



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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34<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

Thursday, May 11, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2017 Spring Sitting

**SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North**  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun**  
**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North**

### CABINET MINISTERS

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

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS

#### Yukon Liberal Party

<b>Ted Adel</b>	Copperbelt North
<b>Paolo Gallina</b>	Porter Creek Centre
<b>Don Hutton</b>	Mayo-Tatchun

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

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

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Liz Hanson</b>	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
<b>Kate White</b>	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Floyd McCormick
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Doris McLean
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon**  
**Thursday, May 11, 2017 — 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 National Nursing Week

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge National Nursing Week, which runs from May 8 to 12. At this time, I would like to introduce Nika Leonard, Christina Sims from the Registered Nurses Association; Rachel Burkhart, Sheila Thompson from Community Nursing; Steve Tapp, a licensed practical nurse from Alcohol and Drug Services; Carmen Gibbons from the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre; and Sean Secord, past president in the gallery today — all of you are representatives of the hundreds of nurses who work throughout the Yukon.

The theme for this year's Nursing Week is #YESThisIsNursing. This theme recognizes the influence that new technologies have on nursing roles and some of the non-traditional settings and sectors that nurses work in. The theme also speaks to how those in caregiving roles can leverage social media to raise awareness on important issues.

Our nurses work in hospitals, communities, clinics, on the streets, in long-term care facilities, care homes, palliative care, correctional facilities, treatment centres and private practices. Nurses also work in policy and management roles.

We have registered nurses, nurse practitioners, nurses practising with expanded scope and licensed practical nurses working everywhere in our territory. The Government of Yukon employs nurse practitioners, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses in areas of Community Nursing, Continuing Care, Alcohol and Drug Services, Communicable Disease Control and Justice. In addition, there are a number of nurses working for the Yukon Hospital Corporation or in private practices. These men and women bring with them not only caring and compassion, but a broad range of skill sets. From the fast-paced emergency room to the bedside of a palliative care patient to the support and assistance of new moms, they show compassion, use critical-thinking skills and pay attention to detail. This week, we appreciate all of our nurses, no matter their specialty or place of work, for their dedication and compassion to improve the lives of Yukoners. Thank you all.

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to nurses across the Yukon for National Nursing Week. Also celebrated this week is

International Nurses Day, which occurs annually on May 12, the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale.

I am happy to have the chance to acknowledge the work nurses do for us day in and day out, and to reflect on the value that work has on our communities. Throughout our lives, we have encountered nurses who have been there for us in many different ways.

Nurses help to deliver babies. They weigh them, bathe them, and help new families get their bearings by answering questions and providing sound advice. They immunize those babies throughout infancy, into childhood and beyond. They help Yukoners thrive by encouraging healthy and active lifestyles. They lead research and innovation. They care for the elderly and seriously ill in their homes. They assist in surgeries and traumas. They provide comfort and companionship.

Nursing is one of the most difficult and also one of the most rewarding professions in our territory. From the community health practitioner to the surgical, emergency room or medevac nurse, each one of these individuals has dedicated their lives to ensuring the health of others and, in turn, contributing to a healthy and vibrant community. Nurses are the front line of patient and health care and tend to be the face remembered when one thinks back to their own or their loved ones' stay at a hospital.

I encourage all levels of government, all communities and organizations, and all Yukoners to acknowledge and give thanks to those working in a profession that makes such huge contributions to the well-being of our territory.

Thank you to all Yukon nurses for your kindness, your compassion and your dedication to Yukoners. Thank you for working long hours on odd rotations and never giving up. Your dedication to the health of our community is inspiring, and I thank each and every one of you for your commitment.

**Ms. White:** #YESThisIsNursing is the theme for this year's National Nursing Week. I'm pleased to stand here and pay tribute to the nurses in Yukon and to the Yukon Registered Nurses Association. We honour and recognize the dedicated professionals in the Yukon who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, certified nursing aides and licensed practical nurses.

It has to be noted that nurses are with us throughout our lives. A nurse was likely there when we took our first breath and it is probable that a nurse will be there when we take our last.

The theme of this year's week is #YESThisIsNursing and is a reminder that these professionals are versatile and all around us. They work in our hospitals and health centres, they work in home care visiting and supporting clients in their homes, they work where the homeless and marginalized are found. They meet and support people where they live and where they're at, whether on the streets or in shelters, hospitals or homes. They are teachers and professors training more nurses, who will in turn support the community in all aspects of health.

We all know about Doctors Without Borders or Médecins Sans Frontières, but what is sometimes missed is the number of nurses who work alongside these physicians.

Nurses are bringing their skills and professionalism to areas of conflicts and to areas experiencing outbreaks of disease. They bring with them compassion and competency. They are training communities in preventive health care to make sure they leave behind a legacy of hope, just like they do in our communities.

Our territory would be a very different place without nurses and it's hard to even imagine, so thank you to the registered nurses, the nurse practitioners, certified nursing aides and licensed practical nurses. You make the Yukon a much better place to live.

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Hassard:** I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming a few people to the Assembly today. First off is Mr. Erin O'Toole, who is the MP for Durham as well as a candidate for the federal Conservative leadership race. With him is his EA, Mr. Jeff Pierce, as well as Connor Whitehouse, president of the Yukon Conservative Association.

*Applause*

**Mr. Adel:** I would like the House to recognize one of my constituents from Copperbelt North, Mr. Dennis Senger.

*Applause*

**Mr. Streicker:** I would like to acknowledge Mayor Michael Riseborough and his wife Brenda, who are here from Haines Junction. Michael is the first vice-president of the Association of Yukon Communities. He is on his way up to Faro, as are many of us later today. We're looking forward to a great weekend with the Association of Yukon Communities.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I would like the House to welcome my family. I have my cousin Mia Starcevic, my wife Shona, Sophie, my son Liam, my uncle Clive Mostyn, and beside him is Dennis Senger, who my able colleague here just identified. Clive and Dennis went to school together a couple of years ago to study journalism, and I welcome them to the House.

