



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Number 88

2nd Session

34th Legislature

BLUES

Thursday, April 19, 2018 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

NOTE

This document, referred to as the "Blues", is the preliminary issue of the Hansard of the Yukon Legislative Assembly and has not been edited fully for errors, omissions or accuracy. It may be used as a reference only with the understanding that it will be superseded by the final, edited version, entitled "Hansard", at a later time.

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, April 19, 2018 — 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.
Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Earth Day and Yukon Conservation Society

Hon. Ms. Frost: I rise today on behalf of Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to Earth Day, which takes place this weekend on April 22. Earth Day is an opportunity for all of us to take pause as stewards of this shared land and reflect on the intricate ecosystems that we enjoy and depend on. It's time to renew our own actions as individuals and communities and take stock of how we impact these ecosystems and how we work to conserve them. What better way to recognize such an important day than by recognizing a partner and a leader of environmental stewardship in Yukon? Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago today, a group of concerned Yukoners joined together. Their focus was on the Alaska Highway pipeline but, very quickly, they started to think bigger. This group developed into a society to promote conservation in Yukon and across the north. The Yukon Conservation Society has established itself as a well-regarded, well-respected, non-government organization serving Yukon through education, research and advocacy on diverse environmental issues.

Today, their main focus is on energy, mining, land use planning and wildlife conservation. They work hard to get people outside, connecting with nature. They offer free interpretative programming for all ages throughout the summer, from guided hikes to "Kids' Ed-Ventures". They also bring people together to discuss, share and learn about important issues on our shared environment.

For example, after barren-ground caribou were listed as a threatened species, they hosted an educational event on the Porcupine caribou herd in April 2017. In June, they will be celebrating Yukon Conservation Society Week with a number of events.

Yukoners have made it clear that the environment matters to them, so let's take this time to recognize this organization. At this time, I would like to recognize those hundreds of individuals who have been directly involved, impacted by or participated with the Yukon Conservation Society over the last 50 years — some of whom have joined us in the gallery today.

Out of respect for all of the past leaders, we have been requested not to recognize individuals and I respect that, but I

would like to honour today Yukon Conservation Society members, past members, board of directors, staff, volunteers and supporters. Thank you for all your help in raising your voices for Yukon's environment for the last 50 years.

Now, let's look forward to the next 50 years as we continue to work together and look at highlighting the intrinsic value of the environment and our interconnectedness to it. Our well-being, as humans and as Yukoners, is dependent on fully functional, healthy ecosystems. It is with the recognition of the Yukon Conservation Society and groups like it, and all members who participate, that we continue to promote awareness and enhance the great places that we have in the wild spaces of Yukon.

Thank you so much — for all members.

Applause

Mr. Istchenko: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize today as Earth Day. This important movement started small. Many events were organized by local community groups and university students. As the grassroots response grew and there was more recognition from communities and organizations around the world, Earth Day became a globally recognized day of awareness.

It is believed that more than one billion people in a 190 countries now take part in what is called the largest civic-focused day of action in the world. It focuses on promoting important environmentally friendly concepts that have become part of our daily activities.

This year, the focus is on ending plastic pollution, which poisons our land and oceans, injuring marine life and affecting our health.

Earth Day this year is dedicated to providing information and inspiration to fundamentally change human attitudes and behaviour about plastics. Terms such as "clean energy" and "clean water" have become a focal point in individual households over the years as well as on a larger scale. Building codes and contracting guidelines have been updated to promote efficiency and green energy. Young people today are engaged and concerned about the type of world that they live in today and what it will look like for future generations. There is no doubt that increasing awareness of the importance of our environment will help to make our children the best stewards to protect it in the future.

This Earth Day, do the small things that go a long way: reduce idling, turn off the lights and water, use a refillable water bottle and change out those incandescent light bulbs. There are so many small acts that together can make a difference: take part in Earth Day activities, make sure your children recognize the importance of all those small acts, and make this Earth Day about creating new and better habits in your daily activity. There are so many things that can be done. We must work together to adapt to the changing climate and lessen the impact on our communities and our territory.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: On behalf of the Yukon New Democratic Party, I am happy to pay tribute today to the 50th anniversary of the Yukon Conservation Society. It is worth pointing out that the Yukon Conservation Society was a pioneer in the environmental movement. Formed in 1968, the Yukon Conservation Society can take rightful pride in pointing out that they pre-date Greenpeace by three years.

The original board reflected the diversity of Yukon interests and backgrounds that continues today. Today, the Yukon Conservation Society has over 250 members, along with many dedicated volunteers. Starting with a small cadre of active volunteers focused on the Alaska Highway pipeline, Yukon Conservation Society focused on three key areas: advocacy, education and research. An early Yukon Conservation Society newsletter banner carried this quote: "Behold the turtle. He only makes progress when he sticks his neck out." And so they have.

Since those early days of the Alaska Highway pipeline debate, YCS's informed and reasoned approach to advocacy has influenced many public policy decisions. Over the course of the past 50 years, the YCS has led civil society discussion and spurred government action premised on their mission to pursue ecosystem well-being throughout the Yukon. It is for this reason that YCS has long advocated that land use planning is critical for managing cumulative impacts and sustainability in the Yukon.

In recent years, YCS stimulated public conversation on fracking in Yukon. The Select Committee Regarding the Risks and Benefits of Hydraulic Fracturing was created, in large part, in response to concerns raised by YCS and, through them, many citizens of the territory.

YCS, standing with Yukon First Nations and CPAWS, was instrumental in bringing about a broader understanding that Yukon land claims agreements are about all Yukoners. The Supreme Court victory on the Peel land use plan was a victory for the principles set out in the final agreements on land use planning and sustainable development. Yukon Conservation Society's work on mining is well-known and respected. They continue to advocate for modern mining practices and for the replacement of the free-entry system.

On energy, YCS promotes low-impact and appropriately located renewable energy projects distributed around the grid with a focus on a coordinated approach among governments, utilities and the public to help facilitate the transition away from oil and gas. Yukon Conservation Society also has a northern climate change curriculum that is used throughout Canada for learning about the effects of climate change. This evening's public talk on energy storage in Yukon is another example among many public education initiatives led by YCS.

Mr. Speaker, when one begins to list all that YCS contributes to this territory, one might conclude that this must be one massive organization. In fact, at the best of times, there are only five dedicated folks on staff. Clearly, they are backed by a remarkable board and a wealth of informed volunteers.

YCS recognizes individuals committed to environmental stewardship through the awarding of the Ted Parnell Scholarship. Ted's name also lives through the legacy

donation of the Parnell House, the blue house at the corner of Hawkins and Third Avenue, which was donated to YCS. Ted was a friend, Mr. Speaker, and I can imagine him chuckling over the idea that the close proximity of Parnell House to the Legislative Assembly allows YCS to keep an eye on the environmental consequences of decisions made in this Legislature.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the strength of will and commitment of YCS as a change agent is reflected in the Gerry Couture Stewardship Award. Created by an anonymous donor in 2009, the Gerry Couture Stewardship Award fosters public awareness of, and appreciation for, the personal dedication required to conserve and manage Yukon's natural resources. The award is inspired — and if anyone knows Gerry Couture, they will know that this is true — by Gerry Couture's fearlessness and persistence in the face of adversity and his creativity, innovation and — the key criteria — curmudgeonliness. From the inaugural recipient to the most recent, all recipients of this award have aptly reflected not only these criteria, but they have also demonstrated as citizens, that we, like the turtle, only make progress when we stick our necks out.

Applause

Ms. White: Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP caucus to recognize the importance of Earth Day.

Every April 22, those passionate about restoring and preserving the planet's health commemorate Earth Day, just like we have been doing for the last 48 years with a billion of our brothers and sisters worldwide.

Earth Day 2018 is dedicated to providing the information and inspiration needed to fundamentally change our human attitude and behaviour about plastic. The main problem with plastics is that it never goes away; it just continues to break down into smaller and smaller particles, but it never disappears. It is about time that we, as humans, take a long, hard look at our relationship with plastic because our current relationship is killing the planet.

A recent study published on March 22 in *Scientific Reports* found that the great Pacific garbage patch contains as much as 16 times more plastic than previous estimated. The region located halfway between California and Hawaii has grown to more than 1.5-million square kilometres. This is roughly 3.2 times the size of the entire Yukon land mass. You can find 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic in the area, weighing 80,000 metric tonnes or about the equivalent of 1,000 Air North 737s.

Why should what's happening in the Pacific Ocean bother us way up here in the Yukon? Because plastics are affecting the earth's food chain from the bottom to the top. Fish, turtles, birds and other animals are constantly mistaking plastic and other waste items for food and this doesn't just happen in oceans. It happens in lakes, streams and anywhere that wildlife venture.

I could go on and on about the evils of single-use plastics, but I think that the anti-plastic movements we see worldwide do a fine job of illustrating my point. It's not too late to

change our course, so I will end with an excerpt from Hawaiian poet Lyz Soto's poem "Pacific Garbage Patch":

Can you hear her whisper —
 Sometimes you cannot see below my surface
 but I am not bottomless
 she says and I listen while I stand
 holding a throwaway Starbucks cup in my hand.
 I sweep my crumbs beneath the table.
 I eat more than my share.
 And tomorrow I will buy another coffee
 in a disposable cup with a polystyrene cap
 showing nothing biodegradable about me
 while the earth speaks.
 I am plastic down to my digestive tract she says.
 I am mercury/lead/monoxide/I am poison.
 Petroleum lined at the cellular level
 confine me in molecular chains.
 Gift wrap me in lead.
 Embalm my flesh with the dead.
 Spit me disposable and I will give you treats
 plastic sand beaches and food you cannot feast.
 Remember she laughs
 You should not have [pooped] where you eat.
 Now she watches us bickering over fate.
 Wonders if too late we will see our expiration date
 filled with too many too much and not enough.
 Come she will say let's come together and listen
 to our heart beats
 stutter.
Applause

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Silver: I'm not sure that poem actually said "pooped".

I would ask all of the representatives here in the Legislative Assembly to help me in welcoming a legislator, a strategic planner in health care and workforce development, an affordable housing advocate and a community leader as well, fighting for improved services and representative government for people throughout the Puget Sound region, a representative from the 33rd legislative district, State Representative Tina Orwall.

Applause

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I ask my colleagues with me here today in the House to join me in welcoming Mr. Deuling's grade 11 social studies class from Vanier Catholic Secondary School. We have with us today: Austin, Caitlan, Guine, Via, Alexander, Donnell, Esha, Floyd, Thomas, Tony, Kia, Heaven, Andrew, Miguel, Kellaine, Brayden, Madison, Rizza, Josh, Nichollis, Andrew, Samantha, Zach and Chad.

Thank you very much for being here today and for your interest in the Legislative Assembly.

Applause

Ms. Hanson: I would ask members to join me in recognizing some of the many people who have been involved

as volunteers and in other roles with Yukon Conservation Society.

Today we have among others — and I will miss some — but for sure Luc Garceau, Bob Van Dijken, Mary Ann and Rob Lewis, Mary and Gerry Whitley, Sally Wright, JP Pinard, Ginny Prins, Eleanor Millard — and Julie Frisch I see up there too.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Silver: I also want to recognize — I believe also with the class — Tyler Hunter. I believe he is working as an EA right now in Mr. Deuling's class, and just for the students — so that you know — he was one of my students back in Dawson City. So welcome to Mr. Hunter for being here.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I would like to welcome Mr. Stu Clark to the Legislature today. He is a constituent and also sometimes a dog-walking companion. Please join me in welcoming him.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I would also like to welcome to the Legislative Assembly today — first of all, the executive director of the Klondike Placer Miners Association, Mr. Jonas Smith. I would also like to welcome Mr. Dave Laxton, one of my constituents and former Speaker of the House as well as new leadership at the Yukon Conservation Society, Mr. Mike Walton.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any further introductions of visitors?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Speaker: Under tabling of returns and documents, the Chair has for tabling the *Yukon Electoral District Boundaries Commission Final Report*, dated April 2018. This report is tabled pursuant to Section 4(17) of the *Elections Act*.

Further, the Chair also has for tabling the *Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2017-2018*, dated April, 2018. This report is compiled pursuant to an order of the Member Services Board.

Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to work in partnership with the provinces and territories to replace Canada's current private and public patchwork

coverage for prescription drugs with a single payer, universal pharmacare program under the *Canada Health Act*.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Ministerial workload

Ms. McLeod: Anyone who has been paying attention can see that the Minister of Health and Social Services is overwhelmed — and it's not her fault. The Premier has put too much on her plate, which means that she can't focus on the important files she needs to. Whether it's major issues like her mishandling of the allegations of abuse within government-run group homes, or the smaller issues like taking over a year and a half to respond to correspondence and not meeting with stakeholder groups, it's clear the minister is struggling to keep up with the workload. Unfortunately, this is not new. For the last year and a half, the minister has struggled to answer simple questions and tends to contradict herself.

Will the Premier show some leadership, help the minister out and lighten her load by bringing in a different member of his caucus to take over one or more of her departments?

Hon. Mr. Silver: What an amazing opportunity to hold up my minister and how amazing a job she has done turning this department around and working with her counterparts, with a whole-of-government approach, with all the other ministers in this Legislative Assembly, in the Yukon Liberal government, when it comes to the pressing issues of the day — pressing issues that go back in time to Auditor General reports of 2014, pressing issues when it comes to mental health when we, at one point, had only two rural mental health nurses for all of rural Yukon — two, Mr. Speaker. Now we have four — not nurses, but four mental health hubs.

We have reduced — I shouldn't say "we". Under her leadership, the reduction of indigenous individuals in care is remarkable. The amount of work that this minister has done by balancing not only the work in Health and Social Services, but also her work in Environment — to meet with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, with individual First Nations, with concerns about mining and concerns about the environment — impeccable.

To answer the member opposite's question next door: No, I think we're doing fine with this minister.

Ms. McLeod: When we ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if her department is doing an internal review into allegations of abuse within group homes, we get a different answer, depending on which day we ask. When we ask the Minister of Health and Social Services about her responsibilities under the housing portfolio and what she is doing to address the growing wait-list for social and seniors housing, she can't give straight answers.

The minister has told us that there are continuing care facilities being built in Carmacks. The minister has claimed that the new Whistle Bend continuing care centre is social

housing. We have asked the minister simple questions about press releases she signed off on, and she has been unable to explain what she is announcing.

One time her response was — and I quote: That's above my pay grade.

She has announced Housing First projects, but has been unable to explain what Housing First means. The minister is overwhelmed, Mr. Speaker, and, unfortunately, the portfolios that she is in charge of are very important to Yukoners.

