



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 12

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, October 7, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 Fall 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. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Government House Leader Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
Hon. Nils Clarke	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board
Hon. Jeanie McLean	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

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, October 7, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

I would like to begin the 2021 Fall 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 the 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 because they are now outdated: Motion No. 27, standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition; and Motion No. 45, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party.

The following motion has been removed from the Order Paper as the actions requested in the motion have been taken in whole or in part: Motion No. 52, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

Motion No. 19, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, was removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

Motion No. 81, notice of which was given on May 31, 2021 by the Member for Lake Laberge, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as the motion is outdated.

Motion No. 83, notice of which was given on May 31, 2021 by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, was not placed on today's Notice Paper as the action requested in the motion has been taken in whole or in part.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Speaker: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the legislative pages who will be serving the House during the 2021 Fall Sitting. They are: Cassi Jensen and Sandy Nagarajan from F.H. Collins Secondary School; Andrew Woolridge and Ave Maria Skoke-Burns from Vanier Catholic Secondary School; Brenna Kelly and Agata Poltorasky from Porter Creek Secondary School; and Gabriel Mamer-Roode and Aurora April from CSSC Mercier.

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

Hon. Mr. Silver: There are a whole bunch of people in the gallery, and I just want to say what a great feeling it is to see them back in the gallery. I will start. I know that there will be a couple of people that I will miss; they are still wearing masks. I am sure some other folks will help me out with that.

I will start with the former Leader of the Liberal Party, Arthur Mitchell, who is with us. We also have former MLA Ted Adel. We have the current president of the Yukon Liberal Party, Karly Carruthers, here. We have a member of the executive, Mike Pemberton, as well. We have Tracey Jacobs as well in the audience, as well as my chief of staff, Jasmina Randhawa.

We also have Sacha Marceau, northern advisor, and my new ministerial advisor, Aaron Casselman. These are just a few of the people in the gallery. I will let my colleagues introduce the rest. Welcome here today.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McLean: First of all, I would like to welcome my husband Rick McLean to the gallery today. Thank you very much for being here today and for being so supportive.

We have a number of guests here today for a special tribute that we will be doing in recognition of Women's History Month and International Day of the Girl. We have Aja Mason, director of the Yukon Status of Women Council.

From Les EssentiElles, we have Maryne Dumaine, president, and Laurence Rivard, director. We have from the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre Mandy Jack, Eileen Melnychuk, Raquel Rosel, Elena Ross, and Cindy Allen. I would also like to welcome Staci McIntosh to the gallery. Thank you so much for coming. As the Premier has said, it is wonderful to have folks back in here with us.

Applause

Ms. Tredger: I would like welcome my mom here today in the Legislature.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would like the members of the Assembly to welcome folks who are here. We have a great group of individuals who have come from the Yukon Housing Corporation today. We are going to be having a ministerial statement in a few minutes. These folks have been doing incredible, incredible work, and this past week, again, they all stepped up. I just want to welcome Mary Cameron, president of the Yukon Housing Corporation; Philippe Molet, vice-president of corporate services; Colin McDowell, vice-president of operations; Kim Ho, our senior partnership advisor; Laura Lang, senior advisor; Hanna McDonald, senior policy advisor; Kristine Carruthers, acting director of tenancy supports; Paula Banks, our director of policy and communications; Sarah Murray, our acting policy analyst; Marcel Robinson takes care of the dollars and is our director of finance and risk management; Aneesha Singh, senior communications advisor; as well as Darren Stahl, who makes

sure that everything keeps running, our director of capital development. I would like to welcome them here today.

As well, a few individuals from the team that I get to work with — my ministerial advisor, Kim Stavert, as well as Kristin Young — those folks just make everything work and they have an unbelievable work ethic.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate having people in the House once again. As my colleagues have said, it is really wonderful to see you all here this afternoon.

I would like to welcome this afternoon Staci McIntosh, who is part of our Making Work Safe panel. It is great to see her here, as well as Sunny Patch, who is also on the panel. We have Jacob Wilson here from our communications team. It is nice to see him in the House this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

Speaker: Are there any further visitors to be introduced? Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Women's History Month and the International Day of the Girl Child

Hon. Ms. McLean: It is my honour to rise on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än' Council today, the first day of the 2021 Fall Sitting of the 35th Legislative Assembly, to pay tribute to Women's History Month and the International Day of the Girl Child, which takes place on October 11.

The International Day of the Girl Child reminds us of the need to address the challenges that girls across the world face each and every day. This includes the right to safety, education, health services, and so much more. This is something that is deeply important to me, both as the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate and as the Minister of Education.

Every October, we acknowledge and celebrate the incredible accomplishments of women and girls throughout our history and today. This month is a time to celebrate the women and girls from our past and present who are contributing to a better and more inclusive Yukon.

It marks a day in 1929 when the historic decision to include "women" in the legal definition of "persons" was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal. This gave some women the right to increase participation in public and political life, including the right to vote, but it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that this decision did not include all women. In fact, it wasn't until 1960 that indigenous women received the right to vote, and it wasn't until 2004 that all Canadians who were incarcerated, including women, received the right to vote.

The theme of Women's History Month this year is "Women Making History Now". It recognizes the many amazing women making a lasting impact on our country today, especially during the pandemic and in efforts to advance reconciliation.

The Yukon is full of women making history now, from our many strong female political leaders to business pioneers to mothers leading their families through everyday challenges of a pandemic.

We know that the pandemic has impacted women more than any other group. In so many cases, mothers have had to make huge sacrifices over the past year to keep their families safe and well.

Women have been the driving force here in Canada behind the national movement for reconciliation. These women are making history, as we saw the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. These women call on us to do better, to do more, to move faster toward equity and equality.

