



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 103

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, March 2, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2023 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

Currie Dixon	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	Scott Kent	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Yvonne Clarke	Porter Creek Centre	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Stacey Hassard	Pelly-Nisutlin

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

Kate White	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
Emily Tredger	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
Annie Blake	Vuntut Gwitchin

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	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, March 2, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

I would like to begin the 2023 Spring Sitting of the Legislative Assembly by respectfully acknowledging all Yukon First Nations, and also that we are meeting on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the motions are now outdated: Motions No. 77 and 91, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek North; Motion No. 118, standing in the name of the Member for Copperbelt South; Motions No. 248 and 367, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane; Motions No. 252, 442, 464, 477, 520, 523 and 541, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party; Motion No. 324, standing in the name of the Member for Mountainview; Motions No. 399, 414, 484, 504 and 510, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge; Motions No. 478 and 492, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin; and Motions No. 480, 481 and 528, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motions have been taken in whole or in part: Motion No. 256, standing in the name of the Member for Whitehorse Centre; and Motion No. 363, standing in the name of the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member: Motions No. 417, 465, 466 and 509, standing in the name of the Member for Klondike.

Certain motions have been removed from the Order Paper as the motions are not in order on grounds outlined in my October 11, 2022, Speaker's statement. To review, motions urging the government "to recognize" certain facts do not meet the requirements for motions laid out in Standing Order 29(1). The following motions have been removed from the Order Paper on this basis: Motions No. 35 and 56, standing in the name of the Member for Kluane; and Motion No. 286, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge.

The following motions were not placed on today's Notice Paper as the motions are outdated: Motion No. 561, notice of which was given by the Member for Lake Laberge; and Motion No. 567, notice of which was given by the Leader of the Third Party.

Finally, the following motions were not placed on today's Notice Paper as the motions are not in order: Motion No. 563, notice of which was given by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin; and Motions No. 564 and 566, notice of which was given by the Member for Kluane.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Legislative pages who will be serving the House during the 2023 Spring Sitting. They are Lilly Salvin and Adney Karais from Porter Creek Secondary School; Izzy Baker and Ashley Cuenza from St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Secondary School; Sanjana Jaman and Maura Gallant from F.H. Collins Secondary School; and Anick Girouard and Noé Kwan-Teau from Le Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile Mercier.

Today we have with us Lilly Salvin and Sanjana Jaman. I would ask members to welcome them to the House at this time.

Applause

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Speaker: The Chair is pleased to welcome Jason Pedlar, the Yukon Ombudsman and Information and Privacy Commissioner, and from his office, Rahil Ahmad, who is an investigator and compliance review officer. In addition, we have Max Harvey, the Chief Electoral Officer, Colleen Madore, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer from Elections Yukon, and Annette King, our Child and Youth Advocate.

Welcome.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my colleagues to welcome a number of incredible Yukoners — for making the Yukon an incredible place — who are here with us today. I will ask to hold applause until we go through our extensive list here.

I would like to welcome from the Yukon Liberal Party Linda Caisson, secretary, and Amy Ryder, director on the executive. I would like to welcome from the Heart of Riverdale, Andrea Simpson-Fowler and Alex Robinson. I would like to welcome: from the Shāwthān Nāzhi recovery support program, Nataschaa Chatterton, who is here with us today on behalf of Diane Strand, Suzanne Lalonde, as well as Monique Chatterton, who is with us; from BYTE, the executive director, Josi Leideritz; from Da Daghay Development Corporation, Ben Asquith, Desiree Coad-Broeren, and Corey Riemer; and from Yukon First Nations Wildfire, Jesse Latoski and Nick Mauro. I would also like to welcome: from Kluane Dana Shāw Corporation, Stephen Mooney, president of the organization; from the Boys and Girls Club Yukon, Lindsay Cornell, Maxime Crawford-Holland, Kaelynn Tessier; as well, from the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, Amos Westropp, director; from the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Allison Camenzuli, the chair; as well, from Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce, Albert Drapeau, executive director; and as well, Kathy Watson, our former mayor of Whitehorse, as well as Alison Adams of the National Health Practitioners of Canada Board of Directors; and last but not

least, thank you, Regional Chief Kluane Adamek, from the Assembly of First Nations, for joining us today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: I would like my colleagues to please help me welcome some special guests, members of my family who are here today: my eldest brother, Jerry Asp; my sister-in-law, Ida Asp, and also an elder in the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation; my sister who is visiting from Campbell River, Rose Smith; and, last but not least, of course, my husband, Rick McLean. Thank you so much for being here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I'm asking my colleagues to help welcome a number of guests here today, and I will start with the commanding officer for the RCMP M Division, Chief Superintendent Scott Sheppard; we also have with us the officer in charge of criminal operations for the Yukon RCMP M Division, Superintendent Lindsay Ellis; the chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board of Trustees, Al Lucier. We have the president of the Yukon Medical Association, Dr. Alex Kmet.

We have the CEO of the Yukon Medical Association, Katrina Fillmore. We have the registrar for the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, Paul Banks, with us. I would also like to recognize the attendance of Michael McCann, past president of the ElderActive Recreation Association, and Helen Slama, the co-chair of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition.

Thank you all for joining us.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have the pleasure of welcoming, from the Ukrainian Canadian Association of Yukon, Elena Kozhevnikova, Eileen Melnychuk, and Donna Reimchen.

I also have the honour of welcoming to the Assembly, from Ducks Unlimited, Jamie Kenyon, and finally, from the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition, Frances Woodcock.

Thank you very much.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I would like to ask my colleagues to help me in welcoming to the gallery today the president of the Yukon Employees' Union, Steve Geick. I would also like for the members of the gallery, as well, to welcome my family, as sad as that is to say because they are all from the Finance department, starting with Scott Thompson, who is the former Deputy Minister of Finance for Yukon and also a previous deputy minister in Ontario from multiple ministries, including Finance, Transportation and Infrastructure. Thank you for all of your blood, sweat, and tears into this budget. My friend and colleague, also Acting Deputy Minister of Finance, Jessica Schultz, is here with us as well, with Glen Traverse, who is the director of the Department of Finance; Miriam Smith, executive assistant to the Deputy Minister of Finance — a fantastic team who have worked tirelessly to present today's budget. Thank you.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Streicker: A few more guests to welcome — I would like to begin with Janna Swales, who is the president of the Yukon Historical and Museums Association. Bienvenue à Yann Herry de la Société d'histoire francophone du Yukon. I also notice Tim Green, who is a member of our Yukon Heritage Resources Board. I would also like to welcome, from the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon, Neil Hartling, our chair, and Dylan Soo, the executive director.

We also have Alida Munro, the managing director of the Yukon Convention Bureau. We have, from the Yukon Arts Centre, Genesee Keevil, the chair, and Casey Prescott, the CEO. We have, from the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board, Denny Kobayashi, our chair. We have from the Yukon Minerals Advisory Board, Heather Burrell, our chair. We have Anne Lewis from Yukon Women in Mining. I would also like to recognize Joe Mewett, our Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms and also president, I think, of the Whitehorse Legion — and finally, if we could also welcome my lovely wife and my lovely mother-in-law — Freda, and Susan Walton — to the Assembly today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much. I have a few other people I would like to recognize this afternoon in the House. We have Carly Carruthers from the Yukon Liberal Party; I want to say hello to her and thank her for coming out. Elisha Sidoun is one of our EAs. We also have, from our communications office, Laura, who has just joined us and I want to say hello to her. We have a few others here. Happy birthday to Aaron Casselman. We have a happy birthday for him today. We also have, from our office, we have Renee, who is here. Last but not least, I would like to say hello to Moira. So, thank you very much to all of our staff who are here today. Thank you.

Applause

Mr. Dixon: Thank you. I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming the president of the Yukon Party, Melanie Brais, to the gallery.

Applause

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Arctic Inspiration Prize winners

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Today I rise to give tribute to the Yukon's Arctic Inspiration Prize winners: first, N'tsaŪw Chu' Kedts'edán Kù traditional camp and Shāwthän Nāzhì recovery support program, which I had the honour of personally handing the award to at the Arctic Inspiration Prize ceremony. The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada aimed at bettering life in the north. The N'tsaŪw Chu' Kedts'edán Kù project was awarded \$100,000 to build a traditional camp on the grounds of Porter Creek Secondary School.