Will the Premier do the right thing and lighten her load?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I think the only ones confused here are the members of the opposition. I believe that our minister — again, with a whole-of-government approach — has been very clear and has done more work in a year and a half in the field of not only health and social services, but also in the field of the environment — and also, like I said, implementing the chapters of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and working outside of the breadth of what this government is supposed to do with First Nations that are dealing with housing issues on a federal level.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I would really like to see this minister do is try to balance out her life a little bit, because she just works too much. We want to make sure that she balances that between her connection with the land, her connection with the Vuntut people, and I know she has been doing that. But, again, that is my only concern at this point — that she works too hard for the people of the Yukon.

Question re: Carbon tax

Mr. Kent: Before Bluesky Strategy got \$140,000 in sole-source contracts from this Liberal government, they met with and lobbied the federal environment minister on Yukon's behalf. The Premier tells us that they did this lobbying for free, but he has refused to tell us what the purpose of that meeting was. However, based on the Premier's answers in this House yesterday, where he dismissed concerns that Yukoners will get taxed on top of the carbon tax, we know that Bluesky wasn't lobbying for Yukon to keep all the revenues from the carbon tax.

Unfortunately this means that Yukoners are going to be taxed even more than the Premier's flawed carbon tax analysis suggests.

The Official Opposition has obtained documents from the Library of Parliament, which confirm that Canada will not only be charging the GST on top of the carbon tax, but they will not be giving any of this revenue back. This means that Yukoners could be paying an extra \$1.3 million in taxes because of the GST on top of the \$26 million that the Premier already told us about.

Why is the Premier not living up to his promise to ensure all of the revenue from the carbon tax comes back to Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I almost needed a map to follow the preamble there between Bluesky to carbon pricing to the sky and the moon. Again today, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing the Yukon Party create needless confusion about carbon pricing.

Let's review the facts once again. The federal government is implementing carbon pricing across the country — fact. We

are not implementing our own mechanism, so the federal government's backstop will apply.

The Yukon Party seems hung up on the fantasy that the Yukon somehow can avoid carbon pricing altogether. We negotiated an agreement with the federal government to have all of the carbon pricing revenues returned to Yukon government and we will distribute 100 percent of those revenues back to Yukoners, like we committed, in a rebate.

Without our negotiations with the federal government, this money wasn't coming back to the Yukon. The Yukon Party has no plans for this and they have never been honest to Yukoners about the cost of doing nothing when it comes to climate change.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, GST is a federal tax.

Mr. Kent: Obviously, not all revenue from this carbon tax is coming back to Yukoners. First, the Premier promised Yukoners that every single cent of the carbon tax would come back to each individual's pocket. Then he broke that promise. Then the Premier promised Yukoners that all of the revenue generated as a result of the carbon tax would come back to Yukon. Now he has broken that promise.

The documents that we have obtained confirm that Yukoners will be paying a tax on a tax, and none of that revenue is going to come back to the territory. Instead of just being a cheerleader for Ottawa, the Premier should have been standing up for Yukon to get all of this money returned. Unfortunately, Yukoners will now suffer as a result of the now \$27.3-million carbon tax GST that the Premier happily signed on to.

Mr. Speaker, did the Premier even raise concerns with the federal government about this tax on a tax?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Our commitment to Yukoners is to return all of the revenue received from the federal government back to Yukoners. The Yukon Party commitment was to put their heads in the sand and to hope that this issue was going to go away. Now they seem committed to confusion.

We know that our reliance on fossil fuels causes drastic changes to our climate. We know that the north sees the impacts of this on a daily basis. Not too long ago, Yukon Party members publicly questioned the reality of man-made climate change in this House. Yukoners are smarter than that. They want us to take action, and that is what we are doing. How much money will Yukoners get back? We committed to returning 100 percent of the revenues collected back to Yukoners, and we will return 100 percent of those revenues collected in the Yukon back to Yukoners.

Question re: Bear management

Ms. White: It's that time of year again when bears are waking up across the Yukon. We are all hopeful that summer will come along sometime soon, but summer brings challenges for bear populations. Last year, the number of human-bear conflicts increased significantly, particularly in the Whitehorse area. This led to at least 63 bears being killed, even though this measure is a solution of last resort.

Mr. Speaker, what steps has the government taken over the winter months to decrease the number of human-bear conflicts after last year's record-high numbers?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would like to speak to the education campaign and the efforts that the Department of Environment has taken, and is taking, coming into the season — clearly recognizing that there was a lot of bear-human conflict last year. We have also had some conflicts over the winter months with wolves. The effort by the Department of Environment is really to look at the insights and the feedback that we get from the public, to work in collaboration with the public and to notify individuals as we encounter bears. We are looking at high-pressure areas, and sometimes we see encounters in our municipalities and our urban centres. We are really working hard to promote education and working with our communities and our communications staff as well. Thank you for the great question. We will most certainly look at bumping up and enhancing our education campaign around the bear-human conflict.

Ms. White: Bear populations are also affected by hunting pressures. This past winter, the British Columbia government banned the hunting of grizzly bears all together. This could significantly increase hunting pressure for grizzly bears here in Yukon. What is the government doing to monitor the impact of the grizzly bear hunting ban in British Columbia on Yukon's grizzly bear population?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Yukon's grizzly bear population last estimated count ranged from 6,000 to 7,000. Certainly, the concerns from other jurisdictions — we always do jurisdictional scans and look at creating awareness and decisions that are made around management of our bear populations in the Yukon. We are aware of the bear ban in British Columbia, and obviously we have an obligation to work through the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, as well as through the RRCs. If there are current pressures, issues and concerns that come about, we will work through that process. The Yukon government is working through the Wildlife Management Board to develop a grizzly bear conservation and management plan for all Yukon.

Ms. White: I wonder, if that last count dates back to 2007, the last time those bears were counted? An essential part of good wildlife management practices is having access to specialized skills and good data. You cannot overstate the importance of species biologists and, when talking about bears, that would mean bear biologists. A bear biologist would have specific knowledge that enables them to make the right decision when it comes to population management. These professionals need up-to-date data around current populations to observe trends and react appropriately. We understand that the Southern Lakes grizzly bear management program was stopped and that collared bears currently get little to no monitoring at all.

Does the government currently have a bear biologist on staff? When was the last time the grizzly bear population was fully measured?

Hon. Ms. Frost: What I can say is that we do have the grizzly bear assessment, which was done in May 2012. I can

verify and get back to the member opposite with respect to the most recent count. I know that, as the management measures had taken effect — the bear conservation plan and co-management plan for grizzly bears — the assessment and the numbers would have been done then, I suspect, but I would certainly be committed to bringing that back to the Legislature or to the member opposite. At the moment, I don't have verification, but I will certainly find that out from the department.

What we do have is the last full assessment. The population was estimated to be between 6,000 and 7,000. As a result of hunting pressures on grizzly bears, most recently, in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the public, the Department of Environment has proceeded with a conservation management plan.

Question re: Plastic waste management

Ms. Hanson: Plastics make up a huge proportion of our waste — waste that will never decompose. From to-go containers to over-packaging at the grocery store, our society is addicted to plastics. Britain has recently come out with a plan to ban single-use plastics. Following this, at this week's gathering of the Commonwealth leaders, Britain called on all governments to ban single-use plastics.

What is this government doing to decrease the use of plastics in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Plastics are important. I'm very happy to respond to this question and to acknowledge that there is a concern here in the territory. Just last week, I believe, there was a zero-waste conference here. Both the Minister of Environment and I spoke at it and attended as much as we could. Our departments were there discussing with Yukoners how to reduce our waste — so reduce, reuse and recycle.

On the recycling front, plastic remains a challenge for us. We are looking for solutions, ways that we can find a reuse for plastics locally, wherever possible. Just recently, we had a report from our ministerial committee on solid waste, and they have given us recommendations and I'll be taking those to Cabinet and seek to follow up on them shortly.

I don't have any announcement today on plastics, but I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Ms. Hanson: It's good to hear that there's some thinking about this going on, because we do hear a lot from this government about waste management. We also hear from Yukoners about our landfills and transfer stations filling up, yet government is going to talk, but not act, when it comes to waste management.

There is a concrete step that they can take to make a difference. When will this government produce, as part of their zero-waste management strategy, the inclusion of banning single-use plastics in Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite again for her suggestion. I don't have an answer; I just said that. I will say it again.

What I will say is that we believe solid waste is incredibly important for all of our municipalities and the whole Yukon.

We recognize that there is pressure. I think I have said it here in the Legislature that there is even concern and frustration. We recognize that those pressures are mounting and we need to work together to find solutions as a whole territory. That's why I'm excited that we pulled together a committee made up of members of the Association of Yukon Communities, members of my own department and members of the Department of Environment. These are folks who are very well-versed on the subject of solid waste and they have brought forward recommendations for a strategy to us. I thank them for that work and I'm looking forward to following up on it.

I will look forward to a final supplementary question.

Ms. Hanson: We keep hearing about the importance of the environment to this minister, to this government and to Yukoners because it impacts on our tourism, our economy and our health and overall well-being. Anyone driving our highways or just walking along our sidewalks and trails cannot help but notice the garbage, especially the plastics, littering our territory from one end to the other — straws, cup lids, plastic bags and more.

Surely, this territory of only 40,000 people can lead the country by taking the initiative and banning single-use plastics. Will this government follow the lead of other countries and even of other major cities in Canada and enact legislation to ban single-use plastics? It's a simple question, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I think that both times I stood, I said that I wasn't prepared to give some announcement on it today but I am totally happy to work with the members opposite. I believe this is a serious issue. I think that we definitely need to see improvement in our overall solid waste strategy. The more we can move from waste to waste-diversion — including recycling — the better. The more we can move from recycling to reuse, the better. The more we can move from reuse to reduce, the better.

I thank the member opposite for her suggestion and I'm happy to work with her. I hope to bring forward an overall strategy that was presented to us from the Association of Yukon Communities' members and to work together as a team to get waste down.

I thank her for raising this issue.

Question re: McDonald Lodge decommissioning

Mr. Hassard: In 2016, a contract was issued for asbestos remediation in the demolition of the old McDonald Lodge in Dawson City. However, as of today, the building still has not been demolished. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell this House why the building hasn't been torn down yet and if the site is in compliance with all safety standards associated with an abandoned building such as fencing around the site and boarding up of doors and windows?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I appreciate having the opportunity to talk about this this afternoon. We had talked about looking at demolishing the old McDonald Lodge. We have heard from the community that they're actually interested in reusing the

building, which ties into my good colleague's statements just a minute ago. We're working with the city to explore options to see if we might actually keep some material out of the landfill and reuse a building that has stood there for many years.

Mr. Hassard: The question was actually about whether the site was in compliance with safety standards. We didn't get an answer to that one, so we will try another one.

It is my understanding that the contractors are still owed money, as a result of the government's decision not to proceed with tearing down this building. Can the Minister of Highways and Public Works confirm if this is in fact the case? How much is owed and when will it be paid out?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I thank the member opposite for bringing this information to my attention. I have not heard from any contractors that they are owed any money, but it is good information. I certainly will run it back to ground and see what I can find out from the department, if that is it. I appreciate the information and I will get back to the member opposite with the information once I get it.

Question re: Yukon government legislative agenda

Mr. Cathers: Earlier this Sitting, the CBC reported they had obtained a confidential document detailing this government's legislative agenda. I have a few questions about what was reported regarding that agenda.

The document stated the government was looking at amendments to the *Quartz Mining Act*. Can the Premier tell us what changes he is looking at making to the *Quartz Mining Act*?

Hon. Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the member opposite, I am not going to comment on leaked documents to the media and the information that the member opposite was reading on a piece of paper that doesn't really act as an official document from this government on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. It is like asking me to speculate as to what the contents of that document are.

I will allow my Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to speak in the second supplementary, but again, I'm not going to comment on leaked documents in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Cathers: What that means is that the Premier is refusing to tell Yukoners whether he is looking at changes to the *Quartz Mining Act* and what those changes are. It is their legislation, and for a government that promised increased transparency, it is unfortunate that they are doing the exact opposite.

The legislative agenda also mentioned an anonymous bill dealing with carbon tax rebates. The interesting thing noted is that the bill isn't scheduled until next year after the carbon tax scheme comes in.

Can the Premier tell us what changes will be included in this omnibus legislation and why the rebate legislation is coming forward after Yukoners are already paying more for the carbon tax, as well as paying the GST on the carbon tax — this Liberal government's plan for a tax on a tax?

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I think that what we have seen today is a difference in questioning — I think that is a new question for the second supplementary. If it was framed around legislation, maybe — but this is sort of — one minute we're talking about quartz mining and then we're talking about carbon pricing.

What we will do is, on the form of legislation, what we will talk about — what we can answer is the fact that we have a very clear process in place. We work with the officials and our drafters — drafters, of course, in Justice — and the individual who is asking me the questions should know this very well, in that he was the former Minister of Justice — so he would understand the process internally with how we move through the drafting process.

But, certainly, there is a very disciplined step-by-step process that we take and a very important part of that process is the public engagement and public consultation period. So there is no legislation moving forward without a broad discussion with appropriate stakeholders. We have seen that already. We have done great consultation and we were commended. The member opposite commended our Department of Energy, Mines and Resources as we moved through some of the changes and work done by the Agriculture branch and we're going to continue to do that good work.

There are no surprises here and, of course, proper preparation — we are looking at a draft plan at this particular point. Will that change? Potentially — but what we want to do is have a good outlook on what the rest of the mandate is, and certainly we will make sure we discuss this with Yukoners.

Mr. Cathers: I am surprised the Deputy Premier didn't see the connection between items that were all mentioned in the same document as reported by the media. Again, what we see, unfortunately, is that for a government that promised increased transparency, the Premier refused to answer the question about the legislation that I asked about and the Deputy Premier also refused to provide information.

Another piece of legislation that — it was reported — the government is looking at is updates to the *Coroners Act*. The Minister of Justice has also mused about moving to a medical model, which would be a much more expensive model for the Yukon.

Can the Premier tell us what changes this government is considering to the *Coroners Act*? While he is on his feet, perhaps he would like to answer the first two questions?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess this is one question — when you say it is a whole-of-government approach — so we will answer this question as a whole-of-government approach.

I don't recall the Attorney General musing about these changes. When documents go to the media — not necessarily officially through the Legislative Assembly or through the departments which they represent — whether it be the Executive Council Office or others — it is really hard for us to comment on these documents. Was it a draft? Was it a recommendation? It is hard to answer that.

