Chair, I'll just read a memo from the Clerk's Table. It said: "In case it may be handy, just wished to address in advance proceedings in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 200, *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*."

"In Schedule A of Bill No. 200, there are three Votes that require new appropriations: Vote 51 — Community Services; Vote 07 — Economic Development; Vote 22 — Yukon Development Corporation.

"After general debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole concludes, these are the individual Votes that can be called for debate.

"If Members have any questions concerning Votes that do *not* require new appropriations, the point in the proceedings at which to raise them would be during general debate on the bill in Committee of the Whole.

"The reason for this is that the approval of the Legislative Assembly is not required for such changes, whereas the approval of the Assembly *is* required to appropriate new funds. This holds true even if a Vote that does not require new appropriation has some changes in line items within the Vote. One such Votes is listed in the Table of Contents (alongside the aforementioned three Votes that *do* require new appropriations) of the information booklet accompanying Bill No. 200. That Vote is Vote 18, Yukon Housing Corporation. Any questions about that Vote would be raised during general debate on Bill No. 200."

So, Mr. Chair, I read that into the record. I know that the Premier has seen that. He has received that note, and I know that, last week, you spoke on this matter and said that, yes, this is the time for the opposition to ask these questions. But you also told us that doesn't necessarily mean that the government has to answer those questions.

Today we have the Premier here providing some information to questions that were asked days ago. My question to the Premier was whether he felt that this was the most efficient way of having us spend our time here in the Legislature. So maybe another question for the Premier would

be: Does he feel that this is the most efficient way for staff to be dealing with their time?

Traditionally, we would have a minister answer questions. He would have officials with him, and the questions could be answered quite simply, as a rule. There are occasions that the staff aren't able or maybe don't have the information at hand, but they certainly endeavour to get that information back to the Legislature.

Now, this way, we have staff from departments running around having to find the information and relay it back to the Premier, and then the Premier can relay it back to the Legislature. As I said, when critics have supplementary questions, they now have to wait for a few days for those staff to scramble around and jump through the hoops to try to get the information.

We certainly appreciate the work that the staff are doing, but we also apologize to those staff because it's unfortunate. I'm sure that they probably all have other things to be doing as well.

My question, Mr. Chair, is: Does the Premier feel that this is the most efficient way to spend the time of staff in the departments?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, in the past, we have made ministers available during general debate — having all of the ministers available during general debate. We also have allowed in general debate an answer to the questions — here we are, in the Legislative Assembly — as opposed to the members opposite asking some specific questions to this bill, they have chosen this as their best use of time to ask very, very specific questions of other departments.

It would be different, Mr. Chair — and I really do think it would be different — in the past, departments that did not have budgetary line items when the Yukon Party was in power — if they had offered up that service or that department — but I don't recall that. That is not something that they did. The only difference here is that the Yukon Party did two budgets. They had a budget in the fall and they had a budget in the spring. So I understand why the members opposite are saying, "Look, we have less of an opportunity to ask very specific questions." But general debate is still general debate — bottom line.

In general debate under this government, we are answering the questions in general, and we are also not only offering answers in general, but we are also offering very specific answers that come in a more timely fashion. I think that anytime that a department spends its time providing information for the questions from the members opposite is a very valuable use of government time, because this is an open and accountable government. If I don't have the information at my fingertips or if I don't have the historic knowledge myself personally to be able to weigh in during general debate — which is exactly what general debate is — then we are doing more so. We are going to go over and above, and we are going to get those very specific answers for the member opposite.

I do remember general debate in the past with the past government. It was a lot of partisan politics, for sure. It was a lot of hurling of certain things back and forth. Pens would be flying. I don't necessarily think that it was a more efficient use

of the Legislature's time. I am sure that the members opposite would beg to differ. But I do recall asking a lot of questions — in Committee of the Whole for the departments — and not getting the answers from the members opposite. I would get folks reading, again, from their campaigns. We could go back to that format, but I think that this is a better way where we actually do get answers. We are answering questions in general — and I am answering the member opposite's question now, in general. If he did ask me a very specific question about numbers, then I would have to endeavour to get back to him. So that's what we're doing as well.

Another question asked by the members opposite the other day was: What happened with the \$100,000 for a homeless shelter in Watson Lake from the spring budget? Had it disappeared? What was the outcome of that? Is there a program or project moving forward? Again, I would hazard a guess that, in the past, when the previous government was around, if that specific question was asked, I don't think we would have gotten a legislative return or even an answer to that specific question. We would get a distraction. We would get something about the difference between the NDP and Yukon Party or the difference between the Liberal and Yukon Party. We wouldn't get an answer. We would have a general debate that was heavy in partisan politics, but we wouldn't get the specific answers. Again, I will endeavour to get those specific answers to the member opposite.

For that particular question, Health and Social Services dedicated \$100,000 in funding to conduct a housing needs assessment in Watson Lake. Health and Social Services entered into a transfer payment agreement — a TPA — with Health and Hope for Families in Watson Lake in August 2019. Health and Hope will be conducting a fulsome assessment of housing needs for the most vulnerable in the community and a men's shelter feasibility study in Watson Lake and surrounding areas. That TPA provides \$85,000 of the available \$100,000 in funding for Health and Hope to conduct a feasibility assessment to determine the following needs for a men's emergency shelter and other supports — supportive housing options and the feasibility of operating an emergency shelter and other supportive housing resources, availability, location and capacity of available community resources, estimated usage, and other types of shelter — low- or high-barrier sheltering.

Once that assessment is complete, an additional agreement for the remaining \$15,000 will be negotiated with a separate consultant to complete an analysis and final report. It is anticipated that there will be a comprehensive report completed by the end of 2019.

I would say that, as well — in answering these very, very specific questions in general debate — I think it also is helpful in the fact that we have done community tours with the Minister of Community Services and public servants who represent those communities and we have talked in general with mayors and councils and chiefs and councils about exactly these specific issues. It is great to be able, on the floor of the Legislative Assembly — in Hansard — to reiterate that and to answer those questions. It helps me to know the specific dollar values that are being allocated and the timelines that are being

implemented, but also it does help that we have it in Hansard — those answered questions as well — as opposed to a legislative return.

I believe the last of the questions from the members opposite was on Helping Hands. What was the evidence used to decide to close the program? What evidence suggests that the individuals would be better served? Has this been successful? Have they been placed in other programs, achieving desired results for these clients? Again, Mr. Chair, a very important question — a very specific question in general debate — but a very important question, so I am happy to get an answer to members opposite and I do appreciate them bringing forth these questions on the floor of the Legislature.

Following up on previous discussions about the program and client need — in February 2019, Health and Social Services met with Helping Hands to put in place a short-term contract from April 1, 2019, to June 30 of the same year, with the intent to provide time to determine next steps for the transition of clients. At that time, Helping Hands was notified that Health and Social Services did not intend to extend the contract with Helping Hands beyond June 30, 2019. By June 25, 2019, all client transition plans were well underway. The transition from Helping Hands was finalized on June 1, 2019. All clients have transitioned to new programs and are doing well. I want to thank the Department of Health and Social Services for their excellent work in that endeavour. There have been no concerns or incidents that have been reported — unless the members opposite have some reports to the contrary — we would love to hear them.

We do appreciate the services that the non-profit organization Helping Hands has provided. This decision balanced client support needs and outcomes while ensuring that public funds and resources were used responsibly. It was determined that funding three different organizations to provide comparable services was not an efficient use of limited funding and resources.

Teegatha'Oh Zheh is a non-profit organization that has provided high-quality, accessible, and inclusive services in Yukon for decades. The Government of Yukon has given TOZ an additional just under \$100,000 — a very specific answer — \$98,552.40 per year to support the transition. Again, that would be a number that I wouldn't have readily available in general debate, but I endeavoured to and got back to the members opposite in a very timely fashion.

Transitioning clients to TOZ and providing the organization additional funding for an increased staff complement still results in a net savings of almost \$200,000 a year. My credit goes where it's due to the Department of Health and Social Services, working with the NGO community and the communities at large to make sure that we're offering the same quality programming and services that Yukoners come to deserve and want and, in doing so, finding efficiencies in that pursuit.

**Mr. Hassard:** As I said before, Mr. Chair, we certainly do appreciate the information that the Premier is providing for those questions that were asked a number of days ago; however, he is continuing to talk about efficiencies and being efficient



and I still feel that it would be more efficient to have the minister with a briefing binder and the officials there to support them in answering those questions last week.

The interesting thing is the Premier stood here for 10 minutes using up his entire speaking time talking about how they're answering the questions, but my one specific question was: Does the Premier feel that this is the most efficient way for staff to spend their time? He actually didn't in fact answer that question, Mr. Chair. He talked at great length about a lot of other things. He did not say that this is the most efficient way for staff to spend their time, or no, this is not the most efficient way for staff to spend their time.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The questions need to be answered. Those answers need to be checked with the department to make sure that they are accurate, so they take time — absolutely.

