



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 42

1st Session

35th Legislature

HANSARD

Thursday, December 2, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2021 Fall Sitting

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

CABINET MINISTERS

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

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Yukon Party

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

THIRD PARTY

New Democratic Party

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

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

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

*Government House Leader: Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee to November 4, 2021; Hon. John Streicker from November 5, 2021

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, December 2, 2021 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Hassard: I would like to ask all members to join me in recognizing a young fellow in the Legislature today — Jim Bobby Laking is with us. We were hoping that his brother Hank Henry would have been here as well, but he had to go to school. He couldn't get out of the school. James brought a couple of folks with him, his mother, Colleen, and his dad, Ted. Ted is our soon-to-be former chief of staff and newly elected politician as city councillor.

Someone told me recently that, of all the people I have hired in my life, Ted might rank right up there in the top nine or 10 as best employee, so thank you for being here.

Applause

Speaker: Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of legislative counsel office staff

Hon. Ms. McPhee: It is a great honour to rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to the staff of the legislative counsel office at the Department of Justice.

The legislative counsel office has a unique and specialized role. They draft the laws that govern our territory — laws that provide for the rights and responsibilities of individuals and organizations. The committed and dedicated people at the legislative counsel office are like no other — a fact that has only been emphasized by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the pandemic began, the legislative counsel office has worked diligently to draft the regulations, orders, and directions that have given legal authority for the implementation of the recommendations of the chief medical officer of health. In addition, this team has continued to advance the development of legislation to meet the needs of, and to fulfill our commitment to, all Yukoners.

To underscore this point, I note that, since March of 2020, the legislative counsel office has completed 31 bills, 1,188 regulations, and 177 ministerial orders. This is on top of the most ambitious legislative agenda that this government has ever seen since our election in 2016.

In order to achieve this impressive amount of work, these individuals have quite literally worked day and night to ensure that all Yukoners have a legal framework that supports a safe

and modern society. We would not be in the strong position that we are in today without their expertise and commitment. It speaks volumes about the characters and the character of the people in that office.

Of course, we must also recognize the literally hundreds of people who work across government who provide the policy work and instructions to our legislative counsel office.

Today, I pay tribute to the legislative counsel office team of Rebecca Veinott, Andrea Bailey, Benoit Brouillard, Christine Badcock, Damien Tremblay, Katherine Hartshorne, Michel Gelin, Renée Craig, Sheri Hogeboom, and Suzanne Pellerin, none of whom could be here today because of the workload that I have just described.

The leadership and hard work exemplified by your team is commendable, and it is through your day-to-day work that we are reminded of the significance and the purpose of our laws. This has real impact on all Yukoners.

I also wish to acknowledge the extensive legal work undertaken by others in the Legal Services division who provide legal advice under difficult and dynamic situations — even temporarily working as drafters during the initial state of emergency in order to support the team that I have just named. Your efforts to improve the laws of the Yukon and to work quickly and diligently in challenging circumstances during a pandemic have not gone unnoticed. It may seem like you are behind the scenes, but never doubt that everything you do has a powerful impact on the entire territory, and we are grateful.

I would ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in honouring the service and dedication of the people who make up the legislative counsel office, legal services experts, and our Yukon public service who work every day to support this Legislative Assembly and all Yukoners.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to all of the government employees involved in developing and drafting legislation. We appreciate the amount of work and detail that goes into the drafting process for legislation and regulations.

I would like to further extend our recognition and thank all of the public servants who worked on behalf of Yukoners throughout this year. As we finish up this Fall Sitting and head into the holiday season, we would like to acknowledge all staff for the work that you do and for the services that you provide to Yukoners. To all full-time, part-time, casual, and auxiliary-on-call staff, contractors, and others — regardless of your current employment status — thank you for your work on behalf of Yukoners this year. We will be thinking of all of you during the Christmas season and wishing you and your families well.

The pandemic has placed a lot of stress and strain on many people, and debates over issues such as vaccination mandates have been divisive, adding additional stress in relationships, friendships, and communities. As another Fall Sitting draws to a close and the Christmas season begins, we urge everyone to be compassionate and caring to your neighbours and all

Yukoners. We will not always agree with each other, but we do not have to agree with each other to care about each other.

We wish all Yukoners well this holiday season and in the year to come. Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I stand on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to thank the legislative counsel office and Yukon's legislative drafters. This office is full of wordsmiths. They are the grammar police, and they are smart. They understand the technical requirements as to the form of legislation and perform the task in a non-partisan manner.

Legislative drafting has a long history that dates back to at least the 15th century in England, and since that time, those tasked with the work of writing laws have morphed and changed.

Today, we find ourselves in the present day where we in the Yukon have a small, dedicated team of word wizards and their support staff at the Department of Justice. Every piece of legislation, every regulation, and every change in wording or action goes through the hands of a legislative drafter. The drafter's role is to ensure that government policy is expressed effectively in legislation. Legislation must be clear and it must be accurate, and this is no easy task. A drafter must not only understand what the legislation is intended to do, but also know how language works to convey that meaning. They must do it in a way that we average humans can understand.

The drafter plays a critical role in determining the effect that legislation has. It's this team that keeps Yukon moving forward and keeps us up to date. We thank the legislative counsel office for their dedication, their words, and their integrity.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling the health care insurance program's annual report, April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, pursuant to section 6 of the *Health Care Insurance Plan Act* and section 7 of the *Hospital Insurance Services Act*.

I also have for tabling two legislative returns to written questions submitted on May 25, 2021 by the Member for Lake Laberge and the Member for Porter Creek Centre.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have for tabling, pursuant to section 101 of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*, the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board annual report.

I also have for tabling, pursuant to section 103 of the *Education Labour Relations Act*, the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board annual report.

I have also for tabling four legislative returns: one for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources from debate in Committee of the Whole and three for the Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation, also from debate in Committee of the Whole.

Finally, I have for tabling today, from the Public Service Commission, the statistics about employee attestations and employees on leave without pay for departments.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I have for tabling a letter from the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon to the Leader of the Official Opposition expressing concerns over proposed amendments to expand cancer presumption to wildland firefighters.

I also have for tabling a letter from Yukon First Nations Wildfire expressing their support for the current WCB legislation before the House and supporting the government's commitment to continue to investigate occupational hazards relating to wildland firefighting.

I also have for tabling an e-mail from the International Association of Fire Fighters opposing last-minute changes to the WCB legislation.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: I have for tabling a legislative return in response to a question posed by the Member for Porter Creek North on November 17, 2021.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I have for tabling the Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues annual report for 2020-21, pursuant to section 15(3) of the *Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act*.

I also have for tabling seven legislative returns arising from earlier debate in Committee of the Whole on Vote 3, Bill No. 202, on: the Old Crow staffing situation; Yukon First Nation board of trustees and their eligibility; school bus arrival standards; EA requests; the staff reporting tool; staffing attestation numbers for the Department of Education; and adult learning supports and programs.

Ms. White: I have for tabling today a letter from Yukon First Nations Wildfire encouraging support of presumptive cancer coverage for wildland firefighters.

Speaker: Are there any reports of committees? Petitions.

PETITIONS

Petition No. 8 — response

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I rise to speak to the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's Petition No. 8, tabled in the House by the Member for Whitehorse Centre, calling for a moratorium on evictions without cause.

I realize that our rental housing market is challenging right now. Our economy is growing, and with new people coming into the territory, finding housing is challenging. It is heartrending to hear that some people are losing their homes through no fault of their own.

Before I continue, I would like to explain the role of the residential tenancies office and acknowledge the good work that the branch does. It provides information about the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* and regulations and

provides legally binding dispute resolution between landlords and tenants. A key function of the office is education to help prevent disputes. In 2020-21, the residential tenancies office responded to hundreds of inquiries, fairly evenly split between both landlords and tenants. Common questions revolve around security deposits, tenancy agreements, repairs, and rent payment rules.

Mr. Speaker, following the election, we entered into the 2021 confidence and supply agreement with the New Democratic Party. Under the terms of this agreement, the Yukon government agreed to cap residential rent increases to the annual inflation rate, effective May 15, 2021 and continuing through the term of the agreement until January 31, 2023.

In the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the tight housing market, we agreed to an interim residential rent cap to provide immediate support to renters. The rent cap allows renters to plan for the future, knowing that their rent will not be increasing each year. Stable, affordable housing is foundational to the health and well-being of all Yukoners. Rental security is also a complex issue that requires a deft, thoughtful, and well-considered approach.

We recognize that this is just one of many ways to support housing security in the Yukon. We are committed to long-term strategies, such as the Canada-Yukon Housing benefit that is getting financial support directly to renters in need. We also have committed to getting more housing onto the market, and we are working on that every week.

When we announced the rent cap, we committed to working with both landlords and tenants to ensure that our solutions to the issue of affordable rent were fair to all Yukoners. In the coming months, we will continue to work with landlords and tenants to assess the impact of the rent cap and to determine the best mix of initiatives to address this complex issue going forward. Doing this might take some time. As we consider any other changes to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*, we will take the time needed to engage with stakeholders to ensure that all perspectives are heard.

Mr. Speaker, landlords currently have the ability to evict without cause. This means that a landlord can end the tenancy without providing a reason. I know that the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition's petition requests that the government issue an order-in-council to temporarily prevent evictions without cause until the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act* is reviewed. In fact, we cannot temporarily end without-cause evictions. To make this change requires an amendment to the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*. Because the right to end tenancies without cause is in the act, we cannot repeal it by regulation — we cannot repeal it by regulation.

Changing legislation is a lengthy process. It is not something that is done overnight. When both parties signed the CAS agreement in good faith, we acknowledged that the rent index is an interim measure to provide immediate support to renters. We anticipated and flagged challenges with this policy, and we now know the rent cap had significant negative impacts on the rental market — and we are hearing about it every day. Not only has it caused some evictions — which, as I said

earlier, are heart-rending — but it has also undermined the financial applications for some apartment block sales.

Over the two-year period while the CASA is in effect, we will work with all stakeholders to look at options and evaluate how best to proceed. Ultimately, we want a rental regulatory environment that meets the needs of landlords, tenants, and all Yukoners.

We recognize that Yukon's economic prosperity relies on making available housing that meets people's needs. Legislative change will be considered; however, it will require careful work to ensure that it meets the needs of tenants and landlords, that it is balanced, that it meets the needs of everyone.

Our goal is to ensure tenants can access affordable housing and that landlords will continue to invest in Yukon's robust rental market.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to make COVID-19 booster shots available to everyone 18-plus who wants one as quickly as possible and announce a timeline for making these available in all communities.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to move quickly to make the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, commonly referred to as "Johnson & Johnson", available in rural communities and announce dates for these clinics promptly.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to immediately review the *Residential Landlord and Tenant Act*.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to initiate a comprehensive review of the need for a Yukon clinic-based dialysis program for Yukoners requiring hemodialysis.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to publicly release the implementation plan for a managed alcohol program, as referenced by the Minister of Health and Social Services on December 1, 2021.

I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:

THAT this House do order the return of the Department of Health and Social Services implementation plan for a managed alcohol program.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Yukon Days

Hon. Mr. Silver: It is my pleasure today to rise in recognition of Yukon Days, an important series of trilateral meetings that are happening on December 3, 6, and 7 of this year. During Yukon Days, the Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations have an opportunity to bring our shared priorities to federal ministers. Over the coming days, we will be meeting virtually with federal ministers on a number of topics, including our continued response to COVID-19, climate change, resilient infrastructure, and clean energy.

The lack of housing and resilient infrastructure across the north is a major concern, and a growing demand on our power grid must be met through new renewable energy projects. We look forward to digging deeper into the details of several priority projects and discussing the territory's investment needs with the new federal ministers. Yukoners are seeing the tragic impacts of the opioid crisis and the effects on our communities. We know that both of these issues have been compounded through the pandemic as well.

Along with my fellow premiers at the Council of the Federation, I have been leading a discussion on the need for more mental health resources. I look forward to continuing these important conversations, together with our First Nation partners. The federal government has created a new Cabinet position to address these issues which are taking their toll on Canadians across the country.

We will also focus on the positive future of mineral development in the territory and how industry and government can include more First Nation consultations when ensuring environmentally responsible and sustainable development. To accomplish our goals, we need to streamline review processes to ensure that projects can stick to reliable and consistent timelines. Mining has maintained momentum throughout the pandemic and is contributing significantly to Yukon's strong economic growth, which is leading the country. Other sectors, such as tourism, have been devastated by the pandemic, and we want to continue working together to provide supports to this vital industry.

In addition to highlighting our shared priorities, Yukon Days is also an opportunity to showcase the territory as a leader in reconciliation. We have built strong government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations, and Yukon Days is a reflection of that.

We support Yukon First Nations and all indigenous communities across Canada in an effort to address our dark history, and we will continue working toward a brighter future for all Yukoners and for all Canadians.