If the member opposite could do his job and keep his questions, his concerns and his critiques of this government

and the questions of the Yukon people based on official documentation, it would be a lot easier to answer his questions that are of a whole-of-government approach. Again, I think the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources did a very good job of identifying our process when it comes to how we engage with the mining industry and how we move forward on everything from land use planning to class 1 notification. All year he has been very succinct in giving people an understanding of how this government works. Our Attorney General has done a great job as well, talking about her initiatives.

With a scattershot question, it is really hard — especially when we are being asked to speculate on leaked documents, Mr. Speaker.

Question re: Airport advisory panel

Mr. Hassard: I will try to make this next question a little easier. Maybe we will have a little better opportunity to get an answer.

Last week, during the ministerial statement, the Minister of Highways and Public Works said that his government had set up the airport advisory panel. This panel will be playing an important role in developing regulations for the minister's *Public Airports Act*. Can the minister confirm when the panel was set up, who was on it and when they last met?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I am happy to stand up again and talk about the *Public Airports Act* because for 24 years, we didn't have one in this territory, and now we do. It is something that I am very proud to have brought into being in this territory because it was something we lacked. It was one of the accomplishments that we made this year. There have been many others — a five-year capital plan; \$60 million in contracts tendered by March 31; I visited just about every community in the territory except for Mayo; we have the 10 CFTA exemptions that came out; we have revitalized the Yukon Forum; we have completed the F.H. Collins project; the Dawson airport improvements are on stream; we are improving the Whitehorse International Airport — so much work has been done.

One of those things, Mr. Speaker, is getting the *Public Airports Act* passed and also, within that airports act, putting in a piece of transparency that was hitherto lacking in the territory, and that is the airport advisory panel.

The act is coming into force, and with that, the airport advisory panel will be struck and put into effect. With that will be a level of transparency that the territory hasn't seen when it comes to airports and all the regulations that pertain to airports. It hasn't had that sort of transparency or oversight in the past, and I am very happy that this government has been able to bring that to the territory.

Mr. Hassard: Before the minister does this victory lap that he is on, he should be reminded that he actually told us in this Legislature in his response to that ministerial statement that the advisory panel was already struck — in his words.

I will try to keep this simple again, just like the first question. Who is on the panel? When did they last meet? When was it set up?

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Mr. Speaker, 24 years — no airports act. Here we are a year into our mandate and we have an airports act. Through that airports act we are going to have a level of transparency over our airports and management over our airports that was hitherto unseen in the Yukon. I am very proud of that work. It is one of the many things that we have done this year — in the last 14 months — that I am very proud of. I have mentioned some of them today.

I could go on, Mr. Speaker, and we could talk about the Nares River bridge project that has been done — value-driven contracts coming into force in the territory that provide value added for the good people of the territory. We have the Carmacks grader station being built. We are fixing the baggage-handling equipment that was left off the government's renovations plans at the airport last year. We are doing that so that people can get their bags from the airport in short order. We are putting in sweepers and new snow-clearing equipment at the airport to make sure that it is open all of the time. We are doing so much to fix our transportation systems in this territory and make sure that people can get around better. I am really proud of the work of the Department of Highways and Public Works on that front.

As for the airport advisory panel, there will be more information on that coming in the next little while. We will actually have the panel announced as far as who is sitting on it and what the terms of reference are.

Mr. Hassard: That was really something. It is pretty obvious to see why we can't get an answer to a very simple question. I am not sure if the minister has been in power for a year, a year and a half, 14 months. We ask questions about an advisory panel and we get answers about Nares River bridge. I don't think there are any 747s landing at the Nares River bridge.

Mr. Speaker, this minister told us in this Legislature that this committee was struck. Can the minister tell this House when the panel was set up, who is on it and when they last met? It is very simple.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: I really appreciate the opportunity to talk this afternoon. This government has accomplished a lot on the airports front and many other places besides. I could go on for a lot longer this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going to do that.

As the member opposite has noted, we have an airports advisory panel now in legislation. We are doing the good work of vetting candidates for that advisory panel, and once those candidates are chosen and we put the panel — it will be tasked with overseeing our first regulations under our new airports act.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

Notice to call motion re Committee reports

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I give notice, pursuant to Standing Order 13(3), that the motion for concurrence in the second report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and

Privileges, presented to the House on April 18, 2018, shall be called as government-designated business.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 17: *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 17, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Dendys.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate that Bill No. 17, entitled *Gender Diversity and Related Amendments Act*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I would like to thank my colleagues in the House for their thoughtful contributions to our discussion on this bill. I'm particularly encouraged and grateful for the impassioned comments made in support of diversity and fairness. Diversity and fairness are priorities of this government, as can be seen through the performance plan, because we support healthier and more vibrant communities.

Greater consideration of cultural, regional and gender diversity in decision-making will support improved outcomes in key areas of childcare, violence prevention, social assistance and the provision of care. The equality and inclusion of the LGBTQ2S+ employees within our public service will support our ability to provide high-quality services that meet the needs of the public.

I know all members here will agree that everyone stands to benefit when decision-making is more reflective of the community being served.

As I have said before, at its heart, this bill supports the inclusive vision of the kind of community we want to be living in. Some of the work for achieving this vision will be easier and some will be harder and it will take longer. The truth is that much of this work should have been started a long time ago. LGBTQ2S+ members of our community have too often been left on their own to take up the mantle of the LGBTQ2S+ equality work and advocacy.

I sincerely thank these strong, compassionate and dedicated people for their incredible work. We would not be where we are today without you, the work that you have done and the work that you continue to do, but I also want to send this message: You and your families, friends, organizations and allies are no longer alone in this work. Our government is committed to catching up and taking the steps needed to support the greater equality and inclusion of the LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in our communities. We have made some progress with the *Vital Statistics Act* and the *Human Rights Act* amendments, the registration of marriage form and now with this bill.

We appreciate the contribution of the Third Party in identifying other legislation that we should consider amending, such as to the *Land Titles Act, 2015*, the *Family Property and Support Act*, the *Marriage Act*, the *Married Women's Property Act*, the *Evidence Act* and the *Spousal Compensation Act*. We know there is more to be done and we also know that when you get a late start on work like this, progress will inevitably feel too slow at times.

I believe that by working together, building relationships and remaining open to feedback from people with lived experience, we can make better progress together. We will continue to engage the LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners, their families, friends and communities to learn more about how we can make our laws and services more inclusive and responsive to their needs. I want to sincerely thank our community partners for the input and the insight that they have already provided, and I look forward continuing conversations on how we can strengthen inclusivity and equality for all Yukoners. We are always open to suggestions on ways to respond to community needs and priorities more effectively and with clear and concrete actions.

Again, I would like to thank all members for considering this, engaging in questions and contributing to our discussion on this bill. I look forward to the passing of this bill today.

Ms. White: I don't think it is going to come as any surprise to anyone when I say that I was underwhelmed by the decision to make these changes. It's not that I don't appreciate that we are making the language more inclusive for the appointments to boards and committees, but I feel like, if we're talking about catching up with what's needed, this was kind of a strange spot to start.

In the time that we had discussions in Committee of the Whole, I do appreciate the information that the minister shared. I do appreciate that we were going to have someone who has the specific training in dealing with LGBTQ2S+ communication, when we do the next round of consultation. But, again, I was a bit underwhelmed by the fact that this is where we started, when previously government had followed up on what the NDP had been trying to do in the previous Legislative Assembly — the 33rd — which was vital statistics and the human rights legislation.

So, to have those two come first and then to follow up with inclusive language with the appointments to boards and committees just felt a little underwhelming.

I look forward to seeing what legislation government chooses to tackle next, including — I appreciate the fact that the minister has heard what I have said with my concerns with legislation and that it is incredibly outdated. I look forward to the next steps.

Of course, we will be supporting these changes, but we look forward to not only catching up, but getting ahead and even leading. With that, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the vote.

Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill No. 17?

If the member now speaks, she will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Hon. Ms. Dendys: I thank the member opposite for her comments today and I look forward to the vote on this bill.

Speaker: Are you prepared for 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. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Motion for third reading of Bill No. 17 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 17 has passed this House.

Bill No. 16: *Technical Amendments Act, 2018* — Third Reading

Clerk: Third reading, Bill No. 16, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. McPhee.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 16, entitled *Technical Amendments Act, 2018*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 16, entitled *Technical Amendments Act, 2018*, be now read a third time and do pass.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Today, I move that the *Technical Amendments Act, 2018*, be now read a third time. We have covered significant ground during debate on this bill in this House and I wanted to just take a few moments to quickly outline the changes that this bill makes before it goes to a final vote.

This bill will fix substantive policy issues and practical difficulties in administering laws that have arisen since the statutes to be amended under this bill were enacted. I have mentioned in this House before that, as the Minister

responsible for the Department of Justice and the government's Attorney General, I am responsible for ensuring that the legislation that governs Yukoners achieves acceptable standards for equality, fairness and respect for the rule of law.

Part of that role entails ensuring that, when needed, we fix specific issues, errors and omissions in legislation. I would like to thank the members opposite for their questions and input and comments during the debate on this bill. As members of this House know, there are a total of five amendments to the *Condominium Act, 2015* included in this technical amendments bill. These changes will clarify definitions, facilitate the provision of information to consumers, clarify the ability for condominium boards to place limitations on renting and leasing of condominiums, make it possible for the registrar of land titles to amend condominium forms without requiring a regulation, which is consistent with how forms are dealt with under the *Land Titles Act, 201*, and lastly, ensure that a condominium qualifies as a pre-existing condominium if it is substantially advanced before the *Condominium Act, 2015* comes into effect and is registered within 30 days of that effective date.

Mr. Speaker, this House is aware that the federal government has recently proceeded with changing the title of the Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of the Yukon to the title "Chief Justice". The amendments in this bill to the *Supreme Court Act* of the Yukon and seven other pieces of Yukon legislation will ensure that Yukon legislation reflects the title change at the federal level and, in fact, is consistent with that federal law.

The *Motor Vehicles Act* has been amended with this bill to clarify that the standard speed limit of 50 kilometres per hour applies to every highway unless there is a government regulation or municipal bylaw varying the standard speed limit. I am particularly pleased that we have a class of young drivers here to hear that important change — or clarification, if I can say that — to our Yukon law. I am sure that every member of this House will agree with me that road safety is important and, to this end, we believe that clarifying in the act where and when the standard speed limit will apply is an important component to ensuring road safety throughout the territory.

All other amendments to the *Technical Amendments Act, 2018* reflect the objective of addressing technical errors in legislation and removing outdated legislation from the books. This includes a minor technical amendment to ensure that the *Judicature Act* includes provisions to allow for non-Yukon bodies corporate to hold property in joint tenancy. We discussed that at some length the other day during debate. As well, cleaning up outdated legislation by repealing the *Lord's Day Act* is a part of this bill.

I don't wish to take too much time here going into significant detail on the bill at this point. I will take the opportunity to thank all of my colleagues for their thoughtful consideration of this bill and for the opportunity to answer questions that they had so that we could clarify any concerns or questions. Once again, thanking members of this House is

my honour and pleasure today, and I seek support from all of them for this bill.

Ms. Hanson: I just rise again to thank the minister on her continued efforts to modernize and/or to correct existing legislation and, in this case, most notably, the responsiveness of the minister to getting the amendments necessary to make the *Condominium Act, 2015* work for both developers and for potential condominium owners. The other amendments that the minister has outlined — it is very interesting to go through these seemingly arcane amendments, but after going through the discussion, it becomes clear that every time we do amend laws, there is a reason for it, and there is a reason for the laws that we have on the books.

I would encourage the minister to continue her work of going through Yukon's legislation as we all know — and we heard reference to it earlier today in Question Period — whether it is the *Coroner's Act* or whatever — there are so many pieces of legislation that go back 40 or 50 years that need to be brought forward and modernized.

We look forward to continuing to work with the minister on positive and progressive changes to territorial legislation and we will support this bill.

Speaker: Any further debate on third reading of Bill No. 16?

Are you prepared for 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. Ms. Dendys: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Agree.

Mr. Gallina: Agree.

Mr. Adel: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Mostyn: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Agree.

Mr. Hutton: Agree.

Mr. Hassard: Agree.

Mr. Kent: Agree.

Ms. Van Bibber: Agree.

Ms. McLeod: Agree.

Mr. Istchenko: Agree.

Ms. Hanson: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 16 yea, nil nay.

Speaker: The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.
Motion for third reading of Bill No. 16 agreed to

Speaker: I declare that Bill No. 16 has passed this House.

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

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. 206: *First Appropriation Act 2018-19* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Is there any general debate?

Department of Community Services — continued

Hon. Mr. Streicker: All I would like to do to begin here is to welcome the department officials. I'm sure everybody knows them. They are Deputy Minister Paul Moore and Assistant Deputy Minister Shehnaz Ali from Corporate Policy and Consumer Affairs. I'm just happy to continue debate on Community Services and I'm looking forward to questions from members of the opposition.

Ms. White: I, of course, echo the welcoming back of the officials in the Chamber.

The last time that we had a conversation about this department was on March 22 when I congratulated the minister for giving me the first answer ever of how we would communicate in the case of an emergency, which is that we would communicate. It has been almost a month since we talked about the importance of getting the information out if there was an emergency and that people would be contacted through radio, cellphones and the rest of it. I just wondered if any further decisions have been made on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: There has been work, although I want to give the sense that there is always sort of continuous work.

But there are some things that have happened. Based on conversations here in the Legislature, we made sure that the plan is posted online and had a link to it on our sort of “plan Yukon” page. Of course, more stuff is migrating across to the new website all the time, so that’s underway. As well, there have been further conversations with community members, including some of our volunteers, about the overall preparation.

There are a couple of other things. I think, in the second week of May, there’s an emergency planning week that comes up. We have a number of events scheduled for that, and I have asked that all ministers get a briefing on roles for when an emergency hits. We have some briefing coming for the media about what’s happening there.

There’s a ministerial meeting toward the end of May — a federal-provincial-territorial meeting. Sometimes we as ministers go, and sometimes we don’t and we send officials. This time around, I have suggested that we do go because of the level of interest and concern by Yukoners on the subject. I’m happy to get there and continue my conversation with Minister Goodale and other colleagues across the country.

Those are a few little updates of things that have been happening since we last spoke here in the Legislature.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that — that’s great. Something that also recently happened is that I asked about oil tanks — specifically, around oil tanks in mobile home parks. I use the example that, if a park owner had installed underground tanks while opening the park, and trailers — mobile homes — had gone in and they needed to be removed, what was the scenario?

