



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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## HANSARD

Wednesday, April 19, 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 — Lane Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre**

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
<b>Hon. Ranj Pillai</b>	Porter Creek South	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
<b>Hon. Jeanie McLean</b>	Mountainview	Deputy Premier Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
<b>Hon. Nils Clarke</b>	Riverdale North	Minister of Environment; Highways and Public Works
<b>Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee</b>	Riverdale South	Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
<b>Hon. Richard Mostyn</b>	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
<b>Hon. John Streicker</b>	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
<b>Hon. Sandy Silver</b>	Klondike	Minister of Finance; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Kate White</b>	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
<b>Lane Tredger</b>	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
<b>Annie Blake</b>	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**  
**Wednesday, April 19, 2023 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.  
 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. Motion No. 699, standing in the name of the Leader of the Third Party, has been removed from the Order Paper at the request of the member.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Introduction of visitors.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. Cathers:** I would like to ask everyone to join me in welcoming today to the gallery a number of visitors for the tribute to Mel Stehelin. They are family and friends, including: his wife, Eva; children, Brenda Stehelin, Mitt Stehelin, Bernard Stehelin; Yvonne Emson, Warren and Eva Holland, Tammy and David Johnson, Morgane and Matthew Pennycook, Eva Newsome, Kim Walchuk, Michele McDonnell, Megan O’Conner, Brijona Stehelin, Max Stehelin, Diarmuid O’Donovan, Carmen Komish, Mark Robinson, Lorraine Nixon, Gordon Steele, Aaron Florian, Hailey Ward, and Lorraine Hoyt. If I have missed anyone, my apologies for that. Please join me in welcoming them today.

*Applause*

**TRIBUTES**

**In remembrance of Mel Stehelin**

**Mr. Cathers:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party caucus to pay tribute to Mel Stehelin, a long-time Yukoner, family man, and local business owner. Mel was born on Bastille Day, July 14, 1943, in McLennan, Alberta. He passed away on the afternoon of January 14, 2023 at the age of 79 at Whitehorse General Hospital, surrounded by family. He is survived by: his wife, Eva; his children, Brenda, Mitt, Bernard, and Erin; his grandchildren, Morgane, Evan, Jordan, Eva, Iliana, Ada, Mason, Brijona, Max, Sofia, Marek and Emilio; his great-grandchildren, Warren, Gus, Molly, and Russell; and his siblings, Yvonne, Jacqueline, and Paul.

Mel was a successful entrepreneur known to dream big, take risks, and work hard. He was also known for being tough and fair. He was an avid hunter, marksman, horseman, and bushman, and he took the time to pass those passions and knowledge on to his family. Mel leaves a legacy behind that can be appreciated by Yukoners in the form of family values, buildings, museum donations, civic duties, and as a strong member of the community. He was always willing to help others where help was needed. Mel was involved in many

things over his decade in the Yukon, but family and business were his two big focuses, and his other passion was the wilderness. The Yukon wilderness and the opportunities that abound in the Yukon were why he made it his home.

Family was everything to Mel. Mel and Eva were married in Edmonton, Alberta in 1965. In 1967, they moved to the Yukon and planned at the time to stay for three years. When they arrived in Whitehorse, there were no paved streets, traffic lights, or parking meters.

Mel accomplished a lot in business and was a local business owner since 1967 when he and Eva, along with his mom, opened their first business, a restaurant called “Mimi’s Rendezvous”. Mimi’s Rendezvous was open seven days a week, 24 hours a day and had a liquor licence that went until 6:00 a.m. After that, Mel’s adventures in business included buying Whitehorse Vendors, which sold items such as pool tables and vending machines, and tripling sales in just one year through hard work and determination. He bought a few small apartment buildings and also ventured into real estate as a realtor, eventually opening Aurora Realty with partners. Aurora Realty was where I first met Mel when I was a little boy.

In business, Mel built over 40 houses, mostly in Riverdale. He also built the Pine Medical Clinic and the Sword Building at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Main Street along with its skywalk. Installing a skywalk involved a bit of a battle with the city, but Mel prevailed and it is there to this day.

Mel was willing to take a few risks in business. One day, he came home, and in answer to the question “How was everything?”, he told Eva, “Oh, I just bought the Town of Faro.” Mel was a partner in Klondike Motors, short-term financed many local contractors, and mined for gold in the Dawson area on Quartz Creek. Mel bought the ’98 Hotel in 1974 and bought the Capital Hotel in 1984. He was elected to Whitehorse City Council and appointed as chair of the Yukon Water Board.

He was also proud of his heritage and family history. The Stehelin family traces its roots back to 1520 in Basel, Switzerland, and Mel inherited the title of count from his father. After arriving in Canada, his great-grandfather founded New France in Nova Scotia, which is now a provincial heritage site.

In 1979, Mel and Eva bought land in Hidden Valley and built one of the first homes in that part of Whitehorse where he lived for the rest of his life. One special part of the Yukon wilderness for the family was their cabin at Tintina Lake, which Mel bought for Eva as a 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary present.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my family, my colleagues and me, our sincere condolences to all of Mel’s family and friends.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Today, I rise to pay tribute to the late Mel Stehelin. Mel was a long-time owner of the ’98 Hotel, a local politician, and a pillar of the community.

Mel first moved to Whitehorse with his wife, Eva, in 1967, choosing the north over other options in Toronto. The couple entered the restaurant business before purchasing the ’98, which Mel owned for the rest of his life. Mel also purchased

the old Capital Theatre, which later became an office and retail building.

Mel contributed to his community in a variety of ways. He joined a number of boards and served as the chair of the Water Board for four years, from 1981 to 1985.

In 2003, Mel was elected to Whitehorse City Council. Mel was committed to his councillor role and wholeheartedly served the people of Whitehorse until 2006. Beyond the '98 and politics, Mel was a real estate entrepreneur, developing several houses in Riverdale and, in the later years, ran a bed and breakfast with his wife.

Mel was a character, a straight shooter, an astute businessman, and a great Yukoner. His touch on this community is indelible. Mel was a big dreamer. He worked hard and took risks.

Today, I finally reflect on the stories that Bernard shared with me one day on a floatplane ride after a hunting trip about Mel's early years that really highlighted his entrepreneurship, his vision, and his "get it done" approach to business.

He made the most of his life in the north, becoming a skilled hunter, shooter, and horseback rider. Mel left behind a large family and a legacy that will be honoured for years to come.

My condolences to his friends and loved ones.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP to tribute the life of Mel Stehelin.

We have heard a lot about Mel's life, from business to politics and all points in between, and there were many points in between. When I think about Mel, I think about his love of family, because everything he did, he did with them in mind. I remember the first time that Eva had me over to help with something in the kitchen, and if you didn't know it, the Stehelins have the absolute biggest dining room table you have ever seen and a kitchen to match. I am sure that everyone in the gallery has shared a meal or two around that dining room table. It is used often with folks from all walks of life and from all points around the globe.

But I will get back to my point. Right off the kitchen is a small seating area, and this is where I first met Mel in person, because I had known about him by reputation before.

He had an entire beautiful house that he could be sitting in, but he chose that seating area because it was close to Eva. I got to listen to them banter and discuss the day, and I realized that what I was watching was love in action.

Mel and Eva ran their businesses like they ran their house — with open arms and an open heart. There are thousands of stories of how Mel changed the lives of those around him for the better, and for each of those, we are grateful.

So, to his family and his friends, we are deeply sorry for your loss. He really was one of a kind.

*Applause*

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

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I have for tabling today a legislative return in response to questions from the Member for Whitehorse Centre on April 5.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have three legislative returns.

**Ms. Clarke:** I have for tabling a news release dated April 17, 2023 from the Yukon Employees' Union, entitled "Picket Lines, Solidarity with PSAC Federal Workers".

**Mr. Istchenko:** I have for tabling the March 20, 2023 Yukon Bureau of Statistics report on the consumer price index, which shows Whitehorse leading the country in year-over-year inflation.

**Speaker:** Are there any reports of committees?

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I have for presentation the *Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees*.

**Speaker:** Are there any further reports of committees?

Are there any petitions to be presented?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS

**Mr. Dixon:** I rise to give notice of the following motion: THAT this House congratulates the Canada Space Agency for their participation in the upcoming Artemis Moon exploration program.

**Ms. White:** I rise to give notice of the following motion: THAT this House supports the Public Service Alliance of Canada workers who are fighting for a fair deal.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Minto mine

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Today I rise to provide an important update on the operations at Minto mine. Yesterday afternoon, an inspector's direction was issued to Minto Metals Corporation to take action once storage capacity in their tailings management facilities falls below 300,000 cubic metres in order to protect the environment in advance of the coming spring snowmelt.

Our government is committed to protecting human health and safety and the environment at all mine sites in the territory. This is why a proactive direction was issued to the company to take steps to protect the integrity of the environment at the mine site and downstream. We have been in ongoing communication with the Selkirk First Nation, and this direction reflects that.

Once the available storage falls below the threshold, the company must divert some of the untreated water from the

current water storage facility to another on-site pit, known as the “Minto north pit”, to ensure safe storage prior to treatment. At that time, they have also been directed to temporarily cease milling during the spring snowmelt to allow water storage levels to recover.

The direction was issued after closely monitoring the situation and will ensure that there is enough water storage at the mine to accommodate increased water levels expected from the spring melt. The direction also lays out increased reporting requirements to continue monitoring the situation and take additional action, as needed.

While the Minto north pit is not part of the current water licence, it is a geologically stable pit with no known surface or groundwater seepage concerns. Temporary storage of additional water in this pit will be safe for the environment and will prevent an uncontrolled release of contaminated water to the environment. Any water stored in the Minto north pit will be treated prior to discharge into the environment.

The Minto mine has been operating since 2007, first by open pit and then by underground mining starting in 2014. The project provides employment for an average of 180 staff on-site throughout the year through a mix of direct employees and subcontractors. In addition, the project provides significant revenues and royalties to the Selkirk First Nation to support its citizens; however, in the face of growing evidence that additional precipitation and spring meltwaters could put the environmental integrity of the mine site at risk, the decision was made to issue the direction.

Since we took over care and control of the Wolverine mine site, we have improved how we assess and respond to risk to make sure we do everything we can to avoid a similar situation here in the Yukon. This is why proactive action is being taken to ensure the immediate risks are mitigated. I recognize that this is a challenging time for the company, its employees and subcontractors, as well as the community. We support a responsible mining industry that provides benefits to Yukoners and does not adversely impact the environment.

In our view, the best long-term risk mitigation strategy for Minto mine is to take proactive actions to protect the short-term environmental risk caused by the spring snowmelt. Our intention is that these actions will protect the environment and improve the long-term viability of the mine project.

We are committed to continuing to work with the Selkirk First Nation and Minto Metals Corporation to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Kent:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to this ministerial statement today.

Changing weather patterns, which can mean additional precipitation in the winter, necessitates officials being adaptable, and that appears to be the case with this decision.

In the minister’s statement last night, it said — and I quote: “An inspector’s direction has been issued for Minto Metals Corporation to prepare to take action to protect the environment during the spring snow melt.”

It goes on to say — and I will quote again: “While transferring water to this pit is not part of the current water

license, the risk is low as it was previously mined, and offers the best choice to protect the integrity of water and tailings storage facilities in advance of the spring snow melt.”

It adds, of course, that the inspector made this decision and that it wasn’t made lightly.

We hope the minister can update us as the situation evolves throughout the spring runoff. One thing I do want to raise is the fact that, while media were offered a technical briefing on this situation by the minister’s officials, no such offer was extended to the opposition parties. This would have resulted in us having a better understanding of the situation so that we would be able to share information with any concerned Yukoners. My one request for the minister is, going forward, that the government offer technical briefings to opposition members on issues where they are also briefing the media.

Finally, I want to note that I appreciate the efforts made by department officials to work closely with the proponent to find solutions that work to ensure the long-term viability of this project while protecting the natural environment.

The Minto mine is a very important contributor to our community and our economy, and it’s in the best interest of all Yukoners that it continues to be successful.

**Ms. White:** So, it seems that not a Sitting goes by that I don’t find myself standing in this Chamber talking about the risk of environmental disaster due to mining. Yukoners know too well the environmental and financial costs of mines like Faro and Wolverine. When a mine site starts showing up in the headlines, they start to get worried. After a temporary shutdown, Minto mine was reopened in 2019 under new ownership. Since then, the mine has unfortunately been popping up in those headlines more than we would like.