*Applause*

**Mr. Istchenko:** I do want to thank the Minister of Community Services for his kind words, but I would like to add a couple of points about our mayor from Haines Junction, who is a good friend of mine. He was once a CO and I look to him for a lot of knowledge and expert advice when it comes to doing my job, and I enjoy our great working relationship.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. Dendys:** I would like to welcome Aubyn Russell. She came in a little bit late and she is one of

our amazing nurses at Kwanlin Dün and I want to acknowledge her today.

*Applause*

**Ms. White:** I'm lucky — I somehow won the coin toss here. I would like to introduce my friend Steve Tapp. It's an important thing to note that he came out of the harm reduction business.

He worked long and hard at making the lives of people better in Vancouver before he moved here. He took that love into the practical nursing program at Yukon College, and now he is working at Alcohol and Drug Services. This is a perfect example of someone taking a passion and moving it up to that next level. He is one of the nurses we are paying tribute to today. Thank you so much Steve for your dedication.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any further introductions of visitors?

Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

### TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Ms. Frost:** I have a document for tabling in response to the question from the Member for Lake Laberge on health care insurance coverage.

**Speaker:** 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, in consultation with palliative care physicians and health professionals, to consider placing the palliative care unit in the Thomson Centre close to emergency physicians and the hospital pharmacy.

**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: Carbon tax

**Mr. Hassard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, we learned what the federal government's plans for implementing the Premier's carbon tax scheme in Yukon will look like. Multiple national news agencies are reporting that the federal government will announce next week that the carbon-pricing scheme, which the Premier is working with Ottawa to implement in Yukon, will be modelled on the carbon tax in place in Alberta. For weeks now, the Premier has been saying that he has been in negotiations with the federal government

about the structure of the carbon tax here in Yukon. He told this House that he is waiting to hear about the details. Well, the details are now available, and they don't look good for the Premier's election commitments.

Can the Premier please tell us if he is happy that the carbon tax is designed by the Alberta NDP that is coming to the Yukon, or will he change course and stand up to Ottawa against this carbon tax scheme?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do appreciate the question from the member opposite. We are very much aware of the recent speculation in the media about the federal carbon-pricing mechanism — the federal pricing mechanism. We continue to work with the federal government on this issue. The federal government will release its plan for the implementation of their mechanism. We will be working with the official information and develop a process to return the monies collected to Yukoners. We have made an agreement with the federal government to allow Yukon to return carbon-pricing revenues to Yukoners, and we remain committed to doing so.

As I have said over and over, this is a federal carbon-pricing mechanism. It will be collected by the federal government. We do appreciate that Yukoners are very interested in how this is going to work, and so are we. When we have more information, we will determine how the money will be collected and how it will be returned.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said over and over that he wants to consult Yukon businesses on the structure of the rebate program that is going to accompany this carbon tax, but now we're learning that the federal government has already made up their mind. In fact, reports suggest that there won't even be any consultation. It turns out that the plan is to mimic Alberta's carbon tax, including rebate payments sent directly to low- and middle-income individuals. The Premier promised over and over that Yukon businesses will get to help shape the rebate program to ensure that they aren't negatively affected by the carbon tax. Now it turns out that there won't be a rebate program for businesses.

Either the Premier has misled Yukon businesses or the federal government has completely ignored this Premier. Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, we are very much aware of the speculation and we can see it being emulated here by the Yukon Party. There has been some talk in the media, for sure, but when we have more information, we will determine how the money will be collected and how the money will be returned — of this federal carbon-pricing mechanism. It's important for the members opposite to understand that carbon pricing is federally imposed and will be levelled by the federal government. The Liberal government negotiated with the federal government to secure the option to return the collected dollars back to Yukoners. At the end of the day, carbon pricing is a revenue-neutral system, geared toward encouraging Yukoners to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

I know that we are in agreement that carbon-pricing mechanisms are a great way of identifying the need to transition off of fossil fuels. I know that the NDP is behind this as well and encourages this mechanism from Ottawa. We

look forward to more details coming in the next few weeks and months, and we will share those details with the Leader of the Official Opposition as we get them to make sure that he and his party can help us in determining how we're going to get those rebates back on this federal carbon-pricing mechanism.

**Mr. Hassard:** So I get from that non-answer that, yes, we are going ahead with Alberta's carbon tax plan.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has proudly told us he is going to rely on the federal government's backstop to implement the carbon tax scheme he signed on to, but now we know that the federal government plans to use Alberta carbon tax as their model for our backstop.

By using the Alberta model, the federal government can collect the tax and send some of the money raised to individuals directly, bypassing the territorial government altogether. The Premier has promised over and over that Yukoners will get to decide how the rebate program will work.

How can he assure Yukoners this promise will be kept when the Yukon government won't even play a role in the rebate program at all?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** If the member opposite is going to get all of his information from newspapers, that's his priority. That's fine. We'll wait until we hear from Ottawa as to how they want to move forward with the carbon-pricing mechanism. That's what we're going to do.

I think I have been very clear in answering the questions. When more details come from the federal government — not from the newspapers — we'll share that information. Absolutely — this government has committed to open and accountable governance. We've committed to a whole-of-government approach when it comes to implementing the federal carbon-pricing mechanism. Also, we're very, very proud of the work that we have done on this side to negotiate the annex. Also, we're happy that the Yukon Party signed on to the pan-Canadian framework to start us down the process of a federal carbon-pricing mechanism so we want to thank them for the work that they've done in committing us to this federal carbon-pricing mechanism as well.