Maybe what I’ll do is let the minister tell me what his legislative response was, and then we can go into further conversation after that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: As the member opposite notes, we did provide a legislative return recently on that. In general, what we noted in that legislative return is that, when there was a pre-existing oil tank that is buried, it’s the owner of the land who has the responsibility for that oil tank. We also noted that, if there were concerns raised where there was some issue between the park owner and the mobile-homeowner, we encourage, as always, that they turn to the residential tenancies office to get support and guidance.

Ms. White: I appreciate that. It came out on April 18, which I do appreciate, because this is a question I have actually been asked — a very specific question relating to this issue.

When the minister says that, if there was an issue, a tenant could go to the residential tenancies office — for example, to specifically talk about being told by the landlord that the homeowner needs to remove the tank — I just wanted to have an idea of what would happen in that case with the residential tenancies office — for one thing, just to lay it out, and then to just discuss it from some of my experiences.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The office is quasi-judicial in nature. It is arm’s length from the minister. It is to try to keep the professionals working on the issue — make sure that they are dealing with it and that it is free from political interference. There is a normal process whenever anything comes forward. Of course, every case is slightly different and I’m not going to be able to say, this is what the outcome of situations are. How the process unfolds is that, if a complaint arrives, casework is developed. The officer or the person who is in charge of investigating it can seek information from both sides. They have, for example, the ability to issue a court order to require a remedy, so they have some authority to them.

I don’t want to get into what the outcome of a particular concern or dispute might be — just to say that the office has the ability to make decisions and to assist with the outcomes of those decisions.

Ms. White: I don’t think it is a going to be any surprise to either the minister or the officials here when I say that I fundamentally believe that the office needs to have more powers. It needs to be stronger. The reason why I am using the example of oil tanks buried in mobile home parks is that, in my mind, if you have multiple units that will be dealing with similar issues and one case will go in front of the residential tenancies office, one of the concerns I have is whether or not the office can then direct the park owner, for example, that the example carries throughout, so that if other owners had similar problems, then the decision would stand for each. That is the reason why I am asking about the specific one.

We can remove what the issue is, but if a decision was decided in a mobile home park and it would be an issue that would affect other owners, would the residential tenancies office be able to direct that other owners be treated in a similar fashion?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I want to say is that of course, if the principle is the same, it would remain and that’s fair. But every case or every situation will have to be judged on its own merits and realities. What I can’t say is that one decision will create every decision because every situation might be different. I don’t know those subtleties at this point; we are talking about what-ifs.

What I want to do is assure the member opposite that — as we gave in the legislative return — if the principle is straightforward, where this is a pre-existing buried tank, it is the landowner’s responsibility. That is the general principle and I will stick with that.

I agree with her that you want to see continuity in decision-making. Again, the office is arm’s length from me, so it’s not for me to say, “You are going to do this.” They would be guided by the act and the regulations around that, but I think it’s reasonable to understand that they would base their decisions by looking at precedents that they have established and considering those cases in light of each other over time.

Ms. White: I appreciate the minister’s answers, but the only person who I would have a conversation with about what happens in that office is actually the minister right here, so —

yes, arm's length; yes, regulations; yes, legislation — I totally appreciate that.

The concerns that I have — which is why I am highlighting them — are that, for example, I did send information to the minister when a lease that had clauses that did not meet the legislation was included and multiple people had taken it into the residential tenancies office, but it wasn't until quite a bit after that when another issue was challenged that the owner was directed to change the leases. Although the problem had been highlighted multiple times by multiple people, the solution wasn't — from the tenancies office, they were not able to reach out and redirect the writing of the lease. It wasn't until a different event triggered that.

What I am trying to figure out is if we have complaints that are made or concerns that are highlighted — and this is why I say I wish the office had more power — because when that mistake or that oversight is highlighted, I would really appreciate it if the office could say, "Hey, P.S., you have another 220 tenants. You may want to correct this issue." Or, "You have another 88 tenants." That is why I am asking the question.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for raising these concerns. The way it is described to me and my understanding of it — and I am happy to have this conversation; I appreciate that we have it here — is that the system and the way the office works is driven by complaints. It is not proactive. It doesn't, for example, identify possible concerns and go out and proactively try to correct them or engage on them. It is complaint-driven.

What might happen — and I don't know because it is hard for me to know for sure — is that someone might come in and have a bit of a conversation, but they might not choose to lodge a complaint officially, in which case there is no case — in which case there is no direction that can be given.

I appreciate that the member opposite would like to see more authority vested in the office itself — great. At this point in time what we have is an office that is quasi-judicial and is complaint-driven. When there is a case that comes before one of the officers and they identify something — let us just use as an example that there is something within a lease agreement that is not appropriate and let us say that it is the mobile homeowner who chooses to raise that concern with the office — and it comes forward and there is an investigation and the office finds in that case that is correct, they can, I'm sure, talk to the mobile park owner and say that this is the reality and this is what's correct.

What they can't do is have them change others. The great thing about the Yukon and our neighbourhoods is that we have conversations with each other about what is going on. I hope that if there is a mobile-homeowner who identifies a problem and recognizes that neighbours have the same situation, that they are invited to also register those concerns. To the point that the member opposite was asking about, one or two questions ago, this would be one of those moments when, if you have done all of the work and you have figured it out on one, it probably continues to apply for others. Again, I won't say that exclusively because each one will be weighed

on its own merits; however, it looks like it would stand to reason.

Ms. White: I am just using parks as an example. Apartment buildings — you would have multiple tenants signing leases, and if those leases did not meet the legislation, I would hope that one complaint would trigger a change for all of them. I will just put that out there. I appreciate that it is reactive and complaint-driven. It would sure be fantastic if it was proactive, and when something was highlighted, they had the ability and were empowered to deal with it.

I will leave it at that — well, except for one more thing. It is fantastic to see the residential tenancies folks at things like Whitehorse Connects. They are explaining people's rights to them. They bring the handbook, and they will have conversations in less of an office setting. Recently, it was at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre — and probably for the rest of forever at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. It is really fantastic to see them so accessible. I just wanted to make sure that I ended with a compliment. It is nice to see them every time I go. That's good.

I am not sure if the minister is familiar or not, but I am sure other members of the Chamber are aware. There is a trail — if you were facing toward the airport, to the right of Hillcrest, down from Copper Ridge to the left of Lobird — it is called Ice Lake. It's a loop that goes around an existing — I would hesitate to call it a lake, but it is definitely a body of water. The reason why I am asking about this is that there was firesmarming that happened there last year, and brush piles were set on fire. I ride my bike in the wintertime. I have a snow bike and it is a trail that is close. It is easy and the dog really likes it. It has smelled like it was smouldering all winter. There was snow on the ground and smoke was still coming up from the snow patches. When the snow melted more, there was more smoke. Understanding that we are in probably the dampest part of the year right now because snow melts and makes water, I just want to know that when firesmarming is happening and brush piles are being burned — and in this case where the smouldering has been going on for a number of months — are there specific things that people who notice that should do? Is that normal? I just have some questions about smouldering underbrush.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Just before I get to the specific answer to the question that the member has raised, I want to thank her for her compliment. A year, or a year and a bit ago, we actually sat down as a department and had conversations about ways in which we could make the residential tenancies office more proactive on public education.

It was a conscious choice to try to look for opportunities to engage with the public so they understood what resources were there. It's great to hear that this is appreciated. I will pass on that compliment to the department officials.

It's also great that we have Yukoners, whether you're from the Legislature or not, out there active in the winter. Yesterday, we had the 25th anniversary of the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon, so it's great to be active all year-round. If ever, whenever, you see smoke and are

concerned about it, please, by all means, call it in. The number is 1-888-798-FIRE, or 1-888-798-3473.

Even in wintertime, there are instances when fire can get down into the vegetative layer below the snow and can actually travel. It is good to watch those things. There are times when we're doing firesmarming and, even with the best of intentions, something goes amiss, so we just encourage all Yukoners to try to reach out to inform us. That way we can investigate and just check to make sure things are safe.

We appreciate this example of the member opposite identifying something. It's great for us to find out.

Ms. White: I probably won't call it in, but there are smouldering, weird issues along the Ice Lake trail closest to the Hamilton Boulevard side. You just follow your nose. I don't think it's an issue, but it's kind of weird. It's like a weird science fair project. When you ride your bike past, everything is covered in snow and there's smoke — just little puffs of smoke.

One of the things that happened — and I'm excited about it — is there is a review currently happening of the minimum wage. I just wanted to know when the minister expects to hear back on that review.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The board has begun meeting. I got a letter just a week or two ago from the chair of the board, and he gave me an indication that he thought it would be — late August or early September is when they anticipate it. What we put in the terms of reference was for around that time, asking them to try to do that, so we could keep the process moving.

We also acknowledged that, as they were deliberating, if they felt they needed more time, we asked them to just reach back out to us to give us an indication. Currently, what we're looking for is late summer, early fall.

Ms. White: In that process, will the board be going out and having conversations with employers and employees? Maybe the minister wants to talk a bit more about what that might look like.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It is my anticipation that is what the board will do. Now, within the terms of reference, we discussed and said that we encourage them to. We also have offered — for example, over the past year or so, as we have been looking at this issue, we have done a lot of work, for example, with the Yukon Bureau of Statistics. We have offered to share that information and have also suggested that they could talk with the Bureau of Statistics — yes to employers, yes to employees — and we have encouraged them to engage on the topic.

At the same time, I want to say that they will come back with a recommendation to me and I will then take that to Cabinet. I am not giving them any direction on what they should find. When I have talked to groups that are interested in this, I have said that, if there are any points of view that come from members of this Legislature, I am happy to pass those across to the board to share those perspectives so that they can consider them. I won't do that myself because I want to maintain my neutrality with them — that they will act in an advisory capacity to me, and thus on to Cabinet. I don't want

to say, in any way, "Here is what you should find." However, as I stand here in the Legislature, if there are Members of the Legislature who have thoughts about options and also about process, by all means, feel free to pass them to me and I will absolutely share them with that board.

Ms. White: I thank the minister. To date, I have been pretty clear that I just wanted a review. I was just curious how it was going to happen so I'm just asking questions about that.

In the opposition briefing that we received, under community development, it has \$1.23 million for year 1 of the Old Crow multi-use complex project. I have been looking through the five-year capital plan and, for whatever reason, I can't put those two things on top of each other. If the minister can tell me more about what's happening in that first year — and also it is super important to know that I think it's fantastic. There is no disagreement from this side. I think anytime that you can increase recreation in a community — for example, wouldn't it be fantastic if the ice rink in Carmacks was usable? That would be good. I think community recreation is really important. I'm just trying to figure out where the Old Crow multi-use complex project is in that five-year capital plan. This is year 1 and I'm wondering how many other years we're looking at.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The first thing I want to say is that, in our five-year capital plan, we noted the challenge of listing every project, so what we gave were samples of the projects rather than an exhaustive list. What we tried to say was "examples of" rather than "everything is there".

This project is somewhat unique in that it existed, for some reason, under the Executive Council Office when we landed as a government. When we were looking at that, we thought that was not the best place to deal with recreation infrastructure, so we suggested that it move over to the Department of Community Services. There was some investment by the community on that project and there was some early work done on it. At this point, as we work with the community to start moving it forward, I am also trying to explore whether there are opportunities to get at some of the federal funding that exists. There are challenges to that, because when you go for the federal funding, there are rules about it being a start-to-finish project.

I don't have a lot of details on the project as of yet. I know that the department has been meeting, or planning to meet, with the community to discuss the topic. I anticipate that it will be a multi-year project. The dollars for the project just basically moved from the Executive Council Office over to us, so I will have to come back at some later date, once we have had a good conversation with the community and explored all of the options that we can to achieve the outcomes for the community.

I think, as is obvious in all of our communities — but especially communities that are a little farther afield like Old Crow — when you build a project like this, you want to maximize the use of that building because you want to squeeze everything you can out of it. I think that would be true of Beaver Creek. I think it would be true of Ross River — all of our more distant communities.

The other thing that is important to watch — with Old Crow, in particular — is that price of a project is quite variable, depending on whether we can get a winter road or whether there is a winter road. That may play into it as well. At this point, I don't have a lot of update.

I heard, Mr. Chair, the member asking about the Carmacks rink as well, and I didn't quite catch the specific question, so I will just sit down for this moment and see if I can get a follow-up on that.

Ms. White: It's a nice segue. I didn't actually ask a question about the Carmacks ice rink. I was just talking about the importance of recreational opportunities in communities. We had the conversation yesterday about cannabis and, as a young person growing up in the territory, I can tell you that the more occupied I was with recreational pursuits, the less trouble I got into. That would be no different than in a community like Carmacks. Although it's not far away, Carmacks is still isolated, if you're a young person. I was just trying to figure out right now — the Carmacks ice rink. The press stuff that I can find is dated from 2015, when my colleague was talking about it. I just wanted to know, with the problems with the Carmacks ice rink — the roof was deemed unsafe and it was unusable — whether or not Carmacks has access to an ice rink these days.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I completely agree with the member opposite about our communities — I don't want to say the word “isolated”, but “self-contained”. All I will say differently is that, for Old Crow, you have to fly materials in; for Carmacks, we can drive them in. There are some differences there. Folks in Carmacks just have a little more access to other facilities — for example, the Canada Games Centre or, when they host the Tantalus Ridge Run, we get a lot of people into Carmacks for that, and that is great. While I sense that more people are going to the Father Mouchet Loppet, it is still a little farther afield.

The point that the member is making — that recreation opportunities are important for all of our communities — absolutely, I agree 100 percent.

There were problems with the roof of the rink; there was deformation, and we saw that. Then, just over the last year, there also started to be problems around the foundation due to water runoff and erosion for the curling rink, which is right next door. It became even more pressing to try to address the recreation infrastructure for the Village of Carmacks and the community of Carmacks. It is in our plans. I think that both the village and Little Salmon Carmacks flagged this to me almost right away. This was their big priority so it made the top of the infrastructure list. It is just one of two pieces of infrastructure this year from the small communities fund going toward recreation infrastructure. It was just deemed to be a very high priority.

Our plan is to break ground on the project this summer. I will have to go back to the department to find out what the schedule is for when ice will be there. It would be hopeful to think that it means we will have ice by — should I say next winter or this coming winter? I am just not sure whether we are done here yet with winter — but the winter of 2018-19. I

don't know the answer to that question. I will get it for the member opposite.

The other thing that we are doing is that, originally when I spoke with the village and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation — as did the Minister of Highways and Public Works — they were asking us whether they could use some of the land that was the grader station in order to get a better design for the rink, and so we were working on that solution. The bigger request was whether we could even move the grader station, and so that is now happening. It is good news in the sense that we are able to coordinate both of those projects. They don't have to happen at exactly the same time — but that they happen. It is good that they are coordinating with each other.