The traditional camp will help the school and the greater community engage in authentic cultural programming. It will

also build capacity in educators and help students understand and appreciate the value of cultural teachings. They will carry these with them and continue to learn throughout their lives. It is especially exciting that the camp will include full school participation, encouraging cultural and land-based connections. The camp advances reconciliation for all students. Classes will have the opportunity to learn traditional skills from Yukon First Nation instructors and elders, and the skills that will be learned are crucial not only for reconciliation, but also for living in the Yukon, transferring knowledge that may help to overcome some of the unique challenges that living in the north presents. This is very exciting for the school community, and I look forward to seeing the positive results of bringing youth and knowledge-keepers together.

The Shāwthān Nāzhi recovery support program was awarded \$500,000 to provide intensive and ongoing aftercare support following treatment programs. I had the personal honour of handing out this award to Diane Strand at the Arctic Inspiration Prize award ceremony in Ottawa this February. The year-long program will blend dynamic healing processes and includes animal and art therapy, energy and body healing trauma and attachment therapies, and more. Intergenerational trauma has heavily impacted our Indigenous communities, and this work supports the recovery and healing journey. Programming will be on the land, based at the Heart Haven Farm near Haines Junction. The program will increase capacity by training more mental wellness staff and provide lessons learned for other communities to draw on in developing their own programs. Again, congratulations to both of these incredible projects.

The Government of Yukon is proud to support the Arctic Inspiration Prize to ensure that it continues to inspire, enable, and celebrate the achievements of the people of the north. By providing youth with valuable educational and cultural experiences and supporting those in need out on the land, these projects are sure to inspire the next generation of leaders and help those who are in need of healing and wellness in the territory. I look forward to your ongoing success. Again, thank you for representing the Yukon on the national stage.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to the Arctic Inspiration Prize winners for 2022.

It's an unusual story of a Swiss millionaire and an Iranian activist, Arnold Witzig and Sima Sharifi, who met online, fell in love, and wanted to help people. After many ventures and projects in Third World countries, they had a look at their adoptive home, Canada. They fell in love with northern Canada and decided that the needs at home were just as great. Not wanting to appear pompous or self-serving, they worked tirelessly to bring their vision to fruition. In partnership with the ArcticNet group, they also brought northerners on board to be partners.

I was blessed to be on the original board with other well-known Canadians, and I have witnessed the growing pains to the creation of the Arctic Inspiration Prize charitable trust

now housed at Rideau Hall. In December 2015, the idea of the trust was encouraged by then-Governor General David Johnston. Arnold and Sima gave \$60 million of their wealth to the fund, and now other entities continue to contribute to ensure that the fund grows and prospers.

Up to 10 prizes are awarded annually from the \$1 million pot — and now a \$3 million pot, the largest annual prize in Canada.

Along with showcasing northern art pieces and northern entertainers, it is an experience like no other. They have added themes. This past year it was “Walking lightly and leaving our mark.” It is wonderful that two of our Yukon applicants have been awarded prizes for their submissions that truly embody this theme. N'tsaŪw Chu' Kedts'edán Kù traditional camp was awarded \$100,000 to build camp infrastructure on the campus of the Porter Creek Secondary School. The goal is to encourage youth on skill development and traditional learnings that will assist them as they move forward on whatever path they choose.

Shāwthān Nāzhi was awarded \$500,000 to provide a recovery support program. After initial attendance at a treatment program, this will be a one-year, intense, ongoing, aftercare support program.

It was fun to be part of the Watch Party held at Porter Creek Secondary on February 8. Thank you.

It will be exciting to see these endeavours grow, and I am sure that it will inspire others to submit their dream ideas. So, congratulations to the teams, and we wish you all the success. Well done.

Applause

Ms. White: I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to celebrate this year's Arctic Inspiration Prize winners. It was wild to sit with other Yukoners in the Porter Creek Secondary School cafeteria, watching a livestream from Ottawa by Yukon's own Gúnta Business of this year's Arctic Inspiration awards. As we have heard, this year's Yukon award winners brought beautifully forward-thinking ideas — programs that will benefit and change the lives of Yukoners for many years to come. These prizes recognize the importance of grassroots efforts that address community needs and community-based solutions. Congratulations to all the winners from across the north, especially those two in the Yukon. We look forward to seeing their successes as these programs are brought to life.

Applause

In recognition of Yukon Heritage Award winners

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today to pay tribute to the 2022 Yukon Heritage heroes. Each year, the Yukon Historical and Museums Association presents heritage awards to recognize folks and groups who have made significant contributions to conserving and celebrating the Yukon's heritage, history, and story. This year's recipients are exceptional in their enthusiasm, dedication, and passion to preserve. I was very honoured to have taken part in the awards ceremony last week.

The Innovation, Education, and Community Engagement Award was presented to Champagne and Aishihik First Nations citizen and Tahltan comic artist, Cole Pauls. Blending personal experiences, traditional activities, stories, and languages with documentary-like profiles, Cole's 2022 graphic novel, *Kwändür*, is a captivating celebration of the culture and heritage of Dene and Arctic peoples. By the way, Mr. Speaker, Cole's previous graphic novel, *Dakwäkāda Warriors*, is currently on display — images from it — in the lobby. If you want to get the graphic novel, it's at the information booth. It's also part of our most recent acquisition to Yukon Permanent Art Collection, which is very cool.

The Helen Couch Volunteer of the Year Award went to Paul Gowdie in recognition of his work with the Hidden Histories Society Yukon and the seemingly endless behind-the-scenes work he does with, and for, the Yukon heritage community. Paul is a tireless coordinator of activities highlighting the importance of telling stories and the history of Black and Asian Yukoners, especially their historical legacy to our communities.

The Heritage Conservation Project of the Year Award went to Karen Murray for her dedication and keen interest in preserving the Melanie Morico House, built in 1902, which now, with thanks in large part to Karen's efforts, will remain part of Dawson City's heritage fabric far into the future.

The History Maker Award — Le History Maker Award a été remis à Yann Herry pour social assistance contribution au développement de la communauté francoyukonnaise et de son patrimoine depuis son arrivée au Yukon environment 1981.

Yann Herry est une référence bien connue des médias de partout au Canada pour l'histoire du Yukon et de la francophonie. Grâce à son travail, nous comprenons mieux et apprécions l'histoire et législative patrimoine francophones du Yukon.

And, finally, the Annual Heritage Award was awarded to Colleen James, in honour of her outstanding service to the protection, conservation, promotion, and development of the — here I go — of the Tséi Zhéle / Sinwaa Éex'i Yé / Conrad Historic Site. Colleen is an all-round wonderful person, and I know that her enthusiasm was a catalyst to realizing the Conrad co-management plan that was signed this past summer.

Mr. Speaker, the humble and dedicated work accomplished by these heritage heroes makes such a big difference to the Yukon story. I ask the members of this House to join me in thanking each of them for their contributions. Through their efforts, the territory is a richer place today and for yours to come.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize the 2022 Heritage Award winners, presented annually by the Yukon Historical and Museums Association to individuals, organizations, and businesses that have made a special contribution to the conservation or interpretation of some aspects of Yukon's heritage. These awards have expanded throughout the years, and so have the contributions by Yukoners. This year, there

were awards for five deserving recipients — each of whom have made exemplary contributions to Yukon's heritage.

Colleen James is the recipient of the Annual Heritage Award. Colleen has worked since 2014 on the conservation and development of the Conrad Historic Site, located in the beautiful traditional territory of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. Her research and knowledge have ensured that the site thrives from a cultural perspective, complete with Tagish and Tlingit names, and continued protection.