I think of all the indigenous women and girls who were murdered or who have gone missing, whose opportunity to make their own history was stolen from them. It is because of the work of the strong female leaders that a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls came to be and that the Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide a comprehensive response.

It is because of the front-line work that so many indigenous women are honoured and supported. I want to express my deep thank you to these indigenous women's organizations: the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, and the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society. Thank you also to the many equality-seeking organizations for the work that you do to make a lasting impact on our territory, including the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Yukon Status of Women Council, Les EssentiElles, Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, Queer Yukon Society, and All Genders Yukon.

As the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate, I remain committed to building a territory where all women, girls, and two-spirit people can live their lives with equal opportunity and free of violence. So, during this Women's History Month, I encourage all Yukoners not only to celebrate the achievements of the ground-breaking women and girls who came before us, but also to consider the history being made now in the current moment and to support the women around us and their ongoing fight for recognition and equality.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause

Ms. Clarke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition in recognition of Women's History Month, which is held in Canada during October. This year's theme is "Women Making History Now", which recognizes and honours women whose contributions can more rightly be referred to as "history in the making".

There are so many women in the Yukon championing efforts to make our territory more inclusive, the rights of women and girls, including freedom from violence and abuse, as well as equal opportunities in areas such as law, education, nutrition, and health care.

Let me name a few of the movements that Yukon women are involved in that are making history now: Yukon's female engineers committing themselves to increasing the representation of women in engineering; Yukon Women in Mining who continue to encourage, empower, educate, and elevate through advocacy; Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, which believes that gender should not be a barrier to pursuing career opportunities in trades and technology jobs; Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, which offers refuge to women and their children experiencing violence; Les EssentiElles, which aims to improve the quality of life of francophone Yukon women; Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, which works to heal the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools; the Yukon Status of Women Council, an advocacy and awareness group for local and national women's issues; Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, which advances the interests of women of indigenous or Inuit ancestry in the Yukon, including status and non-status indigenous peoples and Métis; Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle provides a platform for all aboriginal women to voice their concerns and to seek support and guidance from each other; the women behind the Hidden Histories Society Yukon, which recognizes black and Asian women; and so many more.

For me, the women who run these programs are making history now and are contributing to a better Yukon. They are the unsung heroes of our community. I would like to recognize and thank those women.

October 11 marks the International Day of the Girl Child. On this day, we celebrate girls and young women who continue to make an impact on our communities.

While we continue to make great strides toward closing the gender gap, we recognize that inequalities still exist. By raising strong girls, we are helping to shape the future and tackle those inequalities. This month corresponds with the celebration of Persons Day. It was on October 18, 1929 that Canadian women were first declared to be legally considered as persons, giving women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life.

Thank you to all the women, past and present, who have made and continue to make the Yukon an amazing place to call home.

[Member spoke in Tagalog. Text unavailable.]

Ms. Tredger: I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to Women's History Month and the International Day of the Girl Child.

A few months ago, the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society released a report about women in mining. A staggering 73 percent of women whom they interviewed about their experiences in mining camps had experienced harassment, discrimination, and violence at work. If we ever needed proof that Yukon women are not exempt from the discrimination faced by women around the world, this is it. From our communities to our workplaces, to our homes and our most intimate relationships, women face the threat of violence,

poverty, and more. It is even more stark for women of colour, trans women, and women with disabilities. But being a woman also means more than experiences of discrimination.

Let me tell you that women are going to remake the world; women already are remaking the world. The Yukon has a rich history of women working for change in every area of our lives. Our society has so much to learn. If we want to dismantle our systems of injustice, we need to listen to people whose voices have been marginalized, and that includes listening to women. I can't tell you exactly what it is that we will hear, because women are not just one thing; there are a million different experiences of what it means to be a woman. The experiences of indigenous women, women with disabilities, trans women, queer women, poor women — they are all so incredibly different, and each of them is valuable.

I dream of a world that does so much more than keep all these women safe. I dream of a world that values and learns from their voices, from history and the present. I dream of a place that tosses out our destructive vision of gender as a way to control, a world that says we can do better. I believe that, slowly but surely, we are inching closer.

Sometimes we move forward; sometimes we move back, but our world is changing because of the relentless work of so many women, including extraordinary work by women and women's organizations here in the territory. Acknowledged or not, they have been working for a long time. Their voices are sometimes fierce, sometimes soft, sometimes angry, sometimes calm, but always, always persistent. So, today I want to celebrate Yukon's women and girls. For every woman who in her own way has resisted and created, I am so proud. I am so proud to be one of you. I am so excited about all of the things we are going to do.

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 Sittings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees*, dated October 7, 2021; *Report of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly — Membership of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform; Yukon Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021; Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Yukon — Mental Health Services in Rural Yukon — Department of Health and Social Services; Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly — 2020 Annual Revenue Returns Contributions Made to Political Parties — January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020; Getting Ahead of the Curve: Meeting the challenges to privacy and fairness arising from the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector — Joint Special Report No. 2, June 2021 — Ombudsperson British Columbia, Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, Yukon Ombudsman, Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner.*

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling today a legislative return in response to written questions from the Member for Copperbelt South that were tabled on the last day of the Sitting of the spring Legislature.

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

Are there any reports of committees?

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling the *First Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees*, dated July 27, 2021.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling the *First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges*.

Speaker: Are there any further reports of committees to be presented?

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 1 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 1 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Whitehorse Centre on May 31, 2021.

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

Speaker: Accordingly, I declare Petition No. 1 is deemed to be read and received. Pursuant to Standing Order 67, the Executive Council shall provide a response to a petition which has been read and received within eight sitting days of its presentation.

Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 1 shall be provided on or before October 21, 2021.