Ms. White: I think when I used the term “ice”, it was loosely. It was mostly recreational opportunities. I do appreciate that the grader station and storage area is moving because that was also discussed in the 33rd Legislative Assembly — that if you wanted to build a community, then maybe you wouldn't want to have that kind of industrial storage in prime real estate. I am glad that it is moving right now.

Just to go back to Old Crow a little bit — and I don't know if it is under Community Services but I will give it a shot — are there any plans for an Old Crow winter road in the near future? Is that something that we're planning if we're talking about construction of a facility?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The hope is that we organize a winter road for this coming winter. Nominally, the hope is to have one roughly every three years, because it's expensive to put in, but we can get so much material in and out of Old Crow during the time when you have a winter road.

The hope is to have one this year, and we're trying to line up several infrastructure projects as a result — for example, solar panels. I know the Minister of Health and Social Services has been working on the health centre there, which is in desperate need of repair. There are a few things that are needed, but I want to also acknowledge that a winter road is dependent upon many factors that are sometimes out of our control — for example, weather.

So that's the intention, but we always have to keep an eye on some of the challenges that can be faced in those decisions.

Ms. White: That would only make good sense that weather would affect the ability to put a winter road in. Just because the door has been opened, is there any cost estimate? If the weather was ideal and the sky was blue and snow fell and the temperature was cold enough — what the cost of that road would be?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That's a great question. I would need to turn to my colleague — I might have a little bit of information. Generally, I would turn to colleagues in Highways and Public Works, and also the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. They are the folks who are quite aware of these realities. I can work to get more information for the member opposite. I might even have some when I get up again next — just a second, Mr. Chair.

So the last winter road that went in was approximately \$1.6 million. It was cost-shared between the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon government.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. Luckily for us, Highways and Public Works is up after Community Services this afternoon, so I'm sure my colleague will ask that same question.

When we talk about recreation, we talk about recreation opportunities in communities. Again, if we're talking about healthy communities, we're talking about healthy young people — it's that ability to recreate.

One of the things I wanted to know is the recreation infrastructure priorities for communities and how that's coming forward, and then how the Department of Community Services is ranking those needs and those wants. If you have a community with nothing, I would hope that it would move up the list over a community that had other aspects. Of course, there are other factors to look at. If, for example, you have communities with a recreation director, even if they don't have facilities, they still possibly have the ability to put on programs that are quite important. Can the minister talk about that please?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: The simplest answer that I want to give is that we base our priorities on community priorities. We go to the community — and the communities range from unincorporated to First Nation to municipal and to a blend of all of those together. We go and talk to them about — here, we have a range of funding availability and we would like to hear their priorities. Sometimes, the infrastructure that we are discussing might be something that is of a regulatory nature — for example, making sure that there is clean drinking water. Some funds deal with those types of things — for example, the clean water and waste-water fund. Then we would use, as the member notes, criteria about where there is need.

We also look to ensure that there is a reasonable distribution of funding of infrastructure across the territory because, ultimately, it turns out that we can identify a need almost everywhere. If we are talking about recreation — I think from a comment or question that she posed earlier — all of our communities have recreation needs. Then it becomes more of a simple question where we just ask the community: Where would you like to invest? What is your priority?

As it turns out, of the several funds that are out there — and I will try not to bore everyone with a lot of detail — there is the gas tax fund, which all communities self-direct where it is going — unless you are an unincorporated community, and then it is the government that has the lead, but we still turn to the community to ask their priorities. There is the clean water and waste-water fund which, as we have noted, is just about finished out and was very particular to water infrastructure.

The small communities fund is mostly to do with roads and water and what I call “hard” infrastructure, but has the option to flex across to be for other things like recreation infrastructure or cultural infrastructure. It has been used on occasion for some projects. Again, as an example, I will use the Carmacks rink, where there was an identified need and so we chose to move to that fund.

Coming forward — and we already know how much money is flowing, but we are still hammering out the details on the agreement — is the Investing in Canada plan for infrastructure, which has substreams under it. One of those is culture and recreation. That fund is a great place to put in all sorts of social infrastructure. There is another one under the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, which deals with rural and northern communities and which is basically there to try to shore up our communities.

That one allows for our communities to identify priorities. I can answer further on this, but the general notion is that we turn to our communities to ask them to set our priorities. We make sure that project lines up with the fund and the rules around that fund as it is available and then we tick them off from the highest priority, based on the community.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. Last summer, I got to go ride bikes in Ross River and the hope was that I was going to ride bikes with kids in Ross River, but it turns out that mountain biking in plus 30 is pretty hard to compete with the local pool, so one can say that, in communities where the pool is open in summertime, it's a pretty big deal. I went to Ross River to ride bikes with kids. It was 30 degrees. They wanted to go to the swimming pool. No one rode bikes with me. It is okay, I rode bikes by myself in Ross River. It's a lovely place to visit. It's just an example of how important those facilities are.

For example, Beaver Creek has the community pool and the water is preheated with solar panels, as an example, to bring the costs down. I wanted to know if in any other community pools in the territory solar heat was being embraced. I also saw, of course, the solar panels when I was in Ross River, so just with those summer community pools — what kind of shape they are in, what kind of technology we're using, and if any of those are on replacement lists — that kind of thing.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I have the good news and I have the not-so-good news. The good news is that many of our community pools use solar hot water to help get the temperature of the pools up and to save energy. The bad news or the not-so-good news is that a lot of our pools are pretty old — 25 years. You can talk about cracks in the foundation of that infrastructure — so there are some challenges for sure.

I don't know if I can give a list or anything like that, but what I would say is that it's one of the things that we have identified and I think needs some attention.

Ms. White: It's that critical importance of having recreation that is accessible in communities and knowing that in the summertime a swimming pool is probably easily the most sought-after location. Again, I can use the example of showing up in Ross River to ride bikes and not having anyone come ride bikes with me because they wanted to go to the swimming pool — it's just highlighting the importance of that.

One of the things that had been in the news earlier was the XY Charlie Crew — the Beat the Heat Boot-Camp for First Nations. I just wanted to know if that was funded through Community Services, whether that partnership was

there or whether it was through Energy, Mines and Resources — or where that was from.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: It's not Community Services that helps to fund it, but we certainly help to support it. The supportive funding — and we would have to talk to the Minister of Economic Development because it is their department that has given money for the training. What we do, as a department, is that we provide support with equipment and training modules and staff, like trainers — people who are there. We're heavily involved and engaged, but not funding the base funding of the program itself.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. I would suggest that training and equipment are pretty darn important, so I appreciate the work that is done by the personnel who do that.

When we talk about recreation infrastructure priorities, are there terms of reference for that — how the communities would access, how they would make those applications — or is there something that we could take a look at to see how that all gets sorted out?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: That is a great question. There isn't an actual terms of reference per se. We have been doing this for some time.

What I will say is that I think communities know about us because we've been coming around on a lot of different files like the clean water and waste-water fund and the small communities fund, and we're going back out on the small communities fund because the federal government will be asking us to decide, in conversation with our communities, on the spend-out of that fund sometime over the next year. That is six more years of funding, so there is a lot of discussion.

Then, with the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, we will have lots of conversations happening. There are a whole bunch of conversations that go on. I would say that every Association of Yukon Communities meeting that I have been to, I have talked about infrastructure. I would also say that almost every Yukon Forum that I have been to — I have formally been asked to discuss infrastructure. I have lots of sidebars on the topic all the time.

I'm sorry that I don't have terms of reference. What I can say is that we discuss the principles around infrastructure and how that should be established, and we do that in conversation with our partners. There are certain things — and you will have heard me say them here, Mr. Chair: looking for a reasonable distribution around the territory; making sure that it is identifying and addressing needs; and considering the lifecycle costs of that infrastructure, including the O&M costs because we don't want to burden our communities by putting in infrastructure that is hard to manage. We have seen challenges with that, and some of them I will acknowledge — like hard conversations that we're having where that infrastructure that was originally designed is proving difficult. One that I think we all know is the Dawson waste-water treatment facility — again, I just referred to it as the Dawson WTF — but I have other projects that represent challenges for our communities.

There are a suite of principles by which we work. I don't have specific terms of reference to share — I would, happily, if I had them.

Ms. White: Just because the minister brought it up, I'm going to go to the Dawson WTF project. I know that, in the 33rd, for example, the Yukon government never actually took it over from the contractor because it never met its requirements of the clean water for the length of time. The City of Dawson was concerned about being responsible for it because of those things, and we see money in this year's budget toward water projects in Dawson City.

Maybe the minister could fill us in on what's happening with the water treatment facility in Dawson City, what the next steps are, how it's performing, and those kinds of things.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: We have taken steps to deal with the ongoing deficiencies of the Dawson waste-water treatment facility, and the Government of Yukon has taken over the operations of the plant to assist the municipality.

What I will say is that the municipality has agreed with us to pay for what had been expected as their cost of running the facility back when it was originally designed. It's not like Dawson is not contributing; it's that they're not contributing beyond what was expected.

We filed a statement of claim — I have said that here and publicly — and that's basically to preserve our legal standing for the warranty of the plant, but, even though you file that statement of claim, we'll continue to work to try to see if we can get that plant working.

The current solutions that have been worked on with the design builder will be in place. They are either already there or will be there shortly. The notion is to have them tested over this summer season. We have to see it work over a period of time to understand it. I won't know the results of that until sometime later this year — maybe in the fall.

I can answer more questions as they come, but I'll leave it there for now.

If I could just back up for a second, Mr. Chair, the Carmacks rink is looking like a one-year project, so we anticipate that it should be completed by the summer or fall of 2019. We'll start in the summer of this year and it will be completed in one year's time.

Ms. White: I was wondering if the minister could talk a bit about the technology that's used at the Dawson City waste-water treatment facility. I was under the impression that the technology used in that facility was actually fairly untested when it was first installed — that it certainly wasn't installed in northern communities and maybe not at many places in North America. I am happy to be corrected — but if the minister could share what he knows about it.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I would be happy to try to get some technical folks in to answer some technical questions or to maybe get a fuller answer at some point. What I can say is that this was a non-traditional technique — or not one which is commonly used. I know of one other location at our latitude where it was used — however, not at our climate. I think the other example was in Homer.

The other challenge isn't just the climate; it is also the demographics. What we have in Dawson is a situation that is not that common. What you will have is a time in the summer months when you have a lot of effluent and then, in the winter months, you have very little effluent but you even actually have more water because you have bleeders and systems that are just pushing more water through because the infrastructure was never really designed to withstand the winters, as in the collection system. Then what happens is that your dilution drops even further. It is that difference between the rather concentrated effluent in the summer and the rather dilute effluent in the winter that is proving challenging for the overall system. I will leave it for experts to provide more detailed information if the Legislature so wishes to have that information.

The other thing I want to say is that the infrastructure that is going into Dawson this year — there is some that has to do with ongoing work to upgrade the waste-water system, but a lot of the investment that is happening coming up is actually on the drinking-water side of it — a new water treatment facility and distribution system. They tie to each other eventually, but it is not actually the same thing that is being invested in right now.

Ms. White: I understood that. I did understand that.

One of the things I wanted to talk about was the designated material registry and where we are in that consultation process, because I believe the minister and I are closer on this than I was in the past with previous ministers — albeit that I would like to see more things on that list. I just wanted to know where we were in getting going with the consultations. For example, we are having conversations right now about tires and about e-waste. I would like to know if we are getting closer to having both of those things updated and those fees coming online, and then I will have further questions about tires.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I believe, and I think this government believes, that the *Designated Materials Regulation* is incredibly important. When you think about the whole model of waste and how we can manage and, in particular, divert more of that waste from our landfills, the normal funding model in the past has been to use tax — the taxation method — to pay for the management of that solid waste. A better model is to move to user fees because once you move to user fees — I can use water as an example. If you go to user fees with water, people start to really conserve their water. It actually provides an incentive for people once they recognize that, “Oh, if I pay that money, maybe I will turn off the tap.” When you move from tax to user fees, we get a better system.

The best system is what is called a stewardship model. The *Designated Materials Regulation* is sort of in that camp. It is not our best thing, but it is in that camp. That tells us that we really want to move in that direction. I know, from conversations with the Minister of Environment, that the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment had a whole agenda — or list — of materials that should come in. We started this some time ago, and it has not moved fast. I

want to acknowledge in this Legislature that when we went to bring in the *Designated Materials Regulation* on tires and electronics, we hadn't heard fully from the industry. Now, there was some attempt to reach out to industry, and I will take the responsibility that we didn't get a good engagement with them, so I didn't have the information that I needed. When we got to the point of just about introducing those regulations, suddenly we heard clearly from industry. The great news about that is that the information that they gave us is going to allow us to improve those regulations significantly.

I don't have updates yet on timing or drafts of what those regulations will look like. I know that the department is working diligently on this topic. They hear from me often on it. I can give some examples of what is going on or what we are contemplating, and maybe I will get another question and we can discuss it a little further. I will just say that we know it's important, and we are seeking to try to resolve it. I think it is going to be improved from where it was and I am looking forward to it.

The other thing that I want to say is that the Minister of Environment and I — in conversation with our colleagues, the public, industry and municipal partners, et cetera — have always said that we need to get these ones done to get on to the next round. It should be in logical sequence that you introduce the next ones and then you start thinking about the ones that will be after that. I know that I have heard from municipalities directly that the next ones that they would like to get at are waste oil and waste-oil containers. There is a list. I will acknowledge that there are challenges because of how far we are from the normal recycling markets, but I would also say that Yukoners really care about this stuff and want to see this happen and fundamentally believe in it.

I would also say that one of the things I found encouraging was that, even from industry folks — whether that was electronics or electrical products, or whether it was tires — they all said, “We know that designated material regulations are the right way to go”, and the question is just to get the details right.

Ms. White: One of the things I had asked about was the timeline. I don't think, in the meetings I have been to — it was interesting, because there may have been a difference of opinion and points but, ultimately, even all the industry people said “Yes, something needs to be done.” We have heard from the government that they are looking to a combination between Alberta and British Columbia, depending on what product we're talking about. It's pretty much what industry said.

I just wanted to know when we were looking at having those online for e-waste and then for tires.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: What I can say is that, when we went back out and talked to the public — in particular, to industry — they made some excellent suggestions. I'll use tires as an example. With tires, they said you have to get the categories right — or we, the government, have to get the categories right, and that it was important that they align with neighbouring jurisdictions — for example, for tires, it will be Alberta, and likely with e-waste, it will be British Columbia.