I was wondering if the member opposite thinks that asking very specific questions in general debate is an effective use of his staff's time when they know that this is the time for a general debate. But again, we are happy to answer the questions that the members opposite ask. I think it's a little bit pointless to have a debate as to whether or not the way that the last government answered questions in general debate — by hurling partisan rhetoric back and forth — was a better use of time. I guess that way — I can certainly see the member opposite's point — the staff doesn't have to bother answering the questions. For us, we can answer the questions generally, and then we endeavour to get the answers back to the member opposite.

I guess I can see that it is more time for the departments to actually answer the questions, but I still believe that in an open and transparent government — that is a responsibility of an open and transparent government. I will absolutely endeavour to do my best here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, answering the general questions that the member opposite has for me. If I can't answer those questions, then I apologize. But what I will do is endeavour to get back to the member opposite with those answers. That part is maybe something that the members opposite didn't do so much here.

So, yes, it does take time for the department, but I also know that the departments have that information. Also, the public servants want to make sure that the most accurate information is being discussed here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

So, yes, I do think that this is an efficient use of our time if the goal is to answer those questions and if the questions that are coming in general debate are too specific to answer without being able to fact-check at that time the most up-to-date responses.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly hope that the Premier understands his responsibilities. He is responsible for the government. He is responsible for his ministers. He is responsible that the information that the ministers provide is accurate. That is his responsibility.

Another one of his responsibilities is to ensure that, when the opposition has questions on behalf of constituents throughout the entire Yukon — the Premier ensures that

accurate information is passed on to the opposition so that we can pass that information on to our respective constituents.

Still, Mr. Chair, my question was very simple: Does the Premier feel that this is the most effective way for staff to spend their time? He has talked around this. He has talked about how important it is and how the staff need to have accurate information, but he will not say that yes, this is the most effective way for staff to fill their time or that no, it is not.

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

**Mr. Hassard:** No, you have not answered it three times. Mr. Chair, he did not answer the question once. So if he wants to sit there and tell me to sit down, then I will sit down, and I will hope that we will finally get an answer to the question, Mr. Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes. Yes, it is very effective. If he wants me to say "the most effective" — it's hard to say "the most". I think it's much more effective than with the previous government — absolutely, yes, I do.

It's interesting that the member opposite will criticize me about my roles and responsibilities here, which is exactly what the member opposite said. He said that it's my responsibility to do this and do that. I agree — that is my responsibility. Sometimes I wonder about the member opposite's responsibilities as the leader of that party. But again, we will take a look at his summer activities to determine whether or not it is a valuable use of his time to take on a second job. Again, if the member opposite wants to talk to us about responsibilities — yes, I think this is an effective use of my time. I understand the roles and responsibilities of a Premier, and I take those responsibilities, not lightly, but with a lot of responsibility. I work very hard in that role. I am sitting here answering the questions the member opposite asks and I'm still getting criticized for doing so.

I will continue. There were some questions asked this week when we last sat in Committee of the Whole on lobbyist registration. "When will the regulations be in effect?" was one of the questions.

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

### Quorum count

**Chair:** Mr. Hassard, on a point of order.

**Mr. Hassard:** I would like to call for a quorum count, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Order, please. According to Standing Order 3(4): "While in Committee of the Whole, if the Chair's attention is drawn to an apparent lack of a quorum, the Chair shall ring the bells for four minutes and then do a count."

### Bells

**Chair:** Order, please. There are 13 members present. A quorum is present. We will now continue general debate.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I was about to answer some specific questions on lobbyist registration from the members opposite. I think the question was along the lines of: When will the regulations be in effect? I believe this came from the NDP — answering some of the questions from the Third Party. When

will the regulations be in effect and when will legislators be apprised of the regulation governing lobbying in this territory?

I did answer the question in general, but a more specific answer is: The *Lobbyists Registration Act* will not come into effect until a registration system is available. Work on an online system is currently underway. When the online registration system is complete, we will be ready to bring the legislation into force.

Mr. Chair, this is all new in Yukon, and we are developing the first regulatory system for lobbyists in the territory.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Chair, as the Premier knows, House Leaders have had discussions every morning and suggested that we would be willing and open to saying, okay — that we can pick a department that we would be open to asking questions of in order for the ministers to be prepared — if they felt that they needed staff to be in the Legislature with them for support — and this morning, the discussion was about Highways and Public Works. We are happy that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is here. I'm sure he has his briefing binder with him.

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

#### Point of Order

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I believe it contradicts the Standing Orders to make a reference to whether or not a member is in or out of the Legislative Assembly.

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, on the point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** On the point of order, I believe that the Standing Orders only refer to referring to the absence of a member, not whether a member is here, which is what the Leader of the Official Opposition said. He said that he is happy to see the minister here sitting in his seat.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I tend to agree with Mr. Kent. There is no point of order.

Mr. Hassard, please.

**Mr. Hassard:** So as my colleague beside me said, we are happy to see that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is here and ready to work.

Today, for the rest of the afternoon or for the next foreseeable future anyway, I would like to direct my questions toward Highways and Public Works. I am sure that the Premier is not going to have the answers for a lot of these questions, so I am hoping that he will allow the Minister of Highways and Public Works to help him with some of these questions.

Mr. Chair, there was a contract for brushing. I know that the Minister of Highways and Public Works likes to talk about brushing, as do I. Contract 2018/19-3094 closed on July 26, 2018. Part of the contract was for brushing between kilometre 535.1 and kilometre 565 of the Klondike Highway, as well as a section of the Silver Trail. Highways and Public Works struck a deal with the contractor and traded the work up north for work farther south, I guess would be the best way to put it. Since that time, that section of brushing was never, ever

done. Now the government has come up with a new way of determining the priority for brushing. Mr. Chair, we are left wondering: Since that section was a priority a year and a half ago, how did it fall off of the priority list? Is there any indication of when that brushing may proceed in the future?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When it comes to the brushing issues in Yukon, I am extremely proud of the system that Highways and Public Works has endeavoured to invoke. For the first time ever, classifying roads was a huge endeavour — absolutely — and something that was well-appreciated by the private sector and by those folks who do the highway maintenance work and also the brushing work.

We have heard a difference of opinion between the Yukon Party and the NDP as to whether or not we are doing enough brushing or, maybe in some cases, we have been told by the members opposite that we are doing too much brushing as well. I think that, in general, it is very important that we continue this work. It is very important that we do it in a systematic fashion and make sure that we look at every community and make sure that the brushing reflects the usage of the roads. I know that the members opposite would appreciate that, because we do have thousands and thousands of kilometres of roads that need to have a comprehensive strategy — a long-term strategy — when it comes to brushing.

We are doing all roads over the next five years, and we are planning to do that in a systematic fashion. We don't want to do that — maybe to use the minister's words — “fast and loose”. I have heard him say that a few times in the Legislative Assembly. We developed a system, and that is extremely important. We want to make those roads safer, we want to make them wider, and we want to protect wildlife.

The member opposite — I would assume, based on his background — would want us to see more and to put more money in for brushing contracts. We have heard from the NDP that, in certain areas, they want us to do less. To me, a systematic approach works. Contracts are being let out by that department, and I am confident that, over the five-year plan that we have for brushing, all roads — all roads — in Yukon will be brushed.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly agree with the Premier that brushing is very important. Safety is important. That is why I asked this specific question regarding a specific contract.

I had suggested that maybe the minister could open up his briefing binder and very simply pass a briefing note to the Premier — maybe help him out and provide him with a bit of information — but our open and accountable government doesn't appear to be interested in taking suggestions and actually trying to answer the question.

So, Mr. Chair, I will ask the question again. Contract 2018/19-3094 closed on July 26, 2018 — my question very simply is: Why, after this section of the contract was not completed or not even started — how come it fell off the priority list, but did not make the new priority list? It is quite a simple question, Mr. Chair. I am sure that there is a very good reason. I have people asking me what that reason is, and so my duty is to come here to the Legislature and ask those questions.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think anybody listening would appreciate that, if I had that detail of information here, I would have about 1,000 binders on my table. I can say that three kilometres of barriers will be done this year. I can say that 1,000 kilometres of brushing is done and also that 1,600 kilometres of lanes were painted as well. It might come as a surprise — a shocker — to the member opposite that I don't have that specific case file in front of me, but I will endeavour to get some responses to the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** It might come as a shocker to the Premier that I actually said that I am quite sure that he doesn't have this information, but I am quite sure that the Minister of Highways and Public Works has this information. It is unfortunate that the Premier doesn't have any confidence in his minister and that he isn't willing to converse with him and actually get the information to answer the question that I have asked.

So maybe we'll try again, Mr. Chair — if the Premier could talk to the minister and find out the information to that very specific question.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have available — right here, at my disposal — the briefing notes for the minister for the Department of Highways and Public Works. I have the information. If it is a general question, I can answer it.

That specific contract is not necessarily something that we bring into the Legislative Assembly. That would be the regular operation and maintenance work of the Department of Highways and Public Works. That particular question, regardless of whether it was asked of me or the Minister of Highways and Public Works, would be a question that I would have to get an answer from the department, so I'm relaying to the member opposite that we will get him that answer to that specific question as timely as we possibly can.