#### **Question re: Carbon tax**

**Mr. Kent:** The Yukon finally has some details on what the Premier's carbon tax scheme is going to look like. The Premier has avoided every question from the Official Opposition on this topic for weeks.

I have a simple question for the Premier: Can he please tell Yukoners what his definition of "revenue neutral" is?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, this is an interesting tactic for the Yukon Party: ask one question a day. I guess that way they are not going to run out of questions before the end of the session.

I will answer them again. We do know that there is some speculation going on in the newspapers about the federal carbon-pricing mechanism. We're going to wait for Ottawa to tell us the details and we do anticipate these coming soon. When they do, we will work with them, we will work on our

annex and we will work on the pan-Canadian framework that the Yukon Party signed on to. We look forward to moving forward and finding out what the mechanisms are about — the details. When we do, we will absolutely be open and transparent about the rebate and our commitment to Yukoners to make sure that the money is revenue neutral for Yukon businesses and Yukon families.

**Mr. Kent:** After spending six months avoiding the Legislative Assembly, the Premier spent three weeks avoiding questions on the carbon tax. We now find out from a Toronto newspaper what the Premier's carbon tax scheme will mean for Yukoners. According to these reports, the Premier's scheme will be based on the Alberta NDP model. This means that, by 2018, a couple with two children could pay an average of \$600 more in taxes, whereas the rebate for a couple with two kids could max out only at \$540 if they are one of the lucky 60 percent who qualify. It turns out that the carbon tax scheme the Premier signed on to is going to hit the wallets of Yukon families.

Is this the reason the Premier has refused to share this information with Yukoners and refused to provide a definition of "revenue neutral" here on the floor of this House?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, the Yukon Party is getting very dangerously close to putting words in my mouth and therefore answering their own questions that they are asking here in the Legislative Assembly — but we'll let that go because this government has committed to answering the questions. The Yukon Party can't hear the answers, but I can't tell you something I don't already know and we've been very clear on what we do already know. We know what the annex says. The Yukon Party knows what the annex says. We know that we're waiting for Ottawa to give us more details. The Yukon Party knows that we're waiting on Ottawa to give us more details.

If the Yukon Party wants me to read the newspaper topics and go running around, based upon headlines in the newspapers — I don't think that is how they governed. I know that is not how they governed, and I know that they would appreciate that this government wouldn't do the same.

We will wait until Ottawa tells us about their federal pricing mechanism. We're going to wait. As I have said over and over again, this is a federal carbon-pricing mechanism. It will be collected by the federal government, and when we do have more information, we will determine how this money will be collected and given back in a revenue-neutral way to Yukon businesses and Yukon families.

I don't know how much clearer I have to be, Mr. Speaker, but I will anticipate the same question coming again in the second supplementary.

**Mr. Kent:** We're certainly seeing here today the Liberals showing their true colours — huge deficits, big debt and new taxes, and in the end, it is Yukon families who are going to pay. Let me quote one of the Premier's earlier claims about how he wanted to design his carbon tax scheme. He said — and I quote: "... to make sure that 100 percent of that tax stays in the Yukon so that it is truly revenue neutral for Yukon businesses and Yukon families." Again, Mr. Speaker, we have

not received a definition of what the Premier thinks "revenue neutral" is.

According to the Alberta New Democrats, 40 percent of Alberta households aren't even eligible for the full rebate. So the Premier has promised Yukon families and businesses that 100 percent of them will get all their money back, but now we find out that the Premier's scheme is based on a plan that doesn't give rebates to 40 percent of households.

My question is simple: Why was the Premier wrong?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, we'll tell the member opposite exactly what I know, and that is that we're waiting to hear from Ottawa. There is speculation in the media, absolutely. But here's the commitment: Ottawa made a commitment to our annex; Ottawa made a commitment to the Paris accord; Ottawa made a commitment to the pan-Canadian framework that was signed on to by the Yukon Party, which basically got us moving forward to a carbon-pricing mechanism.

I want to thank the members opposite for the work that they did, including a specific mitigation opportunities workshop from the previous government — I believe it was the Minister of Environment — preparing a comprehensive list of policy options to address climate change and carbon-pricing mechanisms.

So I want to thank them for the preliminary work when it comes to this federal pricing mechanism. We will, when we have more information, share it with the opposition — absolutely. But again, if the members opposite really want me to start speculating based upon news articles; I just think that's a bizarre way to do governance here in the Yukon. We're going to wait for Ottawa to maintain their commitment to our annex and maintain their commitment to the pan-Canadian framework.

#### Question re: Procurement policy

**Ms. Hanson:** It was just over a year ago that the Yukon Procurement Advisory Panel made its findings public. One of the findings from the 2016 report on procurement was that the mechanisms to address contractor concerns and complaints need to improve. However, recently, we have seen the courts being used as a way to settle disagreements or concerns with contractors. This is an expensive recourse that not only creates winners and losers, but it also creates unnecessary conflict. Mediation or negotiation is a more effective way to resolve issues. The courts should only be used as a last recourse. What has this government done to establish alternative dispute mechanisms to resolve disagreements with contractors?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I have been working on the procurement file now for — since being elected. I've met with hundreds of contractors over the last several months. I have heard their concerns. I have started to address their concerns. As you know, this government is committed to bringing in all the recommendations of the Procurement Advisory Panel. We're going to do that.

No government wants to go to court, Mr. Speaker. It's an inefficient use of resources, but it is one of the mechanisms that we do have, and as a last resort, we're finding ourselves in court. I totally agree with the member opposite — we want

to find alternative mechanisms to address disputes within the contracting community when we can't agree on things. That is one of the panel recommendations. We are going to be looking at all of our options.