They said then, in the analysis — because certain categories will really change — for example, medium tires, which are tires on semis or buses, big RVs — usually what happens with those tires is they are shipped out to Alberta, they are recapped and they're shipped back. That happens multiple times. So the result is that those are already in sort of a recycling cycle quite a bit. What we need to figure out — often what happens with those tires is that, when they go out for the nth time to be recapped in Alberta, and they're x-rayed, they just get recycled right there.

We need to get the analysis of those categories right to come up with a fair cost against those tires. Other ways that the industry has suggested to work with us is that we really concentrate on collecting those tires for recycling at the point of contact with the consumer. The closer that happens, then the less we get these situations where we move tires from one landfill to another landfill, and then we push them around in the landfill to keep them separated due to worry about the concerns of too many tires piled up and if there could be a fire risk. Then we get gravel on them, and ice and snow.

The system isn't very efficient at that point. Because of those conversations with industry, we understood that we needed to get back and redesign the system, not from scratch, but thoroughly. It's a thorough redesign. That's what the team is doing. There's the hard work of that.

Part of the conversation with the public, including industry, was about the timing of when that should happen in terms of, once the hard work is done to get those regulations designed and we work it out with industry and municipal partners et cetera, then when is a good time to bring them in? I don't have a date in front of me. What I want to say is that the department is working on those and I'm anticipating that it should come fairly soon — a month or months, but not way down the road. We need to see this happen. We need to get on with the next sets of designated material regulations. I'm not able to give the members of this Legislature today or you, Mr. Chair, a date. I wish that I could, but I know that the team is working hard to try to get that system designed so that we can then get the dates.

Ms. White: I do — well, I don't actually know if I appreciate when I say I want something and then the minister tells it back to me, because I knew that tires were Alberta and I said that, and I knew that electronics were British Columbia and I did say that, so sometimes when it comes back, you know, sometimes I'm not quite sure how to take it. I do appreciate it that it's coming at some time sooner rather than later and I'm going to leave it there because I could try in Department of Environment as well and see what happens.

The reason why I'm asking about designated materials, specifically tires, is that if anyone has the opportunity, I would suggest they go and get a tour of the waste management facility at the City of Whitehorse. I think that if you want to talk about waste or garbage — because I was told it was no longer called the dump because it's far more complicated than that. If you get the opportunity to go for a tour, it is actually really beneficial.

One of the reasons why I wanted to talk about tires is that in this year's budget, during the briefing, we were told that there was a \$200,000 increase for tire diversion to handle and ship tires. That makes perfect sense if you have the opportunity to go see where they're stored at the waste management facility and to understand the challenges that have been highlighted by the industry and all the rest of it. It's the fact that this \$200,000 is to deal with the backlog because paying \$5 a tire just isn't enough. That's the issue. That's why we're even having the conversation about designated materials — it is because it does make sense that the users pay. There is no doubt about it. It makes perfect sense.

When we were getting the briefing and we were told about the \$200,000 increase to dealing with tires, it's about dealing with the backlog. It's not even dealing with tires that are being sold this year or even sold sometimes in possibly recent years or probably even further back than that. It's about dealing with the backlog.

When we talk about the waste management facility in the City of Whitehorse, we talk about how they have to deal with both the e-waste that gets brought up — so I recently recycled a laptop and I had no problems paying the \$10 that I was asked to pay, but, man, was it ever sad to walk into a pile of broken down — or maybe not even broken down, maybe outdated — television sets — so instead of being flat screens, they're bigger ones. My laptop was very dead. It was not going to be resurrected and putting it on top of that pile and being like, "I feel really sad about this" because the \$10 I paid isn't going to cover the cost of it getting shipped down south and getting disassembled and the rare earth pieces being pulled out and those valuable pieces being pulled out. So when we talk about user pay, it's the importance of paying up front because if I wasn't me, maybe I would have thrown it out in the woods on one of my bike trails because I find things like e-waste on my bike trails.

Or you are going to be out in the middle of nowhere and you're going to find a stack of tires that hasn't yet had nature grow throw it, so they are pretty recent. It's the importance of people understanding once you get to that point that, for the tires on your vehicle, you have already paid the recycling fee, so don't throw them out the car window. Take them to the facility because they have already been paid for.

There is a line item — \$200,000 — for an increase for that tire diversion. So maybe the minister would like to talk about that \$200,000.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I truly and honestly do not mean any disrespect when I repeat things that have been spoken by the member opposite. The reason that I do that generally is so that I get on the record as saying things and so I hope that the members opposite would take it as a compliment that I am agreeing with them. I'm certainly not trying to contradict or condescend in any way.

The \$200,000 is — as the member notes — to deal with the backlog because we do have a lot of tires and e-waste. I would like to also acknowledge — and I know she knows this; I know that the member opposite is a champion on waste,

waste reduction and waste diversion, and I thank her for her efforts in our community.

There is a great place called Computers for Schools Yukon and I'm saying this now to any Yukoner, that if you have something that still has some possible life in it, that is a great place to take it because that is where we get to reuse, rather than recycle.

The member is exactly correct when she says that everybody, when they bought a tire, paid a \$5 fee. That \$5 fee typically does not cover the cost of recycling that tire and we have to put money in to try to deal with the backlog. That is correct. That is just a reality that we're faced with. What I want to emphasize is that once we get to a good designated material regulation, for example, on tires, I hope we never have a backlog again. The point about that system is that it should be designed such that it ensures recycling or that recycling is so easy to do for the user, that it is easier to recycle them than it is to carry them into the woods and shove them out back. I want reuse and recycling systems that are easier than dumping. That is the goal.

The member opposite is correct about the money we are using to try to get rid of the backlog.

Ms. White: Tires are one thing. At this point in time, I could take my tires to a tire shop and they would stack them and then they would do whatever magic they do with tires to try to deal with them.

The challenge, when I was trying to recycle that laptop, is that my first point of contact was to go to Raven Recycling because through Raven, they go to Computer for Schools Yukon, but they are only accepted Monday through Friday. I'm pretty busy right now Monday through Friday, so I went on a Saturday and I couldn't recycle it there. I drove around with this laptop in my truck for a very long time until finally, going between Porter Creek and Takhini, I went to the landfill and that is where I paid to recycle my laptop.

Not my first choice, but if we are talking about government leadership and if we are talking about making it easier, I agree, wouldn't it be fantastic if it was easier to recycle something than it was to throw it out. My laptop was an example of how it would have been easier to put it in my waste bin on the curb because that would have been the easiest place. I tried to do it other ways — I checked out Staples and they take old batteries; I checked out other places and they just didn't do it. I carried the laptop around for a very long time until I was able to recycle it.

One of those things that we talk about is how we make it easier. We have got to make sure that there are locations to make it easier and I really do believe that once we have the user pay — when I pay the \$15 to \$20 upfront for the new electronic device — that when it is time for it to be recycled, I will just be able to put it into a bin and hopefully we will have more bins that will be in more locations and they will be easier to get to than currently, because right now it is not so easy.

I am going to move on to volunteer EMS in communities. What we saw a number of years ago — I don't think it was last year; I think it was a number of years ago — was that, for

example, the community of Haines Junction was having such a hard time getting volunteers because it was hard to have enough community members who were able to volunteer their time. One of the reasons was that if you had a call-out at night, you were expected to come into Whitehorse, but if you had to work at 8:30 in the morning, you wouldn't be back in time.

What was done in that case is that there was an actual paid position through YG that was placed in Haines Junction to help facilitate that. I wanted to know what the status was for volunteer emergency medical services in communities like Haines Junction or Beaver Creek or Pelly or Carmacks or Mayo or any of those locations — if the minister could give us an update on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: Any time that I get to stand and, number one, thank our community volunteers for ambulance and fire, it is a good moment. At the same time, I will always try to say that we welcome new volunteers and that is true in all communities.

As it turns out, things in Haines Junction are pretty good right now. We did some training and some recruitment and, as I understand it — knock on wood, Mr. Chair, because there can always arise moments in time or emergencies when the luck of the draw is that people aren't available — right now, Haines Junction is not the community where I have the most concerns.

The two communities where I have more concerns are Dawson and Watson Lake. Even though they are larger communities, with those communities, it is the ratio of call volume to the ratio of volunteers.

For example, in many of our smaller communities, it is all volunteer-driven. In our largest community — Whitehorse — it is all staffed. In our next-largest communities — Dawson and Watson Lake — it is partially staffed and partially volunteer-driven. In those places where you are in that transition zone is where you have the challenges that we are faced with.

I think that, overall, our notion is to try to make sure that our volunteers are well-trained, well-equipped, well-supported and well-acknowledged. I think this will always be a bit of a challenge, so I don't want to make out like it is all roses, but I will say that we have a good group of people who are focusing on this issue to try to do the best with the resources available in those communities.

Ms. White: For the communities of Dawson and Watson Lake — we will start with emergency medical services — how many FTE positions are there for ambulances in both Dawson and Watson Lake?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I was just in Watson Lake meeting with the community there and this was one of our topics of conversation. It is two EMS staff. There is a supervisor who is there, and that supervisor is positioned there but deals on a regional basis. They have to go out — and I'm not even sure if that is a full FTE or not. I would have to check on that. I think it is the same for Dawson. I am going to have to confirm that, but I will just start by suggesting that

this is what I believe the staffing levels to be, and I will correct myself if I find out that I was incorrect.

Chair: Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

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

Recess

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

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 51, Department of Community Services, in Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*.

Ms. White: I have just had this realization that the minister and I could probably talk about the importance of Community Services and their vast array of programs probably from now until we celebrate, in my case, the 50th — we could be here for years, decades even. What I'm going to do is just leave it at this.

I appreciate the work that is done within the Department of Community Services. There is so much. There's nothing that doesn't touch a person coming out of Community Services. I appreciate the conversations the minister and I have had, and the support he has given us today and other days, as well as the briefings. Ultimately, I think, Community Services is one of those departments that, because it touches everyone, it's so important to make sure that our volunteers are supported, to make sure that our staff who are doing EMS and fire and all those things are supported.

I could talk for much longer, but I'm going to leave it at this. I'm going to thank the minister for the exchange and the staff for being here, and, of course, for their very thorough briefings, because I left the briefing pages days ago. Mr. Chair, I thank the minister and I thank the officials.

Mr. Cathers: As the minister knows, Community Services is one of the departments that we have two critics on from the Official Opposition — with my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, being responsible for most of the department, and with me being responsible for the Protective Services division.

I'm going to begin with just returning to questions that I had mentioned — and that my colleague, the Member for Porter Creek North, had mentioned earlier with the minister — and just see if he is able to provide a little bit more information at this point in time.

Although we did have a positive debate at that point, I know that, for some of the information that we're asking the minister questions about, he wasn't necessarily expecting — and needed to get information.

I just want to, in the area of EMS — I'm going to go through a few questions there for the minister. The first is in the area of what government is doing as far as the issue of deploying EMS personnel and EMS volunteers by helicopter. As I mentioned to the minister outside of debate in this House, the issue, from my perspective, comes down to two parts. For more complex helicopter extractions deploying personnel into

mountainous or wilderness areas, et cetera — there are clearly certain types of helicopter activity that do require an appropriate amount of training to ensure that staff are not, at any point, placing their own lives at risk. I understand that the SOMET team is doing some work in that area. I would appreciate, first of all, if the minister could elaborate a little more on what work has gone on through the SOMET team and what work is planned.

The other area I want to touch on relates to the issue of whether EMS volunteers can use helicopters to deploy to a scene when they're in a situation that I would characterize as low risk and — I'm not sure of the proper technical term so I'm going to use non-technical terms in referring to it — in situations similar to what anyone getting a ride in a helicopter or doing mining exploration, or even kids going up sightseeing, would be, which is that you are a citizen on a helicopter. The helicopter pilot will instruct you in safety and you're basically doing flat-ground entry and flat-ground exit from the helicopter. The issue first raised its head to my attention in dealing with the question of whether EMS volunteers in Dawson could go to West Dawson via helicopter when the ice bridge was not in and neither was the ferry. I would appreciate it if the minister could confirm that they are indeed still able to do so.

The second part of the question relates to what the policy is in other rural areas. What I would point to as an example of a situation where I personally believe quite strongly that EMS volunteers should be able to use helicopters, if they are comfortable doing — so rather than having to wait for Whitehorse operations to send paramedics from Whitehorse out to those areas — a good example of that would be that, if someone at a lake near Ross River or on the other side of the Pelly River when the ice bridge was not in and neither was the ferry — I believe that there should be an option of them being able to go and attend a scene via air if that is the most practical way to do so at the time, especially if it's a situation with any urgency attached to it. There has been some question in the past about whether the policy allows that.

I would ask the minister if he could respond to those questions. I will just sit down in the interest of allowing him to respond to those questions before I continue with others.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member for his question. It is still going to need to be one of those where I go back. Now, having heard it very explicitly and with even more detail, I will get an answer from the department.

I know some things, and I will share what I can. Our special operations medical extraction team — which we often refer to by its acronym SOMET — gets specialized training.

The point that the member opposite made is really what this all hovers around — it is about safety. If you don't have safe service providers, then you can't be sure that you are going to have safety for the people who you are trying to help. We just have to make sure.

I know that there is a protocol in Dawson if they are using a helicopter to go across. It is very different from — for example, if you are using a transportation service that is provided publicly — well, okay. In my experience as an

engineer working in remote situations with helicopters, there are a lot of safety considerations to manage. Even on flat land and simple terrain, it is not that straightforward. You have equipment and things that you have to make sure are safe around that helicopter. I don't think the answer is so straightforward. I think that there needs to be those protocols in place if we are working with that helicopter.

I will get a more fulsome answer for the member opposite from the department officials and I look forward to sharing that with him.

Mr. Cathers: I do appreciate the answer from the minister and his undertaking to get back with more information. I will just make one more point about this. I know the minister is probably not going to have any additional information in responding, so I just want to note that I am putting a statement on the record about what I am encouraging the minister and staff to look to if they are not already doing so. I would just say that, in my opinion, when it comes to the issue of staff and volunteers using helicopters, there are two very basic, and also somewhat distinct, types of situations. The first is low-risk helicopter use, which I would characterize largely as flat ground and in situations comparable to when staff of other government departments use helicopters and when mining companies use helicopters. I am not sure if the Minister of Community Services has had the opportunity to travel by helicopter, but the use of helicopters includes ministers and ministerial delegations at times. In those types of situations, what I would characterize as a low-risk helicopter use situation includes, basically, a pre-flight safety briefing by the pilot to those passengers on what they need to do to avoid coming into contact with the blades, and then generally everyone just gets on the plane without extensive training.