I want to thank Yukon First Nation chiefs who will be participating in this year's Yukon Days meetings. By working together, Mr. Speaker, we can continue to advance priorities to improve the lives of all Yukoners.

Mr. Dixon: Yukoners know our relationship with the federal government in Ottawa is of the utmost importance, no

matter which political party is in power. That is why one of the key themes of the year for voicing the Yukon's issues and concerns to the powers that be in Ottawa is Yukon Days.

No matter which political party is in power here in the territory, it's a prime opportunity for not only territorial government officials to speak to their federal counterparts, but for Yukon First Nation governments to stand side by side with territorial ministers and officials in a united front, while addressing joint priorities, including our shared commitment to reconciliation.

We are pleased to hear that those chiefs who are able to participate virtually will have the opportunity to do so. We know that each Yukon community has their own issues, so for individual chiefs, or other representatives from Yukon First Nations, to be able to speak directly to ministers in Ottawa is the best way to address those concerns.

I'm pleased to hear the Premier say that he will raise many of the concerns that we have brought forward during the Sitting — issues such as mental health, housing, infrastructure, and tourism. I'm especially happy to hear sustainable mineral development will be a topic of discussion.

To quote from the Premier's statement: "To accomplish our goals, we need to streamline review processes to ensure that projects can stick to reliable and consistent timelines."

Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. It's reassuring to hear that the Premier has done a 180 on his answers from Monday, which dismissed assessment delays on the Coffee project and the BMC Minerals project proposal as simply business as usual. He has now singled out streamlining review processes as a key discussion point with federal ministers, so we're happy that the Premier is now taking those concerns from industry seriously.

As the Premier said in his statement, mining has maintained momentum during the pandemic and is contributing to strong economic growth. All Yukoners are thankful for the work of the Yukon mining industry to keep our economy going, since many other sectors have suffered under the pandemic restrictions.

Thank you, as well, to the Intergovernmental Affairs officials for organizing those virtual meetings, and we hope for constructive dialogue and tangible solutions to many of the issues that Yukoners face.

Ms. White: The Yukon NDP are pleased to know that the Yukon government and Yukon First Nations will again be sharing their priorities with federal ministers.

There is much happening in the Yukon and affecting Yukoners that have been highlighted as topics of discussion for the upcoming meetings that were listed by the Premier. We are pleased to hear that this again will be happening remotely. The Yukon NDP strongly believes that all decisions and actions taken by governments need to include any effect on our climate, so meeting remotely just makes sense.

The pandemic continues to show us that work we once thought had to happen in person can successfully be completed remotely, whether it's public servants working from home here

in Whitehorse or in communities where they live or as officials meeting their counterparts in Ottawa.

The Yukon NDP believes in the importance of decentralizing government positions, and having access to government jobs in rural Yukon is good for rural Yukon. We look forward to future hiring for positions within Yukon government that allows folks from communities to be hired and work remotely in those communities.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Thank you to my colleagues across the way for their support for these meetings. When we first came into office, the chiefs brought their concerns that, in past Yukon Days, they were more of a cultural component, so the Yukon Liberal government brought them, as governments, into those trilateral conversations, which is exactly where they should be.

Our voices are extremely strong when they are together; our words are louder, and our influence is greater when we speak together, so this is extremely important. Yukon Days represents an opportunity to highlight the rich contributions that our territory brings to the country and an opportunity to bring the priorities of Yukon directly to the federal government.

The timing of Yukon Days this year couldn't be better, actually, as the federal government begins their new mandate, the ministers are all in their seats now, and they are developing the 2022 budget. Climate action continues to be a key driver of federal public policy. New, resilient infrastructure will be fundamental to our territory's transition to a green, post-pandemic economy, and I was very pleased to hear it highlighted in the Speech from the Throne delivered by Canada's first-ever indigenous Governor General.

Yukon Days meetings build on the work that we've done with First Nations through the Yukon Forum. We revitalized the Yukon Forum when we took office in 2016 because we know that Yukon's future prosperity will be built through strong partnerships with First Nation governments.

Nearly 50 years ago, Chief Elijah Smith, along with a delegation of Yukon First Nation chiefs, went to Ottawa to meet with then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau to deliver *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*. That journey, and the conversations that they had with the government of the day, set the Yukon on a path of championing indigenous rights for Yukon First Nations and indigenous people across Canada.

Chief Elijah Smith's vision and availability to unify resulted in an agreement that remains a model for indigenous self-governance in Canada still today.

We believe that it is our duty as leaders to uphold the spirit and the intent of the final and self-government agreements. We must move forward together on a path of reconciliation on the basis of respect and collaboration.

Again, I look forward to these important meetings in the coming days. Together with our First Nation partners, we are building a brighter future for the territory.

Speaker: This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Political party fundraising

Mr. Dixon: More than half of the Liberal Cabinet is heading to Vancouver in two weeks to party it up at a crowded corporate box at the Canucks game. This event is happening in the midst of strict public health restrictions on gathering sizes and limits on the capacities of bars and restaurants here in Yukon. It is not lost on Yukoners that the event the Liberals are hosting in Vancouver would not be allowed here in Yukon under the regulations put in place by the Liberals themselves.

Meanwhile, the federal government has advised Canadians to reconsider large holiday gatherings due to the Omicron variant, and the message from Dr. Bonnie Henry, the chief medical officer of BC, to the province regarding Christmas parties is to keep your indoor groups small.

So, can the Premier tell us why there is one standard for the Liberals and another for everyone else?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe that this is the same question that I answered yesterday. We will be following all of the recommendations and guidelines in the jurisdiction in which we are travelling. We will be making sure that this happens. We have committed to openness and transparency, as well, in following the rules established around fundraising.

I don't recall the Yukon Party having an issue with party fundraising when they were raising the most money, involving the mining industry. The Yukon Party had 14 years to change rules as well. Now they are pivoting to making this an issue about COVID, and I will make sure that Yukoners can rest assured that we are following all of the guidelines as we travel respectfully to another jurisdiction.

Mr. Dixon: Over the past several weeks, we have seen multiple major events cancelled. The Geoscience Forum, which is normally a boon to the Whitehorse hospitality sector, was cancelled. Major Christmas events and parties have been cancelled, all because of the health restrictions imposed by the Liberals. Meanwhile, the Liberals have decided that the biggest event they have hosted in years is going to be held not in a local restaurant or an event space, but down south in Vancouver.

Last week, the Premier urged Yukoners to pay special attention to supporting local businesses this holiday season, yet he won't even support local businesses by hosting his event locally. The Liberals are saying that it is: "Rules for thee, but not for me" as they restrict gatherings in Yukon but head south to crowded parties.

What message does the Premier think that this Liberal event sends to Yukoners and local businesses that have sacrificed under the restrictions that he has imposed here in Yukon over the past month?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think that more of the narrative that we could add to this as well is that the Yukon Party used to use taxpayers' monies to help them do their fundraising.

Mr. Speaker, this is sour grapes from the members opposite, wrapped up in a little bit of concern.

As far as supporting local businesses, the Minister of Economic Development, along with our full team, have provided the most comprehensive packages in Canada throughout the pandemic for the local businesses. We have led

the nation in packages for businesses. How did we get there? By meeting with the businesses, by talking with the businesses, by working on their unique and specific needs, not only here in Whitehorse, but throughout the whole of Yukon. We are very proud of the relationships that we have built with local businesses.

When I am in the press conferences, we talk all the time about wanting to see fewer Amazon boxes in front of people's doors and more support for local businesses when it comes to the holiday season.

We will continue to fundraise, as the other parties will do, and we will do it respectfully and we will do it openly and with full transparency.

Mr. Dixon: What we hear from the Premier is to: "Do as I say, not as I do" with regard to support for local businesses.

The Premier has laid off hundreds of Yukoners just weeks before Christmas. He has forced strict new rules on bars, restaurants, and public gatherings. The cancellation of some of the biggest events of the year have hurt the local economy.

Now, in the shadow of all of the sacrifices that Yukoners have made, the Liberals are jetting off to Vancouver to host a crowded party. This shoulder-to-shoulder event would not be allowed in Yukon under the rules that the Liberals themselves have brought in, and it is happening just as the Omicron variant has arrived in Vancouver.

BC and Dr. Bonnie Henry have given new health advice for holiday parties indicating that indoor gatherings should be kept small, while stating that those partying should be aware of how their actions can bring COVID to their communities.

What message does the Premier think that this sends to Yukon citizens and businesses?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Our chief medical officer of health has said in the past that, as we move through the pandemic, we must make sure that, as we open and close and as we follow the restrictions and guidelines, we do it respectfully and that we are aware of the guidelines in the jurisdictions that we are leaving and the jurisdictions that we are going into. We have done that. If things change in BC, and if the hockey game is not open to vaccinated individuals — if travelling down to Vancouver — if the rules of the Canadian government changes about travelling —

We are all vaccinated. We are moving within all the rules and regulations there. I know that the opposition doesn't want to hear this. They don't want to hear that we are meeting with not only mining folks but also tourism folks —

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Speaker: Order, please. The member has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Silver: A vast array of local businesses will be there, and they also will be travelling very respectfully, but I will let them know that the Yukon Party does not think that they should be travelling either.

Question re: COVID-19 vaccination requirement rollout

Ms. Van Bibber: Yesterday, we learned that hundreds of employees of the Yukon government have been placed on leave without pay. We still don't know how many have

resigned or quit prior to yesterday, and we still don't know how many people from the private sector or the NGO sector have lost their jobs as well. All of this is happening just weeks before Christmas. Yesterday, the minister confirmed that those workers are ineligible for EI. We also understand that employees are not allowed to access their banked vacation time to pay bills.

Can the government tell us what financial supports are available to the hundreds of Yukoners who are no longer getting paycheques this Christmas season?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We did follow the advice of the chief medical officer of health who stated that it was important that we address the wave that was coming to us with the Delta variant. I am very thankful for everyone's efforts around this. I heard through the Minister of Health and Social Services just recently — and the Premier announced it yesterday — that the circuit breaker has been working. I would like to say thank you to all public servants.

I just tabled numbers here in the Legislature. We have had a few more people attesting since yesterday, so now it is less than two percent of our full-time employees who have not attested and are on leave without pay. It is correct that, under the federal rules around employment insurance, they are not eligible. I will work to get a specific answer for the member opposite about what other benefits are available for our employees, but they are not fired. They are still our employees. I thank them for their service.

I would also like to say — yesterday I was asked —

Speaker: Ten seconds.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope to be able to get up again and talk about mental wellness supports and other supports.

Ms. Van Bibber: The Christmas and holiday period can be one of celebration and cheer, but it does come with anxiety and stress for some families. We do worry how the loss of employment income for hundreds of Yukoners will affect this stress and anxiety.

Can government ensure that steps are in place so that these laid-off employees who cannot access EI or their benefits have full assistance to, and easier contacts for, mental health supports over the holiday season?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The number that I just tabled today is 117 employees. The member across is saying hundreds, but it's 117, and they are all people. This is tough for them, for sure.

We do have mental health supports for all of our employees. We know that there has been general anxiety and stress due to work disruptions and social routines caused by COVID-19 and the vaccine requirements and that they have increased. Our understanding is that all people are susceptible to changes to their mental well-being, and so we have undertaken a number of steps recommended by the Mental Health Commission of Canada to address psychological health and safety in our workplaces.

I know that we have had all of our managers and supervisors take introductory mental health training so that they can identify where that stress is. It will help to raise the mental health literacy for our managers, and it will help to challenge

the stigmas around mental health issues and working on the continuum of mental well-being. It's about supporting our staff.

I have instructed the Public Service Commission to work through the departments and to work through each supervisor and manager with their teams to try to make sure that those supports are in place for our staff.

Ms. Van Bibber: It is common to see increased pressure on the food bank over the holiday season, but in light of the hundreds of Yukoners who have recently lost their employment income, we anticipate that this year will be particularly busy for our local food banks. Will the Yukon government consider increasing its support for local food banks in light of the anticipated increase in demand?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I know that there has been increased activity with the food bank. I know that we have been in conversation with the food bank and the Anti-Poverty Coalition. I will check with the Minister of Health and Social Services about what supports we have going on right now. I would like to thank all of the not-for-profits across the territory that work to support all Yukoners at this time. We will do our best to help support them.

I want to say that, here in the Legislature, I have heard the members opposite talk about it being 20 percent or 10 percent of our employees. I have just tabled the numbers. It is under two percent. Of course, those are all very real numbers for people. I want to thank all of the public service sector for coming forward to do their attestations.

I respect the choices of all of our public service employees, including those who are now on leave without pay. We will do our best to support them, and we will do our best to support the community over Christmas time and ongoing, as we have throughout this pandemic, to work to keep the Yukon safe and whole.

Question re: Health care services

Ms. Blake: It has been three months since the only walk-in clinic in the territory closed its services. As we all know, thousands of Yukoners are left to sit on a wait-list for access to primary care. To quote one Yukoner on the wait-list: "I am going to die sooner, because right now..." — the system tells us — "... 'don't come to see us until you're really, really sick'... That quite literally means that this health care system is shortening my life."