Among the issues were security increases due to water licence non-compliance and the spilling of thousands of litres of diesel directly into the environment. When the Yukon NDP talks about ethical, responsible, and sustainable mining, this isn’t what we have in mind.

Yukoners have been promised a new way of mining that would be done sustainably and to the benefit of Yukoners. With modern mining and regulatory regimes, economic and environmental disasters were supposed to be a thing of the past. Yet, in a short time, we have seen cyanide spills, diesel spills, vehicles being abandoned in flooded tunnels, and multiple water licence infractions — and, to be clear, all of these incidents have happened at separate mines owned by separate companies.

So, what has the Yukon government learned from these experiences? It is a bit unorthodox, but I am going to quote myself as I stood in this House last year, responding to the government’s takeover of the Wolverine mine, after I was told for months that there was nothing to worry about. I said then — and I quote: “As the minister lays out this cautionary tale about Wolverine mine, Yukoners have questions about a current security deposit situation. Minto is currently violating its water licence due to the lack of storage in its tailings ponds.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, instead of giving us an update on last year’s water licence issue and the measures taken to prevent

future spring storage issues, like we are seeing again today, the minister has risen to tell Yukoners that another environmental disaster could be imminent, but don't worry, because — quote: "Our government supports responsible mining."

So, at the moment, Yukon government and Minto are hoping that storing water in a different pit will avoid an emergency discharge, but a water management plan based on hopes and finger-crossing doesn't seem like the most responsible way of running a mine. In 2009, a similar situation happened, and Minto unfortunately had to resort to an emergency discharge of contaminated water into Minto Creek and then into the Yukon River.

So, it begs the question: What have successive governments learned in the past 15 years when it comes to sustainable, ethical, and responsible mining? What have the Liberals learned in the last six years that they have been in government when it comes to dealing with infractions of water licences?

It seems that the answer is that they haven't learned much — otherwise, I wouldn't be standing here, yet again, asking for a better way to do things.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** As I previously mentioned, our Liberal government is committed to responsible development of the Yukon's mineral resources in a way that protects the environment, respects the rights and traditions of First Nations, and benefits all Yukoners.

So, we do support responsible mining, and we recognize that the industry is an important source of well-paying jobs and provides many benefits to our local economy and communities. We also know the importance of critical minerals in the green energy transition that is underway — a transition that our government is supporting in a number of different ways.

The direction that we have provided to Minto reflects our approach to work proactively with partners to address concerns before they become issues. So, what have we learned? In 2009, there was a significant release into the environment. We don't want to do that. We are saying that all of this water will be treated, and we are — once that threshold is met, the directive will ensure that the water is stored and ultimately treated. Mining is critical, and it is critical that mines get things right. That is why, throughout this process, we have been in regular conversations with the company and with Selkirk First Nation, and we don't want to repeat past mistakes.

It was the Member for Copperbelt South in 2015 who said that, when it comes to Wolverine Mine, they chose not to shut down the mine. Decisions like that would mean that future generations of Yukoners would have to bear the financial burden of mine cleanup, among a long list of other concerns related to environmental harms. So, we do support responsible mining that provides benefits to Yukoners and does not adversely affect the environment. More broadly, we have work underway to improve the environmental, socio-economic, and governance models of mining.

We are working with First Nations to balance successor mining legislation; at the same time, we are working with the industry and environmental groups. Our government has put in

the work to rebuild trust and establish strong, respectful relationships with Yukon First Nations and restore confidence in the industry. Successor legislation will create a modern, sustainable mining industry in the territory that reflects present-day treaties, respects First Nations' unique connection to the land, and supports the emerging needs of the Yukon. This work will increase certainty both for industry and environmental protection, ensuring that the mineral sector is well-positioned to provide benefits to Yukoners for generations to come.

We will continue to work with our partners to promote our mineral potential and attract interest from investors, explorers, and miners. I recognize the challenges today. What have we learned, Mr. Speaker? It is to be proactive on this issue and to make sure that we are preventing environmental degradation, and that is what this step is about today — it is protecting the environment.

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

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Diesel generators

**Mr. Kent:** Yesterday, I asked the minister how many additional diesel generators we would need to rent if the Atlin hydro project fails to come online. In response, the minister made a very definitive statement. He said — and I quote: "The simple answer ... is none."

I would like to give the minister an opportunity to provide accurate information in this regard. How many additional rentals will we need if Atlin hydro doesn't come online as planned?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** There is a projection through Yukon Energy Corporation's 10-year renewable energy strategy. Under that strategy, there is all sorts of growth that we are anticipating. That growth will need to be met with a supply of electricity. That is why we're working toward all the renewable energy initiatives. Today, we don't have Atlin online. If tomorrow we don't have Atlin online, that hasn't changed. What will change is that there is growth and demand that is coming onto the system. That's why we wish to invest in renewables.

The Yukon Party has told us that they are opposed to Atlin and that they think it's too expensive. They think that, instead, we should invest in diesels. I disagree.

If Atlin doesn't come online, we will need to do something to deal with that growth. That is why we have a whole suite of projects that we are working on for renewables. We will continue to develop that suite of projects.

**Mr. Kent:** An important part of that suite, unfortunately, is rented diesels going into the long-term future. In Yukon Energy Corporation's submission to the Yukon Utilities Board for the Atlin hydroelectricity purchase agreement, they made it very clear what the implications were for Atlin hydro not proceeding. In fact, they included a graph that specifically shows the growth of the dependable energy capacity shortfall in the event that Atlin hydro doesn't happen.

Here's what the Energy Corporation said — and I quote: "Without the Project, this capacity shortfall increases to

27.6 MW by 2027/28 ... and then to 41.5 MW by 2030/31 (requiring 24 rented diesel units)." The minister was clearly inaccurate yesterday, but what's even more concerning is that we're already going to be renting 22 diesels and it's only 2023.

Can the minister tell us how many additional diesels will be needed if Atlin does not go ahead as planned?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This will be my third time. I will answer it again as clearly as I can.

The issue is not whether or not you have Atlin; the issue is that the Yukon is growing. There is more and more demand coming. We need more supply. If we don't have other supply, will we use thermal? Yes, and that's what we have been doing, but if you build a diesel plant or an LNG plant, as the Yukon Party is interested in doing, you are committed to it, whereas if you rent diesels and then tomorrow we get one of the many projects that we're bringing online — the grid-scale battery, the solar projects across the territory, wind on Haeckel Hill, wind in Kluane — all of those projects then will reduce that need.

So, the issue is that we have growth, and under that growth, we have a need for more electricity. So, we will continue to work toward renewables. The Yukon Party has declared itself the party of oil and gas.

**Mr. Kent:** I don't know what the minister thinks he will be burning in these rented diesel units, but it is a product of oil and gas. There are going to be 24 additional units required by 2030-31, according to the Energy Corporation, if Atlin doesn't go ahead. So, when the Liberals made the political decision to cancel the construction of a permanent generation facility in 2019, they consigned the Yukon to renting diesel generators for the foreseeable future. They made the decision that renting forever was better than owning our own assets. The Premier even said that renting was a good investment.

So, my question for the minister is simple: How much money have the Liberals spent on renting diesel generators since that decision was made in 2019?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will have to look up the number, but here is what I can tell you. We had the president of the Yukon Energy Corporation in this House twice and he explained to the members opposite that the price for the rental diesels was less than the price of building a diesel plant for the levelized cost of energy. Thus, what I can say is that the cost of the rental diesels, according to Yukon Energy, is less than we would have paid if we had built the diesel plant.

I am happy to look at those numbers and I will ask the utility, as well, if they can derive the numbers that it would have cost Yukoners.

At the bottom of all of this is this fundamental difference in philosophy. We believe climate change is real. We are looking to transition off of fossil fuels. We need to have backup energy. That is thermal, for sure. We will continue to develop projects around renewable projects like hydroelectricity, wind, solar, storage, demand-side management — all of it — but the opposition, the Yukon Party, is more interested in fossil fuels. That is not what I think Yukoners are interested in. We are going to go with renewables.

### Question re: PSAC members strike impact response planning

**Ms. Clarke:** Yesterday, I asked the question about the impact of Yukon government employees joining the picket lines in the ongoing Public Service Alliance of Canada strike, and the minister ignored my question and did not provide any new information.

On Monday, the Yukon Employees' Union issued a news release that is actively encouraging YEU employees to join the federal picket line. Here is exactly what they said — quote: "You can join a federal picket line. We encourage all YEU members to support their family, friends and neighbours who are federal workers — to stand with them on a picket line."

So, I will ask again: Does the Yukon government have plans in place if Yukon government employees join the strike?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will disagree that giving the most up-to-date information is ignoring the question from the member opposite. Again, while some Yukon government services and employees are located in federal buildings in Whitehorse, the vast majority of Yukon government employees and services are not going to be affected by the current strike of the Government of Canada employees. We are working with representatives of the Government of Canada to limit the impacts on Yukon government employees and on the services as well.

This strike action by the Government of Canada employees is unrelated to the ongoing collective bargaining between Yukon government and our Yukon Employees' Union; however, we are looking forward to continuing collective bargaining discussions with the YEU in this capacity.

I will wait for a supplementary for the opportunity here for more time to get into specifics about YEU employees and picket lines. But again, discussions are ongoing with the federal government about how services to the public in the Yukon will be impacted. Critical services that the Government of Canada provides to the public will continue. I urge the members opposite to head to the federal website, which will give dropdown menus about the effects of each of the agencies and how they pertain in the Yukon.

**Ms. Clarke:** With due respect, the minister did not answer my question.

Yesterday, I also asked about options for Yukon government employees who refuse to cross picket lines. The minister referenced article 52 of the collective agreement but ignored my actual question.

Article 52 outlines the right of workers to refuse to cross a picket line. We are well aware of that right, but what I asked was about what provisions or other accommodations are in place to allow them a choice to continue to work without crossing the picket line.

I would like to ask again: Is there a work-from-home provision or other accommodation in place to allow Yukon government employees to continue to work if they so choose?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yukon government-designated escorts are available on the site for federal government picketing lines to help the Yukon government employees and their clients to cross the picket line and access their place of work or access government services. If a Yukon government

employee chooses not to cross a lawful picket line of another bargaining agent that is located at their regular office place, the provisions of the Yukon Employees' Union collective agreement speak to that issue and these will apply.

If we get more specific, non-essential bargaining unit employees who choose not to cross a lawful picket line of another bargaining agent that is located at their regular place of work will be considered to be absent without pay, according to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

I urge the members opposite to listen to the answers that I have provided today and yesterday, as well, about the provisions that are laid out in the sections of the collective bargaining agreement.

Also, any government employee with concerns about how the federal government picket line may impact them and their specific considerations or situation should absolutely speak with their supervisor.

**Ms. Clarke:** The current federal strike has raised questions from Yukoners about the status of Yukon government employees. They have been without a new collective agreement for 15 months. A three-member conciliation board will meet at the end of April and is scheduled to release a non-binding report that will be made public in mid-May. The parties must take 14 days to review the report, and if a positive strike vote is held by employees, they could be in a position to strike at the end of May.

So, Yukon government employees could be on strike within six weeks. Can the minister update us on what plans are in place to ensure that Yukoners continue to have access to Yukon government services in the event of a strike by territorial workers?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will leave the speculation to the members of the Yukon Party. It seems to be their theme this legislative session. We are currently engaged in collective bargaining with the Public Service Alliance of Canada to renew our existing collective agreement, which expired on December 31, 2021.

I believe that everybody in this conversation is working extremely hard to make sure that we can come together, within the conversations, to something that is amenable to all.

The parties will now work with the three-party conciliation board to address outstanding bargaining issues, and our government respects the bargaining process; therefore, we will not speculate on it — unlike the Yukon Party. We will be able to speak about the details of these confidential discussions and decisions as time goes on.

#### **Question re: Alaska Highway corridor upgrades**

**Ms. White:** When this government announced the widening of the Alaska Highway between Robert Service Way and the south access, a lot of lip service was given to how this would make the highway safer, but drivers brought up safety issues that go beyond the number of lanes. Truck drivers have brought up the danger of not having advance warning lights ahead of traffic lights at highway intersections. When an 18-wheeler is coming along the highway, a light turning yellow isn't enough notice for them to come to a full stop before the

light turns red. It takes a long time for those big rigs to stop, even when they are doing less than the posted speed limit.