Yann Herry is awarded the History Maker Award. Many know Yann from his years as a French immersion teacher in Whitehorse. His contributions have helped to establish our incredible francophone community here in the Yukon and to promote francophone history and culture within the community. I know how much history my child learned when Yann chaperoned the kids to Normandy for the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Paul Gowdie is the recipient of the Helen Couch Volunteer of the Year Award for his contributions to the Yukon heritage community. Paul has dedicated his time and skills to a variety of artistic and visual displays and projects — notably contributing to the awareness of the Black and Asian histories in our territory.

Cole Pauls, my buddy, is awarded the Innovation, Education, and Community Engagement Award. Cole is a comic artist and illustrator from Haines Junction and is a member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Cole is a multi-award winner, has incorporated language revitalization and illustration to introduce comics and graphic novels touching on Indigenous heritage, traditions, and lived experiences.

I have known Cole for a long time — actually since he was born — and I can tell you that he always had that artistic talent.

Finally, Karen Murray is the recipient of the Heritage Conservation Project of the Year Award for her work on the conservation of the Melanie Morico House in Dawson City. Karen's work saw foundation repairs and renovations, allowing the building to be restored to its original character while mitigating issues that will allow this historic building to remain a part of Dawson's charm and history.

Thank you to each of these incredible individuals for their accomplishments and their great contributions to Yukon's heritage.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to congratulate the recipients of this year's Heritage Awards. I want to say a special welcome to those who are with us here today.

This is a group of dedicated individuals from around the Yukon who have worked hard to honour, protect, and share the history of the Yukon. Without their contributions, we know that we would lose the stories, buildings, and language that contribute to the diverse culture that makes the Yukon what it is.

We have heard about protecting historical sites, traditional place names, our connections outside the Yukon, and our

hidden histories that have contributed to the cultural, social, and economic development of our communities. There is always so much more for us to learn. I am particularly delighted by this year's creative ways that the winners have used to keep history alive and accessible — everything from historic buildings to graphic novels.

So, congratulations and thank you to Colleen James, Yann Herry, Paul Gowdie, Karen Murray, and Cole Pauls.

As well, a big thanks to the Yukon Historical and Museums Association for choosing these recipients and sharing our Yukon history.

I want to close today with a quote by Robbie Robertson that I felt was appropriate for the occasion: “You don't stumble upon your heritage. It is there, just waiting to be explored and shared.”

Applause

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under Tabling Returns and Documents, the Chair has for tabling the *Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees*, dated March 2, 2023. This report is tabled pursuant to the direction of the Members' Services Board.

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?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 207: *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 207, entitled *Third Appropriation Act 2022-23*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 207 agreed to

Bill No. 208: *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Bill No. 209: *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2023-24* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 209, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 209, entitled *Interim Supply Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Speaker: Are there any further bills to be introduced? Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House supports the establishment of an independent inquiry into the alleged foreign interference by China in federal elections in 2019 and 2021.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to provide all Yukon government nursing staff the retention bonus referenced in their letter of agreement entitled “Employer Proposal — Nurse Retention and Recruitment Incentives”.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to conduct a quality assurance assessment of the Yukon midwifery program to determine why and how the program stopped operating six months after opening.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to expand the Yukon public dental program to include a top-up for Yukoners whose private dental plans cover less than the \$1,300 of dental care per year provided by the program.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that there continues to be an elementary school in downtown Whitehorse.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to encourage active transportation by:

- (1) ensuring that bicycle parking at all Yukon government facilities is cleared of snow;
- (2) increasing investment in active transportation routes; and
- (3) prioritizing the painting of bike lanes in the spring.

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

THAT this House encourages Yukoners to donate to the Yukon Muslim Society Inc., which is accepting donations to help those impacted by the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria.

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

THAT this House celebrates the recent 10th anniversary of the Yukon African Music Festival.

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

THAT this House applauds the work of the Law Society of Yukon for mandating Indigenous cultural competency training for all of the society's members.

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

THAT this House congratulations Dylan Cozens on his new contract with the Buffalo Sabres of the National Hockey League.

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

THAT this House congratulates all Yukon athletes on their recent participation in the Arctic Winter Games and Canada Winter Games.

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

THAT this House recognizes the suffering of the Ukrainian people as the world marks the one-year anniversary of the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine.

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

THAT, for the duration of the 2023 Spring Sitting:

(1) the Clerk shall keep a daily list of paired members, in which any member of the government and any member of an opposition party may have their names entered together by noon on that date to indicate that they will not take part in any recorded division in the Legislative Assembly held on that date; and

(2) following each such division held, the names of any members entered on the list of paired members for that date shall be printed in Hansard and the Votes and Proceedings.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT, for the duration of the 2023 Spring Sitting, any Member of the Legislative Assembly who is unable to attend sittings of the House in person due to COVID-19 symptoms, illness, or protocols may participate in the sittings of the House by video conference, notwithstanding Standing Order 8 or any other Standing Order, and by video conference shall:

(1) be recognized to speak in debate, notwithstanding Standing Order 17;

(2) be permitted to vote, notwithstanding Standing Order 25;

(3) be permitted to participate in counts in Committee of the Whole, notwithstanding Standing Order 44 and Standing Order 44.1;

(4) contribute to constituting quorum in the Legislative Assembly under Standing Order 3 and the *Yukon Act*; and

(5) be considered to have attended the sitting of the Legislative Assembly, with no deduction of indemnity required under subsection 39(5) of the *Legislative Assembly Act*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT, for the duration of the 2023 Spring Sitting, if the Legislative Assembly stands adjourned for an indefinite period of time, the Government House Leader and at least one of the other House Leaders together may request that the Legislative Assembly meet virtually by video conference, with all the Members of the Legislative Assembly being able to participate remotely, notwithstanding any current Standing Orders regarding members' physical presence in the Chamber.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT Standing Order 76 of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly be amended for the duration of the 2023 Spring Sitting by deleting all instances of the words "Government Bill" and substituting in their place the words "appropriation bill".

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House congratulates the organizers of the Yukon Rendezvous on another successful event and looks forward to celebrating the festival's 60th anniversary in 2024.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I rise today to acknowledge and celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. On February 14, 1973, Yukon First Nation leaders presented *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Half a century later, this is an important moment for us all to reflect on the leadership, perseverance, and dedication of First Nation leaders and the role that *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* plays in our past, present, and future.

Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow is both a foundational and aspirational document for the Yukon and all of its governments and people. It's a forward-looking vision for a fair and just future where First Nation people will be equals in the Yukon society, economy, and governance. It was transformational then and it continues to inspire now. It was both a statement of grievances as well as a proposal of solutions. This proposal began a 20-year negotiation between all Yukon First Nations, the federal and territorial governments that culminated with the signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* in 1993 and 11 final and self-government agreements. *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* was developed by all Yukon First Nations, and it hoped to achieve a Yukon where all First Nations have a significant role to play in co-governance and decision-making.

I would like to thank the leaders at all levels who worked to develop *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* as well as those who have worked over many decades to realize its hopes for our society. I encourage all Yukoners to learn more about this historic document and the transformative changes that it helped propel in the Yukon. This visionary document was foundational to the Yukon's development and remains relevant to this day.

Thank you to the Council of Yukon First Nations for hosting a series of events to commemorate this important milestone. Those events were wonderful, and it was an opportunity for all Yukoners to learn about and celebrate this proud history and the hard work of so many tireless leaders who championed the movement toward First Nation equality in our society. We have come incredibly far over the past 50 years, and the Government of Yukon will continue to work collaboratively with First Nation governments for the future of all our children. Thank you.

Mr. Dixon: I'm pleased to rise and respond to this ministerial statement. February 14, 2023 was a very important day in the Yukon's long and storied history. It marked 50 years since First Nation trailblazers had the foresight, knowledge, and courage to travel to Ottawa and present the groundbreaking document *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to the Prime Minister of Canada. This document not only charted a path for Yukon First Nations, but for the entire Yukon territory as well. It did something at the time that was not talked about: state the grievances of First Nation people to the Canadian government. But that historic document went beyond that. It presented a plan for First Nations to work alongside the Canadian government and all Canadians for the betterment of our territory and our country. It set the stage for the *Umbrella Final Agreement*, the land claims, and the self-government agreements that would come to shape the modern Yukon.