Has the minister directed her department to open a public walk-in clinic?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I appreciate the question and the opportunity that we have had throughout this session to speak about access to medical care here in the territory and the opportunity that we have had to speak about the access to a walk-in clinic.

The members opposite will know about *Putting People First* and the concept of how we must modernize and change our health care services here in the territory. *Putting People First* is an independent opportunity for Yukoners throughout the health system — including professionals, Yukoners, and others — to have their input into how we need to do better and modernize our system here in the territory.

We recognize that the affected walk-in clinic process here in Whitehorse is of concern. We have had the opportunity to debate that here as well. We have started the implementation of *Putting People First*. We have expanded the access to virtual care alternatives, we have added more nurse practitioners to our staff across the territory, and we are exploring options for primary care. I hope to be able to continue my answer.

Ms. Blake: Yukoners are confused. The first time we asked, the minister ruled out a public walk-in clinic altogether. The next time, the minister denied the number of Yukoners on the wait-list. Then, just weeks ago, the minister told the media that a public walk-in clinic is — and I quote — certainly something we are exploring. Each time, the minister's story, numbers, and excuses change, but for the many Yukoners without primary care, nothing has changed at all.

Can the minister tell Yukoners when they can expect a public walk-in clinic?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I don't think that it will surprise anyone that I don't agree with the preamble to that particular question. What is important here is that Yukoners have access to health care in its various forms across the territory and that we put them at the centre of what is a soon-to-be modernized Yukon health care system.

We have a road map; it is *Putting People First*. We have a great relationship with the Yukon Medical Association, and we are working closely with them with respect to how we can resolve the issues of current concern to Yukoners regarding their primary care, but we must remember that there are lots of ways in which Yukoners can have access to medical care here in territory.

I have recently met the new physician recruiter with respect to the partnership with the Yukon Medical Association. I will meet again with her tomorrow, and I look forward to doing that. Health care recruitment and retention strategies represent one part of our overall work to support Yukoners to lead healthy and happy lives.

Mr. Speaker, our government has expanded the scope of practice for pharmacists. We have improved access to preventative treatments, and we have increased the number of specialists here in the territory.

I look forward to continuing my answer.

Ms. Blake: My question is simple: When the minister told Yukoners that the public walk-in clinic was something that she was certainly exploring, she was asked for details. The minister couldn't provide them. She said — and I quote: Not sometime soon, and there is no time frame.

I am sure that the over 2,000 Yukoners without primary care are eager to know what this actually means for them. Will the minister open a public walk-in clinic — yes or no?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I do appreciate the question and I appreciate that it is one part of the services that can be provided for Yukoners. I also appreciate the attempt to make policy regarding medical services here in the territory on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

It's a very important question to Yukoners. We have provided \$4.52 million to the Yukon Medical Association in the 2021-22 main estimates to administer 14 physician

recruitment and retention initiatives, including the medical student bursary program, the preceptor support program, a locum support fund, and others. We have also, by comparison, almost doubled that funding from the 2014-15 year in that particular budget.

A walk-in clinic is an important potential option for the territory. We are absolutely exploring that. We're exploring it with local physicians who would need to be supportive of that process and perhaps initiate that process. I'm looking forward to those conversations with individual physicians and with the Yukon Medical Association and ultimately with the Canadian Medical Association, which has this physician recruitment and retention across the country as one of their top issues.

Question re: Rural solid-waste transfer stations

Mr. Istchenko: When my constituents on the north Alaska Highway invited the Minister of Community Services to a meeting about the closure of the solid-waste transfer station at Silver City, they were disappointed with the minister's abrasive approach and unwillingness to consider their input. In fact, some even started a petition urging the minister to launch real consultations before the transfer station that many of them rely on is closed.

Yesterday, we saw the minister admit that he failed to consult with municipalities on changes to the *Municipal Act* as he was forced to shelve the bill until the spring.

So, this retrieve gave my constituents hope that he will also admit that he failed to consult on the plans to close the rural transfer station. Will the minister now also agree to delay the closure of the solid-waste transfer station until proper consultation has occurred with residents and their views can actually be considered?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I welcome the opportunity to talk about how we're modernizing our waste management systems across the territory so that they match the systems that are used across the country. This hasn't been done before, and it happened because municipalities came to my colleague and asked that he actually improve the way that waste management is being done in the territory because they could not deal with the costs any longer. They wanted it dealt with properly.

What we have is a three-phase plan to deal with waste management. The first phase is already complete. The goal is to have waste management facilities across the territory that are supervised and gated so that we do not have people throwing hazardous waste, paints, solvents, and other deleterious materials into a landfill without any supervision.

Now we're doing that in all communities. In four locations, four transfer stations are going to close because currently we can't supervise them. We do not want to have a hole in this bucket where people can throw contaminated waste or other garbage without being seen. So, we are going to close four transfer stations in the territory as part of the plan that we agreed to with the Association of Yukon Communities. That plan is proceeding through the Association of Yukon Communities' process, and we welcome more questions on this topic this afternoon.

Mr. Istchenko: The question that I actually asked was if the minister would agree to do proper consultation with the residents.

So, the residents on the north Alaska Highway aren't the only ones dissatisfied with the minister's lack of consultation. The government has also made the decision to close the transfer station at Johnsons Crossing. The minister's "go it alone" approach on this has also upset those residents.

Will the minister agree to host a public meeting with affected residents to seek their input before the transfer station at Johnsons Crossing — which several residents and businesses rely on — is closed permanently?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Currently, managing garbage and recycling costs Yukoners more than \$12 million a year. We are working to manage these escalating costs and reduce environmental risk. We want to do well by our territory and by our territorial environment. We want to make sure that we are doing things better, cleaner, and more efficiently. That's what we are doing. We are working with the Association of Yukon Communities to do this.

The Yukon solid-waste management system of the previous government was not sustainable and it was necessary to take action. In fact, as I said, municipalities asked us to take action because they were tired of the intransigence of the Yukon government. My good colleague, the current Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, stepped up and started that work. He has done great work on this.

Promising to keep these transfer stations open, as the Yukon Party has done, shows a lack of leadership in an era where waste per person is going up. We are, as a society, creating more garbage. What we have to do is put a cost to that garbage and start to work as a society to reduce the amount of garbage we produce. This is happening in all other jurisdictions in the country, and it is now coming to the territory.

The Yukon Party clearly does not support responsible, sustainable waste management. They would have us go backwards. Yukoners have spoken; they want us to go forward. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Istchenko: So, the Minister of Community Services listed the failures when it comes to consulting communities and it doesn't stop there. The people of Keno have also been asking the minister to properly consult them before he shuts down their transfer station. Residents there have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the minister's efforts to engage them in a meaningful way. One resident told CBC — and I quote: "It kind of got off in a really heated way ... What took me back was the minister, pretty much after introducing himself, just stated from the get-go, 'Keno is expensive' — and that sort of set the tone that didn't resonate well with residents."

So, it's becoming a theme for this minister that communities don't appreciate his aggressive approach. He is straining relationships with communities and burning bridges. So, will he agree to reset and return to Keno with an open mind to listen to the community's input and some good ideas they have about solid waste?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I was at the same meeting, Mr. Speaker. I heard the concerns of the community, because

that's what we're doing. We're going to all the communities and hearing those concerns. I am more than happy to go out and meet with any municipality or group of citizens across the territory, and I will continue to do that in the coming weeks, months, and years.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that my honourable colleague has gone to those communities several times and talked about this plan. This hasn't been sprung on them by surprise. This has been years in the making. It is going forward.

The minister who has been taken off the bench and put back in rotation — he is now — he's the critic of "hard stop and reverse". We're not doing that, Mr. Speaker. We are actually going forward. We're going to actually put in place rules for waste management, throughout the territory, that meet the needs of the territory and the territory's citizens and takes it into the modern waste management era.

Question re: Condominium insurance costs

Ms. McLeod: The cost of insurance has skyrocketed over the past few years. Further, it has become increasingly difficult to get insurance for condos in the Yukon. As a result, local condo corps have seen their insurance rates skyrocket in recent years. For example, one condo corporation has seen their insurance rates increase by an average of 35 percent per year over the last five years. Increased insurance costs result in increased condo fees, which will make housing more expensive and reduce the supply of rental condos, as investors will not want to take the risks, especially since rents cannot be increased to recoup these costs.

So, what is the government doing to address that growing issue of insurance costs in this territory?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: First of all, I want to just commend the many folks who are volunteering on condo corporations across the Yukon. We have seen a real build-out of strata-titled infrastructure, and with that, we have seen a lot more individuals who are in these roles.

The Official Opposition, as well as government, has white papers that have been shared with them that really define some questions around: How do we move forward? Are there ways for government to be able to look at pooled insurance type of policies?

At this point, the Yukon Housing Corporation is sharing information with the Finance department. We are still looking through this, as is Justice. It's still a work in progress. Essentially, what we're looking at are best practices across the country. We know that prices have gone up, and there are many factors that are there, but the government is committed to working with condo corporations to look at solutions.

Strata-titled infrastructure is going to be key in the Yukon for us to deal with a massive need for housing, as we go forward, so I will report back to the House as we look at different solutions. We are going to continue to work with the condo corporations and the rest of the departments.

Ms. McLeod: One of the causes is that there are now only about three insurers active in the Yukon market, down from about 11 a few years ago. The insurance market is increasingly considering condos as a non-profitable sector. A

lack of competition is driving up costs and reducing the availability of insurance. The risks that are being covered for condos are shrinking, with things like flood being impossible to get, and the deductibles of at least one major condo in Whitehorse increased from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

This is unsustainable and may eventually leave condo owners with uninsured assets that they cannot resell. Will the government agree to launch a comprehensive study into what legislative or regulatory tools the Government of Yukon can use to address this growing issue?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Yes, I would like to say first that we are taking this very seriously, whether the term that we use for the work and due diligence is a "comprehensive review" or a "cross-departmental team", or "task team", or "tiger team". I think what we will commit to is that we certainly take this issue very seriously.

I think that it is important to note that, even as we watch news feeds over the last week, this is going to continue to be a challenge. We are seeing great impacts from climate change. These are things that are going to drive pricing. We see this from coast to coast to coast. It is an issue that is being talked about in many different corners and with many different governments.

We are going to continue to look at solutions to this. I agree that, if there are ways for the government to lean in or step in, that's something that we need to look at. Again, this is something that has built over time, even to the point where a number of condominium complexes across the country had problems with water damage and leaking just from flood infrastructure. All of these things have been driving the costs.

As the member opposite said — which is absolutely correct — now we have fewer companies to provide this service. So, again, we are committed to this, and we will keep working with folks to come up with solutions.

Ms. McLeod: It has become increasingly difficult to get insurance at all for condos in the territory. One condo corporation was a month past their renewal date before they were able to find a new insurer, as their former provider had left the Yukon market. As the number of condos in the territory increases, we need to take urgent action on this so that a lot of condo owners don't find themselves living in uninsured homes.

What will the government do to address this issue in the short term?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: On November 26, I met with some condo owners about this very issue. I have tasked the Department of Community Services to look into this issue, because we do realize that, when you are dealing with condo insurance and trying to make sure that you are protecting your investment, it is important. We heard the same concerns about the number of brokers here in town and sort of a decline in the number of companies actually providing condo insurance, but the department does not believe that is true. I have asked for an analysis about who is providing insurance to the condo industry and how we might increase it, because it is a growth market for the territory. With our territory's economy going as great as it is, we are going to see more condo development, and we really

have to tackle this issue. Community Services and my officials are looking into this matter as we speak.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS RESPECTING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Motion respecting Committee Reports No. 1

Clerk: Motion respecting Committee Reports No. 1, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Mostyn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Chair of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges:

THAT the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges' first report, presented to the House on October 7, 2021, be concurred in; and

THAT the amendment to Standing Order 11 of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, recommended by the committee, limiting tribute speeches to three and a half minutes be adopted.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not going to be very long this afternoon; I'll be relatively brief. The Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges met a couple of months ago and reviewed the rules surrounding tributes. The committee agreed to limit the amount of time we spend paying tribute to Yukoners and events of local significance to three and a half minutes. I urge the House to respect the committee's decision and adopt this change.

With that, I'll take my seat and hear from the members opposite.

Mr. Cathers: We are pleased to see this motion coming forward. This decision was made by the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges. I believe it was in September that the meeting occurred. It is unfortunate to see government wait this long, and I do have to remind this House that, during debate on a motion brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition on our first Wednesday of this Sitting that proposed changing the guillotine clause, as it's commonly called, to prevent legislation being passed without it going through a full debate — at that time, the government's primary argument against it, as stated by the Member for Whitehorse West, was that it should be dealt with through the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges.

The member and the government committed to calling the next meeting of SCREP before November 12, but that's unfortunately just one more addition to their growing list of broken promises.