When will this government improve highway safety and install warning lights on the stretch of highway between Robert Service Way and the Range Road intersections?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I certainly look forward to further discussions with the Member for Takhini-Kopper King and the input that she can provide with respect to her constituents' concerns. We will certainly take those considerations seriously.

Yukon government is making several safety improvements along the Alaska Highway through Whitehorse. These improvements include removing uncontrolled highway accesses and installing pedestrian-controlled traffic lights at crossings to increase public safety and to reduce the risk of collisions.

We have already completed several projects along the Alaska Highway, including installing a left-turn light at the Robert Service Way intersection; improvements at the south Klondike and north Klondike highway intersections; improvements to the Range Road intersection, including traffic lights with pedestrian-controlled lights and a paved multi-use trail; improvements at the Hillcrest intersection, including acceleration and deceleration lanes and traffic lights. Mr. Speaker, we have also made improvements between Hillcrest Drive and Burns Road, including the addition of street lights, two crossings with pedestrian-controlled traffic lights, and a paved multi-use connection to trails going into downtown — and the work goes on.

**Ms. White:** Just to correct myself, I meant Robert Service Way and Two Mile Hill — otherwise, it is the same intersection.

So, advance warning lights are not new in Whitehorse. We see them on Hamilton Boulevard, Mountainview Drive, and along the highway at the Wann Road and the Two Mile Hill intersections. These lights let drivers know to prepare to stop.

So, will this government increase highway safety by installing advance warning lights on the stretch of highway between Robert Service Way and the Range Road intersections?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** As I indicated in my previous response, we are certainly open to continuing conversations for any improvements or additional concerns or suggestions that the Member for Takhini-Kopper King will have, which will include, of course, public safety and additional things that will improve active transportation along the Alaska Highway corridor. I know that this is a matter in a file that the Yukon NDP is certainly interested in.

In my meetings with the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition and others, I certainly have advised, wearing my hats as the Minister of Highways and Public Works and the Minister of Environment, that I want to advance active transportation wherever possible. Of course, now, given the fact that the south access is closed for the foreseeable future, I want to encourage, where possible, Whitehorse residents and Yukoners in general to consider active transportation, if they are able.

In general, there is, of course, additional work. We are continuing to plan for upgrades between the Robert Service



intersection and Philmar RV. This work will include the consolidation of uncontrolled highway accesses and the construction of new frontage roads.

**Ms. White:** I have just made the same suggestion twice, which is to include advanced warning lights for the traffic lights.

Unfortunately, it is not the only issue along this stretch of highway. I mentioned earlier that vehicles speeding or passing is a constant worry along the highway. Many individuals driving the stretch that goes from a two-way highway to over four lanes are ignoring the speed limit. Equally confusing are the constant changing speed limits along the highway corridor and within the city limits.

Will this government consider applying one consistent speed limit along the Alaska Highway corridor within the city limits?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Yes, as I indicated, we are certainly open to considering the most appropriate speed that should be applied with respect to the so-called “Whitehorse Alaska Highway corridor”. It’s unlikely that there will be a uniform speed limit from the Carcross Cut-off to the Mayo Road Cut-off, but I am open to considering improvements that will maximize vehicle safety, pedestrian safety, and also the safety of cyclists or other modes of transportation.

I can also advise, Mr. Speaker, that there will be safety upgrades between Lodestar and the Whitehorse weigh scales station, which started in 2022 and will resume in May and are scheduled to be complete this summer. Upgrades will include: street light enhancements; two lanes on each side with acceleration and deceleration lanes; durable, high-visibility road paint markings; the construction of the north crosswalk at the Hillcrest intersection; the construction of multi-use trails; and improved access at the Whitehorse weigh station. There are a number of projects that continue with respect to the Alaska Highway corridor.

#### **Question re: Mining within municipal boundaries**

**Ms. McLeod:** Last year, from August 29 to October 18, the Yukon government led a consultation about mineral staking within communities and municipalities. Now, this is another example of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources trying his best to complete work that the Premier committed to but could not complete during his five years as minister. Many Yukoners recall that the Premier promised that this issue would be dealt with in 2017, but, of course, here we are in 2023 still asking about it.

So, can the minister tell us what the status of this initiative is? The consultation closed last fall, and there has been no further update. What is the status of the development of the mineral staking and development framework for municipalities and communities?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I actually recall this initiative leading into COVID, and I know it got stalled during the COVID process — during the pandemic, pardon me — and it did restart last year. The engagement with Yukoners, with First Nations, and with communities concluded in the fall of last year — November of 2022. We are currently working on developing

the final framework based on feedback from that consultation. We will continue to work with municipal governments, First Nations, and communities to resolve conflict issues and uphold the values of both mineral proponents and communities.

So, I will have to turn back to the department to try to get a more definitive timeline about what that looks like, but the last information I have is that the final framework is being developed now.

#### **Question re: Rural solid-waste transfer stations**

**Mr. Istchenko:** So, the confidence and supply agreement between the Liberals and the NDP includes a commitment to consult with communities affected by the Liberals’ decision to shut down transfer stations in Silver City, Johnsons Crossing, Braeburn, and Keno. This is an issue that has been very important to many Yukoners and it has been an issue that we have raised consistently over the last several years.

Can the minister tell us when this consultation will begin? When can Yukoners expect to see community meetings hosted in these communities?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** What we’re talking about this afternoon is actually the modernization of our waste management facilities across the territory, bringing them to a standard that meets the same standard that’s supplied across the country. We want to make sure that our waste transfer stations are supervised, that they are controlled, that people start to actually pay for the garbage that they are bringing to those sites — a portion of that cost. I believe it’s probably about 20 percent of the cost of getting rid of the garbage that we’re producing because, as a society, we’re creating way more garbage than is really sustainable. We want to put controls on these things so that when we are actually getting rid of the garbage that society creates, it’s done in a controlled manner so that the noxious chemicals and substances don’t get placed in our landfills. It has a very high insurance cost — a very high legacy cost to Yukoners and Yukon taxpayers. We want to make sure that this is done. So, that work is going on and we hope to complete that process very soon.

**Mr. Istchenko:** My question was about when the consultation will begin with those communities.

Over the past several years, we have seen plenty of examples of this minister’s version of consultation. The last time he conducted a so-called “consultation” on this issue in my riding, the minister showed up to the meeting organized by the community an hour late and made it clear to everyone in attendance that he had already made up his mind and it didn’t matter what they said. The result of that was a community petition calling on him to resign. We hope that the minister has learned from his adversarial approach to dealing with rural communities.

When the minister does these consultations that have been forced on him by the NDP, will he agree to actually listen to the communities and let them have a say this time?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have to challenge the assertions of the member opposite. The member is correct; it was a good

meeting, I thought, in his riding. I appreciated the passionate views of the member's constituents.

It was a good meeting and the member is correct that I was an hour late. If the member recalls, that day there was about a foot of snow on the north Alaska Highway and it was treacherous driving. I really didn't want to put the staff I was travelling with at risk for the sake of that meeting. I did apologize, I believe, when I arrived late at the meeting. I am sorry that he remembers it that way.

The fact is that what we are talking about is actually improving and modernizing our waste management facilities. We are working toward a modern vision for solid-waste management in the Yukon that addresses many long-standing challenges in this sector while ensuring sustainable access to waste-disposal services for all Yukoners. This was brought to us by the Association of Yukon Communities. They pleaded with my predecessor in the role to actually fix the waste management facilities in the territory. We stepped up and are doing that hard work because it had been ignored for so very long, Mr. Speaker.

We are actually doing the hard work that had been ignored and we are making the tough decisions to make sure that our land is managed properly.

#### **Question re: Diesel generators**

**Mr. Cathers:** Ever since the Premier made the bold statement that renting diesel generators was "a good investment", the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has been trying to make the case that renting an asset that we will need for the foreseeable future makes more sense than owning it, but that's not the view of the Yukon Utilities Board — the independent regulator whose job it is to look out for ratepayers.

The YUB had been willing to agree with rentals on the basis that they were on an urgent, short-term basis, but earlier this week, the minister admitted that he will need those rental diesels for the foreseeable future.

Does the minister think that his claim that renting is better than owning will hold up now that it has been made clear that we will be renting these units for decades?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The members opposite are referencing the Yukon Utilities Board. I will go back and re-read that document, but they talked about potentials. They said they wanted more information in the future. We had the president of the energy utility here telling us about the difference in prices. I will get the Hansard and bring it forward for them.

Yesterday in this House, we had a similar question about diesels and energy. The Yukon Party is interested in using fossil fuels around energy when it comes to new generation. We are not. Yes, we agree with them for backup, but our goal is renewables.

Then we had a question about slides on the north Klondike Highway which are caused by snowfall and changes to our climate.

Then in the final question of the day, we had a question about why we don't subsidize fossil fuels. You need to connect the dots, Mr. Speaker. In this big question that we are trying to

deal with, the issue of climate change and transforming the energy economy, we need to move away from fossil fuels. That is the goal. Rentals or not, the point is that we need to focus on renewables.

**Mr. Cathers:** Actually, we are interested in saving ratepayers money. I urge the minister to read the Yukon Utilities Board's report, because when they weighed in on the Liberal decision to rent instead of own, they raised serious concerns that renting diesels would be a higher cost being passed to ratepayers.

I should remind everyone that it is the YUB's job to look out for ratepayers. Here is what they said about the Liberal plan to rent portable diesels rather than own an asset: "... the Board is not satisfied with YEC's evaluation of renting versus purchasing of diesel units for the purpose of satisfying capacity shortfalls." They went on to call the arguments made in favour of renting "disingenuous".

In light of the YUB's serious concerns about the ongoing costs of renting diesels and the impact that will have on ratepayers, does the minister still actually believe that renting is better than owning?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** What I find interesting in the questions coming from the Member for Lake Laberge is that, at the time of taking on the job of the Minister responsible for the Energy Corporation, the Energy Corporation went out to the public and to Yukoners and asked if they wanted to have a diesel plant built. At that time, outstandingly, Yukoners said no. Yukoners said that they didn't want that. That is what Yukoners said to the Energy Corporation for the many, many people who responded.

Really, when you look at the riding of Lake Laberge, that is what we heard from Lake Laberge, and actually, that is what I heard from the Member for Lake Laberge. He communicated that he did not want to see the Yukon Party plan a diesel plant in the riding. When he gets up for the third question, maybe he can tell us: Has he changed his mind? Is he aligned with his colleagues? Has he flip-flopped again? Should we build it? Shouldn't we build it? Because at that point, he was aligned with us and said that we shouldn't build it, but maybe he has changed his mind. He can let us know.

**Mr. Cathers:** I have to give the Premier credit for his imagination when it comes to history.

The independent regulator slammed the government's claims that renting was cheaper than owning, calling it "disingenuous". Over the past few years, YUB tolerated rentals on the basis that they would be short term. But here is what they said last year: "Although the Board agreed with the rental of diesel-generation units on an urgent short-term basis for YEC's 2021 GRA, the evidence of YEC in this proceeding is that the diesel rentals are not a good solution and that the need for additional capacity is for more than the near term."

So, will the Government of Yukon now agree to ask the Yukon Utilities Board to carry out an independent public review of the Liberals' plans to rent diesel generators for the next several decades?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We have these two narratives going here. One is from the Yukon Party, that we need to buy

more diesel generators. The one from us is that we think that rental is better. If the energy utility shows us that those costs are different, then we will happily reconsider that. Things may change — that may be the case — so we will always look at it.

In fact, after that decision by the Yukon Utilities Board — where they did agree with the decision, by the way, but fair enough — I said to the utility that they need to make sure that they are giving that case across to me, to Yukoners, and to the Yukon Utilities Board about the difference between a diesel plant and rented diesels.

But that is not the big question. The big question that we have in front of us is: How will we move off of fossil fuels? That is the big question. What will we do? Where will we go as a territory? What is the direction that we want to go in? We believe that it is to a renewable energy future, which includes grid connection and it includes all of these things. It does not include building diesel plants or LNG plants; that is the wrong direction.