In many ways, the presentation of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* began a journey that continues on 50 years later. There is work to do to realize the dream of Chief Elijah Smith and those First Nation leaders who journeyed to Ottawa, yet still we must join together to make that happen.

Finally, I want to extend my congratulations to all Yukon First Nation leaders and citizens on this historic occasion. It is you who bring this document to life.

There was a week's worth of activities in Whitehorse a few weeks ago, which several of my colleagues attended, to mark the anniversary. These events were meaningful and well-attended. I know that Yukon First Nations and all Yukoners will honour those who travelled to Ottawa in February 1973 for the next 50 years and beyond.

Applause

Ms. White: I'm happy to join members today in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the presentation of the historic *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. We thank the organizers, the volunteers, presenters, performers, and community for the beautiful week-long celebration of this important document.

Over the years when this House has paid tribute to the May 29, 1993 signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the first four final and self-government agreements, my former colleague, Liz Hanson, noted the deeply rooted patience and persistence of Yukon First Nations and their leaders — a patience and resilience that stem from first contact through the Klondike Gold Rush that brought thousands of gold seekers to Yukon and then, with the Second World War and the Alaska Highway — this, at a time when there were no socio-economic benefits or impact assessments. History tells a grim tale of how Yukon First Nation peoples were treated and ignored.

Liz had a poster on the wall of her office called "Sharing the Land", with an image of Chief Jim Boss from the Lake Laberge area and quotes from his 1902 letter, in which he said — and I quote: "Tell the king very hard, we want something for our Indians because they take our land and game." Mr. Speaker, not only was the message ignored, but the government of the day responded by saying that there is no Indian title to be extinguished in the Yukon.

For many years after, First Nations, including Yukon First Nations, were forbidden by law to raise issues related to treaty or land claims. Despite this, in 1968, Elijah Smith, then-Chief of the Whitehorse Indian Band petitioned then-Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien to enter into treaty. This too was ignored.

But Elijah Smith was quick to recognize the significance of the opportunity presented by the Supreme Court of Canada's 1973 Nisga'a decision. This decision ruled that aboriginal title had indeed existed at the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Mr. Speaker, if we reflect back on the actual words in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, we find in those plain-spoken words the true core of the spirit and intent of hundreds of pages of legal documents that, in the 50 years since that historic meeting in Ottawa, have become the very basis of our shared future in the Yukon.

In setting up the blueprint for the future, these leaders did not shy away from the truth. They were clear when they said, "The land has always been home to us and this is where we intend to stay. The White man has always come to the Yukon for money and left without really ever having experienced her quiet brown people or the majestic reaches of her land." They then went on: "Many Indians look at what the Whiteman has done to destroy and pollute lakes and rivers and wonder what will happen to the birds, fish and game. We wonder how anyone will be able to know what effect... industrial projects will have on the birds, fish and game before they are built." But despite all this, Mr. Speaker, the Ottawa delegation said to the Prime Minister — and I quote: "With a just Settlement of our claims we feel we can participate as equals, and then we will be able to live together as neighbours."

First Nations were clear in *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* that, as they said: "We want to take part in the development of Yukon and Canada, not stop it. But we can only participate as Indians. We will not sell our heritage for a quick buck or a temporary job."

Sam Johnston, one of the original delegates to Ottawa with Elijah Smith — and I note also the first Indigenous Speaker of a Legislative Assembly in the Commonwealth — said — and I quote: “... we want the rest of the Yukon to know that we didn’t trigger land claims so that we could take over. But the real thing was that we wanted to become involved...” — so that — “our young people, both Native and non-Native... can all work together...”

Today, Mr. Speaker, we do want to celebrate and thank the visionary leaders who, 50 years ago, set Yukon on a path built of patience and resilience, one that continues to remind us of our obligations to work together, in good faith, for our children tomorrow.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Attending the 50th anniversary celebrations of *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* was a moving experience. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his son Hadrien were in Whitehorse to also mark the momentous occasion. I was also proud to have my son Calum attend with me. He is one of those children of tomorrow.

There is a beautiful photo from the *Whitehorse Star’s* own Vince Fedoroff of Grand Chief Peter Johnston and his son Silas beside the Prime Minister and Hadrien during hand games. *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* truly is a living document. It’s profound to think that, half a century ago, Yukon First Nation leaders met with Hadrien’s grandfather and his journey for modern self-governance began. This enlightened document has set out the groundwork to change the territory for generations to come for the better. The work continues in so many different ways today, and I know that our children will continue the legacy because of the incredible efforts 50 years ago.

Our government works side by side with First Nation governments and the federal government to implement the final and self-government agreements. We also continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation governments who choose not to sign these agreements.

We maintain working to bring that vision to life, and it continues to drive the reconciliation commitments of the Government of Yukon. Again, this work is ongoing and unceasing. Reconciliation is a path, not a destination. The circle loops and loops, and we all have a role to play.

Our government remains committed to addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action, and this year, September 30 will be the statutory day — the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Through the establishment of the First Nation School Board, Yukon University, regular Yukon Forums, updating Yukon’s mining legislation, continuing to advance land use planning, and modernizing Yukon’s health care system, we are moving closer to the vision so well articulated 50 years ago.

We will continue to work collaboratively with Yukon First Nations to pave the way for a better future.

Applause

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Confidence and supply agreement impact

Mr. Dixon: Yukoners have come to realize that the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the NDP is the clearest expression of the current government’s agenda. Since they signed it, the Yukon Liberals and the Yukon NDP have been jockeying to take credit for it. The new Premier has said that half of it came from the Liberals and the other half from the NDP, while the NDP have said that, if it weren’t for them, there would be no CASA.

Meanwhile, the Yukon business community is caught in the middle, as it will be them who have to face the new regulations, costs and red tape.

So, can the Premier tell us if there is a single thing in the new CASA that will help the private sector in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: After working for decades in the private sector, the first thing I would say — and the Leader of the Official Opposition should know this — businesses run and work well when you have healthy people, and you have people who have proper education, and you have people who have proper housing. So, I would think that, in his review of the CASA, he would see the fact that we are focusing on ensuring that we have the best educational opportunities, so people can thrive and Yukoners can thrive. I would think that he would have seen a number of items that make sure that Yukoners are healthy, that makes sure that Yukoners who have gone through generational trauma have the ability to come back and be part of our society and be part of our workforce and be part of the folks we need to make sure that our private sector grows.

I would think that, at the end of the day, when somebody is thinking about the fact that: I need to have the proper housing opportunities in place, so that when I come back from work, I can live the quality of life that I believe I need to.

So, I would say, yes, that through the CASA, there are a number of things that fundamentally are the foundational items that drive a private sector in the Yukon.

Mr. Dixon: The past few years have not been easy for Yukon businesses. Coming out of the pandemic that brought declining revenues and rising debt, Yukon businesses have been hit hard with cost pressures brought about by inflation, the rising carbon tax, and rising payroll costs, and that was before the CASA. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business — and I quote: “Yukon small businesses have indicated one of their top priorities for the territorial government in 2023 is to help reduce the rising costs of doing business, not to add to them.”

Well, unfortunately, the Yukon Liberals and the NDP have ignored the wishes of small business as the CASA adds to the cost of doing business in the Yukon. So, can the Premier tell us if there is a single thing in the CASA that will actually reduce the cost of doing business in the Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that what the Leader of the Official Opposition is asking is, first and foremost: Do we support the private sector, and do we believe that there is an opportunity to help? Again, I think that the answer to my first question really talks fundamentally about how important

people are to any business. When you have healthy people and they are there at work, I think that it reduces the costs for business, and when people are effective in the roles they play and you retain your workforce, you have less costs.

So yes, I do believe — but I think that it is also important for us to — let's take a snapshot of what has played out over the last number of years when it comes to the private sector. First, I think that Yukoners are proud of the fact that we have the strongest economy out of all 13 jurisdictions — provinces and territories. I think that Yukoners are proud of the fact that we have led, over the last half decade — and just this last month, we have the lowest unemployment rate so that Yukoners who are here have many opportunities to join the workforce, and Yukoners who want to come home and be with their family have many opportunities because of that rate.