So, I will not be long. We will support this motion. It is intended to avoid what has become the practice of government of spending more time on tributes, eating into the time for debate of legislation, and capping it to a reasonable amount of time. We do urge the government to follow through on the commitment — that has now been overshoot by a few weeks —

of the chair of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges to actually call another meeting of that body.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I just want to share a few thoughts. I wasn't intending to stand today, but there were some things there that I think I would like to reply to.

First of all, with respect to tributes, the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges did meet. I think that it was a good conversation. I will have to check back, but I do believe that the full debate was three and a half minutes, but if we were going to have a time when we needed a little bit more time — for example, if we were giving a commemorative tribute — we could, at House Leaders, have a conversation and then alert that to the Speaker to say that we were going to allow it to go over now and then, with the acknowledgement of House Leaders.

There are many things that we wish to tribute here in this House, and there have been some very beautiful tributes — both long and short — but we wanted to try to make sure that there was enough time in the House for other business. If I look back — and I did just last night, as I always do at the close of every Sitting. I look back to try to see — and I compared the five years of us as a government and the five years of the Yukon Party as a government. The numbers that I have is that they called 643 tributes and we have called 494, so we have been limiting the number of tributes as well. While there are times when they go over three and a half minutes here — and usually we discuss that at House Leaders' meetings and talk about trying to keep them limited to three or three and a half minutes. There were times in the past under the Yukon Party government, in the 33rd Legislature, when there were many tributes — five in a day — and very long tributes. What we are doing here, through the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, is agreeing to come to a shorter timeline.

I am looking forward to the full agenda — the work plan that the committee has laid out — because the guillotine clause is one that I would like to debate in the standing committee. I look forward to that debate with all members of this Legislature to talk about how we can build in time limits to manage the legislation — that terrific work of the legislative drafters from the legislative counsel office where they do all that work to try to get us here — months of work — so that it isn't then played politics with here in this House. I think that it is important that we get there.

When I looked at how often the Standing Committee of Rules, Elections and Privileges has been called in the past under the Yukon Party, it was not called. It was not convened. It did not do work. I am very happy that work is happening now, and I look forward to this debate today.

Ms. Tredger: I'll start by saying that we support the recommendation of SCREP — the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges. I just want to say a little bit about why I support this motion.

I was at the meeting where this was discussed. I think that sometimes, as a fairly new member of this Legislature, I try

really hard not to forget what we're here to do. What we're here to do is to make the Yukon better for Yukoners. I think that choosing our words carefully and speaking for a short amount of time helps that; it helps us to have useful discussions. I hope that what we try to do all the time in here is to choose our words carefully — choose words that are going to make things better for Yukoners.

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

Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I want to correct the record myself a little bit this afternoon. The motion that the Member for Lake Laberge referred to — where there was a commitment made — the motion never passed, Mr. Speaker. There is no commitment unless a motion passed. The members opposite did not pass a motion, and therefore it's not binding, Mr. Speaker.

I will also maintain that SCREP is the proper place to make changes to the rules of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk's office does a fantastic job — I really have a to commend them because they do a fantastic job researching these ideas. When we have ideas to change the rules of the House, it's really incumbent on us to do the research and see what the implications are of our actions. Sometimes in this House, we make decisions on the fly, and they really do not take into account the entirety of the issue. The Clerk's office, in this case, does a great job actually researching and looking at the implications of some of the decisions we make as politicians that we may not have thought about at the time.

I think that working through SCREP — through a committee that can take a moment and actually consider all of the implications of what we're talking about in governing this Chamber, looking at it from a wider context, what happens in the rest of the country, and making sure that we're not stepping in any unforeseen traps that we just didn't consider — is really important. I think that the Clerk's office does a tremendous job doing that.

The member opposite is wrong again. He said that we had more tributes. It's actually not, as my colleague has noted — 643 tributes under their last five years and 494 under ours. We would love to do more tributes, but this House actually took an action that restricted the number of tributes that we gave, so we are living by those rules.

I made a commitment to hold four SCREP meetings a year — the member opposite said that I haven't called one. He should check his calendar because there is an invitation to the next SCREP meeting. I look forward to seeing him at that meeting in the coming weeks.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat and look forward to the next SCREP decisions that we take in the coming months.

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. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Mr. Cathers: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion respecting Committee Reports No. 1 agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

Bill No. 202: *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — continued

Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any further general debate?

Department of Education — continued

Hon. Ms. McLean: Madam Chair, I would like to again thank our officials for attending today: Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education, and Andrea McIntyre, director of Finance. Thank you so much for being here once again for this important debate.

Thank you again for the opportunity to rise today to speak to the Education supplementary budget, Vote 3, Bill No. 202.

I would like to go back to some of the questions that were asked in previous debates, but I would like to start with some other comments first. A foundational piece of this budget is for early learning and childcare. I am happy that we had some debate around that yesterday. Our government is dedicated to a child-centred approach for implementing accessible, affordable, inclusive, and high-quality universal early learning and childcare for Yukon families.

The agreement that we have reached with Canada symbolizes this and enhances Yukon's early learning and childcare funding program, launched in April, which directly reduces the monthly cost to parents by \$700 per month per child attending full-time, licensed daycare programs. We are making childcare more affordable for Yukon families, increasing accessibility, and focusing on increasing the number of licensed childcare spaces available in Yukon.

These investments will help us reach our goal of providing every Yukon family with access to high-quality, affordable childcare with robust and inclusive learning programs. While we were able to significantly reduce fees for Yukon families with children in licensed childcare, under the new universal childcare model with Canada's support, we can expand the provision of an average of \$10 a day for licensed childcare spaces.

We are working with operators and indigenous governments to support building this capacity, and we will continue to offer territorial funding to support start-up costs among all operators, including for-profit centres. We have, and I do have the list with me, in terms of all of our licensed childcare centres — there are 77 licensed childcare centres and family day homes, of which 23 are family day homes; eight are First Nation-owned and -operated; and 46 are other-owned and -operated. One childcare centre is a rural sustainability project — the Watson Lake daycare; the remaining 76 are funded under the universal program.

We are supporting cultural enhancement goals for implementing early learning programs that feature place-based, on-the-land, and experiential learning; local indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being; traditional language learning, and more. I will speak a bit more about the cultural enhancement piece, because I think that it is an important new feature that we just announced recently.

We are delivering inclusive, accessible programming and one-on-one childcare educator support for Yukon children with additional needs. Enhancing our early learning and childcare program provides benefits to all Yukoners. Not only is this an investment that benefits our children's development, it's an investment that benefits our local economy and equality in the workforce. We know that women face unique and disproportionate economic barriers and work challenges, which were heightened this year by the COVID-19 pandemic. I've had a chance to speak about that, particularly when we debated the Women and Gender Equity supplementary budget, one that is very close to my heart and is an important priority for our government. By providing greater access to affordable, high-quality, and inclusive childcare, we are reducing barriers to entering the workforce and ensuring that the proper supports are in place for women and families when returning to work.

I look forward to continuing working with Canada, indigenous governments, First Nation partners in Yukon, and other stakeholders toward ensuring all Yukon families have access to affordable, inclusive, high-quality early learning and childcare.

In respect to the member's questions yesterday, I would like to provide more clarity. All licensed childcare operators have the same access to funding under the universal program — First Nation- or privately operated centres. The universal program is designed to limit the fees the operator can charge, with the goal of Yukon families paying an average of \$10 or less. Currently, families in Yukon are averaging childcare costs of less than \$10 per day.

These are two funding streams under the universal program. Parent fee reduction is the same across all licensed childcare operators. Operating funding has slight differences in the eligible amounts, based on whether the childcare centre is in Whitehorse or in rural Yukon. The higher wage enhancements and operating reductions are meant to offset the higher costs of providing programming in rural Yukon.

The model provides flexibility for the Yukon to address the unique context and needs of the territory, First Nation governments, rural communities, and childcare providers. Why one parent pays no fees versus another parent who pays reduced fees is complex, as every operator fee structure is different. Each operator determines their program fees, which must be within 10 percent of Yukon average. If an operator has set their program fees to \$800 per month for a full-time toddler, the parent fee would be \$100 per month. A different operator may set the same program fee at \$700 per month, which would reduce it to no parent fee.

Operators, whether under the administration of a First Nation government or privately operated, have much flexibility in how they deliver their early learning and childcare. Some examples that impact the cost of operating a program are, but not limited to, the wages they pay their educators; whether they own or lease a building; whether they are for-profit or non-profit; whether they are owned and operated by a First Nation government; the business model they operate under, such as a day home, childcare centre, after-school program, or otherwise; the hours they operate, including full time, part time, after

school, or evenings; the type of programming; and the capacity, including the number of spaces the childcare centre is licensed for.

The above examples are why a family may pay no fees or reduced fees. It all depends on the model of the operator.

What is important, I think, to reiterate is that all licensed centres have equal opportunity to access the funding available under the universal early learning and childcare program.

I wanted to talk about a few other really notable features within early learning and childcare. I am pleased that we announced that the governments of Canada and Yukon are supporting a benefits program for early childcare educators. Early childcare educators working in licensed Yukon early learning and childcare programs will have significantly more access to comprehensive insurance benefits, thanks to the launch of the early learning and childcare benefits funding program.

The program provides compensation for up to eight percent of staff wages for employers to select and offers a comprehensive benefits package that meets the needs of their employees from a registered Canadian insurance provider. A combined total of \$800,000 in funding from the governments of Canada and Yukon is available to every licensed early learning and childcare program in the Yukon, including operators currently offering benefits for employees. Those operators can also receive retroactive funding for providing their employees with benefits from April 1, 2021.

As of April 1, 2022, providing benefits for early childcare educators will be an integral part of Yukon's universal childcare program. Moving forward, benefits for educators will be considered a standard part of Yukon early learning and childcare funding programs. Following a child-centred approach, the governments of Canada and Yukon are committed to supporting access to early learning and childcare that is high-quality, affordable, inclusive, and flexible.

I would like to share now how operators can access the funding for benefits. Licensed early learning and childcare programs that are currently offering comprehensive benefits to employees from a registered Canadian insurance provider may submit a benefits funding application to the Early Learning and Child Care unit at the Department of Education before January 1, 2022. This funding will cover the period from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022.

Licensed early learning and childcare programs interested in offering comprehensive benefits to employees from a registered Canadian insurance provider will register in a benefits program and then submit a benefits funding application to our Early Learning and Child Care unit at the Department of Education before February 15, 2022. Operators can also access a group benefit plan offered by their local chamber of commerce.

How will this funding help increase access to childcare spaces in Yukon communities? Each community in Yukon is very unique. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we are working closely with community partners to best develop universal childcare options that work for Yukoners where they live. Building capacity for new childcare centres in our

communities continues to be a significant focus for us. As I have mentioned, as well as working collaboratively to identify and respond to the unique needs of the communities and their early learning programs, we are working with community partners, First Nation governments, other partners, Yukon University, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities, expand local education opportunities, and create career development pathways for early childhood education.

Our benefits funding program is designed to support the recruitment and retention of a qualified early learning and childcare workforce. The recruitment and retention of enough qualified staff to meet the minimum required education to child staffing ratios has been raised by many Yukon communities as a significant challenge. By increasing the return value of the ECE career path, such as with this dedicated funding for benefits, we will see the number of qualified educators increase in a more desirable Yukon job market. More qualified ECEs means more spaces available to children in early learning and childcare programs.

We are determined to find creative solutions to support children and families in every Yukon community in a way that works for each community.

Another really exciting area — I would like to highlight that, as part of the Canada/Yukon-wide early learning and childcare agreement over the next two years, licensed early learning and childcare programs and early childhood educators in the Yukon will have access to \$800,000 in cultural enhancement funding to develop: enhanced, culturally rich early learning programs and environments focused on Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, learning, and being; place-based outdoor experiential learning opportunities; francophone language and culture; and languages and cultures of other diverse populations.

Funding can be accessed through two initiatives: the cultural enhancement project for licensed early learning and childcare operators valued at \$2,000 per licensed family day home or \$5,000 per licensed centre; and cultural resource funding for Yukon's early childhood educators to develop resource kits, providing materials to support culturally responsive programming valued at \$500 for use in licensed early learning programs.

I'll do a few more highlights and examples of the cultural enhancement project that programs can apply for. Recognizing Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being and Yukon's diverse cultures and backgrounds, the cultural enhancement project funding has been created to support licensed early learning and childcare programs to provide experiences and programming that supports children to develop a sense of place. Projects could feature: place-based, on-the-land, and experiential learning opportunities; Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being; francophone Yukon language and culture; languages and cultures of other diverse populations; and experiences and learning opportunities to ensure that the culture of children is acknowledged and valued.

Using these criteria, licensed programs are encouraged to apply for funds that meet the diverse needs of their learners

while deepening children's relationships with the land and place. This could look like field trips, elder visits, outdoor experiences, hands-on experiences with guest speakers and community experts, materials such as wall tents, children's snowshoes, kicksleds, and more.