Petition No. 2 — received

Clerk: Mr. Speaker and honourable members of the Assembly: I have had the honour to review a petition, being Petition No. 2 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, as presented by the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin on May 31, 2021.

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

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

Therefore, the Executive Council response to Petition No. 2 shall be provided on or before October 21, 2021.

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 202: *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Silver: I move that Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 202 agreed to

Bill No. 7: *Act to Amend the Family Property and Support Act (2021)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that Bill No. 7, entitled *Act to Amend the Family Property and Support Act (2021)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 7, entitled *Act to Amend the Family Property and Support Act (2021)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 7 agreed to

Bill No. 5: *Act to Amend the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2021)* — Introduction and First Reading

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I move that Bill No. 5, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2021)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 5, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2021)*, be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 5 agreed to

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT, for the duration of the 2021 Fall 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 teleconference, notwithstanding Standing Order 8 or any other Standing Order, and by teleconference shall:

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

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

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

(4) 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*.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT, for the duration of the 2021 Fall Sitting:

(1) the Clerk shall keep a daily list of paired members, in which any member of the Government and any member of the 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 in the Votes and Proceedings.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT, for the duration of the 2021 Fall Sitting, if the Legislative Assembly stands adjourned for an indefinite period of time, the Government House Leader and at least one other House Leader 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.

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to address the impact of significant staff shortages at many Yukon schools as a result of absenteeism, due in part to the impacts of COVID-19 protocols, by:

(1) working with stakeholders to increase the availability of teachers on call;

(2) taking steps to address staff burnout among classroom teachers; and

(3) ensuring that adequate numbers of specialist teachers, including but not limited to educational assistants, counsellors, and learning assistants are available throughout the year.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with industry stakeholders to investigate changes to insurance options for condominium corporations in Yukon that include:

(1) significant cost increases for condominium insurance in the Yukon;

(2) decreasing availability of providers of condominium insurance; and

(3) decreasing risks that are covered by condominium insurance.

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize the acute shortage of family physicians and the large number of Yukon citizens without a family doctor by:

(1) reinstating the physician recruitment and retention officer position in the Department of Health and Social Services;

(2) working with the Yukon Medical Association to review and improve recruitment and retention programs and incentives;

(3) working with the Yukon Medical Association to improve supports for physicians seeking locums from outside the territory; and

(4) assisting physicians who are planning to take extended leave, including maternity or parental leave, to find appropriate coverage.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to consult with the Association of Yukon Communities as well as directly with municipal governments before making legislative changes to facilitate the creation of a new home energy retrofit program.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to fully support and assist the ongoing systemic review of school safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School that was launched by the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate on July 29, 2021.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to create an industry working group to review the impacts of the Government of Canada's proposed Clean Fuel Standard, which is currently published in the *Canada Gazette* and subject to consultation between the federal government and provincial and territorial governments.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 3 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by fully implementing Jordan's Principle.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 5 and call to action 12 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by developing:

(1) culturally appropriate parenting programs for aboriginal families; and

(2) culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for aboriginal families.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 17 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by waiving administrative costs and the revisions of official identity documents for residential school survivors and their families, such that they can reclaim their names changed by the residential school system.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 18 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by:

- (1) acknowledging that the current state of aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools; and
- (2) recognizing and implementing the health care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under treaties.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 22 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by recognizing the value of aboriginal healing practices and using them in the treatment of aboriginal patients in collaboration with aboriginal healers and elders where requested by aboriginal patients.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 23 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by:

- (1) increasing the number of aboriginal professionals working in the health care field;
- (2) ensuring the retention of aboriginal health care providers in aboriginal communities; and
- (3) providing cultural competency training for all health care professionals.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 26 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by introducing amendments to the *Limitation of Actions Act* to ensure that it conforms to the principle that governments and other entities cannot rely on limitation defences to defend legal actions of historical abuse brought by Aboriginal people.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 30 and call to action 38 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by:

- (1) committing to eliminating the overrepresentation of aboriginal adults in custody over the next decade;
- (2) committing to eliminating the overrepresentation of aboriginal youth in custody over the next decade; and
- (3) issuing detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 31 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by providing stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions which provide alternatives to imprisonment of aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 33 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by:

- (1) recognizing as a high priority the need to address and prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, also known as FASD; and
- (2) developing, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, FASD preventive programs that can be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 36 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by working with aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services to inmates on issues such as:

- (1) substance abuse;
- (2) family and domestic violence; and
- (3) overcoming the experiences of having been sexually abused.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 40 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by creating, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, adequately funded and accessible aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 43 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by fully adopting and implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 47 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by:

- (1) repudiating concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous peoples and lands, such as the doctrine of discovery and terra nullius; and
- (2) introducing amendments to those laws, policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 55 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by providing annual reports for any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 57 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by providing education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including:

- (1) the history and legacy of residential schools;
- (2) the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
- (3) treaties and aboriginal rights;
- (4) indigenous law; and
- (5) Aboriginal-Crown relations.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 63 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by maintaining an annual commitment to aboriginal education issues, including:

- (1) developing and implementing kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history and the history and legacy of residential schools;
- (2) sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and aboriginal history;
- (3) building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect; and
- (4) identifying teacher training needs relating to the above.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 64 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by requiring publicly funded denominational schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with aboriginal elders.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to act on call to action 87 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations by providing education that tells the national story of aboriginal athletes in history.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to support Yukoners living with cystic fibrosis by providing full coverage for the drug Trikafta under the Yukon Drug Formulary.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?

Is there a statement by minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon housing summit

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Like many jurisdictions across Canada, the Yukon is experiencing housing shortages across the spectrum. Our strong economy over the last several years, including during the pandemic, continues to attract people to the Yukon. Robust economic activity, which is keeping our private sector busy, coupled with an increasing population and unprecedented cost of building materials due to the global pandemic, have contributed to rising housing prices and rental rates.