We do use a service approach and we are prioritizing by certain travel areas. There are definitely priorities and this likely was undertaken on a higher priority and we're rescheduling that into our priority areas. But again, that's a very specific question about a very specific section of highways — whether it's me or the minister — just again, for clarity's sake and to make sure that we're providing the most up-to-date information on the floor of the Legislative Assembly — that would invoke public resources and the public time of the public officials to get that information back. We will do that in as timely a fashion as we possibly can.

**Mr. Hassard:** That leads directly to my point: Why wouldn't the Premier allow the officials to be here and actually answer those questions or provide assistance so that the minister could answer those questions directly and then we could move on and we could get all kinds of great things done here? But, like I said, unfortunately, it appears that the Premier has no confidence in his minister, which is pretty sad.

But, Mr. Chair, this is our time to ask these questions. So I'm going to persist and I'm going to continue to ask questions.

Tender 2019/20-3595 includes asphalt pavement overlay on the Alaska Highway from kilometre 1370.2 to 1378.9. I'm curious as to if this was a planned project. I didn't notice it in any capital plans, so I guess I'm curious as to where this project originated from.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** To answer the specific question about whether or not I have any confidence in my minister, the answer is: Absolute confidence in my minister — absolutely. I have confidence in all of my ministers — my private members as well. This team, in a whole-of-government approach, is extremely competent and very good at the jobs that they do.

When it comes to specific questions about roads — the point is that all roads will be brushed soon. We have a plan to make sure that, in a five-year plan, all roads will be brushed. That has never been done before. That is the point that Yukoners need to know. Forty years of old trees in some rights-of-way — very dangerous — 40-year-old trees in certain areas that have never been cleared — in 40 years. We are endeavouring to make sure that this gets done in a five-year time frame.

Being able to get that level of work out the door — and then the member opposite asks me if I have any confidence in the minister — absolutely — he is cleaning up some messes that haven't been cleaned up before. On average, we resurfaced 130 kilometres of BST and 10 kilometres of asphalt every year. I have extreme confidence in my minister — absolutely. If the member opposite has very specific questions about very specific sections of road and what we are doing, I will give him the same response that he gave me. If he wants to give me all of those questions in a return or table them in the Legislative Assembly now, that would be an effective use of our time. We could get those answers to the member opposite as quickly as possible, because the member opposite knows that there are a myriad of ways that the member opposite — if he actually wants the answers to these questions — can ask these questions. We can casework these. We have done legislative returns — many, many more legislative returns than the opposition used to do when they were in the Legislative Assembly. We answer more questions. We are answering more questions in general debate here — yet we are still hearing from members opposite that they don't like the style. But again, we are answering the questions.

If the member opposite really wants to look for efficiencies, then he could table all of these questions, we could table the answers, we could get on to daily debate, we could get on to the budget, and we could get on to the other bills as well. But again, I am happy to use this format if that suits the members opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly didn't ask if the Premier had confidence in his minister, but he answered that question that wasn't asked and then went on to talk about brushing when, in fact, I was asking a question about asphalt overlay, which is paving — that is not brushing. Maybe it would be more beneficial and more efficient for the Minister of Highways and Public Works to answer the questions or at least provide some assistance to the Premier to answer the questions.

Since we didn't get any answers to the asphalt overlay tender question, I will ask this — tender 2019/20-3468, graded aggregate seal coat, kilometre 1381.3 to kilometre 1389.0. That tender closed in mid-May, and as I said, contract 2019/20-3468 didn't close until the final days of August. So I am curious as to why those tenders were not maybe done in conjunction with

one another. I am also curious as to why — since they are in fact right next door to one another — did one get graded aggregate seal coat while the other got asphalt pavement overlay.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, again, in my previous response, I did mention the average amount of resurfacing that we've been doing here in the Yukon. I will state it again for the record: 130 kilometres of BST and also 10 kilometres of asphalt — that is part of the answer. I know it didn't answer his extremely specific question on a specific tender, but in general, we do prioritize repairs, contracts, and services out of Highways and Public Works based on many factors, including safety, cost, traffic volumes, impact to communities, and impact to industry. All of those things are taken into consideration — whether it is a brushing contract or asphalt overlay or other things.

The member opposite can be confident that the Department of Highways and Public Works prioritizes projects on a timely basis and does their best to make sure that they get all of the projects out the door in a timely fashion, whether it be brushing, asphalt overlay, or even bridge inspections. Last year, we allocated \$23 million to bridge inspections, maintenance, and repairs.

Again, I am very confident in the work that the Department of Highways and Public Works does to prioritize on a whole-of-community basis when it comes to these projects. So to the member opposite's question — there are lots of extenuating factors as to how projects get tendered, but also as to how they get prioritized based on those factors that I mentioned.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's quite clear that the Premier isn't capable or able to answer these questions, and like I said, he has every option to ask the minister who sits right behind him for some assistance on these answers. But his open and accountable government refuses to do that.

So the question I asked was quite simple: Why did one contract which was neighbouring the other contract — why was one BST and one asphalt, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, if I compared records of general debate, I would say that I'm probably answering these questions a lot more thoroughly than the previous government did in general debate. The only difference is that it's not attached with 10 or 20 minutes of telling us why we're a better party or worse party or that type of stuff. What we'll do instead is we will endeavour to answer those general questions in general debate, and if there are specific questions the members want as well, then we will endeavour as well to get back to them with those very, very specific questions. But again, we make strategic investments to keep these vital links safe and open for businesses and we will continue to do so. Again, if there are these specific questions then yes, we will endeavour to get back to the member opposite with those answers.

**Mr. Hassard:** So since the Premier doesn't seem to be interested or doesn't want to ask for help to answer very general questions on Highways and Public Works — why was one pavement and why was one BST? That's pretty general, Mr. Chair. The asphalt payment overlay project was not forecasted — it wasn't budgeted for anywhere I was able to

find. So maybe the Premier as the Minister of Finance — surely, he can answer a finance question — can tell us where the funding came from for that project.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That would be coming out of Transportation Maintenance.

**Mr. Hassard:** As I said, I was unable to find it forecasted or budgeted anywhere, so maybe the Premier could be a little more specific as to where we might find that.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, we are going to have to ask: Which specific road is the member opposite referring to? I'm sorry, I didn't hear that in the question.

**Mr. Hassard:** It is interesting that the Premier is just upset because I am asking very specific — and I am using tender numbers — and then he asks me if I could be more specific. I have already said that the tender was 2019/20-3595. It is an asphalt overlay project from kilometre 1370.2 to 1378.9 of the Alaska Highway. So I don't know how much more specific I could get.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I didn't mean to upset the member opposite. I just didn't hear him say the Alaska Highway. I apologize if somehow he took offence to me not hearing what came from him. But again, that specific line, he can find in the main estimates which we debated on the floor of the Legislative Assembly in the spring — page 14(10), under Highways and Public Works, Operation and Maintenance, Vote 55(1).

**Mr. Hassard:** I will come back to that one once I have had an opportunity to look at that. I think it is interesting that the Premier felt that I was getting upset. I certainly wasn't upset, but I also think it is interesting that he just stood here and told us that there was 10 kilometres of asphalt done, but apparently he had no idea where that 10 kilometres of work actually happened. It is pretty interesting, Mr. Chair.

I have a couple of questions regarding rural roads. I'm curious to find out how Highways and Public Works determines which projects will be done in-house and which projects will be done through either contracts or third-party rental agreements.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would say that the urgency is definitely a part of that, but to the member opposite, nothing has changed since the time that he was in government as far as how we prioritize that. As the member opposite would know, urgency is an extremely important part of that process. We don't have anything to report as far as a change in policy from when the member opposite was in government.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am curious that the Premier would say that it has to do with priority. The reason I am asking is that I have a constituent north of Teslin who applied for rural road upgrades a couple of years ago and Highways and Public Works talked with some local contractors about getting the work done. It was this time of year and it was very late in the season, so the project didn't go ahead. Then the contractors were anticipating that this work would happen this spring, but in fact Highways and Public Works did the work in-house.

The interesting thing about this project is that there are two separate roads going to this gentleman's property, and the government actually did an upgrade not to the road that the application was made for, but they did upgrades to a different

road — still leading to the gentleman's property. He has assured me that Highways did a very professional job and he is very happy with the work that they did, but he wants to know what happened to his project. Is his project now dead in the water? Did somebody arbitrarily change his project so that his project is no longer on the books? Or will his project actually be done at some point in the future, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I believe that the member opposite is referring to the rural road upgrade program. Yes, so for that, we do provide financial support for the improvement of maintained and unmaintained Yukon roads. Those rural upgrade program funds are typically targeted for projects that serve public transportation needs. On the unmanned rural residential roads, preference is usually given to communities based on applicants, where property owners provide or agree to provide financial or in-kind contributions.

There are some limitations to the support — limitations such as preference given to projects that serve community interests. Private roads or driveways are not eligible for support under this program. Without knowing this case — the program is also not designed for land developers or sellers who receive financial benefits rather than transportation-based benefits from upgrading projects. Another limitation is that the RRUP financial supports to proponents is contingent upon available Yukon government funding.