Recognizing Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being and the Yukon's diverse cultures and backgrounds, the cultural resource funding has been created to support licensed early learning and childcare programs and early childhood educators to provide culturally responsive programming and materials to children they are nurturing. In terms of the resource kits, they would feature: place-based, on-the-land experiential learning opportunities; Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being; francophone Yukon language and culture; languages and cultures in other diverse populations; and those experiences and opportunities to ensure that the culture of children is acknowledged and valued. Using this criteria, programs and educators are invited to create resource kits that meet the diverse needs of their learners while deepening children's connection with diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.

I will potentially get into some of the other answers related to schools.

I am assuming that the members opposite are going to move back to schools. I am not sure.

I am really looking forward to more debate today on the Department of Education and our supplementary budget in Vote 3.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for her opening statement and welcome back the officials. I know that the minister tabled a number of legislative returns today related to Education questions. I thank her, and I thank her department officials especially for getting those turned around so quickly for us and onto the floor of the Legislature. I obviously haven't had a chance to review them, so some of my questions here today may be contained in those legislative returns.

I just wanted to start with a couple of questions about the COVID-19 staff numbers that are affected in Education. I know that the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission tabled a legislative return that I haven't had the opportunity to see yet, so the information may be included in there. I am curious if the minister can tell us how many staff are now on leave without pay. Obviously, the mandate came in yesterday. Can she give us a breakdown of how many are urban and how many are rural, as well as any other breakdown information that she is able to provide without violating any confidentiality aspects with respect to human resources?

I know that the minister is responsible for funding a number of non-governmental organizations, or NGOs. I am curious if she has any idea how many of those were affected directly by the vaccine mandate, and if she has any idea or has begun any work to determine how many staff are affected at those NGOs that the department funds.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Again, vaccination is one of the most effective ways to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in schools. We see right now the positive impacts of vaccination

on our secondary schools, which have significantly fewer exposure notices than elementary at this point.

I have done a return around this. Approximately 96 percent of employees of the Department of Education have completed their attestations. As of 11:30 a.m. on December 1, a total of 22 regular employees — including 13 teachers, nine EAs, and no Yukon First Nation language teachers — are unattested. So, we are talking about 22 regular employees. This does not include employees who have an active exemption request being evaluated. These numbers may increase if exemption requests are denied. That is the process that is in play right now.

I will endeavour to bring back a legislative return on the non-governmental organizations that the member has asked questions about, but I can verify that all volunteers, folks, or organizations providing services within schools that are non-government have a requirement to be fully vaccinated.

A good example of that is the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, which works in many of our schools throughout the territory, if not all. They require their staff to be fully vaccinated, so that is one example that I have.

The numbers are very small, so I will not break down the number I have given around the 22 regular employees by urban or rural. What I can say is that most schools have experienced minimal impacts to operations from the implementation of the mandatory vaccination requirement. A small number of schools were able to minimize impact by adjusting student learning groups or deploying teachers on call. Of course, the Department of Education continues to closely monitor any potential impacts to operations due to unvaccinated employees. We are prepared to make operational adjustments, as needed, to ensure minimal impact on schools.

We continue to encourage employees on leave without pay to verify their vaccination status with at least one dose. That can happen now.

I will stop there, and hopefully I have been able to answer the questions for the member opposite.

Mr. Kent: I thank the minister for that. I understand that the small numbers may not allow her to give us any further detail. I appreciate the detail she did share: Four percent of officials have not yet attested to either the first or being fully vaccinated — the 22 educators, 13 teachers, and nine EAs — I believe is the number she gave.

I am curious if the minister has any numbers with respect to teachers or EAs who, prior to the deadline coming into effect, opted for early retirement. Would the minister have any of those numbers for us here today?

Hon. Ms. McLean: In terms of where we're at with other folks who may have decided to leave their position, yes, I acknowledge that there are folks who have left their position or have taken early retirement. The number is too small to report. It is very, very minimal. I don't want to breach any privacy or confidentiality around folks' personal choices. I just want to emphasize again that the numbers that I have given are as of December 1, at approximately 11:30. On December 1, we had 22 regular employees, and that includes 13 teachers and nine EAs, who are unattested. These numbers may change, because folks can choose to become vaccinated and do an

attestation now, and they will be reinstated and will then be required to have a second vaccination by January 30. There would be another attestation process that would occur around that time for people to be able to report that.

Mr. Kent: With due respect to the minister on the numbers for early retirement, I know of at least one that was mentioned at a public meeting that we attended. I wasn't asking for specific schools or urban/rural breakdown; I was just curious as to how many individuals opted for early retirement once the mandate was put in place and perhaps if they had indicated that was the reason that they were retiring.

I will move on to some other questions. I know that time is tight here this afternoon. I did want to talk about the student transportation, or the school bus, issues. I had the opportunity to raise this earlier this week in Question Period. As the minister no doubt knows, there have been a number of routes in and around Whitehorse in particular where either the entire day has been cancelled for school bus service or a portion of the day. I think I went on the contractor's app earlier today, and I believe there are two buses that either aren't running in full or are partially running, even today.

Recognizing that there are driver shortages — and I asked the minister the other day if there were some specific actions that she could point to that she or her government are taking to assist the contractor to alleviate this driver shortage — and often, Question Period doesn't give us an opportunity to get into too much detail on those types of things, so I'll ask again.

Can the minister just give us a sense of what specific actions they are contemplating in working with the contractor to alleviate the driver shortage that is affecting many routes throughout the territory, but mostly in and around the Whitehorse area?

Hon. Ms. McLean: I want to go back to the previous question, just for a moment, around staff who may have decided to leave their employment with the Department of Education and Yukon government. Within the Department of Education, again, the number is small — I can count on one hand how many. I just want to be clear that it's not a huge number of folks who have left their position. Again, that is a personal choice. It could be for a lot of reasons why folks may decide to take retirement or decide to leave their position. There may be a lot of reasons and factors there. I am not going to speculate fully on that, but it's around this timing.

Moving on to the work that the Department of Education is doing around busing, we have a contractor — Standard Bus — that provides busing services for our children's transportation to and from school. We acknowledge that, like many other jurisdictions, Yukon is facing a driver shortage. We are working with our contractor to support them in their recruitment efforts. That is something that we are doing. Also, I just want to say that, in terms of working with rural communities, working with some of our own superintendents — through school councils and through other community contacts — we are working to identify folks who could potentially take on that role in a community.

I want to emphasize, as well, that there is considerable training that has to occur for people to take on these positions,

and it is definitely during a challenging time around navigating a global pandemic. I can say that, right now, we do have — and Standard Bus has brought folks in from other jurisdictions. We have had folks from BC, and we now have at least one driver from Alberta who is here. Standard Bus is dealing with driver shortages as best they can, including, as I have said, sending up drivers from out-of-territory when and where they are available. We are working with them to develop contingency plans to help ensure that cancellations do not affect the same route for multiple days in a row. I have met with a lot of school councils, and busing has come up at many of them. I think that we have had something like 16 or 17 school council meetings in the last couple of months, and so there have been a lot of discussions with communities and with schools across the territory. This has certainly come up at a number of them. It is, of course, around this driver shortage, and it is really great that school councils are willing to help to mitigate some of the issues around this. The goal is always to ensure that our busing services are providing the service that is needed and such a huge part of having children get to and from school safely.

I want to thank the staff at the Department of Education for being so quick to get the busing schedules out this year and to ensure that folks knew and were assigned a seat on the bus. We have had driver shortages this year, but we have not had these spot shortages. I know that it was a struggle last year because we had less capacity and we were not able to transport as many children. There have been fewer issues around that this year, and I am happy about that. We will continue to work with Standard Bus to mitigate the issues. I want to also emphasize that the Department of Education works with the school busing committee on matters affecting the delivery of shared busing services, so we will continue to have those discussions.

As I've stated, we have had many, many school council meetings over the last couple of months and have committed to working with school councils on any issues that they are having and that they want us to work collaboratively on — and really opened up those lines of communication. So, we will continue to work with them at that level and to work with Standard Bus to ensure bus service for Yukon children.

Mr. Kent: I do have some specific student transportation issues that constituents have brought forward that I think are better to share in a letter or an e-mail with the minister. I will do that as well for those constituents.

Hopefully by this time next year, we will be through the pandemic and we can regroup on recruitment and retention numbers for the contractor and what types of actions and support the government was able to provide to ensure that we had a full complement of staff who are working for the busing contractor.

I do want to go back and ask a few questions about the First Nation school board and just some other issues that have emerged since we last talked about it.

As we know, there are five school councils, including the Watson Lake joint council that voted to put it to a referendum in January on whether or not they should become members of the school board. There are a number of petitions now, I believe — more than just the original two. There are additional ones in

the Whitehorse area that are out and looking for the 20-percent threshold for signatures. Of course, we know that those results won't be known until the week of December 13. The minister has mentioned that, if those are successful, they would also be part of January's referendum. For us and for some members of the school community, there is a sense that it might seem like it's a bit of a rushed process.

The question for the minister is: How will the minister ensure that there will be an opportunity for fair communication in school communities that have gone through the petition process rather than the school council motion process, which was due at the end of October? How will there be an opportunity for fair communication for those other petition communities during the referendum process? Because with the December 13 closure and then schools being out for a couple of weeks over the Christmas and holiday break, the voting, I believe, starts on January 11 when the voting opportunity opens, and those polls are open until the end of January.

We are getting some questions from some Yukoners in these petition areas. They don't feel that there is enough time for proper and informed communication in such a condensed time and given the time of year.

Again, the question is: What is the minister doing to ensure that the process is fair?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thanks for the question around the Yukon First Nation school board process. I have been clear, I think, in terms of where we are right now.

As of today, we are in receipt of the school councils that have passed resolutions. There are five communities but six schools, because Watson Lake has a combined school council. We have received those. Those, we know, are going to a referendum in January. The deadline for petitions — and those who have taken out petition packages and requested them through the Chief Electoral Officer have until December 13 to complete them. I am not in receipt of any complete petitions at this point, but that is the deadline. Then there will be a process to verify and do the due diligence around verifying the criteria for a complete petition.

We will continue, as we have to date, with communities that have chosen to go through their school councils and have issued the resolutions. We are currently working with communities. The Department of Education has offered to support school communities that have triggered a referendum in whatever community-based way that individual communities prefer, including information and resources grounded in the *Education Act* — all factual and neutral information — and that is our commitment to work with school communities. Of course, the date is coming in the next week or so. I will anxiously be waiting for that day as well to then determine next steps, but the information is already flowing to communities that have launched these referendums, and it would be a matter of extending that and modifying to the needs of any particular community. Our commitment is to ensure that folks are informed and well aware of what this process is, what it will mean to have a school go under the Yukon First Nation school board, and how that process will work.

I remain committed. This certainly is an area that our government is committed to. We do see Yukon First Nation education as a means to reconciliation. I am committed, of course, to continuing to work with Yukon First Nations in this regard. It is a high priority and within my mandate letter to support the creation of a Yukon First Nation school board. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Kent: I have just a couple more questions about the First Nation school board process and what will happen after the referendum date. I am curious, from a capital perspective, if there are any plans to build a First Nation school in Whitehorse — a stand-alone school similar, I guess, to what the francophone community has with École Émilie Tremblay as well as Paul-Émile Mercier high school. Are there any plans in the works for that?

I have just a couple of HR questions. We understand that a portion of the curriculum at any schools that choose to become part of the First Nation school board process will be changed. I am kind of curious as to what the plans are to have teachers be given the proper support and training before implementation or during implementation of those curriculum changes. If some teachers end up working at a school that is governed by the First Nation school board but perhaps find that it is not the right fit for them or, for one reason or another, don't want to work at that particular school, will the department be making any accommodations to transfer those individuals to other schools that are run by the department and are not governed by the First Nation school board?

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thank you for the question. This is an important mandate for our government. I will start with some discussion around the question about a new build of a First Nation school.

We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short-, medium-, and long-term facility needs. We are pleased that work is underway on new schools at Whistle Bend and Burwash Landing. The Government of Yukon has a five-year capital plan, as the member opposite knows, that includes school replacement/renovation projects to ensure that all buildings are safe and suitable for many years to come. The plan is based on current information and facility assessments. Should needs change, this plan is flexible and may be adjusted, for example, if safety issues were identified.

At this point, we have the commitment around the building of the Whistle Bend and the Burwash schools. Other school projects in the five-year capital plan include, as I have already stated: the new elementary school in Whistle Bend; the replacement of an existing, aging Whitehorse school, which has not been identified at this point; modular classrooms for short- and medium-term school needs at Selkirk Elementary, Hidden Valley, and Robert Service School; and as I have already stated, we are working with the Kluane First Nation to relocate the Kluane school to Burwash Landing. That work is underway and it's exciting. I am really looking forward to seeing the results of that long-standing request and need for that area of our territory.