**Ms. Hanson:** That report from the Procurement Advisory Panel did make 11 recommendations — including what we just discussed — that would improve the process both for government staff and for the contracting community, those interested in bidding on government tenders.

Local contractors contribute their time and their expertise in sharing their experience and their recommendations. These recommendations also came with a long list of suggested actions.

What did not accompany this document and which is really clear from the minister's response is a work plan that outlines timelines, expected outcomes and measurements to determine if the measures are working, so that we don't just talk about how it would be nice to have alternate dispute, but we actually say that we have it or this is when we will have it.

Mr. Speaker, have any of the recommendations been implemented, and does the minister have a plan to implement the remaining ones?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the member opposite for the question. It is really nice to see that the Third Party, this government and contractors are on the same page — and the civil service. We all want to improve the procurement process and we are in the midst of doing that.

To answer the member's question: yes, I do have a plan.

**Ms. Hanson:** That is really good to hear, Mr. Speaker.

We have heard from local contractors frustrated by the current tendering system that too often sees the addition of dozens of change orders, both when the tendering process is still open and again once the tender has been awarded. In most cases, these change orders result in more work, more time and more costs for the contractor.

What steps has this government taken to reduce the number of multiple change orders? Does the government track and review the reasons for change orders and the costs associated with these multiple change orders?

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I really thank the member opposite for her diligence on this subject. This government, right off the hop — I can tell you that it is going to move away from political interference in these projects. Right off the start, we are going to interfere less in these projects and let the good work of the civil service play out. We are going to provide guidance, we are going to plan and we are going to try to tender contracts earlier in the season so that contractors can actually start to build capacity in their businesses.

That way, they can actually execute on these projects with a little bit more planning a little more methodically, rather than just knee-jerk contracts being let at the last minute with very little consideration or planning. We're seeing contracts — even this morning, we were talking for a long time about contracts that haven't been planned and were done as politically expedient decisions. We're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to take things with a more of a methodical approach and with more planning.

## Question re: Solid-waste management

**Ms. White:** The closure of Raven Recycling's free store on Monday is bad news when it comes to waste reduction in the territory. This happened just a few weeks after the closure of the Salvation Army thrift store and a few months after the closure of the Whitehorse landfill's free store.

When it comes to re-using, options are more limited than ever in Whitehorse, which will likely lead to perfectly good items making their way into the landfill. Mr. Speaker, what steps has the minister taken to work with partners to find a sustainable way to reduce waste by facilitating the re-use economy in the territory?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thanks to the member opposite for the question. We have noted that there have been losses of private sector and NGO facilities that allowed for re-use. We are working with our partners, especially the municipal governments.

This past Friday, we had a meeting with the solid-waste working group, which includes members from several of our communities and members of the Community Operations branch to look at the overall waste diversion picture. We are working on it.

I will be talking this weekend with the Association of Yukon Communities to discuss options going forward.

**Ms. White:** The previous government set a goal for itself of diverting 50 percent of all waste by 2015. Without allocating proper resources to achieve that goal, it failed to even come close to it, with a diversion rate stuck around 20 to 25 percent for the last number of years.

It's important to note that any progress made was largely the result of the work done by the City of Whitehorse. Has the minister set a new goal for waste diversion, and has he allocated appropriate resources to reach that goal?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** To answer the question directly, Mr. Speaker, we have not yet set a new goal. That is part of the ongoing dialogue we're having with the municipalities. I look forward to those conversations to see if there's a goal.

There is encouragement to set a goal, so let's let those conversations happen and I'll be happy to share back with the members opposite the results of those conversations. I would like to acknowledge the work the City of Whitehorse has done. It is great work, and we recognize that, if we're going to do this well in the territory, we need to work in partnership and work in concert across the territory.

What I can tell you is that, when I have sat down with mayors — like Mayor Riseborough — and councils across the territory, and First Nation governments, everybody wants us to be recycling more. So we will be working to try to move more toward diversion, more toward reduce, more toward re-use and more toward recycling.

It is a good path and all Yukoners know we want to get there and we'll be working together.

**Ms. White:** Two key components of Yukon's recycling system are the refund mechanisms on beverage containers and the recycling fees charged at the time of purchase on different products. These are based on the concept of extended

producer responsibility. The idea is that the cost of our waste should be factored up front, rather than when we throw something out. It's the opposite of tipping fees, which too often lead to illegal dumping.

New regulations were supposed to be implemented last year, but the previous government decided to punt the issue forward a year — past election season. The regulations are now scheduled to come into force on August 1 of this year, so Mr. Speaker: Does the Minister of Environment support the concept of extended producer responsibility, and what are her plans regarding the previous government's proposed regulations?

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thanks for the question. If the question is: Do we support the notion of moving toward stewardship models? Absolutely — currently, the date is set for August 1. We have been in discussion as a government and with our partners out there — the processors, the haulers — and our partner governments, municipal and First Nation governments. We hope to have an announcement soon. We recognize that it is important to move from the tax-based model to the stewardship model, and we think that is a great path overall. We will be working along with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and the schedule that is provided there.

#### Question re: Carbon tax

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, the Alberta carbon tax scheme is relatively simple: government collects a tax on all carbon-emitting fuels, including transportation and home heating. It then redistributes the wealth from tax revenue on the basis of income-based rebates to individual citizens. We now hear that the Liberal carbon tax on Yukoners will be based on the Alberta model, which will mean that there won't be a rebate program for businesses. Not even the Alberta NDP has tried to make the argument that the carbon tax is revenue neutral to businesses. Yet, the Premier has said repeatedly that a carbon tax in Yukon will be revenue neutral for Yukon businesses.