I think that when we think about the supports for the private sector, I look at what happened during COVID and the fact that, when it was time for the Yukon government to intervene and to support, we took the advice from the private sector and in turn put the strongest programs in the country in place, and that is why we had positive growth when, really, only one other jurisdiction did, in the country, during that COVID, and I look forward to question number three.

Mr. Dixon: The simple fact is that, while the Liberals and the NDP have been busy trying to take credit for who will increase the cost of doing business in the Yukon the most, neither one of them has given a thought about who will bear the brunt of those increasing costs. It was not lost on Yukon businesses that the economy, small businesses, or the private sector are not mentioned even once in the new CASA. There are simply no measures in the CASA to help reduce the cost of doing business in the Yukon. Instead, all the CASA offers is a pile of new regulations, red tape, and new costs for businesses.

Can the Premier tell us why he signed an agreement that is so damaging to the private sector in this territory?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First of all, I don't believe that the CASA is damaging to the private sector. It seems that there is a theme that is coming from the Leader of the Official Opposition, and that is that he completely supports the private sector and that he would use any tools possible.

He was the Minister of Economic Development for almost five years before I took on the role. I know that, when I had the opportunity to take on the role, I had the support of the now-Minister of Finance to eliminate the small business tax. When we think about reducing costs, there is no Yukon small business tax over this. We eliminated it, and then we went in and put the COVID programs in place.

I just don't understand why, over that five-year period and with such a passion to support the private sector, that wasn't undertaken — at a time, when I think back, the Yukon's economy shrunk; we were in a recession; we had jobs, I think almost 1,000 jobs at one point during that period that were lost.

Again, I think our track record speaks for itself when it comes to the private sector. I know the private sector; I have worked in the private sector; I have supported the private sector. I will stand by my record, and I look forward to tomorrow, to speaking again to chambers about our budget,

which has some great tools in it, and we are excited to put that on the table today.

Question re: Cyber security and foreign interference

Mr. Cathers: Over the past several days, Canadians have learned that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service has been raising serious concerns about Chinese interference in Canadian elections. Calls for an independent inquiry have grown and now include the former federal Chief Electoral Officer, former director of CSIS, as well as federal Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc parties.

Meanwhile, jurisdictions across North America have begun to express security concerns about the streaming platform called "TikTok" due to its links to the Chinese government.

Will the Yukon government follow suit with many other jurisdictions and ban the use of TikTok on government-issued mobile devices?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: We are aware of the federal government's recent decision to remove the TikTok application from government-issued mobile devices. We, of course, take cyber security very seriously, and we have policies in place that provide employees with direction on how to use the government-issued device safely and securely.

Highways and Public Works has the ability to make a change in government-owned cellphones through the mobile application manager system. This system allows us to delete specific apps and prevent them from being downloaded onto government-issued phones in the future. Before we take action on removing the TikTok application, we will let all employees know of the change through a global note. However, we do expect this communication by global note will be released today and that the TikTok app will be deleted and that all YG mobile phones will be prevented from downloading that app going forward.

Mr. Cathers: I'm pleased to hear — I think, the minister is indicating that they are going to take action and immediately ban TikTok and limit it on devices. Jurisdictions across the country are taking this threat extremely seriously. On Monday of this week, the federal government announced such a ban and here is what the president of the Treasury Board said: "The decision to remove and block TikTok from government mobile devices is being taken as a precaution, particularly given concerns about the legal regime that governs the information collected from mobile devices, and is in line with the approach of our international partners." Will the minister confirm what I believe I heard him say — that the government is banning TikTok and that a note will go out to that effect, likely later this afternoon, informing all employees of that change?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer is yes.

Mr. Cathers: Thank you. We are both pleased and relieved to hear the government agreeing to take action and treat this seriously. Most governments have made the ban on TikTok effective immediately. I'm pleased to hear that it's being announced almost immediately here.

There is a growing realization as well in Canada that there has been an attempted Chinese interference in the federal elections in 2019 and 2021. A consensus is formed among just about everyone but the federal Liberal Party that an independent inquiry into this interference is necessary. Former CSIS director, former federal Chief Electoral Officer, and all three federal opposition parties have joined in this call.

Will the Yukon Premier agree to call for an independent inquiry into foreign interference attempts in the most recent two federal elections?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: A bit of a different question than the TikTok question. I think we have seen a motion that was tabled earlier today by the opposition. I assume that this will be something that will be called forward in the near future and we'll have an opportunity here to debate that rigorously. I know that I will prepare and we will prepare and look into the processes that are happening at the federal level.

I want to make sure that I do some due diligence on that, but again I will say this: I know that our team and I, in this role, do not want to stand for any interference to our democratic institutions. I want to ensure that all of us here make our decisions based on our beliefs and our values — those Canadian values and Yukon values.

That is where we stand, and we look forward to debating that motion in the near future.

Question re: Health care services

Ms. White: Right now, it seems that the Yukon's health care system is crumbling. This government not only fails to realize how bad things are, they seem determined to actually make things worse.

So, let's start with doctors. We are in the middle of a doctor shortage, with thousands of folks on the wait-list to get the basic health care they need by getting matched with a doctor. You would think that the government would do everything they could to make the Yukon an attractive place to work so that we could actually recruit more doctors. Instead, the Liberals aren't even paying the ones that we have. Doctors have shared that they have been waiting months to be paid for the care they are providing.

Can the minister explain how delayed payments to doctors fits into the government's plan to solve the doctor shortage?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak about a very important priority for our government and incredibly important activities in building and maintaining our relationship with the Yukon Medical Association. I appreciate them being represented here today. I can indicate that I am sorry, but the member opposite does not have all the facts correct. I think that the key situation is that we are working with doctors through this process. The earlier reported issues about massive delays for particular payments to physicians is being resolved. We will continue to make that a priority. We certainly understand that the timely payment of doctors — who are not only here and have set up their practices and families here in the Yukon — will attract others who might be coming as locums or other visitors. We must maintain a process by which they are paid very quickly.

I look forward to continuing the conversation with respect to this, but I can certainly indicate that our conversations, very recently, are fruitful and we are working together to solve this problem.

Ms. White: That must be a relief to doctors.

It's not just doctors that the Liberal government is failing. When Yukoners called for better wages and better working conditions, the government announced a one-time bonus instead — better than nothing, I guess, except for the nurses who actually got nothing.

If you look in the gallery, you will see some of the nurses who haven't received a cent since the announcement, and that's not even counting new nurses who are being recruited. Some of them don't know what they are entitled to, or these bonuses, while others saw their promised bonus whittled down as their hiring process went on.

Will the minister fix the issue and make sure that all nurses employed by the government do, in fact, receive their promised bonuses?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Thank you for the opportunity to rise to discuss again this very important issue. It is quite specific to a number of nurses who are on leave at the moment. They should, of course, speak with us. We are working one-on-one with those individuals to sort out the situation. It is, quite frankly, a situation with respect to the collective agreement — to which the union agrees that there are certain categories by which bonuses, as we design them, cannot necessarily be paid to individuals who are also on leave for other reasons. It is a very specific problem to nurses here in the territory who are on leave. At this stage, we are discussing this with them to make sure that we can work out the problems. We need to work with the Public Service Commission; we obviously need to look into what the unions agreed to; we need to work with individuals. We are keen to make sure that the bonuses that were designed by our government, and put in place for the purposes of recruiting and retaining nurses here in the territory — and recognizing their incredibly important work as health care professionals and that the services that they provide to Yukoners are properly recognized.

Ms. White: I will just remind the minister that it was an announcement that she made before Christmas, and it is now March.

Here's yet another example of how the Liberals are mismanaging health care: the Yukon midwifery program, or rather the lack thereof. The government promised Yukoners to make midwifery accessible and regulated in the territory. That's great; we all agree. But after bringing in new regulations that prevented all Yukon midwives from practising for a full year, the program collapsed after only six months. This failure wasn't a surprise to anyone. In fact, the Yukon NDP and midwifery advocates warned the Liberals that this might and could happen. Just like doctors and nurses, this government shorted midwives.

They told midwives that they expected them to work for hundreds of hours with almost no guidance and support for about \$40,000 less than they could get elsewhere in Canada. It's no wonder that it failed.