The ongoing stabilization of the Ross River School is part of the plan, along with the Selkirk parking lot replacement and parking lot upgrade and upgrades at other schools.

Planning for 2021-22 processes include some of the following areas: \$10.525 million for the Whistle Bend elementary school; \$500,000 for the Burwash school planning; \$2.5 million for stabilization for the Ross River School; \$1.7 million to rebuild the modular classrooms at Selkirk and Hidden Valley; \$1 million for the Selkirk parking lot; \$4 million for the Robert Service School modular replacement, which is 100-percent recoverable from the Investing in Canada infrastructure program. That is where we are at there in terms of what our commitments are right now within our five-year capital plan.

In terms of your questions around the curriculum that would be used for schools that may come under the governance of a First Nation school board, the BC curriculum will be followed as it is now. Learning styles — there will be other ways of learning implemented, and those types of decisions will be made by the First Nation trustees, but the curriculum will remain.

In terms of your questions around teachers, I'll be clear here that all teachers will remain employees of Government of Yukon and will remain under the YTA. We have a collective agreement. There are clear procedures within the collective agreement around transfer procedures, also governed by the *Education Labour Relations Act*. These are processes that will remain in place, and all employees will remain the employees of the Government of Yukon. That is the case with the francophone school board that we have been working with for some time now. We have some good experience in how that works and have built good relationships and worked through issues that may have been there in the past. We're on good, solid ground around that agreement. It's going very well, so I think it is a good example.

I know that the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education had meetings with the trustees and executive for the francophone school board, and they have supported them in terms of providing information around the real, on-the-ground logistics of running a school board.

These are exciting times for the Yukon. This is a huge mandate commitment. I'm happy to be supporting the First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education to see this vision that is a long time coming in our territory in terms of First Nation responsibility over the education of First Nation children. As you are aware, that could potentially expand to others if we ratify a school board and move toward the election of trustees and actually get to the establishment of a First Nation school board.

Education in the Yukon will look different and rightfully so. We've had self-government in our territory for a very long time and our government is putting the time and effort to work through reconciliation. This is a big part of reconciliation.

We know that the education system — this is not news, I hope, to anyone in the House — has failed First Nation children on many fronts. Some of us came through the system; some of us didn't. That's a fact. Our aim is better outcomes for First

Nation children and all Yukon children. I remain committed to that as Minister of Education. I anxiously await the outcomes of these referendums and next steps. I am certainly not shying away from the work that's in front of us.

Mr. Kent: I want to close out my questions here today on some capital projects that are in the department. The first one that I did want to see if the minister can update us on is with respect to a partnership between Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments to purchase 1,300 devices to improve access to technology for Yukon First Nation students in kindergarten to grade 12. I think that the commitment between the two levels of government — Yukon government and First Nation governments — was \$950,000 in total. Of that, \$478,000 or so was the Yukon government's portion. I am curious if the minister can give us an update on the number of devices that were purchased and if that entire amount was expended. This comes from a news release in 2020.

Hon. Ms. McLean: The Department of Education is continually working to enhance the integration of technology into school programming to meet the needs of Yukon students, including ensuring that educational technology is secure, reliable, and equitable and that there is equitable access. During COVID-19, online and digital learning technologies and resources were, and continue to be, a key part of modern learning and are important tools for blended learning and continued learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. I think that there are some good examples in Yukon just this year where schools had to move toward blended learning, which is a very big part of our "learning through COVID" strategy. The Yukon government has budgeted, in the 2021-22 year, \$2.6 million for education technology. I know that the member opposite is asking a pretty specific question around learning devices from the previous budget. To further support equitable learning opportunities for students, the Government of Yukon partnered with Yukon First Nations and Yukon University to purchase devices to support Yukon First Nation students, and this was in last year's budget.

This was before my time as minister. I do not have the exact numbers, but what I can say is that, when I have met with school communities, this has come up a number of times, in terms of the value of the support that was provided, and it continues to be very important, as we learn through this school year in these sometimes challenging times where we have had to go to blended learning or, in the case of Tantalus School, where they went completely to remote learning.

This year, the Government of Yukon has made another example of working to support students and their learning. This year, the Government of Yukon is making a donation of retired Apple classroom computer devices to the Computers for Schools Yukon recycling program for K to 12 students. The Department of Education is currently investing in upgrading school computing devices, IT infrastructure, and bandwidth access. These are all areas that we continue to work on to ensure that we are able to continue to provide blended learning for students. I will ensure that we return that specific number to the member opposite and the distribution number to communities.

Mr. Kent: Yes, I would appreciate that. I think that it is a great program. I know that, in speaking with officials at the time, we had asked about whether or not this was something that Jordan's Principle would be providing, but it was my understanding that Jordan's Principle had sort of been saturated with requests for this type of purchase. That is why I was curious as to how many of the potential 1,300 devices were purchased and delivered. I look forward to getting that number from the minister when she gets a chance to provide it.

I know that the minister talked briefly about some of the capital projects. I just want to touch on a few of them that are in the five-year capital plan. The first one is the Burwash school. In a joint news release with the Kluane First Nation on January 28 of this year, there was a tender for an owner's advisor posted on Yukon Bids and Tenders. The owner's advisor was to provide expertise and guidance on this new school project. The tender was scheduled to close in February 2021. I just did a quick look on that Bids and Tenders website and was unable to find who the owner's advisor is. I don't need the name, obviously, of the contractor, but I am just curious if that has been awarded and when it was awarded and a breakdown of the \$500,000 — which is identified in this year's budget — of what has been spent so far.

Hon. Ms. McLean: This is a great project as part of our commitment to reconciliation and long-term capital planning for Yukon schools. We're absolutely pleased to be working in partnership with Kluane First Nation to relocate the Kluane school from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing.

Moving the current Kluane school from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing has been a long-standing request from the Kluane First Nation. We continue to work with the Kluane First Nation on this project. We know that there definitely have been a few delays here and there, but I'll get to where we're at, because it's exciting.

There has been an extended election period for Kluane First Nation. We understand now that the Kluane First Nation completed their election for chief and council on November 19, 2021. I would like to congratulate Chief Dickson on his re-election. I'm really looking forward to getting out to a meeting with him. We signed, in June 2020 — not me, but the previous minister — signed a memorandum of understanding outlining the commitment to plan and construct a new school in Burwash Landing. Although I did not sign that, I am absolutely honouring the MOU.

Where we're at right now — a community consultation happened on November 24 and 25. It was intended to solicit feedback and preferences from the community on the four concept designs that we currently have from the owner's advisor, which is the Taylor Architecture Group.

The next community consultation is currently scheduled for January 26 and 27. We're hoping to get out. I've been wanting to get out to the community since taking on this role and had hoped to get out there in June, when we were planning to have the CYFN general assembly. Chief Dickson, at the time, was excited about showing potential locations for the school. So, I'm hoping to get out there, but we may not be able to.

We will continue to monitor current COVID-19 guidelines and community travel and expectations from the community.

In terms of the dollars that are spent out of the \$500,000 right now, we have an actual expense of \$25,498. We have committed \$349,502, and this includes the dollars for the owner's advisor contract, which I have talked about — the Taylor Architecture Group.

The functional program is now finalized, and community consultations are on track to look at the concept designs. The dollars are committed for the year, and it is exciting work. The new school in Burwash Landing will allow Kluane First Nation to learn and thrive in their own community. We continue to work in collaboration with Kluane First Nation to move the project forward. We are excited about getting out there to see the site and to work with them in their process.

I know that one of the exciting things I have done this fall was to attend with the Minister of Highways and Public Works, where we arranged to have an elder do a land blessing for the Whistle Bend school and to enter into — ensuring that we are putting those really good intentions into the land and into the future of that school. We did that alongside Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council members. The building contractor — this was a meaningful process, so I am excited about what Kluane will do in terms of how they will launch their project, and I am sure that it will be significant.

So, I really look forward to putting these really careful intentions into infrastructure builds that we do and to do things in a different way. That is certainly my commitment and our government's commitment to really embrace truth and reconciliation. This project is one of the biggest signals toward reconciliation and one that we are excited to deliver on. So, more to come — thank you for the questions.

Mr. Kent: I wanted to move to the work being done at the Robert Service School. In this supplementary budget, the government is looking for an additional \$2.4 million to bring the total budget for that school in this fiscal year to \$6.4 million. I understand that work has recently started on it, so I have just a couple questions for the minister.

I am curious about the scope of the project — why it changed so much. The budget has gone up significantly. I believe that it was originally \$2 million when there were some renovations being done, and there was mould discovered, so it changed from a renovation to a replacement. That budget was \$4 million, as tabled in May when the government tabled their budget after the election, and now it has gone up to \$6.4 million for this fiscal year.

I'm curious if the minister can tell us if they are confident that the entire \$6.4 million will be able to be spent in the current fiscal year and why the scope has changed so much, which has changed the budget in such a way.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thanks for the question. This has been a work in progress for sure. I think that this is a really good example of how the Department of Education has worked with the school community, including Tr'ondek Hwëch'in, to really be involved in the visioning and design process of a four-classroom addition. It is not just a portable; that is why we have

moved from that language. The school in Dawson City is the heart of the community itself.

I had a chance to do a tour of the space. I thank the school officials and the administration for accommodating that. It gave me a good sense of what the space is like. I do have a good sense of that as a result of that tour and taking the time to meet with everyone and to meet with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and hear what their vision is. As the member opposite is aware, we have a 17.7 agreement with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in around their deep involvement in shaping education in the Robert Service School.

We continue to work with the school communities on planning for their short-, medium-, and long-term facility needs. We are certainly pleased that the work is well underway on the Robert Service School addition. The two old modular structures have now been decommissioned and removed from the site. The school community and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been involved in the visioning and design process for the four-classroom addition.

The public tender was issued for construction of the modular structure, and a contract has been awarded to Wildstone Construction. I know that there were some difficulties with attending the Legislature remotely during the day when we did this particular ministerial statement. I wasn't able to reply because I couldn't hear everything, but when I went back and listened to the transcripts, I became well aware of some of the comments that were made that day by the member opposite regarding this project. I think that the way that it was spoken about did no service to that school community and diminished it in some ways. I am glad that I have a chance here today to speak to it again.

I note that the member opposite made some comments around the previous minister in terms of her not moving forward with a local contractor because the type of modular was not available by a local contractor. This project has changed. It is an addition, and it is being done by Wildstone Construction. I want to clarify that for the record because I think that it is important that we are clear with Yukoners and really hold up our school communities. This is a good news story for that community. One of the great things about it — and the reason the scope has changed — is because we really visioned with the community and determined what the needs are. The cost of the project has increased. The great news is that Canada — these are all recoverable dollars. This is part of our supplementary budget that we have brought forward, so I thank you for your question regarding the supplementary budget. I was wondering if I would get very many of them. Now we've had two in a row, so thank you for that.

The excavation is now underway to put the foundation in place, and construction will continue over the winter. The expansion is anticipated to reach substantial completion by March 2022. This additional learning space and the administrative spaces will meet the current needs of the school. We will continue to work with the school community on longer term planning. It allows for the early kindergarten discussion to continue with the community because it will help us to address the space needs that the school currently has. Again, I had the

chance to see the structure of the classrooms and I have a really good understanding of that, and I know that the deputy minister does as well.

We will continue to work in that collaborative way with the community. I had great discussions with a lot of folks in Dawson over the summer on two separate occasions when I was able to have direct discussions with folks around space needs in the community.

I'm happy to continue to talk about this project. It's an important one for us, and it's meeting a huge need for the Dawson City community and the Robert Service School community.

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

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair (Ms. Tredger): Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education, in Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

Is there any further general debate?

Mr. Dixon: I would like to pick up on some questions that I had with regard to the early learning and childcare system and some of the changes brought in, in the new program over the last year. I will start with some broader ones and then dig into a few specifics.

The first question I have is a general question with regard to the model that the Yukon has chosen for this. I know that it has been determined, in part, by influence from Canada, as they are providing a significant amount of the funding, but I had heard previously, before the election, the government talk about their desire to follow what they referred to as the "Québec model" of early learning and childcare.

I think, for a lot of the folks, that's a reasonable decision to make, that the Québec model is one that has a fair amount of support in a lot of the literature about childcare in the country. However, I should note that the Québec model is not without its challenges and not without its issues. In particular, what we have seen develop in Québec over the last few years has been a fairly significant degree of stratification within their early learning system where there are a number of different tiers. Of course, the marquee tier is the CPEs that are run by the Québec government, les centres de la petite enfance. Those are the subsidized daycare spaces that are run by the government.

The problem with those is that there are extremely long wait times to get into those. The wait times for those spaces are very long. I have heard of families having their children going from zero to four and the entire time being on those wait-lists. What has cropped up is a number of other tiers below the regulated ones. What that means is a whole other shadow, or parallel, system of daycares in Québec.