Together with our partners, our government has taken significant action to increase housing options for Yukoners in recent years. There are many important initiatives underway throughout the territory, but it is clear that more needs to be done.

To identify solutions and actions that address the Yukon's key housing pressures, our Liberal government brought together housing sector representatives and community stakeholders earlier this week for the Yukon housing summit 2021.

The goal of this summit was to inspire new collaborations and partnerships between the various housing stakeholders across the territory. We all have a role to play working together in finding a new way forward.

Approximately 100 delegates from governments, development corporations, private development companies, non-profits, First Nation governments, municipal governments, and community organizations participated in the summit. It provided an important opportunity to raise awareness about housing complexities and challenges unique to the territory. It also provided a platform to create new partnerships focused on increasing the housing supply.

We heard about key housing data and how housing contributes to individual wellness. We discussed barriers to the development of housing and innovative ideas for housing initiatives that can make a real impact in our communities.

Some of the key opportunities identified include continued partnerships with First Nation development corporations to increase housing options in communities and in Whitehorse, potential development of a community land trust that would present a new model of affordable home ownership in the Yukon, and Yukon First Nations that are exploring models for home ownership on settlement land.

I would like to thank our presenters who shared their experience and knowledge. Thank you to: Chief Smith of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Evelyn Pollock, project manager and Community Economic Development officer at Klondike Development; James Moore, policy planning manager for the City of Kelowna; Zain Abedin, director of community development for the Rural Development Network; and Kailer Mullet from the Department of Finance.

The summit paved the way for collaborative approaches, improved communication, public awareness, leadership, and specific actions to address Yukon's housing challenges.

The housing summit would not have been a success had it not been for the participation of all the delegates and the hard work and dedication of the staff of the Yukon Housing Corporation.

Thank you to everyone who made the summit a success as we look forward to our next conversation in six to eight months.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Clarke: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the updates from the government on this initiative. This sounds like it was a very interesting and productive conference. I would also like to thank all the participants who gathered for the 2021 Yukon housing summit.

The minister noted that it is time to do more for housing in the territory and we couldn't agree more. As many have seen, the housing crisis has grown in recent years, with the average price of a home in Whitehorse now roughly \$650,000. For many people, this means that the dream of home ownership is now no longer realistic, so it is clear that the government needs to do more and act more quickly on this important issue. We have heard that the Liberal government's decision to bring in the rent control policy this spring has resulted in hundreds of rental units being taken off the market. Further, we have heard that it has led to many renters being evicted. The Liberals will need to explain why they are forcing this harmful policy on Yukoners.

The government has contributed to the shortage of lots. Yukoners are hopeful that the time for talking and conferences is coming to an end and that the time for action is here. As you know, the current Liberal government has been talking about action for five years now. The report from this conference will be crucial to judge the eight-month review committed to by the government.

There also remain key projects in the territory that have not been addressed by this government. We know that Vimy Heritage Housing is a not-for-profit that is also looking to build an assisted living facility in Whitehorse. We know that all three caucuses met with Vimy representatives prior to the start of this current Sitting for an update on this project. Was Vimy discussed as a project at the Yukon housing summit? Was the shortage of staff housing in rural Yukon communities discussed?

In July of this year, the Canada-Yukon housing benefit was maxed out and turning applicants away who were requesting assistance. Were solutions discussed?

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the topic of the Yukon housing summit and our Yukon housing crisis.

Ms. Tredger: It's good to be getting up to talk about housing for what I am sure will not be the last time this Sitting. As summer ends and the weather gets colder, our housing crisis is intensifying. Yukoners who are making do by living in campers and tents over the summer are running out of time. The businesses reducing their hours because they can't find housing for their staff — they are out of time. The parents trying to find

a stable home for their children before they started school — they have been out of time for a while. We're out of time.

But what we do have is the creativity and resourcefulness of Yukoners. It is amazing what can happen when they come together. At the summit on Tuesday morning, at my table alone, there were people from construction, people from advocacy groups, and people from government. This is an example of what the government should be doing — looking outside of themselves for ideas from Yukoners.

The next step, of course, is action. First Nation governments have already been doing that work. Community groups have been doing the hard work of advocating for projects like the community land trust. It is good to hear the government committing to supporting those projects. It will be even better to see real action and resources toward these goals.

Best of all, of course, will be seeing Yukoners with safe, warm places that they can call home.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Mr. Speaker, I just want to once again thank everyone who participated in the Yukon housing summit who made it a success. There were many organizations involved, including the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, the Village of Carmacks, the Village of Teslin, the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Association of Yukon Communities, Safe at Home Society, Habitat for Humanity, the Northern Community Land Trust, Grey Mountain Housing Society, and so many others.

I would also just like to thank Yukon Housing Corporation for their extensive work supporting and working alongside the Vimy Heritage Housing Society, as we look for solutions there, and the work of Economic Development that has not stopped for the last four years to get them to a good spot to realize their dream. Thank you to all of these folks for sharing their insight and again coming to the table to discuss how we can work together to address housing challenges. My sense is that, when you bring folks like this together who have not had that opportunity, it is not just a conference; it is really a key component in planning and building the right partnerships.

The housing shortage in the territory is not something that any one government or organization can solve, and I thank my colleagues from across the way for identifying that. We absolutely have to work together on this, and that was part of my message at the summit. I also made it clear that the Government of Yukon is a willing partner. Our Liberal government has taken significant action in increasing housing options for Yukoners in recent years, so I think that there has been tremendous action. We have invested in the development of over 600 homes during our previous mandate. We built the first Housing First residence to provide barrier-free housing to those most in need. We are completing a new community housing project in Whitehorse that will provide 47 new safe and affordable homes for Yukon families and individuals.