**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. 25: Act to amend the National Aboriginal Day Act (2023) — Third Reading**

**Clerk:** Third reading, Bill No. 25, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Mostyn.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I move that Bill No. 25, entitled *Act to amend the National Aboriginal Day Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Community Services that Bill No. 25, entitled *Act to amend the National Aboriginal Day Act (2023)*, be now read a third time and do pass.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I will be very brief this afternoon. I would like to begin by thanking each of the honourable members who have risen to speak to Bill No. 25, *Act to amend the National Aboriginal Day Act (2023)*. Since 2017 when we observed National Aboriginal Day for the first time as a statutory day in the Yukon, we have celebrated the history, culture, traditions, and continuing contributions of Indigenous people here in the Yukon and across Canada. This year and beyond, we look forward to celebrating this day with its modern name, National Indigenous Peoples Day.

I will end my comments there.

**Mr. Dixon:** As we have indicated in second reading and during Committee, we will support this bill and, of course, appreciate that it is designed to modernize the language of this statutory holiday. We will be voting in favour of this bill at third reading.

**Ms. Blake:** National Indigenous Peoples Day is so important for all people. Here in the Yukon, the day is

celebrated across the territory. We are thankful to previous Yukon NDP MLA Kevin Barr for ensuring that this day was made a statutory holiday in the territory in 2017. The Yukon is one of very few jurisdictions across Canada that has established this day as a statutory holiday. National Indigenous Peoples Day is a day to celebrate Yukon First Nation people, our achievements, our history, and our resilience. We celebrate with each other and with everyone in the Yukon. It is also an opportunity for non-Indigenous Yukoners to be educated on our shared history and to witness Indigenous people being visible and proud of who we are.

Changing the name from National Aboriginal Day to National Indigenous Peoples Day reflects the language and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* and changes made on a federal level. This change is also a better reflection of many other pieces of legislation and decisions which use the term “Indigenous” throughout.

The Yukon NDP will be voting in support of this bill.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the members opposite for their support this afternoon. I would like to see the vote.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**MLA Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yeas, nil nays.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

*Motion for third reading of Bill No. 25 agreed to*

**Speaker:** I declare that Bill No. 25 has passed this House.

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Ms. Blake):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

**Deputy Chair (MLA Tredger):** I will now call Committee of the Whole to order.

### **Bill No. 23: *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)***

**Deputy Chair:** The matter before the Committee is general debate on Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*.

Is there any general debate?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am just asking the officials to come in. Thank you, Deputy Chair. I welcome the Deputy Minister of Justice Mark Radke and legislative counsel Rebecca Veinott to the Legislative Assembly today. Thank you for coming and thank you for the opportunity to address the Legislative Assembly. This is the *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*.

I am very pleased to put forward this bill. It is administrative in nature. Bill No. 23, entitled the *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, is here for general debate in Committee of the Whole.

In light of the passing of Her Majesty, the late Queen Elizabeth II, on September 2, 2022, His Majesty King Charles III has become Canada's new sovereign and head of state. As a result of this transition, Yukon's legislation is required to be updated to reflect the identity of the current sovereign of Canada. Apart from the administrative updates, the bill, as I spoke about at second reading, also introduces a new provision to the *Regulations Act* which would allow for future administrative updates on the references to the sovereign in Yukon's legislation to be made through regulation.

This is an effort to optimize administrative efficiency and to reduce costs associated with maintaining accurate references in our laws. That said, of course, if King Charles remains in his current position, followed by his son and his son after him, this will be a provision that may never be used in our lifetimes but could be available in future.

While the provision would provide Cabinet with the authority to amend legislation without the Legislative Assembly's approval, it is extremely narrow in scope, and appropriately so, and is only applicable to future updates with respect to references to the sovereign in Yukon's legislation. This is a commonly used legislative tool. It exists in other pieces of legislation in the country as well as other pieces of legislation similarly in Yukon legislation. As I said, it is extremely narrow in scope and amendments are very narrow in application. It only contemplates that future changes could be made in this way to change references to the gender of the sovereign — from "king" to "queen" or "queen" to "king" — should that ever be necessary in future. This will allow Yukon laws to accurately reflect the facts — for instance, whether or not there is a king or a queen as the named sovereign of the country.

In my earlier remarks, I reviewed that there were administrative updates included in sections in the bill, and we are proposing administrative updates to Yukon laws to reflect the identity, as I have said, of the current sovereign. These changes do not make any policy changes on how government operates.

We are bringing forward these administrative updates to Yukon's legislation, and doing so will avoid having outdated references to a deceased sovereign, which we currently have. I am very pleased to present this bill which helps ensure that our laws are accurate and up to date and will allow us to make these updates more efficiently in the future.

As I have noted many times, a goal — certainly of mine personally in this role and I know of the Department of Justice and the legislative counsel office, which I am very pleased to be able to take the opportunity to thank for their hard work. There are just absolutely no words to express the legislative counsel office's dedication to Yukoners, particularly during the last three years with COVID and the unbelievable amount of work and pressure that was put on those individuals to produce all of the appropriate legal authorities to provide services to Yukoners and to protect Yukoners during that period of time.

I am very pleased to have one member of that team here and to be able to thank them for their dedication to Yukoners and for their dedication to this Legislative Assembly in providing all of the necessary legal authorities and the drafting that comes with that. I know that sometimes pieces of legislation perhaps look simple, and maybe this is one example. I know that they are deceptively simple in that they require an unbelievable amount of work to determine how every bill interacts with the current legislation and with the current regulations, of which there are thousands in the territory, to make sure that those things are all cohesive and provide Yukoners with certainty and with the ability to know what the laws are and how they work here in the territory. It is a

thankless job and never has the opportunity to be publicly recognized. I am happy to do that today. Thank you so much to the team, and thank you for this, which I am going to say is one of those deceptively simple pieces of legislation or bills brought before this House.

I look forward to any questions.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly to this. I think that the intent of this bill is fairly uncontroversial, and we are certainly looking forward to getting to other matters in Committee.

I did want to note, though, that as my colleague expressed in second reading, we do have reservations about the idea of including a provision in this bill that would allow Cabinet to unilaterally change laws going forward. Notwithstanding the minister's comments about the narrowness of that allowance, those concerns still remain. So, I will have a few questions for the minister about that when we get to that section, but otherwise, I believe that this is simply housekeeping, and we look forward to moving on after those few questions at that section of the act.

**Deputy Chair:** Is there any further general debate on Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*?

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

**Mr. Dixon:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 1 through 22 of Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, read and agreed to.

### **Unanimous consent re deeming clauses 1 through 22 of Bill No. 23 read and agreed to**

**Deputy Chair:** The Member for Copperbelt North has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem clauses 1 through 22 of Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, read and agreed to.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Deputy Chair:** Unanimous consent has been granted.  
*Clauses 1 to 22 deemed read and agreed to  
On Clause 23*

**Deputy Chair:** Is there any debate on clause 23? Shall clause 23 carry?

**Some Hon. Members:** Count.

### **Count**

**Deputy Chair:** A count has been called.

*Bells*

**Deputy Chair:** All those in favour, please rise.  
*Members rise*

**Deputy Chair:** All those opposed, please rise.  
*Members rise*

**Clerk:** Deputy Chair, the results are nine yea, eight nay.

*Clause 23 agreed to*

*On Clause 24*

*Clause 24 agreed to*

*On Clause 25*

*Clause 25 agreed to*

*On Clause 26*

*Clause 26 agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, without amendment.

**Deputy Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that the Chair report Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Deputy Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 11, Women and Gender Equity Directorate, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

**Chair (Ms. Blake):** Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Before we begin, I just want to let members know that there has been a change in the rotation.

### **Bill No. 208: First Appropriation Act 2023-24 — continued**

**Chair:** The matter now before the Committee is general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any general debate?

### **Yukon Development Corporation**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will just make a few opening remarks. First of all, I would like to welcome to the Assembly Dennis Berry, the president of the Yukon Development Corporation, who is here to assist in providing answers today for the questions during Committee of the Whole.

There are a few things within this year's budget that I will just highlight. We have \$5 million for a couple of our approved projects under the Arctic energy fund. These are the Haeckel Hill wind project here in Whitehorse, owned by Kwanlin Dün First Nation Development Corporation, Chu Nfikwän, a limited partnership, and the Kluane n-ts'i, or wind project, which is owned by the Kluane First Nation, and it will serve the communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay. We are

working with many other community projects to bring more renewables online — both under the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative and the Arctic energy fund.

Also, there is also \$3 million in this year's budget for the grid-scale battery project. I am sure we will talk about that. That project has investment from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än' Council. We still hope to see completion of the build of that project this calendar year, although the Yukon Energy Corporation has let me know that they are sensing that they will need more time to integrate the batteries into the existing system. There are a lot of controls. They have experience in Old Crow in seeing how the battery system works there. They need to use that experience, they think, to make sure to integrate it well here.

I know that we will have some healthy debate today; I am looking forward to it. I will leave it there for opening comments. I am happy to discuss this as we go forward.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak to this. I think that we will indeed have a fair number of questions. So, with the minister's indulgence, I am just going to jump right into questions. I will start with a few constituency-based ones, but before I do that, I will also welcome Mr. Berry to the Legislature as well. I appreciate his presence here and his ability to support the minister.

I will start with the constituency question. In March, my colleague the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin wrote to the minister about an issue facing some of his constituents at 493 Robert Campbell Highway. In response, the minister provided a letter to my colleague directing those folks to the rural electrification program. I think that while everyone agrees that the rural electrification program is a good program, there have been subsequent questions from these folks. They are worried that the program may not work for them.

In the minister's letter, he said that there is a \$50,000 maximum for individual projects in that program but that groups should contact Property Assessment Taxation in Community Services. First of all, I just wanted to clarify whether or not there is a maximum amount for group projects that applies, and if so, what is it?

Next, these folks have previously been told that although they are relatively close to the powerline, the nearest drop-down station is 14 kilometres away, so the project would be very expensive. Can the minister explain if this group of 10 lots will be eligible for the rural electrification program? Ultimately, these residents think that it would be beneficial for them to access the grid both for themselves and for the Yukon's general goals of electrification. For instance, it would give them the access to other government projects like heat pumps, et cetera.

So, can the minister please look into this issue further and provide some further information about whether the rural electrification program will work for this group of residents or whether a different program or support would be better suited to help them access grid power?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The rural electrification program, I believe, sits under Energy, Mines and Resources and it is not with the Yukon Development Corporation. So, the funding —

I think it is jointly under Community Services and Energy, Mines and Resources. The program, in how it is delivered to residents, uses the same, I think, as the rural well program and the upcoming Better Buildings program. That is why Community Services is involved, because I think the way in which the money is recovered is through that system, probably using the *Municipal Act*. Then the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources — and my apologies to the member opposite. I know I am that minister as well, but I just checked for a note. I don't have it with me and I didn't ask the Energy, Mines and Resources folks to be on standby for me today in answering questions.

So, if I could just take the question away and appreciate the specifics — let me just echo what I am hearing: that there is a group of lots together — maybe 10 or so — and that the nearest point where they could tap in — even though the transmission line might be going by, the point at which they have a transformer that would allow it to step down enough for them to get the electricity for homeowners would be quite a distance away — 14 kilometres. What we are asking about is whether there is a way to do a group type of application through the process that we have existing. If I have that all right — great, and I will endeavour to get information for the members opposite.

**Mr. Dixon:** I think the minister generally has it. There is the correspondence from March where the minister addressed this issue, so we are looking for some additional information based on that letter.

The one thing that I would note is that the difference between the rural well program or the Better Buildings program and the rural electrification program is the ability for group projects to occur. Obviously, there is not a group project for a well or the energy-efficiency upgrades in the Better Buildings program, but with an electrification program, there is a common benefit to a powerline being put into an area. So, there's a bit of a difference there between this one and the programs that the minister mentioned.

Perhaps I could just ask the minister to review my comments from before, consider them, work with his staff in EMR and colleagues in Community Services, and perhaps provide further information about the concerns that this group of people has expressed either by letter or legislative return or some other form going forward.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Will do. It's interesting to me because I have seen projects where some people have thought about using shared infrastructure on the Better Buildings side just because of how they have metered themselves. It is interesting to me that whenever you think you have it all sorted out, Yukoners will find a new interesting twist on it all, but that doesn't take away from the questions that are being posed. I will work to try to get some information for the members opposite and their constituents.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that from the minister. I will move on to the status of the CEO of the Yukon Energy Corporation. Obviously, since Mr. Hall appeared in the Legislature in the fall, there has been a change in that position. Can the minister tell us what has happened with the departure

of Mr. Hall, what steps are being taken to replace him and where we are at in that process?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Currently, there is an acting CEO in the role. That happened right away. The board made that decision right away when Mr. Hall stepped down. My understanding is that the board met last week to initiate the process for a recruitment hiring process for the CEO. I am informed that likely it is going to go out to be advertised shortly. I do know that they have been pulling together their hiring committee from the board. It's underway right now.