Will the Premier keep his promise to Yukon businesses that they will get carbon tax money back in rebates, or is this simply going to be another addition to the already long list of broken Liberal promises?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the NDP for doing their homework and coming prepared for work and asking some really important questions — actually two different questions. The Yukon Party read a newspaper article this week, and they have asked three questions on a newspaper article — unbelievable.

I will answer the question again. We are aware of the recent speculation in the media about the federal carbon-pricing mechanism. We will continue to work with the federal government on this issue. I also read that newspaper article. The federal government will release their plan for implementation on their mechanism. We will work with this official information and develop a process to return the money collected to Yukoners.

We have made an agreement with the federal government to allow Yukoners to have that carbon-pricing revenue be returned back to them, and we remain committed to this. We appreciate that Yukoners want to know more about this and so do we. We are waiting on Ottawa to get more information and we are not going to use speculation from the newspapers to determine how we are going to move forward. We are in constant communication with our federal counterparts and the other provinces and territories. It is very important to understand that this is a federal carbon-pricing mechanism. We have to wait for Ottawa to find out more information.

**Mr. Cathers:** The thing that the Premier is not recognizing is that Yukoners want to know how much their taxes are going up within the next 12 months. We hear the Premier say that he is waiting for the federal government to take the lead. In Alberta, their carbon tax scheme is charged to all Alberta families regardless of income. It is charged on heating fuel, fuel in vehicles and a range of other carbon-emitting sources. The Alberta government only provides rebates to certain Alberta families and 40 percent of families are not eligible to receive the full rebate.

Not even the NDP there claim that the carbon tax is revenue neutral for Albertans, yet the Premier has promised that a carbon tax in Yukon will be revenue neutral to Yukon families.

If the carbon tax scheme he signed on to is going to be based on the Alberta model, as we have heard, how does the Premier plan to keep his promise so that the carbon tax will be revenue neutral for Yukon families? Is this simply going to be another broken Liberal promise?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I appreciate the déjà vu from the member opposite. Again, we are waiting to hear from Ottawa. I don't know how much clearer I can be on the process.

Again, for anybody listening to the debate in the Legislative Assembly today, I urge them to take a look at the annex that was created by government-to-government relationships with Ottawa as far as making sure that the carbon-pricing mechanism is done in the way that we actually set out in that annex and it adheres to the plan that was given to us from the pan-Canadian framework, which was a result of the Paris accord and the Paris communications happening two years ago.

Again, this is all a process. There are many different plans across Canada — of provinces that have already invoked revenue-neutral plans. Alberta has a plan. They are very correct there, Mr. Speaker. There are other plans, and then there are jurisdictions like our own that don't have a current plan and we are waiting to hear from Ottawa for them to respond to our issues as put out in our annex. Until we hear back from them, we will not use speculation in the media to determine how we're going to move forward in our next steps.

#### Question re: Oil and gas development

**Mr. Kent:** I will ask a question of the Liberal government. It might be one of the few issues — if not the only issue — that they don't agree with the NDP on, and that's oil and gas development in the territory.



During the election, the Liberal government promised that it would support oil and gas development as long as it was outside of the Whitehorse Trough and wasn't involved in shale gas.

We know that there was interest expressed last year in the Kandik Basin and Eagle Plains and that First Nation consultations are now underway. Can the minister provide us with an update on when those discussions will conclude and the 60-day public consultation period will begin?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for Copperbelt South.

A little bit of background on where we are as a government working with the oil and gas sector — first, the Government of Yukon seeks to foster a thriving and prosperous economy. This means supporting existing industries, such as oil and gas resource development, while encouraging the development of new industries.

Existing industries have an important role to play in providing a stable base that allows us to achieve economic diversification, expand Yukon's economic competitiveness and create good jobs for Yukoners.

The Government of Yukon continues to support investment in development of Yukon's oil and gas industry to grow and diversify Yukon's economy, maximize Yukon business and employment opportunities, and provide government revenue.

As the member has stated, there is consultation ongoing. Just this week, there has been some communication back and forth from the northern First Nations on this piece, and we will continue to go through the process over the next number of days and months as we come to a point of understanding on what to do with these particular areas of interest.

**Mr. Kent:** There was a resource study undertaken by the Yukon Geological Survey among other geological surveys and expert organizations, and it suggested that the Liard Basin has tremendous natural gas potential. Developing these resources could provide direct and indirect benefits to not only the southeast Yukon, but to Yukon as a whole. The minister mentioned in his initial answer that the Liberal government is looking to promote thriving and prosperous economies.

Will the minister include gas development in the Liard Basin as a way to diversify the economy in southeast Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I look forward to a longer discussion, I think, that the Third Party has tabled — a motion that we'll probably see in the near future that will really focus on what is happening in southeast Yukon.

Would I love to see a growing economy through conventional methods in southeast Yukon? Absolutely. The challenge is this: right now we're in cleanup mode. We'll talk about this during the Energy, Mines and Resources budget process. I think the member opposite knows it well. Certainly what we're looking at now is we're going to be spending millions of dollars cleaning up in an area where there is actually no interest. We have one of the largest companies in the industry and at this particular time, we're in a process of cleanup, and there really is no interest on advanced exploration or production.

I look forward to when the member from the Third Party tables this and we're going to talk — really in-depth — about what is happening in southeast Yukon — what has happened — and maybe some troublesome facts that we can discuss later at that time.

**Mr. Kent:** The Liard Basin in southeast Yukon is much more than just the Kotaneelee field that the minister is talking about. It's one of the most attractive gas basins that the Yukon has to offer for a number of reasons. It's close to infrastructure. As I mentioned earlier, it has tremendous potential. The Kotaneelee wells contributed nearly \$50 million in resource royalties to the territorial coffers.