This is a case-by-case situation based on requests and input from property owners — subject to approvals of funding as well. All of this information is available to the member opposite on our website. If the member opposite would want to share with me this particular constituency issue, then we can definitely take a look into that particular Yukoner's file.

**Mr. Hassard:** I would be happy to share that information with the Premier, and Mr. Newell, I'm sure, will be very happy to find out what happened to his project and where it may be going in the future.

If I could just go back for a minute to the paving contract — the Premier says that on page 14-10 there is a budget line item for that paving project. Since I don't have those documents in front of me and I'm sure that he obviously does, would he be able to give us a breakdown on that item, please, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** On the contrary — again, we do have the mains here, and the member opposite has access to the mains. I referenced the page — in general debate — of 14-10 in Highways and Public Works. The member opposite had an opportunity to discuss this in Committee of the Whole in the mains. He didn't at that time, and that's fine. Things change from then until now, but that is a specific piece of a line item that wouldn't be available in the mains. So I do not have that specific breakdown at my fingertips, but I will get that information to the member opposite.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate the Premier offering to get us that breakdown.

Mr. Chair, earlier this year, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Highways and Public Works regarding electronic speed signs in the Drury Creek area. Constituents there felt that, once people passed the grader station and got across the bridge, they

tended to speed up again quite rapidly, even though the speed zone carries on for quite some time.

In his response, the minister said — and I will quote from his letter: "It has been found that speed display devices lose their impact as they become more common, and their effectiveness decreases as local drivers become accustomed to them." So I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Highways and Public Works regarding speed signs. I am wondering if the department could provide us with what they feel is the optimal number of speed signs throughout the territory.

I am also curious as to what the schedule is of those signs being moved around. If they feel that they have been there too long and people become accustomed to them and no longer obey them, then do they have a schedule for moving those signs around? If they do, then when they are in the process of moving signs from one area to another, maybe they could possibly look at the option of putting it up in the Drury Creek area for a determined period of time.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do echo the comments from the minister responsible. When these signs are left in certain areas, people do become accustomed to them. I know, Mr. Chair, that you have a long journey when you come back and forth — as I do as well and as does the member opposite. We do go through communities and you know where these signs are in some of the communities. They are effective, but again, it is important that the department moves these signs around into different positions. They do that to accommodate for the fact that, if they are left in certain communities, they will just become as usual as a road sign saying the posted speed limit. So it's a very effective approach — and kudos to the department for doing this — to move these signs around to make sure that they do appear in different areas where they haven't been before.

There is an operational policy and guidelines that are used, and the Department of Highways and Public Works does work whole-of-government on this. For example, with the Department of Education, they have two per school being procured. As we speak, we're looking at procurement there. We are trying to increase the amount that we have.

I appreciate the member opposite's concern with this specific road, and we will definitely get that information to the department and see if it's something that they're willing to consider. Again, there are lots of different areas and not necessarily a lot of these signs. Sometimes these signs as well — they suffer the ill effects of being on an all-weather road. Spending time in minus 40 doesn't help these signs, and they do have a tendency to sometimes go into disrepair and need to be either changed out or fixed up. But again, an extremely important part of the safety of our rural roads is the commitment from Highways and Public Works to these signs. Again, we will take the member opposite's request under consideration as the department works whole-of-government to provide safety and to improve the safety of our roads for all Yukoners.

**Mr. Hassard:** It's interesting that the Premier says he echoes the comments of the Minister of Highways and Public Works in regard to this. He wouldn't have to echo them if he

would just let the minister stand up and answer the question and then maybe we would have actually got an answer to whether Highways and Public Works would consider — when moving their signs, if they would actually consider moving it into the Drury Creek area.

Mr. Chair, a question regarding Highways and Public Works regarding Jersey barriers — we know that not long before that late August tender for paving — which I talked about earlier — before that contract was let, the government used one of their \$1-million contracts to build and install Jersey barriers.

Interestingly enough, one of the sections that they installed these Jersey barriers — well, two sections of the Jersey barriers actually were installed in this 8.7 kilometres that was about to be paved. I'm curious, Mr. Chair, as to if the government has any idea how much extra the paving job cost for the contractor to have to then remove and reinstall the Jersey barriers that had just been installed just a few weeks before.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I believe that the complete budget, year after year — for two years now — was \$1 million per year for this particular initiative.

**Mr. Hassard:** Maybe I will try a different language and then maybe the Premier will understand the question. No, I will keep this language.

The question was: How much extra was added onto the paving contract in order to remove and then re-install the concrete Jersey barriers that had just been installed a few weeks before the paving contract was let?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite can put personal attacks in all he wants as far as my competency here in this position. That's fine.

I gave him a number overall, which is \$1 million per year over two years for Yukon-wide initiatives when it comes to these Jersey barriers. When he is talking about this specific contract, I believe that the cost he is looking for is about \$10,000.

**Mr. Hassard:** So just to clarify — the Premier is saying that it was approximately \$10,000 to remove and re-install all of the Jersey barriers for the paving project between kilometre 1370.2 and 1378.9, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The original question was how much additional money — so I answered the member opposite's question about how much additional money, which was about \$10,000.

**Mr. Hassard:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, I had one more question about the Drury Creek area. I should have touched on this when I was talking about the electric speed sign.

I know that we have talked a lot about brushing, and the Premier has talked about how sometimes we want more brushing and sometimes other members of the Legislature want less brushing. I tend to lean more on the more brushing side; however, I do have a constituent who has concerns with what they feel to be excessive brushing in their neighbourhood. It is in the Drury Creek area.

Their property is actually in the 50-kilometres-per-hour zone. So my question for Highways and Public Works was: Would they look — on a case-by-case basis — at saying, well,

since the area is in a lower speed zone — and don't get me wrong, Mr. Chair; I am a very strong proponent of brushing and safety and allowing ample time for animals to be seen. However, in this case, I wonder if there is a little bit of a difference — since it is in a 50-kilometre-per-hour zone, if Highways and Public Works would re-evaluate the full 20-metre brushing that they normally would do and maybe accommodate the homeowner in some way.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The member opposite is correct on the fact that, when living in wilderness communities, it is extremely important to have a line of sight for wild animals on those highways and into communities as well. It is extremely important, in those areas that have a slower speed zone, to work with the communities and to make sure that we make all efforts to address community needs. But, at the same time, the primary focus is safety on our roads. I believe that this ministry has done an extraordinary job of working with the communities but also coming up with a new way of doing things as far as a five-year plan to get all of the brushing done on our roads and highways. That is extremely important, and it is something that hasn't been done before.

The member opposite should be happy that, again, we are doing more brushing than the previous government. This is a highway situation where, if there is a specific constituent, we definitely look at every single situation. If the member opposite wants to share the information about which specific constituent this is, we could talk with that specific constituent as well about how we plan and what we do when it comes to planning for slower speed limit areas compared to those highway sections.

We will always look to make sure that things are safe. If the member opposite wants to share the information — I mean, we know the specific area that he is talking about, but he has mentioned a specific constituent as well.

We are happy to always go back and make sure that safety is being taken into consideration but also that we are engaging with the residents of these affected communities.

When it comes to the brushing component — again, just to be clear — this is an extremely important endeavour. There have been, over the years, areas that have had 40-year-old trees in there, and to narrow that down to a five- or six-year brushing cycle — it is extremely important to get those areas done that have not been done in the past 40 years.

When it comes to assessing the sites and stuff, speed is an extremely important factor. There are many factors, but we are willing to take a look at a particular area if there is a complaint or a particular constituent who wants to work with us on this.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Chair, you probably know that there aren't a lot of people who put as many miles on around the Yukon as I do in a year, and I certainly understand the importance of brushing.

I'm happy to hear the Premier say that Highways and Public Works does work at these types of things individually. I know that this constituent has written to the Minister of Highways and Public Works on two occasions and still has not received any response, but I certainly will be sending them a clip from the Blues assuring them that Highways and Public

Works looks at these issues on a case-by-case basis, so I appreciate that.

Mr. Chair, if we could, I wouldn't mind moving into your neck of the woods and talking about the Mayo aerodrome. On March 13, the Minister of Highways and Public Works stood in this Legislature and gave us a ministerial statement where he talked about the importance of the investment in the Mayo aerodrome and how they were committed to spending \$5 million this year on the Mayo aerodrome. Unless a whole bunch of work has happened without going out to tender that I don't know about — the member who lives in Mayo may have some more information on this too, but hopefully we could get some information from Highways and Public Works on this because it appears that, as far as I can tell, just less than \$1.15 million has been spent on the Mayo aerodrome.

We have heard great fanfare about the importance of accurate budgeting, the importance of the five-year capital plan, et cetera. We sat through the ministerial statement, hearing about the \$5 million, so I am just curious about what has happened to that other \$3.85 million or thereabouts.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It is a timely question, as Transport Canada is on-site in Mayo as we speak. They are there for certification reasons. Again, when we're working with the federal government, we have to make sure that the certifications are there. Buying lights for night is an extremely important part of this upgrade, so we are looking at that for this winter — installing those hopefully by next summer or somewhere in that time frame.