Just tightening up my comments there, I would encourage the department to look at it from two parts: a low-risk helicopter use situation that doesn't require training or doesn't require a significant amount of training and can be approached as a normal passenger situation; and the second category being more of the medium/high-risk situation, which could include extractions on a mountain and other situations where the helicopter might not be landing on level ground, or might be in a situation where there are more risks at play that do require higher level training.

I would encourage the minister and the department to ensure that we reach a place where, in the low-risk situations, the use of helicopters is available based on common-sense assessment of the situation for all staff of EMS trained as paramedics and also for volunteers in all of our rural communities, in the medium- to high-risk situation that they continue to expand the training available to staff, and I would encourage them to consider potentially volunteers to be able to deploy safely in those situations.

I am just going to leave that there for the minister. I would very sincerely encourage them to consider that. My strong belief is that, at some point, there is likely going to be an urgent situation in rural Yukon involving someone experiencing a heart attack or a stroke or some other urgent

situation that requires trained health care professionals to attend as quickly as possible and, if they are not able to do so or have to spend a lot of time discussing it and getting approval with the Whitehorse base of EMS, I think that — if we don't address the situation — there is a very good possibility that, at some point, someone may not survive a situation that they could have survived if there had been the ability for staff and volunteers to attend a scene by a helicopter, especially in those low-risk situations.

I am just going to leave that there. I am going to move on to two other areas related to EMS. One is a topic that I have discussed with the minister before, but it does keep coming up as a concern from people in Tagish and from volunteers there in Tagish. There has been talk on several occasions of replacing their four-by-four ambulance with a non-four-by-four ambulance. I know the minister has mentioned before the age of that vehicle, and I would just ask him two questions on that — first, to confirm that, in the current fiscal year, the Tagish EMS crew will be keeping their four-by-four ambulance.

The second question I would ask is if the minister would commit that, when the government needs to replace that ambulance, they will work with the volunteers in Tagish who do want a four-by-four option and look for a four-by-four ambulance to replace that ambulance, rather than putting them in a situation where they are not able to use four-wheel drive in one of the snowiest parts of Yukon, where — as I have been told by volunteers there in the past — they regularly deal with situations in the winter where they simply couldn't get to someone's place. Even driving on the highway, they would feel that their safety was improved because they had four-wheel drive. It is something that they are very concerned about and I look forward to the minister's answers.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I thank the member opposite for his suggestions about the training. I think, regardless of whether they are staff or volunteers, it is about the ability to make sure that if we have some protocols and trained officials in place, we can then help provide more lifesaving services under a broader range of situations.

I have not had the opportunity to travel via helicopter as a minister and I don't know if that will come, but I have done a lot of helicopter work over my time. In fact, I have been trained in a helicopter that they put on a machine, flipped upside-down and dropped into a pool of cold water, and we had to get out. I have done some rather rigorous training, so I get that there are ranges of training from just a brief ride on a helicopter.

The point that is being made — I will provide a more detailed answer and, because the member has asked — and I appreciate that he would like to hear that response on the record — I will do two things: Once I get that response, if it is before this coming Tuesday when the Legislature rises, I will provide that answer as soon as I get it. Then, when we next sit — or at the next opportunity — I will table that as well so it gets on the public record.

With respect to Tagish, I am aware — and I know the member opposite knows I have had conversations with

various folks who volunteer for Tagish EMS. I will just put a shout out for a pancake breakfast this coming Sunday, and I would love to see Tagish folk — Tagishites; I don't know what the correct term is; I hope someone will tell me — there this weekend.

What we are looking to do is to not get rid of the four-by-four ambulance. What we are looking to do is to add so that there is an option for our Tagish EMS folks. When it is safe for them to do so, or when they feel comfortable to do so, they will have a more modern ambulance that has the ability to be operated by fewer operators at a go, so that can be their option, or when they prefer they can use their four-by-four ambulance. We will do our best to keep it up over time.

What we are trying to do is accommodate the wishes of our volunteers. I think the more critical factor here is to support the volunteers. So if they identify that this is the need — if I talk to the folks in Carcross, they might disagree where the snowiest place is. I don't know; I just leave it to the volunteers. If they feel this is important, then we will do our best.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer from the minister. That sounds like a workable solution. I'm pleased to hear that he's looking to ensure that the Tagish EMS doesn't lose the four-by-four. I very much understand where the volunteers are coming from. Being somebody who is very attached to having four-wheel drive, I find it hard to imagine navigating some of our secondary roads without it.

I would echo and agree with the minister's comments and I am very happy to hear about the importance of supporting our volunteers. One of the things government should always be doing, with both EMS and fire, is recognizing that we do depend on people being willing to volunteer. In doing so, that also means we need to listen to them about their concerns and their equipment needs, while recognizing there needs to be some degree of consistency with equipment. This should lead to, in my view, sometimes adjusting the equipment plans and priorities to reflect and respect the needs of our volunteers and to hear what they're telling us about what they actually need in their area.

I'm just trying to find my next note here.

We were told by officials in Health and Social Services that there was a 12-percent increase in the medevac costs compared to the year before. The question I asked officials, which I expect they have probably passed on to Community Services, is what that increase is due to and how much of that increase in the cost of medevacs inside the territory under the air ambulance section of the program was due to Whitehorse having to deploy to Haines Junction or other rural communities at times when there weren't sufficient volunteers there.

As the minister may know, and the officials will know, there have been times when, if there wasn't volunteer coverage, the fallback solution was paramedics from Whitehorse deploying to that community via air, getting in the ambulance and then responding to the emergency call.

I would appreciate if the minister can break down that 12-percent increase a bit. I understand the cost increase is

within the Health and Social Services budget, but the Department of Health and Social Services told us that they weren't in a position to tell us the cause and that we should ask Community Services the question about how many there were of those cases and how much of that increase was due to having to deploy them due to gaps in volunteer coverage.

I should actually maybe phrase that question slightly differently, noting that I'm interested not only in how much of that increase is due to it, but overall, what the total cost was and the number of times Whitehorse operations had to deploy staff, primary care paramedics or other paramedic levels from Whitehorse via air to provide on-the-ground services in rural communities.

The next question I am going to put into that — just in the interest of time and also allowing the minister and officials time to get the information in response — the next question I'm going to ask is about support for rural EMS. There had been some issues that I dealt with early in my time as Minister of Community Services related to training and equipment, particularly uniforms and radios for rural EMS. The radio issue, I believe, was completely solved. The training and equipment were solved at the time, but I would just appreciate an update on what is being done — whether currently EMS is meeting its commitments to ensure all of our volunteers have full uniform kits, and secondly, what steps government is taking to provide EMR-level training to rural volunteers and whether they're doing any other additional training.

The third part of my EMS question that I'm going to put in there is — noting the fact that the honorarium and the standby pay that is provided to rural EMS volunteers was set back quite some time ago — actually, 2007 was the first year we provided it. That happened just before the program was transferred from Health and Social Services, and I was minister responsible at the time for Community Services. We provided the standby pay for rural EMS volunteers in recognition of the time commitment and the effect on their lives that carrying the radio and being on call have, and we also provided some changes to the honorarium that they receive. If memory serves, I believe it was an increase over a period of several years that hasn't been reviewed since that time.

I would appreciate if the minister could indicate whether the department is currently reviewing or considering reviewing the honorarium and standby pay as well as the compensation for rural supervisors and also whether they're looking at the possibility of adding any additional staff positions in rural communities, noting that there are the primary care paramedic positions in Watson Lake and Dawson City.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will do my best to answer some of these questions, but I also feel that some of it might need to loop back with the Department of Health and Social Services as well.

One of the points that I will need to confirm is changes in cost. The member opposite said that there had been a 12-percent increase in cost — I think that is what I heard him

say. I would have to check those things because I will need to turn to a different department to confirm that.

What I can say from our side is that there has been a 19-percent rise in medevac call volume — a 19-percent increase in medevac calls. None of that — as I understand it — is the transporting of Whitehorse staff down to another area. When we have had communities that are short, we put some Whitehorse staff and/or other people on call — we have put them sort of on standby. To my understanding, we have not had to deploy them, so it is definitely that cost. Maybe it has happened once or twice, but it certainly is not something to increase by 10-plus percent the cost of some system. There was some additional cost — again, I don't know overall percentages, but there was a time when the Whitehorse hospital had so much pressure on it that we were transporting patients to our other hospitals. There were some flights there. It was to offset the bed pressures at the Whitehorse General Hospital. There may have been some cost; but again, if I were looking, I would look at the increase in medevac calls. That is what I would look at.

I should note that we routinely deploy medevac via road, and that depends on a variety of factors. Even though you might think that going by road is slower; it is not always. With flights, you have to get the flight crew. There are certain things that will take time. Sometimes the road is the fastest, and so we will deploy by road whenever that is appropriate. We will be seeking the fastest route, depending on whether it is an emergency situation.

As far as I understand it, the radios and uniforms are meeting all equipment requirements right now, and the training is ongoing. I know that there have been some increases to honoraria and standby pay as of January this year. I am sorry that I don't have specific numbers, but there has been an increase.

I do want to also note that we always — I said it earlier to the Member for Takhini-Kopper King. I don't think it really matters if it's Protective Services or Community Affairs or if it is Community Services or one of the other departments. I think that there needs to be — and is — continuous assessment of funding for programs to try to understand whether we are able to deliver the services appropriately — whether there is appropriate compensation.

I don't want to suggest, for example, with Health and Social Services, that we are doing a more deliberate and fulsome review, but I do want to say that, in working with the department and with the finance officials from within the department, I know that we have ongoing discussions about how we are meeting those needs and concerns.

In particular, as I have already stated here in the Legislature today, we recognize how important our volunteers are to our communities outside of Whitehorse for emergencies, and so we need to do our best to support them.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answers from the minister. If he is able to get back with information about what increase occurred on January 1, that would be appreciated.

In looking at the 19-percent increase in medevac calls — I am sure the minister is not going to have that information

with him today, but if he could get back to me, it would be appreciated. If the department has an understanding of, after the fact, there was a 19-percent increase in medevac calls — what the volume is due to, and whether any of it is due to changes in practices, whether it is shipping patients from Whitehorse to a rural hospital or something else, or just any changes in what is available in communities versus when people are being medevaced — that information is something that we would appreciate if the minister and his officials, in consultation with health, are able to come up with it.

I would just encourage the minister, before I move on to another area, that, if he could — I would suggest that this is an area that, looking at how the medevac program is functioning — include ensuring that all parts of it have adequate resources. I know there are a number of players within it. It relates to the Department of Community Services, the Department of Health and Social Services. The Department of Highways and Public Works is involved. There is also involvement by the Hospital Corporation, physicians and nurses. There are a lot of people who work together. One of the problems, in my opinion, that can occur in having that many different places that people are reporting to, and are responsible for, is that everyone has their budgets and everyone has their own focus, but looking at how all that is working together is important to ensure that it is not being done with a silo approach — that it is looked at from two perspectives: one from the cost-effectiveness perspective, and the second being the patient-care perspective — ensuring that everything is working as it should and that there aren't unintended problems within the system as a result of those various players.

I missed mentioning in that — also, of course, there are the medevac contractors who are involved in that as well, providing the air services — a lot of players. I want to also acknowledge that there are many people involved who are working diligently in providing emergency health care to Yukoners and I thank them for that. I just would suggest to the minister that having everyone work together and making sure the program is operating efficiently — but also addressing patient care appropriately — are really important.

I'm going to just remind the minister that I think he probably inadvertently missed replying to this question. I was just asking about what is being done as far as training for rural EMS volunteers and whether the minister is confident that we are meeting our commitments around providing full uniform kit to all of our volunteers.

My last question specifically on that particular area of EMS — I'm just going to note, on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, that Watson Lake has had concerns with how the program is operating now and is interested in seeing a couple of things. I understand that one is that they want to ensure that the supervisor position there continues to be there, or I believe they would also be comfortable with an alternative position providing that service of a paramedic level being there.

The second thing is that I understand there has been a request from some within the community for the government

to look at changing the structure from having the two primary care paramedics serving during the daytime and volunteer service at night, to potentially having a situation where one paramedic — whether it's one of those positions or an additional position — is available during evening hours to work with the volunteers.

There are some advantages to that, including reduced pressure on volunteers' ability to help further improve their skills by working with a paramedic together on any cases that occur. I would just ask the minister if he could provide an update on what they're looking at doing with providing coverage in Watson Lake.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will endeavour to get some analysis around the increase in call volume, although sometimes the answer would just be that it's because there has been more acuity.

But it is always good to look at these things. I appreciate the comments from the member. Talking about dynamic systems where we're working with multiple departments, multiple interests and multiple budgets, it is important to do a lot of cross-pollination, a lot of discussion as groups.

I know, for example, that the deputy ministers have fairly regular meetings, especially when an issue arises of concern, and that they will form a group quickly to try to address it.

That's also important when we go to review systems to understand whether or not they're effectively delivering the service that we need. It's a great point that's being made. I appreciate it.

As EMS moved across to Community Services, there will always be some advantages and some disadvantages to those types of systems. It's good to have a look now and then to understand whether we're doing what we can, or whether we're delivering the services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

With respect to training, I apologize that I missed that question. As far as I understand it, training is still in good shape with our volunteers and that it's moving ahead well. Within the last couple of years, we developed an online system so that we could do training right in the communities for our volunteers, again trying to support them and get that training to them, rather than them to the training. I have attended a couple of sessions personally where we had folks coming from the communities.

I know we have got — I think it is next week or coming up shortly when we are going to be doing some of our awards for some of our EMS folks, and I look forward to that.

Watson Lake — just recently, I was there with my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works, to discuss issues in Watson Lake and we had a meaningful conversation with both the Town of Watson Lake and the chamber of commerce, which raised some of these suggestions. What I want to say here is that — and on the floor of the Legislature is not going to be the best place to try to get at solutions — as we look for those solutions, I will always need to balance.

I sort of referenced this earlier where we have the situation where we have got both paid staff and volunteer

staff. That is an area where you are in transition at all times. Watson Lake in particular has a fairly high call volume to volunteer ratio. We recognize that. One of the reasons why we moved the supervisory position to that area was to try to shore it up and to provide the support. I have said to the folks in Watson Lake that if that position was going to change, we would be reaching out to them and be in conversation with them. I don't anticipate that at the moment, but it is always challenging because at some point, when you are down to one person talking in the Legislature, it is hard to get away from talking about personnel issues. That is always a challenge that we have — how to navigate that well.

The other thing that I talked to them about was working collaboratively with them on a solution, or trying to find the best solution for our blend of staff and volunteers and how to coordinate them. I must always consider our collective agreement with our staff that doesn't permit all of the solutions that might come forward from the folks in Watson Lake, but I appreciate that we are both working — the department and the members of the community — to find a solution that will result in the best services that can be provided with the resources that we have at hand.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer and I am sure that my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, will also follow up with the minister on that issue. I know it is a topic of concern for her community and that is why we are raising it with the minister.