Has the minister had conversations with the affected Kaska First Nations — as well as the Acho Dene Koe, who have an asserted claim to areas in southeast Yukon, about including the Liard Basin in a future disposition?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I think that when we look at oil and gas development overall, really what we're doing at this particular time is — there are a lot of challenges that have been left. The first question talked about the 15 areas of interest and then of course the 12 that had shown interest — north Yukon. What I'm getting now are a series of letters really outlining the flawed process that we had.

There were a lot of discussions before we came into government. There are some lands that are in question. There are some areas that were supposed to be planned. There are some special management areas and all of those went out. At this point in time, I'm really trying to fix that scenario. In southeast Yukon, certainly, yes, we've had actually some great discussions with different affected parties, which were mentioned — different perspectives from each one about what interest looks like. But to be very open with the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, certainly at this time there has been really no interest from industry on doing anything in southeast Yukon. That may change. Certainly, the member opposite knows these files well. At this particular time, I'm trying to fix relationships and clean up things that were left behind.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Hutton):** Order. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is

continuing general debate on Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

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. 201: *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18* — continued**

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Mr. Cathers has two minutes and eight seconds.

**Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to rise here today and engage in general debate on the budget. We left off with the Premier when last debating this. I want to recap a couple of things and point out that part of our job in opposition is to remind the Premier of his commitments, particularly when he is not doing what he said government would do, prior to taking office, and to call them out on those failings.

We have seen the government backtrack on a number of things the Premier said prior to the election. The Premier, in opposition, didn't like special warrants, yet set a record for the use of special warrants by using two special warrants before calling the Legislature and spending a total of \$456 million without the approval of the Legislative Assembly, which is a new record here in the territory.

We have also seen that the Premier, in opposition, was extremely critical of the previous government any time there were increases to the public service, even if those increases were in areas such as health care. Yet, as we have seen in the budget, the Premier has acknowledged that he is increasing the size of the public service by the addition of over 200 new positions in this fiscal year.

The Premier has also attempted to blame the red ink in future years on the cost of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility but, with those 200 new positions, we have seen that most of them are not even in Health and Social Services. The overwhelming majority are in other departments and represent a fairly significant increase of over 200 new positions to the public service, which increases the future O&M costs going forward.

Another area that we're concerned about is that the Premier, on April 4, appeared before the House of Commons finance committee. We're concerned about statements he made. The Premier told that committee — and I quote: "We're looking to remove power from our debt cap as well." Has the Premier made a formal request to the federal government for this yet and if so, what has he asked for?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I would like to again welcome Kate White, Deputy Minister of Finance, here today by my side and again, thank you to the Department of Finance for

helping prepare me for the debate in general and also on departments.

So there are lots of things to go over from the 20 minutes that the member opposite used in his last time on his feet, both on Tuesday and today. I might as well start right with the FTEs. What's concerning, Mr. Chair, is that the member opposite either knows the truth about the numbers and understands the numbers, or the Yukon Party did a whole bunch of hiring without telling him — it is one of the two. I don't know which one is more concerning.

I do have a piece of paper here and I will share it with all members of this Legislative Assembly that breaks down that 201 number.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Point of order**

**Chair:** Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The statement that the Premier made — those types of statements in the past have been ruled out of order as being contrary to Standing Order 19(h).

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, on the point of order — which statement is the member referring to?

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The accusation that another member is uttering a deliberate falsehood is typically ruled out of order in this Assembly.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** If the member opposite would give me the opportunity to explain why I am making these comments, I think it will become very obvious to the Members of the Legislative Assembly Office what I'm talking about.

**Chair's ruling**

**Chair:** I don't see a point of order. I didn't hear the words that you did. If they are in Hansard, as you have suggested, I will look at it and review my ruling tomorrow.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have the information here for the member opposite. The total of 201.75 FTEs — 133.33 of those are the expansion of programs pre-election. So if they are pre-election, they are from the Yukon Party. Out of those 201 hires that I have been criticized for by the Member for Lake Laberge, 133 of those are from his government. An additional 25.25 of those are for opening of new capital that the member opposite's party didn't plan for. Does the member opposite want me not to hire those 25 hires for Sarah Steele, e-health, new campgrounds or the Dawson City waste-water treatment plant? All of these are for them.

This document also breaks down our hires. We will stand behind the decisions of this government to put 10.6 more FTEs in the Department of Finance.

I will let the Minister of Health and Social Services talk about finally getting some support in Mental Health Services for mental health nurses in the communities. I don't know if those are the jobs that the member opposite would want us not

to have because they only had two, I believe, and that was just not enough. I am wondering if he doesn't agree that we should be expanding mental health services there — again, federal money.

I guess I would ask the member opposite if he could explain the 133.33 full-time equivalencies that his government hired that weren't in their last mains. They did not show up when we debated — when the Yukon Party put their last mains in. They didn't have a supplementary, so we will take it with a grain of salt that they could have at some time during the summer explained these 133 hires that their government did that we now have to account for with the 201 hires. I will leave that to him to answer.

Mr. Chair, the member opposite was very critical of our public servants — really. The member's disapproval was implied in this House earlier and he was very direct in an article in yesterday's *Whitehorse Star* as well. The quote was very clear — and I quote: "The ballooning of the Department of Finance is a total waste of money." It took a total of three weeks into the first Sitting for the Yukon Party to go on the record criticizing public servants.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The member is imputing unavowed motives to another member, contrary to Standing Order 19(g). He knows very well I was criticizing his decision, not officials.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, I will suggest that this is a dispute among members. We both have our own different opinions on this, and I don't think there is a dispute here.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I don't find a point of order on this. It is a disagreement between members.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Given some of the comments from organizations like the C.D. Howe Institute, we firmly believe that mistakes of the past should be avoided. For example, it was in the April 2016, C.D. Howe Institute report that noted that Yukon placed 13<sup>th</sup> out of 14 jurisdictions in Canada when it comes to overshooting its spending targets over the last number of years.