When will the government offer midwives competitive wages so that the midwifery program can finally be successful?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Again — I'm sorry to challenge necessarily — but the member opposite does not have the facts necessarily correct. We are working to undertake the biggest transformation of health care in the Yukon's history. We are working to provide services better in all areas of health care for Yukoners. We have introduced many programs that have not even been contemplated by former governments.

We have had an independent review of the health care system that produced the *Putting People First* report. We are working diligently to implement aspects of the *Putting People First* report, having recognized all of their recommendations and accepted them all.

With respect to the midwifery program, it is experiencing the impacts of the local, national, and global shortage of health care workers and is currently facing some significant staffing challenges. Some were unexpected — well, they were all unexpected, quite frankly, because, as we know, the midwifery clinic in Whitehorse officially opened its doors on July 7, 2022.

I can also indicate that, in the budget that we are about to hear about, there is \$1.35 million for the Yukon midwifery program. The first midwife-led birth occurred in November 2022, and 12 other babies have been born. We are working to restore all the services.

Question re: Carbon tax

Ms. Van Bibber: When the Liberal government brought in the federal carbon tax in 2018, they promised that all the revenue collected from the carbon tax would be returned to Yukoners. Unfortunately, that has not happened. The most recent Public Accounts from 2021-22 show that the Yukon government has consistently been taking in more revenue from the carbon tax than they are giving back. As of March 31, 2022, the Yukon government has accumulated almost \$19 million in surplus from the carbon tax.

Why isn't the Yukon government ensuring that all of the money it collects from the federal government for the carbon tax is coming back to Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The answer is very simple: the Yukon carbon rebate is revenue neutral, and we are returning 100-percent of the federal carbon levy back in four rebate groups to Yukoners, Yukon businesses, and First Nation governments. We remain committed to ensuring that the four rebate groups continue to receive more, actually, on average than they pay in to carbon pricing levies. We are distributing 45 percent to individuals, 36 percent to general businesses, 12 percent to mining businesses, 3.5 percent to First Nation governments, and 3.5 percent to municipal governments as well.

Rebate programs are on their way, obviously. Sometimes it takes some time with the application process. I know that the Department of Finance and others — Energy, Mines and Resources — are helping miners to understand the system, but rest assured, this is not a revenue that the Yukon government takes in.

Actually, the carbon expenses that we as a government put in go into those four groups as well. So, not only is it revenue neutral, it is a little bit less than that, actually.

The cheques will be coming, obviously, and sometimes there are procedural problems with that, or some time frames. I will make sure that I endeavour to get back to the member opposite with a most up-to-date reflection of where we are, as far as the return to these four groups.

Ms. Van Bibber: The worst example of the Yukon government taking in more money from the carbon tax than they give out is in the amounts for Yukon businesses. In the 2021-22 year, the Yukon government took in almost \$11.5 million in carbon tax revenue designated for Yukon businesses, but they have only distributed approximately \$3 million. The remaining \$8.5 million is sitting in the Yukon government's bank account.

Why doesn't the Yukon government distribute that \$8.5 million that is owed to Yukon businesses from the carbon tax?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I am going to disagree with the members opposite. The Yukon businesses receive their carbon rebates as a taxable refund, as a credit. This happens in the financial credit year. As with some other tax credits, businesses can apply retroactively for past tax credits as well. The business rebate for 2023-24, for example, is \$21.98 per \$1,000 of eligible Yukon assets. The rebate is calculated based upon the value of the business assets and includes incentives to invest in clean technology. For the 2023-24 year as well, the super green credit provides a rebate of about \$109 for \$1,000 of clean technology assets, which includes eligible solar energy systems, energy vehicles, and charging systems.

The uptake for the general business rebate was slow in the initial years, so I hope the members opposite are not trying to tell businesses that we are keeping their money. I hope that they are going to help us out with the business community to make sure that every single dollar-plus will come back into the pockets of Yukon businesses.

Ms. Van Bibber: Unfortunately, 2021-22 was just the latest year in a growing trend of the Yukon government taking away more money from the carbon tax than it gives out.

According to the 2021-22 Public Accounts, as of March 31, 2022, the Yukon government is sitting on a pile of cash, clinging on to \$15.8 million that is owed to Yukon businesses. The amount will likely increase when the carbon tax increases on April 1.

Will the Yukon government agree to consult the Yukon business community about what to do with the growing amount of money that is owed to Yukon businesses from the carbon tax?

Hon. Mr. Silver: It's actually quite disappointing how inaccurate these statements are coming from the Yukon Party. They don't want to listen to the answer; they just want to spread misinformation, obviously.

Mr. Speaker, the low uptake that resulted in significant surplus balances to the business rate account was carried forward to increase those rebates in the next fiscal year, in 2022-23, quite simply. Tax data also indicates that the uptake

is increasing. So, the rebate for 2023-24 no longer includes large surpluses. It no longer includes large surpluses — for the members opposite who ask the question but don't listen to the answers. So again, this will explain the decline in the rebate compared to the previous years.

Question re: Budget estimates and spending

Mr. Hassard: For the past several years, the Liberals have been quick to brag that they have tabled the largest capital budget in history. Unfortunately, what the Liberals consistently forget to mention is that the government has never been able to spend that budget. In fact, at the hearing on the Public Accounts in December, Department of Finance officials revealed that, in the 2021-22 budget year, the Government of Yukon was only able to spend about 78 percent of its capital budget. So, that means that just under \$100 million of capital was lapsed.

So, can the minister tell us why the government consistently overbudgets and under-delivers?

Hon. Mr. Clarke: What I can say — the member opposite is likely aware — is that the most recent year, 2022-23, will be the busiest year and the most significant year in capital spent in the history of the Yukon. We do anticipate getting in excess of \$500 million out the door in capital projects, including the national trade corridors funding, work on the north Klondike Highway, the Crooked Creek bridge, the airport parallel runway, the airport apron, the beginning of Nisutlin Bay bridge project, and various green infrastructure projects, including the grid-scale battery project at the top of the south access and Alaska Highway. The list goes on and on.

I can get the numbers, but the last year of the Yukon Party government fiscal 2015-16, I don't think they got \$200 million out the door. I think it was \$185 million, or something like that — this year, in excess of \$500 million of amazing, green, resilient infrastructure.

Mr. Hassard: Unfortunately, the minister didn't provide us an answer to the question. So, here is exactly what officials from the Department of Finance told the Public Accounts Committee back in December, and I'll quote, "I have noted that we tend to overbudget compared to the capacity that we can actually produce, given the size of the economy here in the Yukon. We are predominantly bringing in people from the south to do the work."

So, what's clear is that the Liberals like to overbudget so that they can get a big, splashy number for a talking point, but they struggle when it actually comes to getting the money out the door. So, is the Minister of Finance concerned that the Liberals have never been able to live up to their capital budget commitments?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We are very pleased to participate in the hearings for the standing committee. I guess the member opposite forgets that I was sitting in opposition during his time as a minister and watched their Public Accounts every year compare to what they said they were going to build in the mains. I watched every year as they re-budgeted again in the fall — again, not really knowing what they were going to put out there, to the chagrin of the private sector, who really didn't know what kind of projects were going to come at anytime.

We've developed a five-year capital plan. I'll compare our mains to our Public Accounts any day, compared to the five years of the Yukon Party — any day — especially in those last years, when the Conference Board of Canada had a scathing review of the economic opportunities under the Yukon Party government. In the last several years of the Yukon Party government, 1,400 private jobs gone from the Yukon; a recession in Yukon, when the rest of Canada was booming. Through a pandemic and through supply chain issues from international conflict, we have been leading Canada in getting money out the door for private investments, for capital investments, and the work that the minister has done with his team in Highways, not only to get projects out the door on time and on budget, but also working with Finance on a yearly basis to make sure that we're keeping the fiscal responsibility there at the centre of everything we do.

Mr. Hassard: Another thing that we keep hearing from the Liberals is about investment in land development and lots. So, however, here is what the Department of Finance officials told the Public Accounts Committee back in December — and I will quote again: "Residential land development was underbudget both in Whitehorse and the communities; \$15.7 million lapsed in total, \$8.5 million just in Whistle Bend."