We have supported the Challenge Cornerstone project, a supported and affordable housing development that will provide another 50 homes in Whitehorse. Thanks to robust partnerships, we have supported the River Bend project and Boreal Commons projects. We've also joined forces with the

private sector on a new supported housing development for seniors in Whitehorse. Folks can see that there's a crane high above Takhini, and you'll see that it is part of the infrastructure that's in place to build 84 new homes.

The Yukon housing benefit that was touched upon in comments was launched last year and directly supported over 200 Yukoners to afford their rent. Again, I thank the Yukon Housing Corporation for being innovative and moving dollars that we had in place to top that up to make sure we maximized the number of folks who would receive that. So, yes, again, innovation — we are moving and are agile.

We have also made historic investments in lot development across the Yukon. This last year, we worked with the City of Whitehorse to release more than 250 lots — the largest ever lottery and tender of lots in Whitehorse. We continue to work with our partners across the territory to develop land for housing. We recognize that more needs to be done — we absolutely do.

Action is happening as we speak. We are seeing the largest investment in affordable housing in Yukon's history right now. 2020 was a record year for residential building permits, but what's incredible is that, in the first three quarters of 2021, that has already been surpassed.

The goal of the summit was to foster the partnerships needed to keep this momentum going, and I believe that working together will be key, not anything divisive around partisanship. We truly, in this Assembly, have to come together for the greater good of Yukoners.

Again, I look forward to my colleagues keeping tabs on our commitments, because we need to be accountable to the Assembly and to Yukoners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Leader of the Official Opposition.

MOTION OF URGENT AND PRESSING NECESSITY NO. 4

(Standing Order 28)

Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity, pursuant to Standing Order 28 of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to waive Cabinet confidence and immediately release all briefing notes and documentation related to when Cabinet first became aware of the allegations of sexual abuse at Hidden Valley Elementary School and who made the decision not to notify the public of allegations of sexual abuse of a child within an elementary school.

I have the requisite number of copies here, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the Standing Orders permit me to make a few brief comments about this motion.

I think it goes without saying, given the subject matter, that this is indeed urgent and pressing and that Yukoners deserve to see the full breadth of information that's available from the Yukon government related to this issue.

Since this issue came to light this summer, we have — as have Yukoners across the territory — been pushing for openness and transparency and for answers and accountability. That begins with the open sharing of all the relevant documents and information pertaining to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, this motion would set about to have the government release all the relevant information and share it publicly so that Yukoners can see the facts about this and make an informed decision about what happened.

Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition has requested the unanimous consent of the Assembly to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity.

Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Dixon: Over the past several months, Yukoners have been deeply upset and disturbed by the government's obvious mishandling of the situation involving the sexual abuse of students by a former educational assistant. What Yukoners have been seeking throughout this scandal have been answers and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, let's begin with answers. When did the current Minister of Education learn of the sexual abuse of a student at the Hidden Valley school?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I welcome the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak about this very difficult matter that, at the heart, involves our children. There is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care. This is a devastating situation for absolutely everyone involved. Again, we acknowledge that there has been a breakdown in trust — we have acknowledged that — between the families, the Hidden Valley Elementary School, the Department of Education, and Yukoners as a whole, but I think that at the heart of this are our children.

Since this is the first question today in this Sitting, I want to remind the members opposite that we are in fact talking about children. Something very devastating has happened in this circumstance, and I want to remind them of this. These matters are very sensitive, Mr. Speaker, and I want to ask people to try to tread lightly with this.

We are absolutely committed to rebuilding the trust.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's sentiments here and her comments, but my question was very simple and very clear: When did the minister first learn of the sexual abuse of a student at the Hidden Valley school?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Mr. Speaker, again, these matters are very, very sensitive and involve a lot of Yukoners. We acknowledge that there were mistakes made and that other parents in this situation — when we became aware of these matters in 2019, the individual involved was immediately

removed from the care of children and has not been in the care of children since 2019.

The Hidden Valley school administration has changed some of their protocols, as well, to increase the safety of students and reinforce accountability.

At the time of the incident, Mr. Speaker, we informed the RCMP. We expected them to undertake a complete and thorough investigation at that time. The Yukon RCMP have initiated a complete review of its own investigation, so I am very pleased about that. There are also ongoing investigations into this matter, which brings me to my point that there are matters still before the court. I really want to ensure that folks in this Legislative Assembly are well aware of that.

I have launched an independent review of our government's response to this incident.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the government has admitted that a grave mistake happened, and we are aware that there are matters before the court, but the question I am asking today is not one of those.

The question I am asking today is: When did the current Minister of Education learn of the sexual abuse that occurred at Hidden Valley school? When did she learn of that fact, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will finish the part that I was talking about in terms of where we are at with the independent review of our government's response to this incident. This will look at internal policies and protocols to respond to incidents of this kind. I am very pleased that we have hired Amanda Rogers, who is very skilled and knowledgeable, and she will be taking a very deep look at what happened in 2019. This review will involve parents and guardians — and I made that commitment to parents at a closed meeting at the Hidden Valley Elementary School. There are a lot of questions around this matter, Mr. Speaker, and I am committed to ensuring that we review everything thoroughly and bring the answers back. I know that the member opposite is looking for something very specific here, in terms of my knowledge of these matters. I did not become aware of them until the media reported on them. They were not part of the initial briefings within — our early briefings coming into the position as new ministers.

I will continue to answer questions as we go forward.