I don't raise those as a criticism of this government's decision to follow Québec's model. I think that there is a lot of

good that Québec achieved as well. I guess my question is: Has the government given any thought to measures that they can take, or things that they can do, to avoid some of the more negative aspects of the Québec system cropping up in Yukon?

As we build the system essentially from the ground up, if we can give some thought to some of those more negative outcomes that have occurred in Québec and try to address them at the early stage in our system before they become an issue, as they have been in Québec —

For instance, I note that in Québec, the number of spaces that are provided through those CPEs represent only about a third of the spaces in Québec. Two-thirds of the spaces are then either in for-profit or unregulated childcare spaces. There is a lot to be lauded in the Québec model, but there are some significant challenges, and I think, if we're going to follow that road, it would be wise to think about some of those challenges and how we might address them here.

I would be interested to hear what the minister has to say about that and whether or not there are some changes or unique features that we can add in that will avoid the more unfortunate outcomes that have come about as a result of the Québec model.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Thanks for the question. To continue on with the discussion around early learning and childcare in Yukon, again, this has been a really important initiative for our government. The new universal program focuses on three key areas: affordability, accessibility, and quality.

I want to say thanks for bringing up the Québec model. In the early days, that is where we were focusing a lot of our attention, but I can assure the member opposite that we have a made-in-Yukon model, and we have learned from other models across the country.

In terms of access to funding under the universal program, it is applied the same for all licensed childcare programs. I want to start with that. I am not sure if the member opposite was able to hear my opening comments. I went deeper into First Nation- and privately operated centres — that it is accessible across the board.

Keeping in mind those three areas — affordability, accessibility, and quality — that is where we have learned from other models, particularly on the quality aspect of it.

The new universal program reduces parent fees, as we know, by \$700 per child per month, under the affordability for full-time participation in licensed childcare programs, and has a flexible, pro-rated chart for reducing parent fees for those in part-time licensed programs. Parent fee increases are capped to ensure that parent fees remain affordable. We are working toward achieving \$10-a-day childcare and putting more disposable income into the hands of families.

Regarding accessibility, our goal is to increase the number of daycare and childcare spaces available. This has been a huge focus for us. One of the points that we worked really hard on with Canada when we were negotiating our agreement was to ensure that we would be able to continue to support for-profit centres. Our Yukon dollars are going toward supporting for-profit centres. Canada's dollars will go for not-for-profit centres, so we will be able to accommodate the needs of

communities. Economic Development and others taking that one-government approach are working with various communities right now to help them to establish these quality childcare services in our communities.

We are ensuring that childcare programs can be accessible to all Yukoners as costs to families have been significantly reduced. We are providing parents and guardians with more choices if they want to work outside of the home.

In terms of the quality — and this is where it gets into, I think, some of the questioning that the member opposite has brought forward around what has happened with some of the unintended outcomes of the Québec model. Again, we have learned from that. We have had that opportunity to learn from other models. I think that others will learn from us now in terms of where we are at.

The government provides funding to operators to support them in developing high-quality early learning environments through wage enhancement and quality enhancement funding. The new program provides a minimum wage of over \$30 an hour to fully qualified educators. These are some of the highest wages in Canada right now, so investments in early childhood educators will improve the quality of programming through enhanced training and retention strategies. This provides children an opportunity for learning and development in the early years and provides a continuum in a child's education.

I just want to point out that the University of Toronto Atkinson Centre identified Yukon as the new leader in early learning and childcare on May 20, 2021. I think that points to the fact that we have learned from others. We are looking forward to having discussions with our counterparts from across the country. Minister Gould is certainly asking Yukon to share the experience that we have had and to help to inform other jurisdictions as they look to establish a model that may be similar to ours or may take from what we have done or what Québec has done or others. We have certainly had the advantage of learning from others and look forward to helping other jurisdictions establish this because it will make a stronger country. I know that this is a key mandate for the federal government.

Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the minister's response there. I would just take this opportunity to flag that there were a number of challenges, not just with the model, but with the speed at which the government of the day in the late 1990s adopted the model. That is just something to keep in mind.

One of the things that the government did do in the early 2000s under the Jean Charest government was to expand the tax credit available to those parents who were not in the regulated system. I am aware that the Yukon government is looking at the development of a tax credit in a similar concept. I am wondering if the minister can provide us an update on the development of a tax credit in relation to childcare expenses and what the parameters of that tax credit could look like.

While I am on my feet, I will also add what will probably be my other last question, which is just an update from the minister on Watson Lake. I know that Watson Lake had initially not opted into the system that the government had put forward and instead wished to stay on the rural sustainability

model that they were on previously, although I am given to understand that perhaps they are reconsidering that and are either in negotiations or have completed negotiations to join in the system.

Those are the two questions that I have for the minister now.

Hon. Ms. McLean: I will bring information back on the question. I know that we are trying to get to another item on the agenda today, but I will endeavour to bring back more information on the tax credit. Maybe the member opposite and I can have some discussion to just clearly understand — I just want to make sure — outside of the Sitting today.

I will move quickly to the rural sustainability project and I will try to move through quickly. As of September 1, 2021, all licensed operators in Yukon, with the exception of the Watson Lake daycare, are participating in the new Yukon universal early learning and childcare program. The Watson Lake daycare opted to continue to participate in the rural sustainability pilot program.

Recently, staff from the Early Learning and Child Care unit met with Watson Lake daycare officials, and they have indicated that they would like to move to a new universal early learning childcare model that will meet their unique needs by the new year. It's great that our officials continue to work with folks.

One last thing I'll say on this particular area, just so we can be clear about the differences, is that in July 2021, licensed childcare centres signed on to the Yukon's universal childcare funding model. I think that the good news is that the Watson Lake daycare, in early days, chose not to be part of the Yukon universal childcare, but our officials and our department continue to work with them and would continue to support them under the rural sustainability project. However, they're now working toward opting in, and we'll continue to support them in whatever way we can.

I'm looking forward to having direct discussions with folks from the daycare as well. I have done that with other communities and would certainly be looking for that opportunity when we're able to travel more freely within the territory and in the comfort of the rural communities.

I will endeavour to bring more information back on the other question.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further general debate on Vote 3, Department of Education?

Seeing none, we'll proceed to line-by-line debate.

Ms. White: Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried, as required.

Unanimous consent re deeming all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried

Deputy Chair: The Member for Takhini-Kopper King has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of Committee of the Whole to deem all lines in Vote 3, Department of Education, cleared or carried, as required.

Is there unanimous consent?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Deputy Chair: Unanimous consent has been granted.

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$13,216,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$119,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$13,335,000 agreed to

Department of Education agreed to

Deputy Chair: The matter now before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*.

Do members wish to take a five-minute recess to allow the officials to take their place?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

Deputy Chair: Order, please. I will call Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill No. 6: Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021) — continued

Deputy Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*.

Is there any further general debate?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: First of all, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome back Jeff Simons and Sheri Hogeboom from the Department of Justice. They are the officials here to support this debate. I appreciate them being here. Thanks so much for your support and for helping members opposite as well as me with any questions that might be asked going forward.

I do not recall how much time I have, but it's a few minutes. I would like to just go back to one of the questions near the end of our previous debate about firearms, in particular, and the concerns brought forward with respect to that by the Official Opposition. My response was shortened based on our debate time, and I will just take a moment to respond. I am pleased to have that opportunity.

As I mentioned previously, the tabled amendment to the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* expands the scope of illegal activities. The safer communities and neighbourhoods unit — or what we call the “SCAN unit”, which is a pretty common acronym here in this debate and in the Yukon — can investigate to include activities related to child sexual exploitation, criminal organizations, and firearms. That is what is before the House — and the opportunity to continue that debate.

With the proposed amendment, the Government of Yukon is taking steps to continue supporting safe and healthy

communities wherein the possession or use and trade of illegal firearms, organized crime, and child sexual exploitation does not exist. To be clear, this government sees the amendments before us today as necessary changes that respond to changing criminal and social dynamics here in the Yukon.

I had the opportunity to recently meet with the RCMP here in the territory. We had a great discussion about a number of issues, not the least of which was the changing dynamics of criminal activity here in the territory, how they are seeing that change over the course of the last number of years, and how they are seeing it change over the time period of COVID — so since March 2020. Their emphasis certainly was on the concepts of trying to address organized crime with respect to drug dealing here in the territory and about the drug pipeline that comes from British Columbia and is more and more tainted with drugs that kill people, frankly. We have seen evidence of that in the numbers that have just come out from the chief coroner with respect to the opioid crisis here in the territory. I certainly thank her for her guidance and for her perspective on the opioid crisis, the difficult job that she does for Yukoners every day, and the support that she provides to Yukon families facing this kind of devastating loss.

There is no question in the conversation that I had with the chief superintendent and senior officials at the RCMP here in the territory that organized crime and drug dealing has taken its toll here in the territory and has increased significantly over the last number of years. I want to emphasize once more — and I am really trying to emphasize this because I know that this isn't the perspective of some of the members opposite and certainly of the Official Opposition — in response to comments made by one of the members opposite, that the lawful purchase, possession, use, storage, and transportation of firearms are activities that are not captured by the proposed amendments here before us.

The member opposite will tell Yukoners differently; he has done so, and he is wrong. If his party is not going to support these amendments to the SCAN act because of his interpretation, or their interpretation, of these changes, they are also wrong.

I urge them to reconsider this issue. I urge them to recognize that this issue is not open for interpretation. This is not about one interpretation of the changes versus another. They are not written so as to affect the lawful purchase, possession, use, storage, or transportation of firearms. They are simply not captured in these amendments.

I would like to recommend that all members of this Legislature support the passing of this *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)* as a means to ensuring that the SCAN unit can, upon complaint — because their process is complaint-driven — investigate and take action on these matters, as needed, and in turn increase public safety in Yukon communities.

I know that this is a great concern in Yukon communities with respect to how we are going to stop drugs entering communities and how those drugs — tainted, as they often are, if not almost always — are causing the deaths of Yukoners. They just are, but the organized crime opportunity in SCAN

would allow them, upon complaint, to investigate those kinds of things. They don't have the authority to do that right now. If the complaint is about one person dealing drugs, they have some opportunity to do that, but if it is about how those drugs are moving into a community, including Whitehorse, and if it is about how those drugs are moving here with the assistance of organized crime — which we cannot be naïve about. We can't pretend that, in the Yukon, it's not a thing. We cannot pretend that, in the Yukon, we are not being affected by the increased drug trafficking into this territory from places like Vancouver and Toronto — that it is done in an organized way, in a criminal organization, and that they are sending individuals here to infiltrate our communities, to start a drug trade, and to continue that drug trade.

That is real. This is a tool that we can use to help citizens of this territory, in the event that they observe such things, that they choose to make a complaint, and that the activity is causing a community to be unsafe. The criteria in the SCAN act does not permit investigations without those criteria being met. I know that I am taking time to emphasize this, but I feel strongly that these are changes that will assist SCAN and ultimately assist the RCMP in addressing these kinds of issues that do affect small and large communities here in the territory.

I don't know if I can say enough — and there is not often an opportunity here in this Legislative Assembly to talk about this unsavory situation in which Yukoners find themselves when they are trying to face things like the opioid trade and the drug trade here in the territory.

I appreciate the time today, but lastly, I just want to commit to the conversation that I have had with the Leader of the Third Party with respect to a full review of the SCAN act. It is nearly 20 years old. There has not been such a review — 16 and a bit — but, once you start a review, it will take a few years by the time that can happen. I have committed to doing that with the Leader of the Third Party. I have committed to returning this legislation to this Legislature to do such a thing, and I have committed to beginning a review without that change being put in the act by 2023. I have committed to that in writing, and I want to make sure that it is on the record here today.

So, I appreciate the opportunity to have clarified these issues. I am happy to answer questions with respect to this bill.

Ms. White: I can't help but notice that the gallery is full of firefighters, and this will be the only opportunity that I can acknowledge that they are there. I am glad that this time I don't have to tell you why I am not voting in favour of something, because that is not going to be the case.

I just wanted to make sure that I also acknowledge that there were discussions with the Minister of Justice. It is important to note that the SCAN legislation came forward in 2006 and the times have changed. I appreciate the highlighting of why these changes are coming through, but I also think that it is really important that this piece of legislation, which has so much reach and can have so much power, does not have a review clause.

So, the minister has committed in writing and has committed on the floor that there will be an amendment brought forward in the spring to add a five-year review clause. I think

that this is really important, and there was the acknowledgement that, if it was possible, we would have worked on doing it this Fall Sitting.

I want to thank the minister for that. It's important that we all work together to make legislation stronger, and that review clause will make it stronger. There is also the commitment that it will be reviewed in 2023. I just also want to say that the NDP is committed to that, as is the Yukon Party, because 2023 is a ways in the future, at that point in time.

With that, I thank the minister and the officials for their time.

Deputy Chair: Is there any further debate on Bill No. 6, *entitled Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*?