Again, that's an update for right now, but I believe the complete number for those upgrades to the aerodrome is roughly \$1.1 million. It is an extremely important upgrade to the aerodrome in Mayo. As you know better than anyone, Mr. Chair, activities in that aerodrome have increased significantly. We had Joe Sparling from Air North, Yukon's Airline come up to Dawson City for the paving of the runway and the opening up of the maintenance facility as well, and he talked about how important it was to upgrade that facility and the cost-savings to the private sector that this Yukon Liberal government initiative has afforded the airline.

In some of my earlier years here as a Yukoner, Canadian Airlines was still around at that time, and a one-way ticket was well over \$600, \$700, or sometimes even \$800 if you had to book without a lot of advance notice. Again, to enable us to work with the private sector and make sure that we put some dollars into some of these airports that have really not received a lot of funding in the past, it's extremely important.

One of those things is in the Mayo area — to add lights to that runway — and some other upgrades. It comes with increases to O&M, so making sure that we have considered that as we put these capital investments in is extremely important as well. I believe the O&M increases for this are not insignificant, but again, when you take a look at the benefit for the community, the benefit for Victoria Gold, it's extremely important. It's nice to see regular flights coming in from Air North into that area.

Aircraft movement has increased significantly in Mayo because lead is up 14 percent this year — extremely important

— compared to the 2017-18 year. Scheduled flights are up to eight times per week in 2019 — zero scheduled flights in 2016. As we see the mining industry expand and as we see the private sector reaping the benefits of that, it's important that we, as a government, modernize our facilities, whether it be in Dawson or Mayo or other regions.

In July, First Nations delivered a double-wide trailer to accommodate increased passenger traffic in that area — what a great partnership with the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun to make sure that we work hand-in-glove with the governments in those communities as we upgrade our assets that desperately needed those upgrades.

**Chair:** Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

#### *Recess*

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

The matter before Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 200, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2019-20*.

**Mr. Hassard:** We are talking about electronic signs for speed control. I had another question on signs that I kind of forgot about. I know that there have been numerous questions around business signs in a highway right-of-way, and I know that the government has been working on a policy for signage and highway rights-of-way.

I am just curious as to if there are any updates as to whether that policy has now been completed and is in effect, or if it is still being done in the way that it has been done previously.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We do have one that is in effect now.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the Premier be able to inform this House as to when that policy was completed and put into effect, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, same policy.

**Mr. Hassard:** There hasn't ever been a policy, to the best of my knowledge, and I know that Highways and Public Works had been working on a policy. The Premier said that it's the same policy, so I guess I am curious as to when that policy came into effect.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I guess that we are going to agree to disagree. There has been a policy for several years now, and we have made no effective changes to that policy.

**Mr. Hassard:** There were some concerns from citizens and from the Member for Watson Lake regarding street lights in and around the community of Watson Lake. Highways and Public Works had done a study. It came back and felt that street lights were not necessary. The Member for Watson Lake then presented this Legislature with a petition from community members, and the minister committed to reassessing the situation. We are just curious as to whether or not there has been another study done or where that project might be.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** There is nothing new to report on the conversation that has been had already, I believe, in Question Period here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

I will add that when we went to the community of Watson Lake and spoke with, not only the mayor and council, but the chief and council — one, we were blown away with the sophistication of both the mayor and the chief and their understanding of issues and their willingness as well to work together so that the community itself at large would be where we can coordinate efforts and make sure that the community's needs are reflective of the whole community. So it was a fantastic conversation.

We did have a conversation about a specific set of street lights — not necessarily the ones that the Member for Watson Lake brought up in the Legislative Assembly — but we did have a really productive conversation. It went along the lines of First Nations with certain abilities to access federal funds that a municipality may not have because of stacking abilities — whether or not we wanted to have a conversation — if the community wanted to have a conversation about some type of a net endeavour there where we can come together on something small to begin with and then maybe that could precipitate some bigger project in the future. Again, we're not leading that conversation. It was one of those conversations that was best served to have a meeting with the mayor and the chief, and we are going to follow up the lead from there.

I have nothing new to report on that, but I do have to say that under that Minister of Community Services' leadership — I think it's a very smart approach for this government to do as much as it possibly can in all communities — to try to do tri-lateral conversation with the leaders in those communities. In doing so, you're not having one conversation in one area and then another conversation somewhere else. You have everybody — the mayor, chief, and the minister responsible — in a room together discussing how the community can lead infrastructure projects — whether they be smaller items like street lights or larger items. We all know the needs in Watson Lake when it comes to — I mean, you have a community that is the first community that most people see when they're driving up the highway of the Yukon. What an opportunity that is for the tourism industry. What an opportunity it is to showcase our culture and our heritage together as a community and build some assets together that the community can be proud of.

From the original conversations that we had in the Legislative Assembly — nothing new to report other than we have met with Watson Lake, and absolutely — if these are community priorities, then we will look into executing them. The particular string of lights the member opposite is talking about comes with an expense, but it also comes with a desire from this government to make sure that the community prioritizes projects and we work on the community's priorities.

**Mr. Hassard:** It also sounds like a good way for the government to pass the buck.

But at the end of the day, the question is: Is Highways and Public Works going to follow up? The minister stood here in this Legislature and, in his response to the petition, said that he would be following up — doing another study or whatever — I forget the exact wording, Mr. Chair. So my question is: Is the

minister doing what he said he was going to do here on the floor of the Legislature?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't look at it as passing the buck at all. This government worked extremely hard to get flexibility for federal dollars and enabled more opportunities — not less opportunities, but more opportunities — for communities to access 25-cent dollars from the federal government. Whether that materializes or not, it's not up to us to decide. We will continue to work on the priorities of the community, as addressed by the community.

If there's an opportunity outside of those priorities to work on other projects, well, that's just an added bonus. It's not passing the buck at all; it's creating a new opportunity. We understand that this does take capacity, that some communities are really flexing already to address all of the issues they have with the growing economy and growing needs — so we would understand why a community wouldn't necessarily want to take up the option of having another opportunity to access federal dollars. That's fine. We will still prioritize the community's assets from their perspective, not ours — so that's what we'll continue to do.

For the minister to be able to get different levels of government in the room together — that's an extraordinary feat in some communities. We have had the conversation here on the floor of the Legislative Assembly about a half-million dollars for this particular project that the member opposite is talking about for what seems to be, from our statistical analysis — from our data — about five pedestrians a day and only a few vehicles — and again, only necessary six months of the year because of sunlight. The study results have come into that. It would be a half-million dollars in initial cost. There's no new study; that information is readily available to the members opposite.

They have already done two studies, and basically, there are only a few pedestrians per day. That is where we are right now. Again, there are a few off-road vehicles as well, so we will continue to work with the community, work with the mayors and councils and chiefs and councils in the communities and identify priorities.

The one thing that I heard loud and clear when we went on our community tour from the Department of Community Services — whether it was from the specific community representatives, public servants, or the deputy minister or the minister himself — was that these priorities are going to be the communities' priorities. If these priorities change from the community basis, we will do our best to accommodate those changes, but again, I believe that this government is doing a very effective job to make sure that community perspectives and priorities are being dealt with, with the lead from the communities themselves.

**Mr. Hassard:** It is interesting that the Premier has made this statement. It appears that the Minister of Highways and Public Works is going to go back on his commitment that he made here in this Legislature. I think it's interesting that the Premier can say that he and the Minister of Community Services went to Watson Lake, had one meeting, and determined that the community has different priorities. I guess



I don't know what the MLA for Watson Lake is supposed to tell the — in the neighbourhood of — 400 community members who signed the petition — that the government talked to someone else and determined that their street lights are not a priority.

I like to believe that MLAs coming in from the communities, whether it's the Member for Watson Lake or the Premier himself coming in from his own community in Dawson, tend to have a pulse on their community. It's interesting that the Premier thinks that they can swoop in and, in a matter of a couple of hours, determine what the priorities are for a community over someone who has lived in that community every day for the last 10, 20, 30, or 40 years. It's also interesting that it appears that the minister is going back on his commitment that he made here in the Legislature, but I guess we shouldn't be too surprised about that.

If I could go back to the sign policy for a minute — after I asked the question, I had a note handed to me from the Member for Kluane that says that the business community belonging to the St. Elias Chamber of Commerce has been told that, until the new sign policy is finished, signs within the highway right-of-way cannot be put up. That was my understanding as well.

I can get the Member for Kluane to send this information directly to the Premier or the Minister of Highways and Public Works, but that was my understanding as well. I guess that is why I maybe appeared to have been a little surprised when the Premier said that this policy is there and it has been there for a long time. Maybe if the Premier has any further insight on that, he could enlighten us.

Also, moving on, I had questions on the float plane base here in Whitehorse at Schwatka Lake. I am curious if the government is working with the City of Whitehorse to deal with issues that we heard about this fall at the Schwatka Lake float plane base.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do take issue with the characterization of my answer by the member opposite. Again, when identifying the cost of a project, that is exactly what I am doing — identifying the cost of a project. When identifying the number of people who use that particular area, all that I am doing is identifying that.

Then I went into my answer, saying that we want to make sure that our priorities in our communities come from those communities. For the member opposite to say that I went to one meeting and, therefore, I am going to make a decision on the fate of Watson Lake is simply — it's just not true, Mr. Chair.