**Mr. Dixon:** I understand that the hiring of that will be led by the board. When there are costs associated with severance and other types of things that come up in these situations, are those costs in any way dealt with by the Development Corporation, or is it strictly held within the Energy Corporation? Do those costs come back to government in any way or is that strictly dealt with by the board?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Yukon Energy has its own human resources group. It is a part of the business that they do and it would be just as in a normal part of any organization, and I believe this to be no different.

**Mr. Dixon:** We can get into the good stuff now. In general, I have some questions about the energy strategy of the territorial government and the Energy Corporation right now.

First of all, I will ask a question that was asked earlier in the Legislature and perhaps we can get into a little more detail. Can the minister confirm how many new rental diesel generators will be procured by Yukon Energy in 2023 and what the total number of rented diesel generators online will be this year?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will reconfirm that we are going from 17 to 22 diesels in the next year. That will be an additional five diesels.

I will say that the two main reasons for them are — there has been a delay in Yukon Energy's replacement of its Faro diesel replacement project. I think that it is two diesels, but I will confirm that. Those are part of our permanent fleet of diesels. They are aged out and ready to be replaced. However, there have been supply chain issues in securing those new diesels and so there will be interim rental diesels that are used in between, until they can be procured.

The other reason is that there is a change — I am going to use some of the language that is used within the corporation, or the utility, and beg everyone's indulgence. It is called "N-1". I am sure that members opposite know exactly what I am talking about, but just for Yukoners' sakes, what I am talking about is that whenever you have the grid that we have here in the Yukon, you have to prepare for the single most critical piece of infrastructure going offline. In our case, that would be either the Aishihik dam or the transmission line between Whitehorse and Aishihik. When that line goes down, you have to have enough backup to be able to resupply Yukoners. The whole purpose is that we need to make sure that we have reliable, affordable, dependable energy.

The way in which the N-1, or that critical piece of infrastructure, is calculated to ascertain what the amount of backup is needed — part of what goes into it is: What was the

coldest temperature at which you had a blackout in the past period of time?

It's a long period of time, and when we had the blackout this past December in Whitehorse, there were cold temperatures at that time — close to minus 30, but in the low minus 20s. That new temperature goes into the formula, and it changes the number of diesels that you need for backup.

Okay, so, the number in Faro — the diesels from our permanent fleet — is five megawatts, and it is two units. So that is where two of the rental diesels will go until Yukon Energy is able to procure the permanent replacements, and the others have to do with the change to backup and the increased demand under the formula around the Yukon. I will stop there.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, I will get into some of the details on the diesel replacements — the permanent diesel replacements — soon, but my questions were specifically about the rental diesel fleet right now.

The minister, I believe, has said that two of the new five that will be joining the Yukon will be located in Faro. Can he tell us the location of the remaining three? If I heard correctly, he did say that those two would be in Faro. So, what is the location of the five new incoming rental diesels?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This is where it gets complicated, but the units that are there to replace the Faro units won't be located in Faro; they just have to be located on the grid. So, currently, with the 17 diesel generators that we rent, we have nine units plus one spare in Whitehorse; we have six units plus one spare in Faro; we will have nine units plus one spare in Whitehorse — that is no change. We will have seven units and no spares in Faro, so the one that is a spare becomes dedicated. Then, the place where we're looking to place the additional rental diesels is in Mayo, so we are working through a YESAB application. So, in Mayo, we will have four units plus one spare.

There is a whole process that we're going through, so I want to be careful to say that is what we are working toward; that process is not complete. But the reason that Mayo was chosen is because it would be near the Mayo A hydro plant. Because of its proximity to existing infrastructure, we have an existing substation with transformer capacity nearby, so it's accessible. We have Yukon Energy Corporation staff nearby who live and work in Mayo. And where that station is, it's far away from residents, because you are always worried about sound and air quality. That is what the game plan is, but we are working through the process in order to get permits for that siting.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that new information from the minister that these five new diesel generators will be placed in Mayo.

Can the minister tell us if there has been any engagement yet with either the community vis-à-vis the municipality or the First Nation? The minister referenced a YESAA process. Can he tell us if placing the five new rental diesels in Mayo will be something that will require YESAB?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, yes, there is a YESAA process, and the note I have is that the utility is planning to submit a proposal to YESAB this month. I am not sure whether

it has happened or is happening. I will work to find that out, but, of course, as soon as it does happen, there is always engagement with the community nearby. There has been ongoing conversation with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. I will have to find out about the municipality. I am not even sure if this is within the municipality. I don't think it is, but I will check on that.

What we have been doing is going through the Mayo re-licensing project, so there has been ongoing engagement that Yukon Energy has been having with Mayo about that. That includes the municipality, that includes the First Nation, and that includes the community itself. I know that Yukon Energy is in a great deal of conversation with the community of Mayo.

I have just gotten a note that there is the intention to engage with the municipality. It's on their work plan around these units going in, but that would indicate to me that it hasn't happened as of this time. Again, the location of the plant is near Yukon Energy's Mayo A hydro plant.

**Mr. Dixon:** Are the five new rental diesels under the same contract with Finning or was there a new contract to seek additional units?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** That contract that the member is asking about is an annual contract. It is renewed each year, so in this renewed contract — and there is a dialogue underway with the proponent right now about that contract. Of course, it will include the additional units. I wouldn't say it's the same contract each time, but it always begins from the previous contract. They use the previous contract to renew, but they are always in negotiation with that contract.

**Mr. Dixon:** The reason I ask is that my question ultimately is: Was there a competitive process to procure these additional diesels? And the answer, it sounds like, is no, but I will ask the minister to clarify.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will have to check in with the utility to find out how the initial contract was established and what terms there were for numbers of renewals under their procurement processes. I don't know that. I do know that, from talking with the utility, this is not a run-of-the-mill type of diesel generator. The reason is that we want generators that were not always running. That is part of the purpose of them, that they are often not running. Usually, when you think of most applications for diesel generators, it is about those units running pretty often or reasonably often. So, it is a specific application of generators, and in particular, as I have said previously, most of our electricity on the system is renewable. Over the past year, it was 93-percent renewable, seven-percent thermal. I don't have a breakdown on LNG versus diesel, but you can also know that diesel in our communities is different because — anyone who lives in one of our off-grid communities knows how often those gensets run.

So, those run often. It is on the grid where they don't run as often and especially when it is just as a backup system. I will have to endeavour to get more information about how the original contract was let. It was before my time in the role, but I will check into that.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's commitment to get back to us with more information about that.

Can the minister tell us what the total amount of money that is being spent on rentals in 2023 will be?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Okay, with respect to costs, I have the numbers up until 2020-21, and I have partial numbers for 2021-22. I don't have the full numbers, and in terms of projection, I will talk about that for a moment. The total number that I have for 2020-21 is \$8.6 million. The rental and set-up cost for the 17 units was \$6.5 million, and the fuel cost was \$2.1 million. For the 2021-22 rental and set-up cost, that came to about \$3.7 million.

One of the challenges in a go-forward basis is that we are right now negotiating the renewed contract with the company, so I'm unable to say where that's going to land. The other challenge is always that you have two other factors that you can make estimations on, but you don't know. The first one is: What is the cost of fuel? — because it has been pretty volatile in recent years. The second one is: How much backup will we need for top up? So, our goal always is to prioritize our renewables first and use the diesels and LNG plant only as needed, so it's difficult to project those things. Those are the costs that I have in front of me right now.

**Mr. Dixon:** While the minister has that note in his hand, I will just ask a few more questions about it. The minister has said that, in 2021, the cost was \$8.6 million, which was arrived at with \$6.5 million for rental and set-up and \$2.1 million for fuel. For 2022, he said \$3.7 million. I didn't quite understand why that would be such a dramatic reduction for 2022 given the fact that we were renting more diesels in 2022 than 2021.

Could I ask the minister to clarify? Is the 2022 number of \$3.7 million indeed the total amount spent on rentals in 2022?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The first thing that I can help provide some insight on is that, in both years — let's just call it 2021 to try to make it easier — there were 17 rental units. In 2022, there were 17 rental units, so that didn't change. Then, second of all, the biggest difference was that there was a much lower set-up cost.

The note that I have is not terribly detailed; it just says "lower transportation and commissioning costs". I am not sure what goes into that, so maybe units were the same units that were there before so they didn't have to be transported up. I don't know, but I am giving the costs as they have been presented to me. So, they were lower in 2022.

Now, what I don't know yet is what the fuel costs were, and that I have to get. So, I don't know what the total is from one year compared to the next. I just know that, in terms of rental and set-up, it was lower in 2022.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's willingness to look into that, because I think a \$5-million difference for set-up costs would be a pretty substantial amount. So, I think it may merit further questions that the minister may ask, because the difference is \$8.6 million to \$3.7 million, and if he is saying that is all in set-up costs, that is \$4.9 million — that is a substantial amount.

So, while he is looking into that, can I ask if he can provide previous years' numbers as well for the rental costs? Ultimately, we would like to go back right to the beginning. We know the costs from — I believe — when Minto started in



2016. I have seen them published in the media in 2017, but I would like to ask if the minister could give us the full gamut of rental costs since Yukon began renting rental diesels.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am just going to go back to try to correct something — and I will apologize if it was me who said it wrong. In 2021, the rental and set-up costs came to a total of \$4.5 million. The fuel costs were an additional \$2.1 million, and that made a total of \$8.6 million — okay — but the rental and set-up costs: \$4.5 million. Again, my apologies if I said it incorrectly. Oh, there may be some other costs they don't have, but — sorry, sorry, sorry — \$6.5 million — apologies. Is that what I said earlier? Apologies — just trying to do the math as I am standing on my feet.

The rental costs were \$6.5 million in 2021; in 2022, it was \$3.7 million. So, that is a difference, and I can look in to see what that was. Look, at all times, Yukon Energy — and this is the direction that I give them: Do your best to keep these costs down. Why wouldn't we say that to everybody? I will continue to say that, and I am sure they are doing their best to keep these costs down while making sure that we have reliable energy for Yukoners.

The member asked whether I would be willing to share the history of the rentals and what those costs have been over time. Yes, I would be willing to share that. I will seek to get as up-to-date information as I can, and then I can put it in a legislative return. I'm not sure I'm going to be able to get it this Sitting. I have a busy utility; they are doing a lot, and I just want to give them some time to pull those numbers together. So, I will make that commitment to the members of the Assembly, and I will try to table it for sometime next Sitting so there is information for everybody.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's explanation there. I think where I missed what he was saying, perhaps, was that the \$3.7 million in 2022 was just the rental and set-up, not the total cost, because the 2021 total cost was \$8.6 million, which adds up, based on what he said, with \$6.5 million plus \$2.1 million. I think we are on the same page there.

I want to turn, looking back, to the previous years' information that we are seeking. Ultimately, it would be great to have what the minister just gave us for 2021 for each of the previous years going back to when we started renting these things. I believe that the first year that I remember seeing information, \$2.2 million was the total amount. I believe that was 2017, but I stand to be corrected.

Ultimately, what we would like to see is just the year-over-year total rental costs, and then we can get a picture of where we are at today and how those numbers have changed over time. I think it's important information for us and the utility to be aware of.

I want to move now to the dependable capacity gap. The minister has referenced it several times, and I think it's worth getting specifically to this now. That's what these rental diesels are achieving for us: They are filling the dependable capacity gap that exists right now.

In Yukon Energy's documents over the past several years, they have relied on a chart that shows their plans for this. It's on a different page in different documents, but it is ultimately

the same chart. The one I am referring to today is from the submission by YEC to the YUB for the THELP EPA, but this very same graph appears in the BESS submission, and it appears on Yukon Energy Corporation's website. It's called the "Forecast Non-Industrial Peak and Dependable Capacity Under N-1 Capacity Planning Criteria: 2021/22-2030/31". Essentially, what this graph shows is what Yukon Energy forecasts its dependable capacity gap will be over those years and their solutions for filling that gap.

Now, the solutions that they have listed as committed or planned supply options to fill that gap include diesel replacements, and we will get to that in a moment. Those are the units in Faro, Dawson, and Whitehorse that will be replaced — permanent diesels. There is the Whitehorse No. 2 uprate, which is an uprate on the hydro dam here. There is the BESS, the battery project, Atlin hydro, DSM, and Moon Lake. Those are the projects that YEC forecasts to have coming online to fill the dependable capacity gap. Everything else that is not covered by those is covered by rental diesels.