The 2016 report gave Yukon government only a C+ grade on hitting budget targets and a similar grade on spending overruns and on the level of clarity on financial reporting. The previous government routinely spent more than it budgeted. One of the purposes of the new employees in Finance that the member opposite is criticizing — if the Member for Lake Laberge is now saying he is criticizing me, I will take the criticism, even though these appointments were a fantastic conversation with our caucus and the Department of Finance officials. It was an absolutely necessary step. I will go on to explain why we, working in partnership not only with the Department of Finance but also with a whole-government

approach, believe in these 10.6 more new hires. It comes back to my statement where the previous government routinely spent more money than it budgeted.

One of the purposes of the new employees in Finance is to improve that forecasting accuracy. The new division of the Department of Finance, which is Economics, Fiscal Policy and Statistics, will provide fiscal policy analysis and advice that has not been previously available to previous management boards, as the member opposite will know.

The division will work with departments to ensure that all budgeting and planning incorporates the latest of information and provides an internally consistent fiscal plan. Budgeting and reporting processes will be improved and streamlined, and supported by a consistent set of assumptions across Yukon government departments for planning purposes.

When we take a look again at the 201.75 new hires that have been identified in this budgetary process, 133.33 of those were decisions made by the Yukon Party government. We would like to ask the member opposite which communities these hires are in. We would like to ask the member opposite what departments they are in. We know that — he knows that — well, when he gets to his feet, he can comment on whether or not he was aware — it was his previous government that did the 133.33 full-time equivalencies there.

We have not made any request to the federal government to raise our debt cap, as the member opposite is saying. As the member opposite knows, our government has established an independent Financial Advisory Panel and we want to get our finances back on track to make the Government of Yukon financially sustainable now and into future generations. That's what we're going to do.

Our Finance department is going to become whole and we're going to make some better financial forecasts than previous governments and get ourselves back on track here.

I also did want to clear the record. It's noted in Hansard, I believe, when the member opposite, in closing — I will quote here from his statements on Tuesday, I believe. I'm not sure about that date but I believe it was on Tuesday that he said: "... I would also note that, for a government talking about fiscal control — if we look to the government's transition costs, there is \$111,550 spent for transition costs." Mr. Chair, that's not true. Really, the real cost in total is \$66,900. The member opposite — again, I don't know where he gets his numbers but he's twice as far off as the actual costs.

I think what might have happened — and I will let the member opposite correct me if I'm wrong — I think he didn't do enough due diligence on the numbers. He might have taken a look at the contracts as opposed to the actual money that was spent in the end. So for him and for anybody else listening to this debate today, our transition team — I think we did a very good job of transitioning from a 14-year government into a new government in as expeditious a process as possible and the total that we spent is \$66,900 — just under \$67,000, not the \$111,000-plus that the member opposite told everybody in the Legislative Assembly.

We're clearing up the FTEs. We're cleaning up the member opposite's questions about transition costs.

I just want to move on and I hopefully have enough time here for pension solvency, which was also brought up by the member opposite. I think the Member for Lake Laberge was finishing his remarks on Tuesday as well. He had mentioned the issue of pension solvency so I want to correct the record here just so he understands what's going on.

I want to ensure the honourable member that I do understand the issue and I do understand his point with respect to the Public Accounts for 2015-16. The Auditor General did acknowledge that, for 2015-16, the letter of credit in place in relation to the college pension plan was sufficient to cover any solvency deficits. However, Mr. Chair, that was then and this is now.

When we came into office in December 2016, there was a bill waiting for us. Money was required for 2016-17 to cover the pension solvency issues for both the college and for the Hospital Corporation. Now, I imagine the member opposite would know that. I'm sure he would, which is why I'm surprised by the line of questioning.

Money for this purpose was not included in the main estimates of the Yukon Party's last budget, so the money had to be provided in a supplementary estimate for last year. That's the process that the previous government would do. In other words, there was a bill for last year and I would have thought that the previous government knew that there would be that bill, so the member opposite can comment on that.

At any rate, it was left for us to pay and the payment was due. The letter of credit for the college was sufficient to cover solvency issues for 2015-16. That was not the case for last year, so money had to be included in the supplementary estimates for 2016-17 to pay last year's bill. That was \$3.5 million for the Hospital Corporation, and it was also just under \$500,000 — so \$496,000 — for the college.

Now, Mr. Chair, I understand that it was the practice of the previous government to wait until each year at the supplementary estimates to allocate the money for pension solvency. We changed that practice. That's what we're doing and I'll explain why. We have said that we are giving a true cost of governance — a true picture of cost for government. That includes providing these pension-solvency payments in the main estimates. We have a reasonable estimate of what they will be for 2017-18, just as we have reasonable estimates for many other expenditures. Again, by putting more emphasis in the Department of Finance, we're getting better and better at these estimates — so better and better accounting and better and better fiscal responsibility for the taxpayers.

The budget for 2017-18 includes \$3.6 million for the Hospital Corporation and also \$1.9 million for the college to cover pension-solvency requirements. As I have said, this reflects on our commitment to include money as we expect to spend annually — we do spend this annually — in the main estimates, as opposed to waiting for a supplementary budget or a budget light, we want to use the supplementary budget for its real purpose as well.

Mr. Chair, we intend to work with the college, the hospital and their pension committees to find a sustainable solution to this solvency issue. In the interim, we have some

progress to report as a result of discussions that I have had with the federal Minister of Finance. I am sure the member opposite will be interested in this.