Again, when he is talking about members of the community who have lived there all their lives, I would say that mayor and council, chief and council — probably a good place to start, as well — and the member opposite as well, the MLA for the area — absolutely, a great place to start when it comes to information from the community — 100 percent. For him to take my answer and make it seem like we are going to obfuscate or we are going to move off a project or a priority, that is just simply not the case. That is just him trying to divide a wedge between my ministers and me. We have made over —

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

### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** I think the Premier, in his last rambling narrative, just accused the Leader of the Official Opposition of uttering a falsehood, and that is clearly in contravention of Standing Order 19(h). I would urge you to call him to order and have him apologize for his remarks and retract them.

**Chair:** Mr. Streicker, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We seem to have talked about this quite a bit. The last time we discussed the word — I will have to find the word — but it was “deliberate falsehood”, and that is not what the Premier just did. He said that he wasn't correct, what was said wasn't true, and he did not suggest that it was deliberate in any way.

### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I tend to agree with Mr. Streicker on this one. There is no point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will continue to put my words into Hansard, as opposed to having the Leader of the Official Opposition try his darnedest to interpret my own words for his own narrative. We want to make sure that the communities are the ones that lead the conversation about priorities for the communities.

Being able to join the minister on a community tour is an absolutely fantastic way to make sure that the information that I get when I am here coordinates with the leaders in those communities. I don't know how the member opposite can construe that in any other way.

Identifying the cost of a project is, again, being more open and accountable. Having 120 community tours this year alone — one visit every three days — is a great opportunity for us to be able to have a finger on the pulse of the community.

Back to his original question, he mentioned again something about a policy that we have. I have answered that question. That policy has been in place for several years.

When it comes to the Schwatka Lake water aerodrome, the Government of Yukon is not assuming operational control of that particular area. There are 338 registered or certified water aerodromes in Canada, none of which are operated by provincial or territorial governments. At this time, the Government of Yukon does not see a need to be the first. I will ask the members opposite — if that is what they are asking — if they want us to take on that responsibility or, more, to just have a conversation with the mayor and council about the potential there.

Any party interested in using the lake around Schwatka Lake must apply for the appropriate authorizations, and that is through Energy, Mines and Resources and also the City of Whitehorse. Applicants should be aware that their proposals must comply with the Whitehorse official community plan, as well as all applicable land use plans and zoning bylaws.

We will continue to work with all municipalities on priorities and responsibilities and make sure that we provide great opportunities for our private sector interests.

**Mr. Hassard:** Almost thought maybe I struck a nerve there when I suggested that maybe the Premier needed to spend more than a few hours in a community to decide whether he knew the priorities of the community better than 400 people who actually live there.

Mr. Chair, I certainly wasn't suggesting anything to the government in regard to the Schwatka Lake float plane base. I was just merely asking if they were working with the city in any way to help alleviate some of the concerns that had gone on there this fall. I guess if the government is assisting the city at all, the Premier can answer that next time he is on his feet or maybe let the minister answer his own questions.

Regarding aerodromes — I'm curious as to why the tender for resurfacing the Teslin aerodrome was cancelled.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I agree with the member opposite that there has been lots of conversation with the municipality on the aerodrome specifically. Again, we're following mayor and council's lead when it comes to something that is within their responsibility, but with the applications through Energy, Mines and Resources. I know that both my Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Deputy Premier have had lengthy conversations. Also, we know this has been a conversation with the municipality and the mayor and council. Again, we will not necessarily get into that way when it comes to the priorities or the responsibilities of municipalities in that pursuit.

I don't have anything new to report on the cancellation of a tender in Teslin on the aerodrome. I believe this question has been asked of the minister responsible in the past in the Legislative Assembly. There are no new updates on the information that has already been provided to the member opposite on the contract for the Teslin aerodrome.

**Mr. Hassard:** If that question was asked in the Legislature, I certainly didn't hear it. That's why I'm asking it this afternoon.

One other thing — before I move on from the Watson Lake street lights, I just would like to remind the Premier that highways are actually the responsibility of Highways and Public Works and the Yukon government. It's not the responsibility of either the mayor and council or the chief and council, so just maybe for him to think on that one when he's answering these questions.

So we've heard that Highways and Public Works or that the government is intending to review or redo the *Motor Vehicles Act* in the future. Mr. Chair, as you probably remember, I tabled a motion regarding "slow down, move over" legislation, which unfortunately the government amended to death, we'll say. So, Mr. Chair, I'm curious as to if we can be enlightened as to whether "slow down, move over" legislation will be incorporated in the work regarding the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** If I was wrong about the Teslin aerodrome conversation not being in the Legislative Assembly, then I do apologize. I seem to recall that it was and at that point seeming to recall that the issue was the Government of Canada. There was a legal issue with the Government of Canada — I'm quite certain this conversation was in the Legislative Assembly

— and problems with the devolution transfer in that. Those are the issues as to why this project is stalled.

Again, as far as responsibilities in communities — I am well aware of the responsibilities and overlapping responsibilities of territorial governments versus municipal governments and First Nation governments.

The member opposite also asked about safety policies. These have absolutely been identified — absolutely — along with other needs. As we move forward on much-needed upgrades to this particular act — it's a big pursuit and one that should have happened long ago, but didn't — we will be addressing that as part of the *Motor Vehicles Act*. There will be more to come on that as that act gets developed and consulted on within the communities.

We know the motion that the member opposite put forward. We definitely did a friendly amendment to it, and again, as we go down that process on the *Motor Vehicles Act*, we will definitely be addressing the safety policy concerns and issues that the member opposite has presented. We are addressing this as part of the bigger rewrite.

**Mr. Hassard:** A question regarding costs of maintenance and repairs at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter — I am wondering if we could find out what those costs are now, Mr. Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, there is nothing to report as far as costs associated with the emergency shelter. Those costs — if we had identified new costs — would have been in the supplementary budget. There is no line item for that, although I will say that conversations are ongoing with the communities. Conversations are ongoing on many different initiatives to ease the pressures that the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter is addressing right now. I have to say that the use of it obviously has increased. That is a good thing. The pressures therein have caused some concerns — absolutely — with the business community around it.

The Department of Health and Social Services is dealing with these issues, and it is an extremely important part of our continuing care, of our mental wellness strategy, of a myriad of different attempts and efforts, whole-of-government.

We have seen significant reductions in opioid deaths. We have seen significant decreases in assault. But we are also seeing things that used to be in the woods now happening in our streets because of an additional care. We understand the concerns, absolutely, but we also know that, with the collaborative care model and with more supports for mental health and addictions, we are trying to not only just provide daily supports for individuals who are in need, but long-term supports to get people into safe housing — Housing First — and long-term supports to get people back to their communities where there is care, and trying to identify how we can make sure that, when we do that, they are not going back into the exact same situation that caused them to struggle in the first place. It is a lot to consider.

We have come out of a government that was acute care, and now we are trying to address issues head-on. We are trying to increase the supports — and we are and we have — when it comes to mental health services. We had a building that was

built by the previous government and a faith-based system that was installed with the previous government. The Salvation Army, with the tools that they had, did a fantastic job for a long time in this community and in a very small building. We owe a lot to the Salvation Army, but with a new model of care comes new responsibilities. I believe that the Department of Health and Social Services is doing a great job to identify how to move forward, working with our partners, working with the non-governmental organizations and trying to find a method forward.

I do understand the member opposite's concern that we do need to move some new pieces into place to make sure that the continuum of care is completed. I don't have anything new to respond today. The Minister of Health and Social Services has been on her feet on this particular issue a few times in the Legislative Assembly this session, and there is nothing necessarily new to say other than that those harm reduction strategies are employed at this facility. We just opened up EMR services yesterday, which is fantastic and will see huge cost reductions when it comes to the care of our most vulnerable citizens.

With the emergency unit at the hospital, the RCMP, and the Sarah Steele facility all together, we'll see a reduction — absolutely — and we're going to continue to work on these harm reduction strategies.

Other than that, I really don't have too much more as far as financial costs identified at this point.

**Mr. Hassard:** I have a question regarding Dempster fibre. I'm sure that if the Premier or the Highways and Public Works minister isn't able to answer it, the Minister of Economic Development will be happy to jump in for me. I'm curious if the fibre line will be plowed into the highway right-of-way, or will there be a separate right-of-way for the fibre line?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have to say that this file has been one that we have been talking about in the Legislative Assembly for a long time. I'm very happy to see a solution that's in-country, taking a look at the previous plan to go into Juneau, and how that kind of unravelled at the time as far as what happens after a 10-year contract and the responsibilities for the assets. There were so many questions at that time. To have the Minister responsible for Economic Development and the Yukon Development Corporation come in and make sense of and unravel a conversation that was happening for way too long to provide an essential service, in my opinion, of redundancy — I have to commend the Deputy Premier for his work and his team's work to get this project moving forward. It was definitely stalled. It was interesting to see this government take that responsibility and actually move forward on it. That request for proposals is going forward this winter, and it is not built into the road, so the member opposite can take that information. Again, there will be more details on that as the request for proposal moves forward.