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up. The minister has just told us that she didn't learn about this particular matter until it was reported in the media. It has been reported to us that the minister told that very fact to parents as well at the Hidden Valley school at a meeting. I would like the minister to confirm for us once again: Is it true that the minister did not learn about this until after the media reported on it?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I just answered that question, and I am going to continue to talk about the work that we are doing, going forward. Again, these are very delicate matters that involve a lot of people, and I want to be very careful and cautious about that, in that we still have matters before the

courts, and there are still active investigations going on, Mr. Speaker.

I have launched an independent review of our government's response to this incident as well as looking at the internal policies and protocols to respond to incidents of this kind. The review will involve all of the parents and guardians at Hidden Valley. This, again, Mr. Speaker, is a commitment that I made to the Hidden Valley Elementary School.

We are also supporting and working with the Child and Youth Advocate on a review that she is conducting. We share the Child and Youth Advocate's interest in ensuring the safety and protection of our Yukon youth and ensuring that policies and supports are in place to do what they are intended to do, which is to keep our children safe, Mr. Speaker. The advocate's review will focus on Education's policies, protocols, and actions taken after the allegations were brought forward and determining whether the actions —

Speaker: Time.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments, but the facts of this matter are extremely important, so I want her to be absolutely clear with Yukoners.

Prior to the CBC report on July 16, the minister is saying that she never received any briefing notes, any briefing materials, or had any correspondence with the department or her colleagues about this matter. Is that true, Mr. Speaker? Did she not receive any information about this until after the CBC report in July?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I do take some issue with the preamble in that question. I think that the member opposite is accusing me of not telling the truth. I have already answered the question that has been posed to me.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I really want to focus on the work that we are doing going forward. We have two reviews of this matter that will go in depth into what occurred in 2019. We are also aware that the RCMP is launching an investigation and review of what happened with their investigations in 2019 and have spoken clearly about some of the issues that happened and, more importantly, things that didn't happen in the 2019 investigation.

So, there are three investigations going on in this matter. I have assured the parents, the community, and Yukoners that we will have the answers available. I am very committed to having the questions answered as well.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate that the minister has a number of things to say about this, but I am interested in some very clear facts. What she has told us today is that the minister did not learn about a statement of claim that was filed in the court that alleged pretty serious allegations about the Yukon government on July 14.

So, she is telling us that she didn't hear anything about this from her department or staff — that a claim had been filed in court alleging that the Yukon government was liable for the abuse and failed to properly vet or supervise the assistant and protect the student.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: The Hon. Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I have been surprised, frankly, by the question that the member opposite is bringing forward. There is clear indication in our Standing Orders that questions and, frankly, answers about ongoing investigations and court matters before the court system here in the territory — and perhaps even otherwise — are not appropriate questions. We are happy for him to ask other questions. We have no issue with that, but he is seeking information about evidence and, in particular, contrary to Standing Order 19(f) — I will just confirm that — and that is not an appropriate line of questioning here.

I am sure he knows that, Mr. Speaker, but I think it is important to direct that matter to you now.

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

Mr. Cathers: I believe that there is no point of order. My colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, is being very careful to ask about matters that are not directly before the court and, in fact, are not related to what the court is reviewing at this point in time. What is more, the minister knows it.

Speaker's ruling

Speaker: With regard to Standing Order 19(f), there is no point of order.

Mr. Dixon: Mr. Speaker, to conclude my question, it is hard to imagine a more serious and pressing issue facing the department or this government. It seems unbelievable that the minister would not learn of such an incredible thing before the courts.

So, can the minister once again clarify that she had no knowledge prior to July 16 of the allegations or the charges at Hidden Valley school?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, I think I will go back and review some of what I have said today in terms of actions that were taken in 2019. These are not matters that we take lightly; this is a very serious matter.

In 2019, as soon as Education officials learned of allegations, the individual in question was removed from the school and has not worked in our schools or with students since then. They are no longer an employee of the Government of Yukon, of course, and the Hidden Valley school administration has made significant changes to their protocols to increase the safety of students and reinforce accountability.

We have two reviews underway, Mr. Speaker. I have launched an independent review of the Government of Yukon's response to the situation at Hidden Valley Elementary School. This was a commitment that I made to parents and the Hidden Valley Elementary School community in a private, closed meeting. We are following through on that. We are also participating and cooperating with the Child and Youth Advocate's review, which will shed light on other matters within the case.

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, the handling of the situation at Hidden Valley school was all over the news. The minister offered an apology to parents and caregivers, but we all know that this was too little and it was too late, because so many questions remain unanswered.

Information gathered under ATIPP paints a picture of individuals at the highest levels of government choosing to withhold information from families.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the Department of Education chose to withhold this information and why families at Hidden Valley school were left in the dark about sexual abuse in their school until after it was publicly reported in the media nearly 18 months later?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again for the questions. I know that it is on the minds of Yukoners, and I appreciate the questions coming forward and the opportunity to stand and talk about where we are at and where we are going with this.

I know that there is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of our students. This is devastating, and we acknowledge that there has been a tremendous breakdown in trust with families, with Hidden Valley school, the Department of Education, and, at the heart of it again, our children.

We committed to rebuilding and ensuring that this does not happen again. That really is at the heart of two reviews that are underway and a third with the RCMP in terms of how the investigation unfolded — what some of the parameters were around the publication ban and information related to that, Mr. Speaker, and I will continue down that path a bit on the second question.

Ms. White: The government had the opportunity to make the right choice when the abuse was first disclosed in the fall of 2019. They again had the opportunity to make the right choice when the offender was first convicted. They again had the opportunity to make the right choice this July when the story made news headlines, but it took them another month or so of public pressure to just decide to do something. Both ministers failed over and over again to do the right thing. Just last night, the Minister of Education announced an independent review.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why parents and Yukoners should start trusting her government to do the right thing and stop withholding information when they have failed to do so multiple times already?