Those same Finance officials told the Committee that Highways and Public Works left a variance of \$5.8 million, including \$10.5 million in the Yukon Resource Gateway program.

So, what measures has the minister put in place to reassure Yukoners and Yukon businesses that the amounts budgeted for in the 2023-24 capital budget will actually be spent?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: The Yukon Party boasted about population growth for more than a decade but failed to put an action plan together for the inevitable increase in demand for housing. The Yukon Party's record on housing is embarrassing. I have said this before and I am going to repeat it again. If I was on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I would be embarrassed to bring this point forward given their party's previous actions. The Yukon Party sat on millions of dollars and refused to invest it in affordable housing. We are still paying the price for the Yukon Party's inaction on housing and on many other things.

This government has taken action on so many fronts. We led the economy through the pandemic. We are still leading Canada's economy on so many different fronts. My colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, has just outlined how we are going to get more than \$500 million in capital budget out the door. The Minister of Finance has just indicated how we did five-year capital planning — that the members on the opposite side of the House have never even considered.

I would take the record of this government over the record of the Yukon Party any day on the economy.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 208: *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 208, standing in the name of the Hon. Sandy Silver.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is an absolute honour to present the Government of Yukon's budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'án Kwäch'án Council. It is a distinct privilege to do so at such a significant moment for our territory.

2023 is truly an historic year for the Yukon. This year marks 125 years since the Yukon became a territory and joined Confederation. From the influx of fortune seekers chasing dreams during the Klondike Gold Rush to punching above our weight in two great wars, the construction of the Alaska Highway, surviving two global pandemics, and becoming the birthplace of modern treaties within Canada, the Yukon has played a seminal role in our country for more than a century. The territory's rich history of ingenuity, perseverance, and leadership continues to guide our government's efforts to move the territory forward for the benefit of all Yukoners.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. This visionary document, created by Yukon First Nation leaders, redefined Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations and formed the basis for modern land claims and self-governing agreements in Canada. It led to the *Umbrella Final Agreement* between the Government of Yukon, the Government of Canada, and what became the Council of Yukon First Nations, and subsequently, final and self-government agreements for 11 of Yukon's 14 First Nations. It continues to inspire and to inform the reconciliation commitments of the Government of Yukon to this day.

Twenty years ago, the Yukon also became the first territory to take over land and resource management responsibilities from the federal government. In the two decades since, the territory has experienced growing pains, but our government's focus on collaboratively modernizing legislation, and creating an inclusive, vibrant and prosperous territory for us all, has allowed the Yukon to emerge as a model jurisdiction for all Canadians.

The Yukon is full of promise, and we are poised to continue playing an exceptional role within Canada. We have the strongest economy in Canada and the lowest unemployment rate. As Canada emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and faces increasing geo-political instability, which we saw first-hand with NORAD activities over the territory just last month, eyes are on the north in an increasingly uncertain world.

This year's budget has a total of \$1.94 billion in spending. This includes \$484 million in capital spending and operation

and maintenance expenditures, accounting for \$1.45 billion. Our five-year capital plan includes approximately \$2.15 billion in planned spending. Our government pledged to exercise good governance and responsible fiscal management, and we continue to deliver on that commitment with a budget surplus of \$48 million and a \$50-million contingency fund for emerging priorities, including wildfires and flooding, which reached historic, unprecedented proportions in recent years.

As more and more people pursue the unparalleled opportunities available in the territory and choose the Yukon as a place to call home, our government continues to invest in the areas needed to grow our communities in resilient, sustainable ways. Since we took office, our government has been focused on making lives more affordable for Yukoners. We cut taxes for businesses, we eliminated the small business tax rate entirely, we extended the interim electrical rebates, introduced a made-in-Yukon carbon rebate system, and introduced the inflation relief rebate to help Yukoners save money on their electricity bills. We also increased support for low-income Yukoners, seniors, and those on social assistance — and caregivers of children as well.

We made history in 2021 when we introduced the first universal affordable childcare program in the Yukon. This program has been a game-changer for Yukon families. It has also significantly reduced the cost of living in the territory. This year's budget will make lives more affordable for Yukoners. It will move the territory forward on reconciliation. It sets out our plan to grow a strong, resilient economy. We are putting real money behind our efforts to build a better health and social services system, and we continue to build on our clean, green future, all so that the Yukon can truly be a place that everyone calls home.

We know that inflation is a real concern, not just here in the Yukon, but across the country and the world. Our work to make lives more affordable for Yukoners continues with this budget. We have included almost \$10-million worth of inflation relief measures, including an extension of the inflation relief rebate, top-ups to social assistance and the Yukon seniors income supplement, and an increase to the Yukon child benefit. We will also continue to fund the paid sick leave rebate program to ensure that employees and self-employed individuals can afford to stay home from work when they are not feeling well. Through this program, we are ensuring that paid sick leave does not cost businesses more as they recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

The spell of the Yukon continues to attract people from far and wide. Between 2016 and 2021, the Yukon experienced a population growth rate of 12.1 percent, more than double the national average. During that same period, residential development more than kept pace with the number of private dwellings in the Yukon increasing by 12.9 percent. Our government has worked over the past six years to create a modern, inclusive, and prosperous territory in partnership with First Nations, and has attracted thousands of new people, which has led to historic economic growth.

Our government continues to make unprecedented investments, as we work collaboratively with partners across

the territory to address the housing needs for all Yukoners. This year's budget includes more than \$40 million to stimulate housing development and to help make housing more affordable for renters and owners. \$22.4 million from the northern carveout of the National Housing Co-Investment Fund will support projects in rural communities, including new homes in Dawson City, Teslin, and Watson Lake. This year's budget will also include \$26 million for land development projects to address the strong demand for residential lots. We are working closely with Yukon communities and First Nation governments on a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial lots in Watson Lake, Carmacks, Teslin, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, and Mayo. We are pleased to continue funding the successful housing initiative fund that supports First Nation governments, First Nation development corporations, developers, contractors, community organizations, and individual Yukoners to build more affordable housing projects in Yukon communities. We launched this innovative program in 2017, and to date, 361 new home units were built, including 220 new affordable homes for Yukoners. More than 150 additional units are currently under construction.

This highlights just some of the good work that we are doing to address the growing housing needs in our territory. The Government of Yukon will continue to make investments across the housing spectrum and work collaboratively with partners throughout the territory to make housing more affordable and attainable for all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that our government launched a comprehensive review of health and social services led by a five-member independent expert panel who engaged extensively with Yukoners throughout the territory. The result of the review was *Putting People First*, a road map to transform the Yukon's health and social services system into a more integrated, collaborative, and person-centred system that will better meet the needs of all Yukoners. This year's budget includes \$10 million to continue this important work.

More than two-thirds of the 76 recommendations in the *Putting People First* report have been implemented or are currently in progress. These include doubling the medical travel benefits for Yukoners, reducing pharmacy backups and fees, hiring additional nurse practitioners to increase access to primary health care providers in Yukon communities, and the implementation of an affordable universal early childcare education program.

This year's budget includes an increase of \$3.6 million for the new Yukon dental program. Up to 8,000 uninsured Yukoners will benefit from \$1,300 in dental coverage each year under this new program. Increasing access to primary care for all Yukoners is a priority of our government. This is why we are investing more than \$4 million to support our work with health care partners to increase the number of health care professionals in our territory.

Our government recently signed a new memorandum of understanding with the Yukon Medical Association. Through this agreement, we will support a series of innovative projects, including a new attachment and attraction program, which will increase access to primary health care services, support

recruitment and retention efforts, and reduce overhead operating costs for physicians. The Yukon Medical Association is confident that our new agreement will make Yukon one of the most competitive and desirable places to practise medicine in Canada.

Our nurses have gone above and beyond the call of duty when responding to the local, national, and global shortages of health care professionals and providers. We are investing in the retention and recruitment of nurses here in the territory, offering nursing staff a more competitive compensation package and providing our government with the tools to effectively attract and retain nursing staff to serve Yukoners.