So, I will start with the diesel — I will start with the topline question: What is the dependable energy capacity gap or shortfall currently?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We are trying to reach out to Yukon Energy, because they are the folks who know the answer about what the gap is at any point in time. Each time I show up at some sort of session with Yukon Energy, at a conference or something, they always show this graph about what we have for actual supply right now and what we have for demand and where we forecast the demand to go. It does move around significantly; although, as I have already stated today, I know that, over the past year, 93 percent of the electricity produced in the territory was produced with renewables and seven percent was produced with thermal, which is both LNG and diesel, and that includes our off-grid communities. It includes the whole of the system for the Yukon.

I will look in terms of their planning and have to see what that physical gap is, but to try to understand it in simple terms, it is close to that number that I am giving you right now. We don't want to burn diesel or LNG, so the burning of it has to do with what we don't have for supply. We would always use our hydro first whenever possible and our renewables. By the way, there are other programs that are having an impact and exist on these charts. For example, demand-side management is one of those; the independent power producer policy is there as well. They are small but important, because when you are working on those margins, you are doing everything that you can to try to get off, or not use, diesel or LNG.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate that the minister will have to defer to YEC for some of those questions, so I will try to keep them on more high-level questions. Since the minister mentioned it, he mentioned DSM as one of the suppliers of the capacity shortfall, so can he tell us how much the Yukon Energy Corporation got from DSM this year?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, with respect to the gap — before I share the number, we have to understand that the way that Yukon Energy is going to give this is on N-1. So, at N-1, we have 141 megawatts of dependable capacity, and you

would need 36 megawatts to meet N-1. What that means is that you take away your biggest generation — so Aishihik. So, that is the current number. With respect to demand-side management, the program has the intention to launch this fall. So, they have been developing the project at Yukon Energy. They have been doing some pilots. They have a bunch of pilot units out there that they are trying out right now, but that is just to test-run the system. That isn't made to make any measurable difference. The goal is for seven megawatts by 2030, but I talked with the person — Mr. Labrecque, I believe — from Yukon Energy who is developing the program and he believes that this number is low — that they can get higher.

So, the action under *Our Clean Future* and what Yukon Energy is working toward is seven megawatts by 2030 on demand-side management, but the specialist believes that there is more potential. We will look at that with him as we seek to update *Our Clean Future*.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, I appreciate the minister's answer, but I know what the goal is; the goal is in YEC's documents. The goal for 2023-24 was 6.6 megawatts for DSM, and the minister is correct that, by 2030, it is meant to be seven. But what we want to know — and what the concern I have is — is that we are not meeting that goal yet because, according to YEC's projections as of January 2022, they were intending to get 6.6 megawatts by this year. So, what I would like to know is what they are achieving today. It sounds like they are not achieving that because the program hasn't been fully launched yet.

So, what I would like to know is: How much off of the projection or the goal are they so far? It is possible that the minister may not be able to answer that or it may be a question for YEC, but the reason why I am asking this is that, with any of these committed and planned supply options, what we unfortunately see is a bit of trend where what YEC has projected to be getting from these options has not been happening, and I will get to some of the other ones in a second.

My point is just that I would like to know where we are at today. Are we meeting the goals that we have set for ourselves previously? Because what I see for 2023-24 for DSM is 6.6 megawatts, and I don't think that is where we are at, so I would like to know where we are at for this year or even what we were at for last year. If we could look back to 2022-23, what did we get from DSM by way of capacity last year? According to YEC's forecast, they were meant to get 4.4 megawatts, but I would like to know what we got last year and what we got this year.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am unaware of the target that the member opposite is talking about for this year. In my understanding of DSM, it is in development right now. If there is some difference — if the member could point me to it, that's great. I do know that the note I have and the conversation that I have had with Yukon Energy is that they are developing a permanent demand-side management program that they plan to launch this coming fall. I know that they have been doing some piloting studies, but it does not sound the same to me — the way that he is referring to it where it should be 6.7 — I think

he is talking about megawatts — this year, given that the total action is seeking to get seven megawatts by 2030.

The conversation that I have had with Yukon Energy has been positive and — “encouraging” is how I would describe it.

If there is some other commitment that I am unaware of and that he could draw my attention to, I would appreciate that and then I could dig in to try to see what has changed from when that commitment was made until the interim point, but that is the information that I have in front of me.

**Mr. Dixon:** The commitment was made with the 10-year renewable strategy. That is what I'm referencing. This is the chart from the 10-year renewable energy strategy that was tabled in 2019. It is submitted in every submission that YEC does to the Yukon Utilities Board. They include this chart. The one that I happen to be accessing is from the THELP EPA. It's on page 20 of that submission by YEC to the YUB. It's available on the Utilities Board website, but one can also find it on the Yukon Energy Corporation website under the 10-year renewable electricity plan where, under “The Capacity Gap” button, you see a chart. The chart lays out YEC's projections for what they forecast to be receiving by way of capacity. In 2023-24, the Energy Corporation was hoping to be achieving significant gains from DSM this year. Obviously, as I said, that hasn't happened, but I will move on because I don't want to belabour that particular point.

A more significant one, at least in terms of capacity, is the diesel replacements. The minister already touched on this earlier, so I want to return to it. YEC had been planning on replacing 12.5 megawatts of dependable backup diesels — permanents — and the minister has just told us that there is a delay on those. Can he tell us what the nature of the delay is? How much of the 12.5 megawatts that are intended to be replaced this year are now no longer available? What else can he tell us about the delay in the procurement of these new permanent diesels?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Basically, the way it has been described to me regarding the diesels is that it's just supply chain — I shouldn't say it so cavalierly. The challenge is securing the units.

There are units that we are planning to replace in Faro, Whitehorse, and Dawson City. The Faro ones are the first ones that are aging out. The other ones are coming later. They are working to secure replacement units for all, but the ones that are not going to make it in time are the Faro units. Those are the ones that we are replacing right now.

What they are anticipating right now for the Faro units is roughly a one-year delay. They were hoping to get them in 2023, this year; they are not able to secure them. Currently, the supply chain estimation is that they will get them in 2024.

Just before I sit down again — on demand-side management. The whole time that the member has been asking questions about the capacity gap, et cetera, I have had the 10-year renewable plan up in front of me. What I am missing is the specific target that we were going to have X amount by this year. Now, I understand that when the plan came out in January 2020, I think, the intention was to have a lot of programs running, but we did hit quite a few hiccups during

COVID — that's for sure. So, I can check. Some of our targets have been delayed, of course, but others have moved faster than we anticipated. For example, the independent power producer program has been doing better than we forecasted in terms of the buildout. Some programs, like demand-side management — maybe there was an earlier intention to get it moving more quickly. I am not seeing the specifics that the member opposite is referring to, but again, I am not trying to hide from it. I just really want to know what he is seeing so that I can try to work on it. I am trying to let everyone know that the current plan is to be released this fall.

**Mr. Dixon:** We will break here at some point, so I will print the documents from YEC and give them to the minister so that he can see them and so we are singing from the same song sheet, as they say. This is a consistent submission that YEC has been doing for several years now. It started with the 10-year renewable electricity plan. Every year when they have to go to the YUB and provide their forecasts for upcoming dependable capacity, they consistently provide it to the YUB because they are required to. I will get to that.

What I am interested in, though, is just a little bit more information about the replacement of the permanent diesels, because the notion that we have a year delay in some of them is news. I would like to ask: What is the capacity of the existing aged diesels that are in Faro that are set to be replaced? What is the overall capacity of the units that are there now that we are going to replace?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It is five megawatts for the Faro diesels. I think I mentioned it earlier, but my apologies if I did not. Those two units that we are using rental diesels to bridge until the other units come in are part of the five additional that I have been talking about. They will bridge for roughly a year. The current plan is that all replacement diesels — so the total for all of the retiring diesel units is 12.5 megawatts — roughly five megawatts in Faro, five in Whitehorse, and 2.5 in Dawson.

Those are the units that are being replaced. They are part of the permanent fleet. It's just that two of them can't make it in time, but the others were due to be replaced in 2024. So, now the intention is to try to get them all in 2024 — in September or October, ahead of the cold season.

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

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

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

*Recess*

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*.

Is there any further general debate?

**Mr. Dixon:** I believe it was to me, but if I have asked a question that hasn't been answered, I apologize.

Where I would like to get to very briefly — because I do want to pass the floor over to my colleague for Whitehorse Centre. What I wanted to inquire about was the nature of the

diesels in Faro that are being replaced and the delay. I asked what the current capacity was and the minister said this it was five megawatts. I know that this is what their replacement capacity will be, so I just wanted to confirm that this is an exact megawatt-for-megawatt replacement. There is no additional capacity as a result of these new units coming to Faro; this is just capacity overall. It is not changing from this; it is just replacing our old set of diesels, that total five megawatts with a new set of diesels.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** To be as precise as I can — the current retiring capacity of the Faro permanent diesels is 5.1 megawatts and the intention is to install five, so it is virtually the same. Again, the intention is to use the rental diesels while the supply chain catches up. It is roughly a delay of a year. The current anticipation is for rental diesels for the coming year and then, in September or October, the permanent diesels will go in — let's say the fall of 2024.

**Mr. Dixon:** I think that covers off the committed and planned supply options for now. As I said, I do want to hand the floor over, but before I do, the additional piece that I really want to ask a little bit about before I hand the floor over is the BC grid connection. It is in the minister's mandate letter. There is no money budgeted either in the five-year capital plan or the current budget for this. When asked about it earlier this week, the minister described that as being the plan B for the territory.

I would like to just ask the minister to give us a bit of a sense of what can we expect for updated costs. His mandate letter indicates that they are to update the engineering and projected costs, so how do we do that without any money in the budget? What is the current timeline for this project? What is the current sense of cost? When can we anticipate some sort of investment by the government in this project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** So, I want to be careful about using the language "plan B". I think what happened is that during Question Period, the member opposite said, "What else are you doing?" So, I want to say that we have the 10-year Yukon Energy renewable plan, but that plan has many things in it that, no doubt, by the time we get to the end of that 10 years, there will be lots that will change. So, I am asking them to please dig in and take a look at that plan and work with it.

And I will just acknowledge that when the member was raising questions earlier, he was using the submission that Yukon Energy had done to the Utilities Board around the energy purchase agreement with the potential Atlin hydro project, and in that submission, they put numbers in against demand-side management and that was part of their submission. So, I think that those things change over time and that we will continuously need to look at that.

The grid connection is on top of — so that work, including updating the 10-year plan or renewing it, should keep going. At the same time, we have the grid-connect project. The grid-connect project will take a significant amount of time — just the scale of it. So, it is effectively to run from Whitehorse down the Stewart-Cassiar and hopefully pick up Watson Lake along the way. We have a group — including the Yukon Development Corporation but also Yukon Energy Corporation and Energy, Mines and Resources — where we have asked that

group to work together and to come up with a timeline and a planning budget. So, those will be initial steps.

We have definitely sat down to broach the subject with Yukon First Nations and to start the conversation with them. We are just at the initial stages of that, and as I mentioned, we had our first conversation where it was on an agenda, et cetera, at the Yukon Forum. We also have had initial dialogue with British Columbia. Yukon Energy has had dialogue with their counterparts, BC Hydro. I have had dialogue with my counterpart, minister Osborne, and the Premier has had dialogue with his counterpart, Premier Eby, and all that is to say that, at this phase, it is in the preliminary stages. I will come back at some point with a plan, including budget and timelines. It is just preliminary, at this point.

We also have had early conversations with the mining industry. I heard from them — even before the Premier asked me to focus on this directly, I had heard from the industry that they thought that this was an important project, but I will also say that it is not the only avenue that we are exploring. For example, we continue to explore things like small modular nuclear reactors, hydrogen, and longer term storage. If you get longer term storage, then all of your non-baseload renewables get much, much better.

So, there is a whole bunch of ways that we are working on potential projects to explore them to see what their potential is, but the budget for the planning and the planning timeline are still to come. We just had a meeting on this yesterday with some of the team. It should be over the summer that it will get fleshed out, and then there should be actual dollars assigned to it later this year.