I am just going to move on to a couple of other areas related to EMS. The first, as the minister mentioned during his initial remarks on the budget on March 22 — it is page 2213 — the minister said, "First responders with the Yukon Emergency Medical Services will benefit from \$225,000 to upgrade and replace vital communications equipment this year." If the minister could just elaborate on what is included in that, it would be appreciated.

I'm going to ask the minister about new buildings for fire and EMS. I know that both the municipality of Mayo and the municipality of Carmacks are interested and have been in the past — they were when we were in government — in moving forward hopefully in partnership with Yukon government to develop new facilities there. In the case of Mayo, they were looking at a design that they had as of a couple years ago, and which they had done for, I believe, a four-bay facility that would house two fire trucks and one rescue vehicle as well as one ambulance. Mayo wanted to continue what is currently the relationship at the existing fire hall, that being having government rent some office space in that facility. They were hoping that with infrastructure money from the government, as well as infrastructure money from Mayo, they could move forward with developing this facility and then subsequently rent that space to the Yukon government.

Could the minister update me on whether that facility is something that the current government also supports and what exactly they're currently look at doing with Mayo. What has the government offered in terms of support? What timelines are associated with this project?

Hon. Mr. Streicker: To address the first part of the question from the member opposite, the \$225,000 was for communication equipment, heart monitors, ventilators, IV pumps, training aids, protective equipment, et cetera, and that's for both, of course, staff and volunteers across the board.

We are definitely supportive of — I will start with the Mayo fire hall. I have toured their existing building and had a good conversation with the Village of Mayo and they have identified it as a priority so yes, we're working with them. The conversation is ongoing. For the record here, we will state a couple things in principle. The first one is that if we are using space within that building and someone else is responsible for the building — for example, the Village of Mayo has a responsibility for that building — and we are taking up space in it, then I expect that we should pay a fair market price for that space. If those are our ambulances that have a bay or bays or some space, then for sure I think that we deserve to pay what would be effectively the O&M costs of that.

By the way, I have had direct conversations with Mayor Bolton and his council on this and I have said that to him even quite recently. I know that the department has been in conversation with the village on this even I think this past week.

This is where I'm going to again reference this envelope approach with the capital budget. What we have is the opportunity to begin work on that building this year, but I don't have the certainty until the department has ironed out the details with the community.

That's what is important to me first — who will have building ownership? Who will have responsibility for the building? I said it earlier that we need to see the O&M and think it through and be sure that it's going to work for everybody ahead of time.

Let me turn now to the Village of Carmacks and their fire hall. It's a different situation from the Village of Mayo. The upgrades to equipment that they're thinking about would make the current fire hall not feasible, so something has to give. Maybe the possibility is to replace the fire hall, or maybe the possibility is to upgrade the fire hall or provide an extension or do something to deal with those deficiencies to allow for the new equipment.

I think it's important that we do diligence around that before we get to a choice. I will always seek to defer to the community itself in setting those priorities. The reality will be that, if that's the priority, something else moves down on the priority list. I will do my best, or ask the department to do its work, to say, "Okay, here's option A, and this is what it would take to do some retrofit on that building and get it where you might need it to be; here's option B, which is a new build. These are the two price tags." Of course, there are pros and cons with both of those and one of the differences will be, if you make the choice to get the full rebuild, great, but it will drop other things down on the priority list. I leave that to the Village of Carmacks to lead.

Our job, I believe, is to provide them solid information about what those options would look like so they can tell us,

based on their local knowledge and local realities, what their priorities would be.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer from the minister. I would just note that I'm going to start with Carmacks first, since the minister mentioned it last. I would note in that case that, having toured the facility, there are also age issues in that situation. My recollection and understanding from talking to the village council in the past was there was an interest in building a new facility for EMS and fire. I believe the location they were looking at was near the waste-water treatment plant.

I would just encourage the minister to give strong consideration to doing that.

In the case of the Mayo fire hall, I'm pleased to hear the minister is committed to moving forward and I'm pleased to hear his indication that government is committed to a fair market lease rate for the building, starting once it's built, if they're leasing any space in it. There was a little concern — he mentioned the question of ownership. That was a red flag that caught my attention.

The proposal that had come from Mayo that they brought to us during our time in government was for Mayo to own and operate the facility, to manage the asset. The town of Mayo — as I hope the minister would agree — actually does a great job of managing their buildings and assets effectively and in a fiscally responsible manner. Is the government now considering not supporting Mayo owning the facility and potentially keeping it as an asset on the government's books instead? If so, could the minister explain why? Because, to me, that undermines the principle of trying to support sustainable communities.

When you have a municipality that is quite capable of managing a facility and had indicated a desire to do so, not supporting their request to build and own a facility seems to me to be counter to the basic principles government has operated under within Community Services, of trying to support sustainable communities. I would appreciate it if the minister could provide an explanation on that.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I will do the same. I will answer in the order in which they came. Let me turn back to Carmacks for a second. Yes, that building has an age to it of course. That goes into the calculus. While I respect that the member opposite is emphasizing an opinion, I think what I want to stress here is that I will support the direction that I get from the Village of Carmacks. I just believe that we present them with the options and they tell us. If that is the priority, okay — I have no problem with that. The infrastructure dollars that we have are not infinite, so you have to make choices about what is going to be the way to go. I am sure that the age of the building builds into that assessment of what the priority is and whether it is better to replace or to repair.

I thank the member for his questions regarding Mayo. Let me start by saying this: I agree with him that the Village of Mayo is quite capable, competent and able to manage facilities like a fire hall, and I totally support them in that. There is a question about ownership. It is a really good question. I will point out why it is worth the conversation with the Village of Mayo, but I will start by saying that, again, I am

not going to force Mayo to take some choice. I am going to have a good dialogue with them and see what they would support. Here is why.

We have a lot of infrastructure dollars coming to us — so many infrastructure dollars are coming to us that we are in the position where we look at the spend-out over the years — let's say, over the next decade — and currently, it is more than we can spend on the 25 cents as a territory, so we are at a limit. That limit is putting us in a different position where we turn to our communities and say, "Well, here are the choices. We can go so far. What would you wish to do? Do you want the opportunity to access those extra dollars or not?" We have had some questions about that here in the Legislature, and I am sure that we will have more. We as a department have to have lots of conversations with our communities about that.

If, on the other hand, there are assets that we can build and continue to own as a government, while — at the same time — allowing the management to happen by our — in this case, a municipality, but our communities — then they manage that facility and they still are able to charge us back for the use of that building. In a way, for example, if we put a bay in there for our EMS ambulances and they charged us for that and used that as revenue generation, the difference to the municipality might be whether they put it on their books or whether we keep it on the books of the Yukon government. Does that make a difference? Yes — it is a material difference. If we transfer assets to the communities, then the tangible capital assets immediately hit our books. When that happens, we won't be able to stretch that money as far. If we are able, by doing life cycle analysis on the finance side of that infrastructure investment to stretch our dollars, what that then means is that we will get more of the overall funds coming from Canada, which we can supply the 25 cents on. It comes down to that debate.

What we have decided to try to do is this analysis in partnership with our communities. We are in conversation with them about it. The Mayo fire hall is an example of where we are having a conversation like that and looking to see what the differences would mean.

Again, I will say here on the floor of the Legislature that we in no way will impose a decision on Mayo. We will have a full and open conversation with them and, if we reach an agreement — great, if we don't — okay, fine, we have another way to go, which is to make sure that the asset transfers to the municipality, if that is their wish — and away we go.

To directly answer the question from the member opposite: What would be the reason? The reason is to change our tangible capital assets and to hopefully stretch how far our dollars will go in providing the 25 cents for our communities.

Mr. Cathers: I appreciate the answer and the explanation. I'm still a bit concerned, but I would just encourage the minister to commit and ask him to commit that, ultimately, they will leave the choice to Mayo to decide whether they own the facility or the Yukon government does.

In the past, I know that Mayo — when they had approached us — they certainly were very much strongly in favour of having the municipality own the facility, instead of

the government. To the best of my knowledge, I haven't heard that this has changed, but I'm concerned that government is considering not doing it and would strongly encourage the minister to commit that, if Mayo wants to own the facility, they will be able to own it and government will commit to leasing the facility at a fair market price, starting as soon as the facility opens.

Just in the interest of maximizing time this afternoon, I'm going to move on to a couple of other areas. One is related to the comprehensive municipal grant. I would ask the minister when the next comprehensive municipal grant review process will start next. I would also note, as it relates to infrastructure — gas tax funding is designated to be used for specific projects.

The minister has said he is in negotiations with the federal government to allow gas tax monies to be stacked against Building Canada fund monies and other infrastructure dollars. Since most municipalities are unable to come up with the 25-percent contribution for Building Canada projects, these communities may be forced to cancel the very progressive gas tax projects in order to fund other infrastructure projects. Does the minister feel that's fair to communities?

The minister has also spoken to reporters about a new way of thinking about infrastructure funding. Again we have expressed concern about that and feel we need to again, about requiring municipalities to come up with 25 percent for infrastructure projects. In many cases in our rural municipalities, they simply do not have a big enough tax base to be able to do that, and that's why the structure that was in place during our time in government was that, very commonly, the Yukon government would contribute the 25 percent and the federal government would provide 75 percent under those funding agreements.

I would also ask, related to the comprehensive municipal grant — there is the \$50,000 in funding for fire. I'm pleased to see that the minister put that in as permanent funding. It was put in during the last CMG process for structural fire protection. However, I understand that it's now designated as funding to cover costs over and above structural fire protection, including monitoring wells at landfills and, because of this, municipalities are having less money for fire at a time when actually the cost of fire trucks has gone up significantly.

As the minister will know from briefings with officials, the cost of a fire truck has gone up quite dramatically over the last few years. I understand that, in part, it is due to some of the environmental standards and the availability of equipment. That means the \$50,000 will have to be used to buy a fire truck that's now hundreds of thousands of dollars more than it was when the money was first put into place. Instead of increasing the money beyond \$50,000, which is what I think should occur, it appears that the government is actually asking municipalities to dip into it to cover other costs.

Since that decision was made after the new comprehensive municipality grant was negotiated, does the minister feel that is fair and will he commit to ensuring that,

during the next CMG planning process, funding dealing with costs due to changes in regulations, which includes monitoring wells at landfills, is kept separate from funding for fire services? Will the minister consider — and I know he would require Cabinet approval on it — increasing that \$50,000 allotment for structural fire protection to reflect the rather dramatic increase in the price of fire trucks?

The minister has also made a commitment in this House about making an announcement regarding carbon tax rebates to municipalities in roughly three weeks from now. From the answer the minister provided it sounded like the decision in this area had already been made. I understand the temptation to want to fill a speech at AYC with information, but if the decision has indeed been made regarding whether there will be a carbon tax rebate to municipalities, I would urge the minister to actually answer that question here today or put out a press release tomorrow and let them know what is happening, because this is a situation where municipalities are concerned about their budgets. They are facing cost pressures. Citizens of Whitehorse — and I have heard from taxpayers who are concerned when they hear that Whitehorse's costs due to the carbon tax may be upward of \$300,000. People in Whitehorse are already tired of the amount of the property tax increases they have faced and are concerned that they may have to reach deeper into their pockets.

If the minister would consider here today — or through a press release tomorrow or Monday — actually telling us what the government is doing — if anything — as it pertains to carbon tax rebates for municipalities.

I am going to move on to another couple of areas, just in the interest of maximizing time this afternoon. I was pleased to hear that officials from Community Services are following up on looking at the potential development of a community well in Ibex Valley. That has been something that was discussed at the local advisory council before as a measure to immediately address fire safety.

We added storage tanks and a fire truck refill point to the Ibex Valley fire hall, but there was also an interest from the local advisory council and people in the community of looking at developing a community well since that particular well has both water-quality issues and water-production issues. They had identified a location that the minister may — if not, Energy, Mines and Resources should — have a map of the location that the local advisory council was interested in, which was just past the first entrance to the Old Alaska Highway by Creek Road.

I would just ask the minister if he could provide an update on what government is looking at doing in that area. I thank him for the fact that officials are in discussions with the local advisory council and encourage the minister to look at ensuring that, when that facility is built, it's done in a manner similar to the water treatment facility at Deep Creek in that it contains excess storage capacity to allow fire trucks to refill. I know that there's already one refill point but, having one at a location further out, in my opinion, has strong merit to it. If a well facility is being built, the cost of adding the ability to fill fire trucks is not that massive, and it does improve the ability

to respond to an emergency, especially if it is a facility with a better-producing well, since the current fire hall, once those tanks go empty, takes a long time to refill them.

One other question related to fire that I'm going to ask the minister is regarding Grizzly Valley. The Land Development branch of Community Services developed Grizzly Valley and engineered it and inspected it. Can the minister please confirm that this is what occurred and indicate from information he has available from officials whether that was built to Transportation Association of Canada tax standards and should be accessible for both fire and other vehicles?

Last but not least, I am going to ask him whether the department through Land Development is doing any work on reopening the access for the second access to the new Grizzly Valley subdivision or whether that's under the Department of Highways and Public Works, which I believe is likely the case.

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I commit to Mayo. The CMG is now finally increasing. It's going up roughly by \$800,000 this year. It will go up by more. I am happy to get it moving. It has been stagnant for some time. When we moved money into the base, we did so in a way to allow municipalities to have the opportunity to use that money where they needed it.

We did not say that, as that money moved into the base, it was going to be that they have to pay for monitoring wells. Unfortunately, that was a time-limited budget that was put there by our colleagues opposite; however, I am happy to work with municipalities on that very issue.

On the gas tax, if we get an agreement with the federal government to allow stacking, the great news is that it will not take away from those sustainable projects. It will allow them to expand those sustainable projects because they will get at more funds through that stacking. That is a terrific thing.

Sorry, Mr. Chair, there are so many other things. I will have to get back to the member opposite on Grizzly Valley. I will work with the other departments that are involved in this. I just wanted to say thank you to my colleagues, and I thank the members opposite for thanking the department as well. I apologize to Hansard for speaking so quickly.

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

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

Motion agreed to

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

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

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

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

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 206, entitled *First Appropriation Act 2018-19*, and directed me to report progress.

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

Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following sessional papers were tabled April 19, 2018:

34-2-58

Yukon Electoral District Boundaries Commission Final Report — April 2018 (Speaker Clarke)

34-2-59

Report on Subsistence, Travel & Accommodations of Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly 2017-2018 (Speaker Clarke)