Further funding will support the development of a health human resource strategy for the territory and encourage students pursuing studies in the medical field to return to work in the Yukon after graduation. Through cooperative programs, we will increase the number of health care providers in the territory to meet the needs of our rapidly-growing population.

Now, beyond primary care, our government continues to invest in the public health needs of Yukoners. More than \$10 million is budgeted for a mental wellness unit at the Whitehorse General Hospital. We are funding projects to help address the substance use health emergency in the Yukon, including expansion of the safe supply of opioids in the territory. \$12 million will allow for the completion of the new health and wellness centre and housing project in Old Crow.

We are putting money forward to ensure that justice-involved individuals have access to supervised residential services to help them to reintegrate into our communities in a safe and healthy way and support access to justice through investments in the Yukon Legal Services Society. We are funding the enhanced delivery of restorative justice services, the Gladue report writing project, in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations, and strengthening safety access and justice for victims of crime in the territory.

The Yukon's education system is undergoing a generational transformation to empower Yukon students throughout their journey in learning. From early learning and childcare and the reimagining of inclusive and special education to the establishment of the Yukon First Nation School Board and the growing success of Yukon University, our government is leveraging partnerships to expand educational opportunities for learners of all ages.

We are building schools. This year's budget includes \$27.3 million for new schools, including Whistle Bend elementary and the Kêts'ádañ Kù School, and upgrades to existing schools and Yukon University.

As I mentioned earlier, in 2021, our government launched the Yukon's first universal affordable childcare program. The Yukon is now recognized as Canada's leader in early learning and childcare, according to the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the University of Toronto. Since we launched the Yukon's universal affordable childcare program, more than 200 childcare spaces have been created in Pelly Crossing, Whitehorse, Ross River, and Dawson City. The program continues to expand and to grow, and we are continuing to support it through this budget.

The Government of Yukon, the Chiefs Committee on Education, and the First Nation School Board share the common goal of providing all Yukon students with high-quality and culturally appropriate education that incorporates an Indigenous world view. Budget 2023-24 continues to invest in the First Nation School Board, which successfully launched last year. This is an historic step for Yukon First Nations and their citizens. It honours the vision of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, and our government will continue to work in partnership to ensure that all Yukon students have the opportunity to learn about First Nation ways of knowing, being, and doing.

We are investing in our teachers and in our school staff. Thanks to an agreement with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, we are providing funds to support efforts to recruit and to retain new rural education professionals to meet the needs of our growing education system. Together with our education partners, we are taking a holistic approach to enhancing the learning environment for our students by providing funding for food in schools and improving mental health supports for students. We will continue to work collaboratively to empower our students to become the next generation of leaders here in our territory.

Yukoners are experiencing the impacts of climate change at an accelerated pace. To ensure a sustainable and resilient territory for subsequent generations, our government continues to implement *Our Clean Future — A Yukon strategy for climate change, energy and a green economy*.

The Government of Yukon collaborated with Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities to establish *Our Clean Future* priorities. The strategy incorporates significant input from Yukoners, non-government, and community organizations, industry, and private businesses as well. *Our Clean Future* is the Yukon's strategy for tackling climate change, and we have taken aggressive steps to implement it over the past three years. That important work continues through investments in this budget, including nearly \$60 million for climate change initiatives.

We are building more resilient communities with \$61.4 million worth of investments in infrastructure across the territory. This includes funds for local projects like community centres, recreational facilities, boat launches, fire halls, EMS stations, and public works buildings, as well as community infrastructure like water, sewer, and other municipal services used by Yukoners every day. Yukoners are blessed with the abundant wilderness in our territory. We rely on it for our food, recreation, emotional and spiritual well-being, and economic benefit. We will continue to enhance recreational experiences throughout the territory's parks and campgrounds with \$2.3 million in capital investments to support the ongoing implementation of the *Yukon Parks Strategy*. We are supporting ongoing work on wildlife surveys to ensure that we protect and maintain hunting opportunities for Yukoners.

We also continue to invest in the transportation infrastructure that keeps our communities connected. \$44.5 million is budgeted this year for the Nisutlin Bay bridge replacement project. This is the single largest capital project in

the history of Yukon, and for good reason. The Nisutlin Bay bridge is vital. It is a vital gateway for both Yukoners and Alaskans. The new bridge will be safer for drivers and pedestrians, and it will be able to handle larger loads of commercial goods and all manner of items to supply both jurisdictions.

The project will create local jobs, community benefits, and significant economic opportunities over the coming years thanks to the partnership with the Teslin Tlingit Council and also with the Village of Teslin. Additional funds are also available to replace the Big Creek bridge and the Lapie River No. 2 bridge. Approximately \$23.8 million will support upgrades to the Alaska Highway and the north Klondike Highway this year. These upgrades will increase safety, improve driving conditions, and better connect Yukon resources to markets. The Carcross bypass project will benefit from a \$13.6-million investment this year, while the Robert Campbell Highway project is allocated \$3.4 million. Both projects are part of the Yukon Resource Gateway program, which will see nearly half a billion dollars invested to support the Yukon's mineral resources development sector while creating economic opportunities in partnership with Yukon First Nations. An additional \$6.5 million is allocated for roadway safety improvements and bridge maintenance across the territory.

Over the past six years, our government has made unprecedented investments to enhance the territory's air transportation network. We continue to invest in modernizing our airports and our aerodromes to support Yukon's growing economy. \$25 million is budgeted to make critical infrastructure upgrades at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. These improvements include replacing the main runway, upgrading the parallel runway, and developing airport land for commercial use as well. We are also advancing upgrades to airfield lighting and resurfacing the runway in the Watson Lake Airport to help maintain the critical aviation infrastructure that serves that community.

Technological infrastructure is also critical to supporting economic growth and the diversification of our territory. Our government's investment to establish NorthLight Innovation has put the Yukon on the map in the global discussion of innovation and entrepreneurship. More than \$24 million will advance the Dempster fibre project, which will benefit communities in Yukon and the Northwest Territories by providing a backup fibre optic link in the event of a service disruption. Nearly \$2 million will also be available through the economic development fund to support projects that drive business innovation, diversification, and competitiveness.

We continue to support the growth and development of our sustainable tourism sector as well as Yukon's creative and cultural industries with dedicated funding to support the territory's film and sound industry, the creative professionals, cultural practitioners, Indigenous artists, and cultural carriers who make these industries thrive.

Improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the territory requires coordinated action from all levels of government, organizations, businesses, and

individuals. This budget includes nearly \$20 million to expand energy retrofits and support renewable energy projects. Additional funds are budgeted to support Yukoners' efforts to reduce their energy consumption through the Better Buildings program and to help our agricultural sector adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while increasing food production and the availability of local agricultural products.

Our government continues to modernize the Yukon's laws to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our territory now and into the future. More than \$1.7 million will go to support our work to update resource legislation. Last year, the Government of Yukon conducted a public engagement and consultation for new public lands legislation. This year, in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations, we launched a public engagement on new minerals legislation. We are working with Yukoners as we review the *Forest Resources Act*. We are in the early stages of developing legislation to establish a regulatory regime to manage geothermal resources, which have the potential to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels as a renewable energy source. Made-in-Yukon legislation will improve our regulatory system, respect First Nation relationships with the land, protect our environment, and strengthen our economy.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, under our government's leadership, the Yukon has established itself as a leader in Canada, building on the rich and diverse history of the past 125 years and the deep traditional knowledge that Yukon First Nations have developed over millennia. The Yukon has time and again demonstrated that it is ready and able to lead the way forward. Our government is delivering programs and services that meet the needs of Yukoners today while investing in the infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of our future generations. Drawing on the strengths and visions of the past, we look boldly toward the future as we move the territory forward into the next 125 years of the Yukon's story.

The Yukon's story is one of hope, resilience, inclusivity, and prosperity. It's a story that we must continue to tell the rest of Canada and the rest of the world.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Mahsi' cho. Günilshish. Shaw nithän.

Mr. Cathers: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

The House adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled March 2, 2023:

35-1-90

Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (March 2, 2023) (Speaker Harper)