**Mr. Hassard:** It is interesting the way that the Premier characterizes how it went, but at any rate, it's a very much-needed and very important project.

My question was: Is it being plowed into the highway right-of-way, or will there be an additional right-of-way just strictly for the fibre line, Mr. Chair?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** In the current right-of-way, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Hassard:** I appreciate that.

There has been some talk about the retrofitting of buildings. We heard today the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources talking about \$120 million. Does Highways and Public Works have a list of buildings that they are currently doing energy retrofits on or that they anticipate to do retrofits on in the near future?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Quite simply, yes to both of those questions — some investigation is needed for this, but quite simply, yes.

**Mr. Hassard:** Would the Premier or the Minister of Highways and Public Works be able to table the list of buildings and any projected costs as well?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Of course, that information will come out as it is readily available from the department. We have conducted assessments on 26 buildings since 2017, and we will be doing 10 more this year. I don't have any more information on that right now, but as that becomes available, of course — maybe we will do a ministerial statement for the member opposite. We will definitely have that information available on a timely basis.

**Mr. Hassard:** I am sure that the Premier is correct that there will be a ministerial statement on it.

I just had one last question at this point in time, and it is kind of an odd question, I guess. Well, maybe it's not odd. Last week the roads were, for lack of a better term, "the shits". When I was going home in the dark, there was a vehicle broken down on the side of the road. RCMP were there and Highways and Public Works came to put signs up, notifying the travelling public that they needed to be careful ahead. I stopped to talk to the RCMP and the person who was broken down, and I carried on down the road very carefully to where the Highways and Public Works vehicle was parked crossways on the highway. I stopped to see why it was parked at such an odd angle. As it turned out, the vehicle was actually stuck in the middle of the highway. So I parked and — hazard lights on — I proceeded to help the employee to get the vehicle to the side of the road safely and I encouraged them to maybe just wait until the sander came so that they could proceed safely. I asked the employee — I said, "Why the heck are you out here in a two-wheel drive, one-ton, dually pickup?" The employee responded that the foremen were the only ones who have four-wheel drive pickups.

It's not a question — it would just be a recommendation for the government that maybe all rural highway camps should have more than one four-wheel drive pickup available so that when our staff do have to go out in certainly less-than-perfect conditions, they don't have to put their lives in danger in such an instance. So that's just a suggestion to the government that maybe Highways and Public Works — I understand the reasoning of wanting to save the few thousand dollars to not have four-wheel drive pickups, but if it's something that maybe

they can take into consideration — that few thousand dollars might be very well spent.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do want to commend the member opposite for helping. I think that's one of the things that comes with your licence to be a Yukoner. I used to think it was illegal to not stop because of the practices that I see on a yearly basis driving back and forth from Dawson to Whitehorse. It's just an automatic thing that we do as Yukoners to stop and to make sure — or at least as you're driving by, giving the thumbs-up to people who have broken down on the side of the road — and always being there to lend a hand.

I think that this is the benefit of living in such a small community, because nine times out of 10, you are going to know that person. I wouldn't even doubt if the Leader of the Official Opposition knew the individual who was in that car, or at least if they sat down and had a conversation, they could come within one degree of separation.

As far as the policy — or the way that it's being portrayed by that particular public servant — of only foremen having four-wheel drive, that is not correct. Of course, not all vehicles are four-by-four. That would be nice — absolutely — but it also is extremely expensive, so again, we try to match the need to the vehicle. But to say specifically that only the foremen have four-wheel drive is not true. We would love to have the ability to have four-wheel drive for all of those vehicles, but that would be — as the member opposite knows — very expensive. It's not necessarily the policy to just have four-wheel drive for the foremen.

**Mr. Hassard:** I certainly wasn't suggesting that Highways and Public Works buy all four-wheel drives. My suggestion was that — I guess I am also not saying that only foremen have four-wheel drive. In this particular instance, that was the case. My suggestion was that there be more — let's say two — four-wheel drive vehicles in all rural camps — just to give the employees the option rather than not having any vehicles with four-wheel drive in the camps when they are going out in situations like this.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I don't mean to belabour the point, but if the member opposite is saying that there is only one truck per camp that is four-wheel drive, then the assumption would be that he is saying that there are only four-wheel drive trucks available for the foreman, I would imagine. So, I will take a look into the actual amount of four-wheel drive trucks. I don't think it's necessarily just for the foremen. But I will take a look at it.

I appreciate the member opposite's observation. Again, I hope he appreciates the response from the government, which is that we try to match the vehicle with the need, but we will take his recommendations under consideration.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would just like to follow up with the Premier with some Highways and Public Works-related questions.

In most cases, I'm going to refer to some of the things that were outlined in the budget earlier this spring and ask for an update on what is being done in those areas.

For example, there was debate earlier today in Question Period — my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North,

had asked the Minister of Community Services questions about the Liberal government's commitment during the election to invest \$30 million per year as part of energy retrofits. The budget for this year shows, in the budget highlights — and I'll just quote from it on page 4 of the budget highlights from this year: “up to \$14.2 million to fund retrofits which increase the energy efficiency of Yukon buildings”.

Can the Premier please advise how much money the government currently is expecting to spend during this fiscal year in support of energy retrofits?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We do want to create a building retrofit program for all residential, commercial, and government buildings in order to reduce our energy costs. We want to minimize our greenhouse gas emissions, create skilled trade jobs, and make it worthwhile to switch the source of heat away from fossil fuels. I know that, in my community, when I was building my house in Dawson City — and I know I heard that from others' experiences, the same — working with the construction industry — the go-to in a lot of communities is to put in certain sources of heat, for sure, and try to minimize the dollar value there, get off fossil fuels, and go toward electric. That does bring a strain onto the grid, for sure.

But again, we have to do a better job as we build to take into consideration some maybe extra costs up front, but some longer term savings because of these retrofits.

The program will continue to grow up to \$30 million per year to implement an energy retrofit program for residential, government, and commercial buildings. We know that the federal government is looking into supporting the north's transition to a sustainable energy future, and we would work directly with them to leverage the funding sources. With a continuation of the same government in Ottawa, we can continue those conversations very soon. We do know that we are on track, I believe, for \$14 million this year — mostly out of Yukon Housing Corporation, but also Community Services as well.

I also know that, when it comes to the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative, which was over four years — that was a range of \$5 million to \$10 million — completely subscribed to. First Nation housing energy retrofits — that was over a four-year period — \$5 million to \$10 million as well — all completely subscribed to. Also, completely subscribed to were the staff housing and social housing energy retrofits, plus the Energy, Mines and Resources operation and maintenance rebate program as well. You add with that the money for the Arctic Energy Fund — over the years, we are looking at — in 2019-20 — \$13.9 million — close to \$14 million — that ramping up next year to over \$31.6 million — almost \$31.7 million — in 2021-22, even more — close to almost \$35 million.

We're seeing not only the subscription increasing, but also it is extremely important that this creates an industry for the private sector. So that is extremely important. Also, on top of that \$14 million that I identified — like I said, several community infrastructure projects to help municipalities and First Nations with their buildings — the Teslin Tlingit Council,

for example, or the Town of Watson Lake as well, with some of these initiatives that I mentioned.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the answer and I would also appreciate if the Premier could indicate if those are new federal commitments and money or if they are already shown in the fiscal framework. I do just have to point out for the record, while we are here, that the commitment made by the Minister of Community Services in the press conference during the campaign in 2016 prior to being elected was not a commitment of “up to” a \$30-million investment; it was a commitment of a \$30-million investment. Again, part of our job here in this Assembly is to hold the government to account for the campaign commitments that they made to Yukoners and point out when they are not achieving those commitments.

I am going to move to a couple of other highways areas. That includes just following up on some of the projects that we had some debate on in the Legislative Assembly, as they were part of the list of infrastructure priorities that our caucus brought forward as an amendment to Motion No. 31, tabled by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. We didn't really get clarity from the government on whether the government is willing to consider these proposals. I would again remind the Premier though that there can sometimes be a robust to-and-fro debate here in this Assembly and that, ultimately, the priorities that we are bringing forward are priorities that we have heard from Yukon citizens. We are trying to reflect their concerns and their priorities in proposing that to government. I believe that when those requests come on behalf of Yukon citizens, the government — whether through the minister or through the Premier — does owe Yukoners an answer on whether government is looking at doing that — whether they are prepared to do it and, if so, when.

To that, I am just going to ask the Premier about items that we proposed both in the motion last week and have previously, of course, raised with the government through a variety of means. They include the proposed improvements to the Alaska Highway and the Whitehorse corridor, including turning and through lanes at the intersection of the Mayo Road — which was a project that was originally slated to begin last year — second, there is the request for a turning lane by Porter Creek Super A on the highway; third, acceleration lanes by Alusru Road. Can the Premier indicate if the government is moving forward to address any of those items?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Beginning with the member opposite's first question, the Government of Yukon has allocated over \$120 million in territorial government and federally secured funding to implement the energy-efficiency initiatives throughout Yukon. Thanks to a joint investment with the Government of Canada and our government, we are able to dedicate \$30 million annually specifically for energy-efficiency retrofits for residential, for commercial, and for institutional buildings. Being more energy efficient is our first line of action when identifying actions to decrease our demands for energy. This is why the Government of Yukon is offering those retrofit initiatives — to make upgrading insulation and improving window quality or draft-proofing a home,

commercial, or institutional building accessible and affordable. That is a priority of our government.