Hon. Ms. McLean: There is a lot in that question. I know that the trust has been broken with families and with Yukoners. At the heart of where we are moving toward with these two reviews is to get to the bottom of it. I made that commitment to families and to the school community to ensure that we get the answers. I acknowledge very sincerely that I know the trust has been broken and we have a long path to restoring the faith within our department. We are very committed to doing that. I have committed personally to walking that path with parents, and I will stand by that. I know

that, when I stand and answer these questions, I think about the families, I think about the anguish that was shared with me in a private meeting that really, at the heart of it, had a tremendous amount of grief, anger, fear, shame, guilt, and everything else that you can imagine. I do not take any of this lightly, and that's who I am answering to today.

Ms. White: It's unfortunate. I wish that the Department of Education had that same thought and care back in 2019. The government waited until the evening before the first day of the Sitting to announce that an independent review of the response to the initial incident at Hidden Valley school will be undertaken. In the release, it was stated that a report would be coming back to the Minister of Education in 2022.

Can the minister tell Yukoners when in 2022 they can expect this report, and can she assure Yukoners that the report in its entirety will be made public?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the question. We are still in the process of developing the full terms of reference, which we will release publicly. I am committed to releasing the findings of the report publicly. That is the point of it — to get to the heart of what happened and to be transparent and accountable to Yukoners, but first and foremost to those families and the Hidden Valley community and again, at the heart of it, the children.

I am absolutely committed to transparency around this matter, and as soon as those documents are available, I will release them.

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school

Mr. Cathers: I would like to continue on where my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, left off in our attempt to begin confirming important details that the public has a right to know about the government's handling of the Hidden Valley school matter.

It is hard to imagine a more serious and pressing issue facing the Department of Education and the government as a whole than the Hidden Valley sexual abuse matter, yet the minister has indicated that she did not become aware of this until after the media reported it in July.

Can the minister confirm that she is actually telling us that between May 3, when she was appointed as Minister of Education, and July 16, she was not informed by anyone what had occurred at Hidden Valley school?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have answered that question already.

Again, I am going to focus on what we are doing going forward. I cannot say it enough and I know that I will have a lot of opportunity during this session to say this — that there is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students in our care. That is not something that anyone should ever take lightly. I know, first and foremost — and people have heard me say this many, many, many times in all sorts of venues — that I am first and foremost a mother. That is the reason why I do anything and everything in my life. I am also an auntie, and I take those roles very seriously. So, as we

go forward, I know that I am going to have a lot of opportunity to talk about this matter.

It's devastating to everyone involved. It's devastating to the families of Hidden Valley. Again, as I just said in the last answer, I keep the families at the forefront and I'll continue to do that. Mr. Speaker, that's who I am speaking to when I stand and speak about the Hidden Valley matter.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, we're after facts and accountability. We've heard the minister indicate that, during the time period from May 3 to July 16, she was not informed by anyone of this serious matter at Hidden Valley school, even though it's hard to imagine a more serious and pressing issue facing her department and the government as a whole than the Hidden Valley sexual abuse matter.

Can the minister explain why her department, the deputy minister, or the former minister did not brief the new Minister of Education about this issue according to what she told this House earlier this afternoon?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As I've said here today a few times now, we have launched an independent review of the Government of Yukon's response to the situation at Hidden Valley Elementary School. This is a commitment that I made to parents at the Hidden Valley Elementary School.

The independent review will look into the internal and interdepartmental processes of 2019 when allegations of child abuse were brought forward to the Department of Education staff. It will also include a broad and comprehensive review of established government policies and procedures around operations, reporting, and communication to address serious incidents in Yukon schools. It will include reviewing how the Department of Education, Health and Social Services, and Justice work together to respond to serious incidents in schools and their interaction with the RCMP.

Parents, families, and guardians of students at Hidden Valley Elementary School will be involved in this review, along with partner organizations and agencies, including the RCMP. This is a commitment that I've made. Further to that, there is another review from the Child and Youth Advocate that we will be participating with and supporting.

Mr. Cathers: We're after facts and accountability here. It is hard to imagine a more serious and pressing issue facing the Department of Education and the government as a whole than the Hidden Valley sexual abuse matter. Yet, according to the minister, she was not aware of it until after media reported it during July.

Can the minister explain to us why her department, the deputy minister, or the former minister did not brief the new minister about this issue? I asked the question already; the minister did not answer it. We want the facts.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thanks again for the question. I think that I have answered that we have launched an independent review to in fact look at all of what happened in 2019 as a result of this matter.

I will go over it again. The independent review will look into our internal and interdepartmental processes of 2019 when allegations of child abuse were brought forward to Department of Education staff. It will also include a broad and

comprehensive review of established government policies and procedures around operations, reporting, and communications to address serious incidents in Yukon schools. It will include reviewing how the Department of Education, Health and Social Services, and Justice work together to respond to serious incidents in schools and their interaction with RCMP.

Parents and families, of course, will be involved in this review, Mr. Speaker, and our partner organizations, agencies, and, again, the RCMP. I have committed today in the Legislative Assembly, and I committed at the family meetings at Hidden Valley, to be transparent and ensure that these reports that are forthcoming will be released to the public. The answers will be in those reports.

Question re: Sexual abuse within elementary school, Child and Youth Advocate review of

Mr. Kent: Mr. Speaker, shortly after the story about what happened at Hidden Valley Elementary School broke, the Child and Youth Advocate announced a review. At the time, however, the Minister of Education pronounced very publicly that the Child and Youth Advocate did not have the legislative authority to conduct a review of this. She said — and I quote: “... it is the view of the Government of Yukon that the Child and Youth Advocate office does not have the legal authority to conduct the kind of review that has been proposed.”