**MLA Tredger:** I will start by thanking Mr. Berry for being here and for everyone listening in. It's great to be talking about the Yukon Development Corporation again.

I want to start by talking about the inflation rebate, which is administered through YDC. My understanding is that there is funding for two months confirmed and then another potential three months, depending on circumstances. Maybe the minister can confirm if that is correct.

Also, I am wondering why there was only five months budgeted for this year, compared to last year's six.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We have been doing these rebates on three-month increments. The current three-month increment just spans across the fiscal year. So, we have one month, which was March, in the previous fiscal, and two months, April and May, are in the current fiscal. We have an intention to bring it back in the fall. Typically, electricity bills drop down in the summer, so we don't think that it is as important then, and then we intend to bring it back in the fall. That's why we have five months currently dedicated within this fiscal budget — just because one chunk of the three months overlapped with the previous fiscal year.

**MLA Tredger:** Thank you to the minister for that.

We have had conversations previously, both in Question Period and in budget debate, about how there are people who this inflation rebate is missing because it is on electricity bills. So, people who share a house and pay one electricity bill together — there is a condo building in my riding that has one

electricity bill for the entire building because of the innovative way they've done their energy, which mostly relies on renewables. So, they only have one bill and are only getting one rebate for, I think, about 20 units in that building. Don't quote me on that number, but it's a large number of people. Similarly, anyone who lives off-grid is not being supported by this inflation rebate.

I know that when we talked about it in the past, the minister said that we needed to get something out quickly, but we'll be on month 11, if not 12, of this program. So, when the minister decided to renew this program, what other alternatives did he look at to try to make this a more fair program?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It is difficult to make these programs — what term could we use? — let's say the term "universal" — where they work, because no matter how you set up a program, you are always going to have a line somewhere, and that line is going to have someone just on one side of the line and another person just on the other side of the line, and they are going to look at each other and say, "Hey, that doesn't feel fair." The program was set up to be simple, and so what we did was we contacted ATCO, and we asked them whether it was possible to use their billing system. The answer was yes, but it actually took quite a bit of work to even get to this simpler system, and it was just a \$50 rebate. Once we had that system set up, it is one that we could use.

But, to answer the question — what we did was we tried to come up with a suite of inflation measures, not just the one, and not every one of those — this is one of the things that, when I have talked with individuals who, for example, are off-grid and they say, "What about me?" and I will say, "Do you get wood?" and sometimes they say, "Yes" and I will say, "Okay, well, we have a rebate for you around firewood." One of the comments that I hear back from individuals, or from folks across the way, is that, you know, it should be fair. Then I will point out, for example, that we have a top-up for the Yukon senior income supplement, so that doesn't get everybody — that gets seniors. We have universal childcare, and that doesn't get everybody — that gets people who have kids — but when we look at the suite of inflationary relief initiatives that we are trying to put out there, we feel that it covers quite a bit of ground. I will never stand up and say that it is perfect; I will just say that we are trying to reach as many Yukoners as we can.

I went on a tour — it was a really lovely tour — of the building that the constituents who the Member for Whitehorse Centre is talking about, and we had a good look at their meter system, and we actually asked the utility to look into it and see what was possible and also to talk about — if we were to develop programs in the future — how we can work to support their approach to electricity. In some ways, you know, they also have done so much in that building, in particular, to try to have a super small footprint. So, the system was just a way to try to move money out while we were in these inflationary times. It is not meant to be a permanent program. Even though it is not universal, we use a range of inflationary approaches to try to support Yukoners with the cost of living.

**MLA Tredger:** I don't really think that talking about universal childcare and the seniors income supplement is a fair

comparison, because those are groups of people who have exceptional costs — families with young children, seniors on limited incomes — so I understand why we would have a program targeted to them. I don't understand why we would have a program targeted to people who pay electricity bills but not if they are in shared housing or off grid.

I know the program probably can't be perfect, but that is not an excuse to not try to improve it. We have been bringing up these concerns for, I think, a year now. That is a lot of time to come up with ways — alternate methods of delivery, systems to help people who fall outside the — who fall through the cracks — and I haven't seen that, but we have made suggestions on how it could be improved. One of them is that we already have a system for getting out a universal payment, and that is the GST rebate that all Yukoners receive. Did the government look into using that rebating system so that all Yukoners could get this inflation benefit?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** If the question is: Did, for example, the Finance department and the government writ large try to consider a whole bunch of different ways? — yes; the answer is yes.

Of course, I have shared, and I think my colleagues have all heard the specific concerns that have been raised about this one — the \$50-a-month rebate for chunks of three months. When we talk that through about whether that one should change, what we usually discuss is whether there are other programs that we could add on that would capture more Yukoners who might be falling through the cracks.

There has been an exploration of other ways. I appreciate that, to Yukoners, it looks like a long time. And it looks simple, but I also know how hard it would be for the Department of Finance. It wasn't so much the Yukon Development Corporation, because it was really ATCO Electric — that's what I should acknowledge — that did the work in order to try to get the program in place. It took effort, and I should acknowledge that. ATCO made an effort to make it happen for us. The budget sits with the Yukon Development Corporation, but the effort was on the Department of Finance side and on the utility's side.

We do consider a range, and every cycle, as we move into the budget cycle, there is a concerted effort to talk about inflation and the ways in which we can try to support Yukoners across the board. Yes, we have explored, and we sought to come up with a suite of rebates, or supports, for Yukoners in order to try to help them.

**MLA Tredger:** I assume the fact that there wasn't a direct answer to the question about the GST rebate means that wasn't explored. I guess it is just disappointing that, a year into this program with concerns raised over and over and over again, there doesn't seem to be a willingness to change, modify, or improve it. We know it can't be perfect, but that's not a reason to not try to make it better, but I will leave that.

While we are talking about ATCO — and I do appreciate their work on getting this rebate going — the last time that we were discussing this department was in the supplementaries, I believe, and the minister said that there was a GRA coming from ATCO in the second quarter of the year. I wasn't sure if

that was the calendar year — so we would be expecting it about now or between now and June — or whether that was the second quarter of the fiscal year. I am wondering if the minister has any updates on that and could clarify when we should expect to see it.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** First of all, let me go back for a moment. I did just check with the Minister of Finance about whether or not GST was a consideration, and yes, the Department of Finance considered a suite, including GST, because we had heard the suggestion. I thank the member for the suggestion, but anyway, considering doesn't mean that it always gets realized. I just want to say that the Department of Finance has looked at a range of measures. Even earlier today, I know that my own department brought forward another potential measure, so we continue to look for avenues.

With respect to ATCO, I have not seen — I just took a look at the Yukon Utilities Board to see if anything is posted, and I don't see it yet. So, I don't know the timing, although I understand that it is happening this year or that the application is coming in.

I am just not sure when it becomes an application that everybody starts to see, but the vice-president of ATCO did reach out to me and did indicate to me that they have written to the Utilities Board. ATCO has other applications in front of the Utilities Board around the — there is an application where they put in to look at their overearnings and their rate-relief measures. That measure is still in front of the Utilities Board and is still working its way through the system, but what I am referring to is that they have indicated to me that they are applying for a general rate review.

**MLA Tredger:** I look forward to finding out more about that as it becomes available. In his opening remarks, the minister talked about the battery project, and it sounded to me like he was suggesting that there might be a change in the timeline for completion. Could he give us an update on that project and when it is expected to be online?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I am just looking for the specific note that I had that talks about when — the construction work is still, I think, this fall, but what the utility has indicated to the Yukon Development Corporation is that they need more time in order to do the — how the systems will integrate.

So, when you get the battery system, it is meant to be a very fast response. What that can do is — the existing system right now — say, when you have some sudden increased demand — it could be from, say, a blackout or something like that or where some generation piece goes offline that you weren't anticipating, but one of your turbines goes down, and you have to get energy on the system — there is a whole sequence at which the backup comes into play, and the battery now has to integrate within that system to start to work. It turns out — through the experience of the work, for example, in Old Crow with how the solar cuts in and out, how the diesels might cut in and out — that the battery has to be well-integrated with the overall system.

That experience has led Yukon Energy to indicate to the Development Corporation that they feel that they will need more time to do that commissioning part of it. The battery's

main usage is in wintertime. That is when the real purpose will come into play. So, they feel that they are going to miss this winter cycle — this fall/winter — so it is not part of the plan right now. So, the plan is to get it in service next summer and have it ready for the following fall/winter.

**MLA Tredger:** We have talked a lot about Atlin in this House. I am wondering — and I may have missed it in all the conversation about diesels and good connections — but I'm wondering if the minister could just kind of give us a summary of where we are at with Atlin right now. My understanding was that we were waiting on the federal budget, and then the federal budget was not — it was not clear to me, one way or the other, whether there was funding for it or not. So, if the minister could just give us sort of a summary of what the next steps are and what is happening.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Madam Chair, the budget referenced Atlin specifically. It talked about — this is an important project. To quote from the budget, it says: "Budget 2023 clean electricity measures would be able to support projects across the North that support the transition away from diesel and in meeting emissions goals, including the Atlin Hydro Expansion Project, the Taltston Hydro Expansion Project, and the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link." So, they talk about it specifically.

Then, underneath that, they talk about a couple of programs. The first program that they talk about is the clean electricity investment tax credit. We think that tax credit could have some relevance, but it isn't specific money for this project.

Right beneath that, they talk about an additional \$3 billion over 13 years through Natural Resources Canada to recapitalize funding for the smart renewables and electrification pathways program to support critical regional priorities and Indigenous-led projects. The smart renewables and electrification pathways program is one of the programs where we had identified federal funding for the Atlin project, but there is a cap and we are already at the cap, so what we are working to understand is whether this reference in the budget indicates some flexibility on that cap.

So, really, what is happening right now is that the proponent, the Taku River Tlingit — or Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership — and the Development Corporation are off talking with the federal government to investigate whether these references will yield the funding gap that we have been interested in closing.

So, we don't have certainty. The good news is that we see the reference directly to Atlin. It's very specific, but we don't have certainty on that funding gap right now, so the team is off working with the federal government. I have met with our MP to talk through how to approach this conversation. The Premier has had several conversations with counterparts federally. We will see whether there is the ability to close that funding gap. That is our priority at the moment.

**MLA Tredger:** Thank you to the minister. It's helpful to understand what is happening right now on that. We, of course, are very hopeful and look forward to hopefully positive updates on that. We think it's a great project and we really hope that it gets the funding it needs to go forward.

I want to quickly ask about the Development Corporation's new strategic plan. I was looking at the annual report from 2021. And just as a side note, the 2021 report was tabled in the House but is not on the Yukon government website for the Yukon Development Corporation. The most recent one is 2020, so this is just a flag that it would probably be a good thing to have it on there. Anyway, it referenced the new five-year strategic plan, which, I believe, was delayed slightly because of COVID and was supposed to be in place for 2022. I am not sure if that happened, so maybe we could have an update on that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The Development Corporation board is meeting next month to work through the strategic planning. I thank the member for her observation about the website. I have just asked the president to check in and make sure that things are up to date or that there is an indication of what's going on. It's being worked on later this spring.

**MLA Tredger:** That's great to hear; thank you.

I want to ask a couple of questions about items in *Our Clean Future*. Item H28 is: "Complete the Peak Smart pilot project by 2022 to evaluate the use of smart devices to shift energy demand to off-peak hours." That's under the Yukon Energy Corporation's mandate. I am wondering if there is an update on that.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This is the demand-side management program. We were talking about it a little bit earlier, but I will just review that there is the intention to release the plan this fall for the demand-side management program. I have met with the lead on it at the Energy Corporation. They are pretty enthusiastic about the program. The goal under *Our Clean Future* was seven megawatts by 2030, but he believes that there is a potential for more. I have said to the utility to please keep going. Let's start with the plan, get it going, and see how it works. Hopefully, there will be an opportunity for more.

It's one of those areas where we hope we can enhance our goal under *Our Clean Future*.

**MLA Tredger:** I believe there are a bunch of things. If I understand correctly, that's not the only piece of demand-side management — the smart devices. I understood there to be a number. I just wanted to check on that specific one, but I can wait for the plan that's coming out — the minister just said when and I will check the Blues to make sure I get the right date. The forthcoming demand-side management plan — I do look forward to reading that.

The next one I wanted to talk about in *Our Clean Future* is E9, which is: "Develop a framework by 2022 for First Nations to economically participate in renewable electricity projects developed by Yukon's public utilities." I was wondering if I could get a bit more information about where that is at and what is sort of contemplated. I don't know if they are thinking specifically of the re-licensing of the Whitehorse dam or if that was sort of a separate project. I imagine those two are intersecting right around now.