To date, our retrofit programs are delivering measurable benefits by relieving pressure on our energy-generation needs — as I spoke to earlier — reducing our collective greenhouse gas emissions and creating green jobs that stimulate Yukon's economy.

The federal government funding is specifically designed to work with First Nation governments, municipalities, businesses, local industry, or even homeowners on retrofitting buildings and residences to improve energy efficiency. That's extremely important — as this government has declared a climate change emergency — to make sure that we have these types of programs put in place.

This has been something that has been extremely important to this government. The Energy, Mines and Resources mandate letter has a commitment to increase the availability of renewable energy solutions while reducing our reliance on non-renewable sources and lessening energy consumption by allocating \$30 million annually for an energy retrofit program for residential and commercial buildings. This was part of some successful negotiating for funding around the Government of Canada. The funding agreements, as I said — there are pretty substantial amounts of money here — when you take a look at \$120 million in funding over the next four fiscal years — and the total amount includes both federal and also territorial contributions.

Again, this means that approximately \$30 million annually is available across government departments specifically for energy efficiencies and retrofits of existing buildings in Yukon.

In my community, talking to the private sector, people have spent their lives as children walking through buildings of a ghost town with ashtrays and packets of cigarettes basically abandoned in these buildings — and then trying to breathe life into these buildings. The comment that I get from the private sector is that the best way to be energy efficient is to recycle these buildings and not throw buildings away into our landfills and to make sure we use the resources we have. To be able to couple that with a federal and territorial commitment to \$30 million per year in retrofits, working with the private sector — it is extremely important to not only look at how we can most effectively reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but also preserve and protect our heritage. That's extremely important to the people in my community for sure, and I know that it is a priority for Yukoners Yukon-wide.

These government energy-efficiency retrofit programs targeting not just one part or another part of our community — but targeting homeowners, businesses, municipalities, First Nation governments, and local industry — are to not only increase the energy efficiency of those existing homes, businesses, and institutional buildings, but are also to create that industry. I know of quite a few young, entrepreneurial construction folks who are really seeing the benefit of steady, continuous funding over the next four years, which is extremely important.

The funding breakdown over four years by recipient — we have homeowners, businesses, commercial and municipal

interests that can benefit from a total of \$23.7 million in initiatives for residential, commercial, and institutional building retrofits. That's all being led by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The First Nation governments can benefit from a total of \$10.36 million designated for their housing or community building retrofits, including the insulation of biomass-based heating systems. That is led by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as well as with the Yukon Housing Corporation.

All of Yukon's communities, whether First Nation or municipal governments or even town councils, can all benefit from \$31.6 million available for energy audits and institutional building retrofits. That is led by Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources. The Government of Yukon has a total of \$58.9 million to do energy-efficient retrofits to its social and staff housing, as well as the larger institutional buildings.

I do want to give credit where credit is due. The previous government did a great job of energy retrofitting this building that we are in. To be able to increase that to these millions and millions of dollars is extremely important work. The \$58.9 million in energy-efficiency retrofits for social and staff housing is being led by the Department of Highways and Public Works, as well as the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Again, new funding — we have spoken already about these funding buckets and where they are coming from — again, identified funding to be moving forward.

I believe that answers the member opposite's question. I apologize if there's a part of that question that I haven't responded to, but I can allow the member opposite to get to his feet and I can endeavour to answer another part of a question that he has.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier did miss answering the question that I had asked about road projects, including the project that was originally slated to happen last year — adding turning and through lanes at the intersection of the Mayo Road and the Alaska Highway, including widening two kilometres of the Alaska Highway, the request for a turning lane on the Alaska Highway by Porter Creek Super A, as well as acceleration lanes on the highway by Alusru Road. I had asked the Premier for an indication of whether government is prepared to agree to the request that we have made on behalf of our constituents.

I'm just going to move on to another couple of areas in the area of highway maintenance. I would note, as we did in the amendment to a motion that we tabled last week — as well as the motion that my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition and critic for Highways and Public Works, read into the record, as far as our proposed infrastructure priorities in the area of highways — if the Premier could answer that specific question as well.

I would note that the impacts to road maintenance — the government did cut \$2.5 million this year in that budget. While we realize that there is some benefit in trying to do things more efficiently, what we're hearing from constituents is actually a decline in service. I have received more complaints this year

about the condition of rural roads than I've received in any previous year as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. I'm saying that while also acknowledging that I do receive complaints every year, including during the time that we were in government, about some roads — and especially if rain or wet snow occurs, there are times where gravel roads may see damage that can be repaired but needs to be repaired before it's back to a normal travelling condition.

A few examples of the roads that I've heard complaints about this year just recently — within the last month or, in some cases, as recently as last night — include the condition of Burma Road. I had a constituent contact me on the weekend quite upset about the condition of the road and the lack of work that has been done in terms of fixing it with gravel due to, in part, the heavy traffic that goes down it, travelling to the riding arena. I've mentioned as well the Horse Creek Road and the road to Jackfish Bay. I had a constituent contacting me last week complaining about it. Vista Road — I've received complaints about it as well. Takhini River Road continues to be the one that I receive the highest volume of complaints about.

Again, as we outlined in our constructive suggestions to government, we're seeking a commitment from the government to upgrade Takhini River Road, including building a proper roadbed, resurfacing the road, and improving the ditches — and recognizing, of course, that there's some engineering work that needs to be done on that to make that project happen and to scope it out.

If the Premier could answer the questions that I asked him previously, as well as indicate in this situation whether the government is prepared to, in fact, agree to that request and move forward to act on Takhini River Road, that would be appreciated.

One road that I missed on the list of ones that I have received complaints about recently — I received complaints as well about the cul-de-sac at the end of Simmons Road in Pilot Mountain subdivision.

A constituent told me — and I quote: "Every time it rains, I have a giant puddle the size of a bus that forms and stays for weeks." He went on to indicate that it gets rutted as school buses and others travel over it — so just a few examples of things that may not be high on the Premier's radar screen or the minister's, but they are concerns that I have heard from constituents. They are the real concerns and priorities of Yukon citizens which we are trying to bring forward here today.

The last item I will just add to the list, since — as I have mentioned before in the Assembly — the first letter that I wrote to the Premier, upon them taking office, was regarding the Takhini River bridge. At that point, I was seeking a commitment that the government would move forward with adding a walkway to the bridge — as had been in the design stages at that point — for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and other users. I have yet to get a definitive answer from government on whether they will support that priority and recognize the public concern about safety that exists, especially as that road becomes more popular for cyclists both from my riding and from Whitehorse, as well as tourists in fact — cycling out to the wildlife preserve or the hot springs out there.

Additionally, regarding the bridge, we still are waiting for an indication from the government of their willingness to do planning to replace the bridge, including widening that bridge and improving the approach, so if the Premier would provide an answer on that, that would be appreciated.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** That was a lot of questions all added together. I appreciate that we are at the end of the day, so the member opposite wants to get these questions on the record.

Again, we are not going to make decisions on the floor of the Legislative Assembly as far as planning projects. There is a budgetary process, so we are not prepared to agree right now. I have listened to the particular projects that the member opposite has spoken of, and of course as we go into the budgetary process — under the guise again of “All Communities Matter” — we will add this to consideration for sure.

To some of his comments — he mentioned cuts — again, not true. These are funds that have been reallocated to other priorities and are going to be spent, and they have been spent. They didn’t get cut — spent — just reallocated to different priorities. We do a lot of this kind of work this time of year for sure that the member opposite is talking about.

Of course, he will be aware with his time in government that primary highways are definitely done first, and that takes priority. Specifically to the Takhini River Road that the member opposite mentioned — we did close to \$265,000 worth of work in 2018-19. This year, I believe we’re spending an additional \$25,000 on that particular road. Again, we’re putting some money into the member opposite’s constituency.

The walkway on the Takhini River bridge — we do expect to get to it. Again, it is expensive, but again, this would have to go through a budgetary process, and it definitely is a legitimate requirement. I will agree with the member opposite about that. But for the record, this must be stated: The Takhini River bridge is safe. It was strengthened in 2017; deck pooling was repaired; and we continue to monitor that bridge for traffic as well because it’s extremely important.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### Chair’s report

**Mr. Hutton:** Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 200, entitled *Second 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.

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

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

### The following sessional papers were tabled October 22, 2019:

34-3-11

*Yukon Development Corporation 2018 Annual Report* (Pillai)

34-3-12

*Yukon Energy Corporation Annual Report 2018* (Pillai)

### The following document was filed October 22, 2019:

34-3-12

Independent Commission on Electoral Reform, letter re (dated August 2, 2019) from Floyd W. McCormick to Hon. Nils Clarke, Speaker and Chair of Members’ Services Board (Hanson)