Can the minister tell us who gave her that advice at that time?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, this is a very serious matter that we’re speaking about today. I have had a lot of opportunities so far to speak about the matters and incidents that happened at Hidden Valley school in 2019.

There is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care. We share the Child and Youth Advocate’s interest in ensuring the safety and protection of Yukon youth and ensuring that policies and supports are in place to do what they are intended to do to keep our children safe. At the heart of it, that is what it is about. The advocate’s review will focus on Education’s policies, protocols, and actions taken after allegations were brought forward and determining whether the actions taken followed established protocols.

We have been working with the Child and Youth Advocate since July to clarify the terms of reference and scope and work that will focus on the policies, procedures, and actions taken after allegations were brought forward.

Again, there are also ongoing RCMP investigations related to this matter, and it is critical that we protect the integrity of those investigations.

Mr. Kent: Again, I will quote what the Minister of Education said at the time when the Child and Youth Advocate first announced that she would like to conduct a review of the serious situation at the Hidden Valley Elementary School. She said, again: “... it is the view of the Government of Yukon that the Child and Youth Advocate office does not have the legal authority to conduct the kind of review that has been proposed.”

So, again, my question to the minister previously — and I will ask her again because I didn’t get an answer: Who gave the minister that advice at that particular time?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, we have been working with the Child and Youth Advocate since July to clarify the terms of reference and the scope and work to focus on the policies, protocols, and actions taken after the allegations were brought forward. There are ongoing RCMP investigations related to this matter, and it is critical, of course, that we protect the integrity of those investigations.

We are pleased to see that the advocate will ensure the review does not interfere with the ongoing criminal and civil proceedings that are related to the matter. We will be cooperating, of course — I have said this a couple of times now and maybe more than a couple — with the Child and Youth Advocate office throughout the review to ensure that it is effective. This is an important step to identifying any actions that can be taken to better protect students. The advocate’s review is specifically focused on the Department of Education’s response. We thought a broader independent review of government’s response was necessary, including how we work with the RCMP in these cases. This will be a comprehensive review — the independent review — that lays out the facts around what happened in 2019.

Mr. Kent: Again for the minister, when this story first broke and the Child and Youth Advocate office first announced that they wanted to conduct a review of it, she said that they did not have the legal authority to conduct the kind of review that has been proposed. I asked a very simple question about who gave the Minister of Education that advice at the time. She’s either unable or unwilling to provide us with that.

Obviously, from that point in time to the announcements made yesterday at 4:30 and some of her comments about the Child and Youth Advocate investigation going forward, something changed.

Can the minister tell us what exactly changed from her earlier statements where she said that they did not have the legal authority to conduct the kind of review to yesterday when now they are, all of a sudden, partners in the review with the Child and Youth Advocate?

Hon. Ms. McLean: As I’ve said a few times today, we’ve been working with the Child and Youth Advocate since July to clarify the terms of reference and scope of work to focus on — which is now focused on policies, protocols, and actions taken after allegations were brought forward.

I have personally met with the Child and Youth Advocate. Our deputy minister has worked hard to ensure that we are moving forward in a good way together and that we are working in cooperation. This is an important step to identifying any actions that can be taken to better protect students. The advocate’s review is specifically focused on the Department of Education’s response, which is why, again, we thought that a broader independent review of the government’s response was necessary and we have launched that as well.

I’ve committed today — in this Question Period today, you have heard me talk about the release and transparency of these reports. When they are available, I will absolutely be releasing

them. What we're looking for, Mr. Speaker, are really solid recommendations as well.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Ms. White: I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without notice, and notwithstanding Standing Order 12(2), a motion "THAT the terms of reference for the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, as established by Motion No. 61 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, be amended by changing the special committee's reporting deadline to the House from March 31, 2022 to the 2022 Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly."

Unanimous consent to move without notice a motion to extend the Special Committee on Electoral Reform's reporting deadline

Speaker: The Leader of the Third Party has requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without notice, and notwithstanding Standing Order 12(2), a motion "THAT the terms of reference for the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, as established by Motion No. 61 of the First Session of the 35th Legislative Assembly, be amended by changing the special committee's reporting deadline to the House from March 31, 2022 to the 2022 Fall Sitting of the Legislative Assembly."

Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: Disagreed.

Speaker: Unanimous consent has not been granted.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker: The House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

The House adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled October 7, 2021:

35-1-9

Report from the Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly on the Absence of Members from Sitzings of the Legislative Assembly and its Committees (October 7, 2021) (Speaker Harper)

35-1-10

Report of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly — Membership of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform (October 7, 2021) (Speaker Harper)

35-1-11

Yukon Conflict of Interest Commission Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly for the Period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (Speaker Harper)

35-1-12

Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Yukon — Mental Health Services in Rural Yukon — Department of Health and Social Services (June 7, 2021) (Speaker Harper)

35-1-13

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly — 2020 Annual Revenue Returns Contributions Made to Political Parties — January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 (Speaker Harper)

35-1-14

Getting Ahead of the Curve: Meeting the challenges to privacy and fairness arising from the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector — Joint Special Report No. 2 June 2021 — Ombudsperson British Columbia, Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, Yukon Ombudsman, Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (Speaker Harper)

35-1-15

First Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees (July 27, 2021) (Clarke, N.)

35-1-16

First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges (October 7, 2021) (Mostyn)

The following legislative returns were tabled October 7, 2021:

35-1-8

Response to Written Question No. 8, Written Question No. 9 and Written Question No. 10 re: compensation for placer and quartz mining claim holders, successor resource legislation, and land withdrawals and staking bans (Streicker)

Written notice was given of the following motion October 7, 2021:

Motion No. 113

Re: amendment to Standing Order 76 (Dixon)