I will just ask the minister for an update.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** So, we have worked with First Nations on many projects now, but we don't have the framework in place yet. Part of it, I think, is tied to the

re-licensing projects — plural. So, we have the Whitehorse re-licensing project, the Mayo re-licensing project, and effectively also Aishihik. Aishihik was one of those examples where we got somewhere, but for Yukoners, I will just acknowledge that I think the intention originally was to get a couple of decades' worth of re-licensing, but that one got shortened to five years. So, we will be back in that cycle almost right away because it takes roughly that long to do the re-licensing.

We also have had conversations that I have mentioned at the Yukon Forum where we were talking about the grid connect. That is another example of where we want to bring First Nations in. Atlin was more direct — where the nations are working to supply the energy and then we just purchase it. That is a different example. So, they are all there, but the action of getting the framework in place — not yet completed, but the activity is ongoing.

**MLA Tredger:** Just a quick follow-up: Will that framework be made public once it is ready? I guess I am wondering, with a number of ongoing projects, whether the plan is to just complete those projects and then come up with a framework afterwards or whether the framework is being done as part of those projects.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Just based on the way that the member posed the question, it is the former. We are not using these projects to try to develop the framework; we believe that the framework should be coming anyway. We have been trying to develop it at the same time, and it is very important. We would like for the framework to already be there, because it would help guide many of the conversations that we have around how to approach projects, because it would be a good framework to have, but we don't have it yet. We are working to develop it in conjunction with First Nations, right? We are not just going to develop it and say, "Here it is; here is our framework." But we have policies that assist us in this conversation. For example, we had developed policies within the Development Corporation about how we approach projects like the grid-scale battery project and others, about how equity stake would be proposed to nations, if they wished to be part of it. We have the big grid connect — we think of it as being a partnership with First Nations over time. We need this framework, and we want to get it in place, so we are still actively working to achieve the action under *Our Clean Future*, and at the same time, we have this ongoing work with relicensing. So, we will continue to have these conversations as we go through that, but we would like to have the framework in place over and above all that other activity that is happening.

**MLA Tredger:** Thank you to the minister for that. I only have one more question, so I just want to thank Mr. Berry for being here and everyone listening, again, for their help today.

I keep hearing about the Kluane Lake Research Station renewable and hydrogen microgrid project. I don't know if that is one that is being funded through YDC right now or not. I was wondering if the minister could just talk — if YDC is funding that project, if the minister could talk a little bit about that project and what its potential is.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** My apologies, Madam Chair; if I could just ask the member to repeat the question about the microgrid or microgen — I didn't quite catch it.

**MLA Tredger:** I was asking — my understanding is that, at the Kluane Lake Research Station, there is a project on hydrogen microgrid right now. So, I was just curious to know more about it.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This is being funded under the Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative funding stream. It is a feasibility study. Sometimes, folks think of hydrogen as an energy source — it is more an energy storage, which really is exciting, because we need storage so much here. And I can indicate that, last year, we contributed \$100,000 to the feasibility study, and we have another \$50,000 coming up this year.

I will have to try to investigate a little bit more to hear some of the details of the project itself. I might be getting some just as we speak.

It is really about using hydrogen as battery storage for the Kluane Lake Research Station, so it is about trying to make them 100-percent renewable.

I will say this about it: The reason that this is an important project is because we have several off-grid communities. You look and see, okay, is the project scalable? That's why I think it is very interesting, and that includes if we think about other projects that are far away from the grid, like mine projects.

I am interested in this project. I don't have a lot of specific detail on it, but I am looking forward to hearing how the project goes.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate my colleague from Whitehorse Centre giving me another opportunity today.

I wanted to pick up where I left off with the discussion the minister and I were having around the notion of plan B. This actually came from the chair of the Energy Corporation in November last year when I was asking questions about this.

Just for the minister's sake, I will just provide a couple of quotes from what the former CEO of the Energy Corporation said at the time. On November 17, 2022, when I asked about the planning and what sort of plan B options there are, he said — and I quote: "So, are we working on anything else actively today? No, but I would say that there is a conversation about — is it time to start looking at plan B?"

Then, a few minutes later, he indicated — and I quote: "I think, to come back to the question, looking at plan B is a worthwhile activity and something that the utility would likely start next year in consultation with the shareholder, Yukon Development Corporation, et cetera."

In November of last year, the former CEO of the Energy Corporation was contemplating some sort of formal review of the resource plan and some sort of — in his words — "looking at plan B". I am just wondering if the minister can tell us what that looks like at this stage. Is there some sort of comprehensive review underway to look at the resource plan? What was the former CEO of the YEC talking about there when he said they were going to launch some sort of new activity that would look at plan B and would involve the Yukon Development Corporation?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** A few points that I will raise. I understand that we're using the term "plan B", but I want to be careful about language. There are three things that we are looking at — or that the utility is looking at. The first one is looking at the existing 10-year renewable plan, updating loads, supply, demand, the forecast — all of it. We had a healthy conversation earlier today with good questions talking about whether those numbers that have been shared are up to date. The challenge, of course, is that they are changing all the time, but the utility, or the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation, have this plan this summer to carry out a thorough process for updating the resource plan. That's the first one, so it's not a different plan; it is reviewing or renewing the existing plan.

Number two, right after that — that was November 17 — right after that, maybe two weeks after that, I travelled with the president of the Energy Corporation and the president of Tlingit Homeland Energy Limited Partnership to Ottawa to talk about funding for the Atlin project. I also initiated the conversations with my federal counterparts about a grid connect. So, that is another piece that is now being looked at by the utility, and as I have stated, Yukon Development Corporation and Energy, Mines and Resources working together.

I have tried to be very clear that this isn't a replacement for the 10-year renewable plan; this is in addition to the 10-year renewable plan. That is just — we just see that much potential growth on the system and demand on the system. That is the second piece.

Then, the third piece, which came out of the conversation — when Yukon Energy went to the Utilities Board and was talking about the potential energy purchase agreement for Atlin, the Utilities Board said that they wanted to understand a comparison between rental diesels and a purpose-built diesel plant. I said to the utility at the time that we do need to do that diligence — we do need to do that work to try to have those comparative costs, because I think Yukoners will want to know. But, as I have said, even earlier today — and I will quote from a different section from November 17 — the president of Yukon Energy stated — I am quoting now: "... we have done the math, and by our estimates, the levelized cost of capacity of rentals is \$210 per kilowatt year, and a permanent diesel plant would be \$253 per kilowatt year." So, from their perspective, they are saying that those felt like compelling numbers.

Now, I think it is important that we always look at those numbers and update them to try to make sure that we are making the best choices for Yukoners.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate the minister's indication that they will be reviewing the 10-year electricity plan starting this summer. I think that is a worthwhile exercise. I think the former chair certainly acknowledged that in November — that this is something that they will need to do, and I am interested to see how that process progresses.

At this point, I have gone over this a few times now, but I just want to make sure that I have the facts straight on the 12.5-megawatt diesel replacements. What is the budget for that overall replacement project? Obviously, the minister has told me the number of units and the locations of them. That is fine,

but what I'm looking for is the total budget of the 12.5-megawatt replacement and an understanding of where that money is coming from. To be more clear, how much is coming from YDC, how much is YEC contributing themselves, and what is the total overall budget of that project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The cost estimate that I have — and my latest note is from about a month ago — is \$49 million for the 12.5 megawatts for the diesels including Whitehorse, Dawson, and Faro.

**Mr. Dixon:** I just want to understand the source of that money. How much is coming from YDC and how much from Yukon Energy Corporation, et cetera?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It is coming out of the Yukon Energy capital budget.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, is that money that we have put on the rate base or is that money that is being provided by YDC? To be more clear, is that close to \$50 million coming from ratepayers or coming from taxpayers?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The permanent diesel fleet is part of the capital of Yukon Energy and, as such, would be part of their overall asset management plan. So, it comes from rates. That is where this is coming from, but those things should be managed over time and they should be part of how the capital depreciates as we move through time. However, when it comes to rates, usually it gets spread out over a long time, because that is how the infrastructure is intended to be used, but it is coming from the rate base.

**Mr. Dixon:** The minister mentioned that when he travelled to Ottawa in November, he was there to make the case for the Atlin hydro project. I presume that they went with a specific request. Can I ask the minister how much funding the minister asked for from Canada for that project at that time?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** My recollection is that what we talked to counterparts in Ottawa about was — let me back up. We are there with the proponent of the project, so, really, the request is coming from them and I am reinforcing that request, and my belief is that the request was for the funding gap, which was \$60 million, and that there was an additional \$20 million where the request went to the federal government to say that this would be important because we don't want to come back a second time if there were inflationary changes — so it would be for contingency. My recollection is that the request was for \$80 million. We met with federal counterparts to share that request.

**Mr. Dixon:** The request obviously didn't pan out. The federal budget has come and gone. There is no indication in the federal budget that Atlin is specifically offered the grant funding that was necessary.

While there is some reference to the project in the budget, there are no specific amounts provided in terms of funding. Without that federal funding, can the minister give us a sense of the current timeline of this project?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I hope I have been clear that my sense is that if we don't close that funding gap — if we don't find those dollars — the project won't go. The proponent has been pretty clear with us about what they feel they need in order to make the project go. We have committed \$50 million. We



have not spent that money, but that's what we have said we would contribute to the project.

But if we are not successful at finding the money, then I think the project will not be able to proceed unless someone repackages it and tries again with partners. We are still there at the table working with the federal government to see if the reference in the budget is able to yield that funding gap.

So, I don't have a definitive answer today, but if the question to me is: What will happen if we are unable to get that gap closed? — then I think that the Atlin project is not going to be realized and we will have to pivot to other renewable projects.

**Mr. Dixon:** The budget that we are debating today, of course, includes \$3 million for ICIP funding. I am just wondering if the minister can provide a breakdown of that \$3 million — what it is for and what it is.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** We are just trying to confirm from our notes, but there is — I know that we have \$3 million for the grid-scale battery, and that is ICIP funding — but we also have a project that is the upgrade to the Mayo-McQuesten transmission line. We are just trying to check to see whether any of the ICIP dollars are going to that, but the main one that I see is the dollars toward the grid-scale battery project.

**Mr. Dixon:** I suspected as much, but I wanted to confirm. In November, the former CEO of the Energy Corporation told us that the Yukon government was receiving \$16.5 million in ICIP funding for the battery, so I assumed that was the case, but I wanted to doublecheck. Speaking of the battery project, can the minister give us an updated total cost of that project and current timeline?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** The total cost for the project is \$35 million. The Yukon Energy Corporation is contributing \$18.5 million toward that, and under ICIP — the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan — it will be \$16.5 million. I think that the \$3 million that we have in our budget this year is for the battery project.

The timing — the substantive work will be done this year and then the commissioning work will happen in 2024. Our current timeline is that the battery will integrate into our system in the summer of 2024. Those are the current timelines and the dollars.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Chair report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

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

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

### Chair's report

**Ms. Blake:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 23, entitled *References to the Sovereign Statute Law Amendment Act (2023)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 208, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2023-24*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

**Hon. 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. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.*

### The following sessional paper was tabled April 19, 2023:

35-1-96

*Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Appointments to Major Government Boards and Committees (April 19, 2023) (Clarke, N.)*

### The following legislative returns were tabled April 19, 2023:

35-1-85

Response to oral question from MLA Tredger re: greenhouse gas emissions (Streicker)

35-1-86

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 10, Public Service Commission, in Bill No. 208, *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — cultural safety and anti-racism training (Silver)

35-1-87

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 10, Public Service Commission, in Bill No. 208, *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — grievances (Silver)

35-1-88

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 10, Public Service Commission, in Bill No. 208, *First Appropriation Act 2023-24* — employee and family assistance program (Silver)

**Written notice was given of the following motions  
April 19, 2023:**

Motion No. 710

Re: warning lights for Alaska Highway intersections  
(White)

Motion No. 711

Re: establishing a Special Committee on the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (Streicker)

Motion No. 712

Re: appointments to the Yukon Human Rights Panel of Adjudicators (McPhee)

**Written notice was given of the following motion  
respecting committee reports April 19, 2023:**

Motion Respecting Committee Reports No. 5

Re: concurrence in the *Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges* (Mostyn)