Mr. Cathers: Just as we draw to a close, I do want to correct the minister and note that 2006, when the act was put in, was 15 years ago, not 20 years ago.

I largely addressed the issues that we have with this legislation earlier, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time restating them. I would just note for the record that we do object to the lack of public consultation on that. That is our single biggest concern regarding this. While we agree that the original SCAN legislation has been useful, it also does set a lower standard than the criminal standard in going after activity. It is something that, when expansion of those powers is being considered, we think that it's very important to give Yukoners the opportunity to weigh in with their views and that there should be a full act review.

Contrary to what the minister indicated, the legislation itself does cover the very same firearms that were purchased as unrestricted weapons, but due to the Trudeau government's order-in-council passed last year on May 1, they have now been deemed prohibited weapons. So, this is a subject of concern for a number of Yukoners — about whether the territorial government will be assisting the federal government as part of the so-called "gun buyback" that is, in fact, confiscation by another name.

Again, we will not be supporting the legislation for those reasons, but I want to emphasize that some of the other parts of this amendment, had they been subject to public consultation, we would very likely be supporting.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I noted the other day — but I think it's important to add — that there was no public consultation with respect to this matter coming forward. This is advice from authorities here in the territory about criminal activity that occurs here. It is advice from the experience of the SCAN unit, which is complete with very well-experienced investigators, that these are activities that are occurring here in the territory, that these are activities that exist in many of the other jurisdictions in their SCAN-type legislation, and that these are activities that individual Yukoners are complaining about, but there is no authority for the SCAN unit to ascertain whether or not it is affecting the safety of the neighbourhood and to then proceed with an investigation if that is so warranted.

All of this is to say that there was no public consultation because this amendment is to add three very serious criminal activities to the roster of things that can be complained about,

that are occurring in Yukon communities, and that might need to be investigated through this process.

I can also indicate that there is a lower standard, as the member opposite notes, with respect to the criminal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt", because there are no criminal consequences in this legislation.

Let's be clear. This is about property; it's not about people's actions. It's about the opportunity to make communities safer across the territory, and it does not affect an individual with respect to a criminal sanction. It could affect an individual who is carrying out some of these activities and causing neighbourhoods to be unsafe, but it is property-related. It does not carry a criminal sanction, so it doesn't have a criminal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt". I think that we have had the opportunity through this debate so far to make that clear. I think that it is incredibly important.

I am disappointed that the members opposite in the Official Opposition won't support this because I do think that we have committed to a review, so we will hear from Yukoners about the activity here with respect to how SCAN operates and to the effects and from people who might have a different point of view with respect to how we can improve this legislation over the 16 years of what has been this legislation — or since 2006. I don't think we need to argue about months, but frankly, by the time a review was done, it will be close to 20 years.

Legislation like this, which reflects the rights of individuals in the community and is designed to help keep our neighbourhood safe, is something that should be reviewed. The opportunity to do that has been brought forward.

I really want to indicate how much I appreciate the conversations that I have had with the Leader of the Third Party and the good idea brought forward.

We have run, since 2016, this government on the basis that good ideas come from everywhere. I agree with the Leader of the Third Party that the opportunity for us to work together makes legislation stronger in this Legislature and for Yukoners. I'm disappointed that the Official Opposition can't see their way clear to supporting this legislation. As I've said, we're adding three very serious criminal activities to the opportunity for SCAN to investigate and make neighbourhoods safer.

Child sexual exploitation — I can't see my way clear to not being able to support that. Illegal operation with respect to firearms and organized crime, which I have said quite clearly is a serious problem here and is something that is not going to go away —

Deputy Chair: Order, please.

Termination of Sitting as per Standing Order 76(1)

Deputy Chair: The time has reached 5:00 p.m. on this, the 31st sitting day of the 2021 Fall Sitting.

Standing Order 76(1) states, "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, if the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole at the time, shall interrupt proceedings at 5:00 p.m. and, with respect to each Government Bill before

Committee that the Government House Leader directs to be called, shall:

“(a) put the question on any amendment then before the Committee;

“(b) put the question, without debate or amendment, on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill, including all clauses, schedules, title and preamble, be deemed to be read and carried;

“(c) put the question on a motion moved by a Minister that the bill be reported to the Assembly; and

“(d) when all bills have been dealt with, recall the Speaker to the Chair to report on the proceedings of the Committee.”

It is the duty of the Chair to now conduct the business of Committee of the Whole in the manner directed by Standing Order 76(1). The Chair will now ask the Government House Leader to indicate which of the government bills now before Committee of the Whole should be called.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Deputy Chair, the government directs that Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, and Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act*, be called at this time.

Bill No. 202: Second Appropriation Act 2021-22 — continued

Deputy Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*.

The Chair will now recognize the Member for Klondike for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Silver: Deputy Chair, I move that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that all clauses, schedules, and the title of Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, be deemed to be read and carried.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures

Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$59,079,000 agreed to

On Capital Expenditures

Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$17,392,000 agreed to

Total Expenditures in the amount of \$76,471,000 agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Schedules A and B agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Silver: Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, without amendment.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Klondike that the Chair report Bill No. 202, entitled *Second*

Appropriation Act 2021-22, without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 6: Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021) — continued

Deputy Chair: The Committee will now deal with the *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*. The Chair will now recognize the Member for Riverdale South for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I move that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, be deemed to be read and carried.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, without amendment.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South that the Chair report Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Bill No. 8: Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act — continued

Deputy Chair: The Committee will now deal with Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act*.

The Chair will now recognize the Member for Whitehorse West for the purpose of moving a motion pursuant to Standing Order 76(1)(b).

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, I move that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act*, be deemed to be read and carried.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that all clauses and the title of Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers’ Safety and Compensation Act*, be deemed to be read and carried.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Clauses 1 to 226 agreed to

Title agreed to

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Deputy Chair, I move that you report Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, without amendment.

Deputy Chair: It has been moved by the Member for Whitehorse West that the Chair report Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, without amendment. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question. Are you agreed?

Motion agreed to

Deputy Chair: As the government bills identified by the Government House Leader have now been decided upon, it is my duty to rise and report to the House.

Speaker resumes the Chair

Termination of Sitting as per Standing Order 76(2)

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Ms. Tredger: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Committee of the Whole has also considered Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend to Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

Finally, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, and directed me to report the bill without amendment.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Termination of Sitting as per Standing Order 76(2)

Speaker: Standing Order 76(2)(d) states, "On the sitting day that the Assembly has reached the maximum number of sitting days allocated for that Sitting pursuant to Standing Order 75, the Speaker of the Assembly, when recalled to the Chair after the House has been in Committee of the Whole, shall:

"(d) with respect to each Government Bill standing on the Order Paper for Third Reading and designated to be called by the Government House Leader,

"(i) receive a motion for Third Reading and passage of the bill, and

"(ii) put the question, without debate or amendment, on that motion."

I shall, therefore, ask the Government House Leader to indicate which of the government bills now standing on the Order Paper for third reading should be called.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Mr. Speaker, the government directs that Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act*

2021-22, Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, and Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, be called at this time.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 202: *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 202, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Silver.

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

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Premier that Bill No. 202, entitled *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question to the House. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 202 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 202 has passed this House.

Bill No. 6: *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 6, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and*

Neighbourhoods Act (2021), be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 6, entitled *Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021)*, be now read a third time and do pass. As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall put the question to the House. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Mr. Dixon: Disagree.

Mr. Kent: Disagree.

Ms. Clarke: Disagree.

Mr. Cathers: Disagree.

Ms. McLeod: Disagree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Disagree.

Mr. Hassard: Disagree.

Mr. Istchenko: Disagree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Ms. Blake: Agree.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 10 yea, eight nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 6 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 6 has passed this House.

Bill No. 8: Workers' Safety and Compensation Act — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 8, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Mostyn.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board that Bill No. 8, entitled *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

As no debate or amendment is permitted, I shall now put the question.

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Silver: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Clarke: Agree.

Hon. Ms. McLean: 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.

Ms. Tredger: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 8 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 8 has passed this House.

We are now prepared to receive the Commissioner of Yukon, in her capacity as Lieutenant Governor, to grant assent to bills which have passed this House.

Commissioner Bernard enters the Chamber announced by her Aide-de-Camp

ASSENT TO BILLS

Commissioner: Please be seated.

Speaker: Madam Commissioner, the Assembly has, at its present session, passed certain bills to which, in the name and on behalf of the Assembly, I respectfully request your assent.

Clerk: *Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act (2021); Act to Amend the Territorial Lands (Yukon) Act (2021); Act to Amend the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (2021); Act to Amend the Family Property and Support Act (2021); Workers' Safety and Compensation Act; Act to Amend the Cannabis Control and Regulation Act (2021); Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act (2021); Second Appropriation Act 2021-22.*

Commissioner: I hereby assent to the bills as enumerated by the Clerk.

Thank you, members, for your work this session. I wish you a well-deserved rest. On January 1, 2022, I invite you to visit the Commissioner of Yukon's Facebook page to see our 2022 levee video where we will present the 2021 Order of Yukon inductees, the Bravery Award, the Public Volunteer Service Award, and other awards presented during this year. I know you will join me in congratulating these deserving Yukoners.

Merci encore de votre travail durant cette session, and enjoy your time off.

Commissioner leaves the Chamber

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

Before I adjourn the Fall Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, I have a few brief comments. I would like to extend my thanks on behalf of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Chair of Committee of the Whole and on behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to Clerk Dan Cable, Deputy Clerk Linda Kolody, Clerk of Committees Allison Lloyd, Director of Administration, Finance, and Systems Helen Fitzsimmons, Operations Manager Brenda McCain-Armour, Finance and Operations Clerk Lyndsey Amundson, as well as Sergeant-at-Arms Karina Watson and Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Joe Mewett, who have all provided invaluable support to all MLAs and their staff in order for all of us to continue to do the important work that we are sent here to do on behalf of all Yukoners.

As well, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the skilled team at Hansard for their timely and accurate service and all of the other background staff and contractors who kept this Legislative Assembly operating.

I would also commend the hard-working civil servants who delivered service to Yukoners and support to all of us, as members, in our work. I wish Members of the Legislative Assembly all the best for the winter. We have had another difficult year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Yukoners have suffered financially, physically, and emotionally from the effects of the pandemic. I hope that all of us can look forward to a better year next year.

Happy holidays to all and all the best in the new year. Thank you very much.

As the House has reached the maximum number of sitting days permitted for this Fall Sitting and the House has completed consideration of the designated legislation, it is the duty of the Chair to declare that this House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled December 2, 2021:

35-1-34

Health Care Insurance Programs — Health Services - Fiscal Years 2011-12 to 2020-21— Annual Report April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 (McPhee)

35-1-35

Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2020-2021 (Streicker)

35-1-36

Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2020-2021 (Streicker)

35-1-37

Yukon Advisory Council on Women's Issues Annual Report 2020-2021 (McLean)

The following legislative returns were tabled December 2, 2021:

35-1-19

Response to Written Question No. 1 re: court cases involving the Government of Yukon and Written Question No. 2 re: legislative drafting (McPhee)

35-1-20

Response to Written Question No. 6 re: Whistle Bend Place (McPhee)

35-1-21

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 53, Energy, Mines and Resources, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — Vangorda (Streicker)

35-1-22

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — clearing along Robert Service Way (Streicker)

35-1-23

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Dixon related to general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — carbon credits (Streicker)

35-1-24

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 22, Yukon Development Corporation, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — public information sessions (Streicker)

35-1-25

Response to oral question from Ms. Van Bibber re: school zone safety (Clarke, N.)

35-1-26

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — Old Crow staffing (McLean)

35-1-27

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — bus arrival standards (McLean)

35-1-28

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — bus arrival standards (McLean)

35-1-29

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — educational assistants (McLean)

35-1-30

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Mr. Kent related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — staffing reporting tool (McLean)

35-1-31

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — staff vaccination attestation (McLean)

35-1-32

Response to matter outstanding from discussion with Ms. White related to general debate on Vote 3, Education, in Bill No. 202, *Second Appropriation Act 2021-22* — adult learning supports and programs (McLean)

The following documents were filed December 2, 2021:

35-1-38

Yukon Government Public Service Commission
2 December 2021 Employee Attestations (Streicker)

35-1-39

Yukon Party Support for Extending Cancer Presumption to Wildland Firefighters, letter re (dated November 30, 2021) from Kalin Pallett, President, Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon to Currie Dixon, Leader of the Official Opposition (Mostyn)

35-1-40

Bill No. 8, *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, letter re (dated November 25, 2021) from Frederick Koe, Chair, Board of Directors, Yukon First Nations Wildfire, to Hon. Richard Mostyn, Minister of Community Services (Mostyn)

35-1-41

Change of clause 94, Division 4, Bill No. 8, *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, letter re (dated November 17, 2021) from Chad Thomas, CEO, Yukon First Nations Wildfire, to Kate White, Leader of the Third Party (White)

The following written question was filed December 2, 2021:

Written Question No. 13

Re: clearance times at the Fraser border crossing (Kent)