Late last month, the federal government proposed regulatory changes that would increase the proportion of a solvency deficit that could be funded by a letter of credit rather than by cash. These regulations, if passed, would change the formula for the maximum amount that could be covered through letters of credit to 15 percent of liabilities instead of 15 percent of assets.

This is roughly equivalent to about 1.5 years of funding. That's good news. That would mean that if these regulations are passed, we could reduce the amount of money appropriated in future years. I hope that clears up a bit of the financial issues for the member opposite. I look forward to some more questions from him and hopefully some questions from the Leader of the Third Party as well.

### **Chair's statement**

**Chair:** I would ask all members at this time to avoid references to “true” or “truth” when referring to statements from other members — “accurate” or “inaccurate” is preferred.

**Mr. Cathers:** First of all, in the Premier's assertions about jobs and employment that he claims were done by the previous government, and tying them to capital — first of all, I would note that the actual O&M requirements — actual personnel requirements — for any new asset are not necessarily as black and white as the Premier likes to indicate that they are. The choices of what staffing requirements are made are typically made by the Cabinet and Management Board of the day in conjunction with departments when reviewing the request. One thing that the Premier may not be aware of is that there are times when that request can be changed or adjusted to come up with a more fiscally responsible model than the original request.

Particularly when one is trying to live within a culture of restraining the growth of fiscal O&M costs, it's important to look for cost-effective solutions and to find ways to reduce those costs and to find efficiencies, particularly when one is adding new staff and new staffing requirements.

Again, we simply challenge the Premier to provide the evidence that those staff were actually hired prior to the election and provide that information, because he has made those assertions. He knows very well that we don't have access to previous Management Board documents. Those are taken as soon as Cabinet leaves office as part of the transition process. Executive Council Office staff come over and archive all confidential Cabinet and Management Board documents, and those are then put in a file. The member is welcome to share the information that his government is working from and, contrary to assertions the member made the other day — I will assume that he may have been unclear on the law in this area, but Management Board information can be released with proper authority. It is typically kept confidential, but the oath of secrecy that members swear is an oath not to disclose information without due authority in that regard. I know that

is cumbersome wording, but that is a quote from the oath of secrecy, based on my recollection of it.

In that case, the current Cabinet is the one that has the authority to choose to release briefing books, as they, prior to the election, campaigned on being more open and being more accountable. One of the current members of Cabinet — in a former role — indicated a belief that Cabinet briefing books should be made available to the public and yet we see government refusing to release transition books and briefing documents they told the public they would make available.

Mr. Chair, I would acknowledge that some of that is information that has been protected under the previous government prior to that. The point here is, when the Premier likes to point fingers at the previous government, we're holding him to account based on his own words and statements. Part of our job as the Official Opposition is to hold him accountable on behalf of Yukoners as we do our work. Our job as the Official Opposition includes holding the Premier accountable for his own statements and promises and those of his team — what they said to Yukoners to gain their trust and get their vote.

The Premier did provide a bit of a breakdown on those FTEs his government is adding this year, the increase of over 200 new positions — most of them not in areas such as health care, which is where the Premier, in statements to the media, has suggested is the real reason for government running red ink in future years — because of the Whistle Bend continuing care facility. As we have seen here, most of the new employees the Premier is adding, which would have drawn strong criticism from the Member for Klondike prior to the last election, when he was in opposition, are not in areas of health care. We would welcome a detailed breakdown on where these positions are located, which communities and the date when employees were hired or when they will be hired.

Mr. Chair, I would again note that it's not often that I will quote the Leader of the NDP here in the House, but I refer to remarks she made earlier in a previous Question Period during this Sitting — or pardon me, I believe it was Motion debate — when she told the story of one premier talking to another and the three envelopes. It seems the current Premier has taken that advice to heart and has opened envelope one, which is blaming the previous government. He is peeking at envelope two, which is to blame Ottawa and, at some point, if he doesn't start to actually acknowledge the decisions this government made are ones for which he and his team have to take responsibility, then Yukoners in due course will force him to open the third envelope as he leaves office.

I would point out that one of the challenges with special warrants is that it does make it difficult to dig into the details for not only members of the opposition and private members of the government who don't sit at the Cabinet table, but it makes it difficult for the media and for the general public to understand what is contained within a half a billion dollars of spending authorized by a special warrant — I should say nearly half a billion, \$456 million in total.

It also blurs the line between fiscal years, makes it more difficult to find those details, and makes it easier for a new

premier to try to pass off decisions of his government as being those done by the previous government. As Yukoners know, in fact, the last almost half of the 2016-17 fiscal year was after the Liberals took office and they do need to take responsibility for the decisions made during that time period.

A couple of pieces of advice that I would pass on to the Premier — and I would hope, with some degree of doubt, that he'll actually listen and take this advice to heart — that is advice that most Yukon families, small businesses and people with their personal finances can pass on — which is that when you're short of money, you don't start increasing spending in areas where you don't need to spend it. You exercise fiscal prudence in making decisions about what new spending you need to do. You look for efficiencies within your existing resources and you try to tighten up your belt. You don't go on a spending spree and add a large number of new positions, which increases your overhead now and for years to come. You don't control spending by increasing it.

We've seen by the Premier's statements, including in previous budgets — and I'm genuinely concerned — I don't think the Premier understands the finances of the territory yet and why certain departments tend to lapse money or where and where there are issues and challenges with program delivery. I would also point out to the Premier and make a prediction that the total amount they've included in this year's budget in net capital is unlikely to be spent. The Premier has budgeted more than typically the procurement and contracting system has historically delivered in the past. I think that the Premier will be lapsing a significant amount of money because of that and because of this government's failure to meet its commitment to tender seasonally sensitive contracts by the end of March.

I do again have to — at the risk of being rude — point out to the Premier that this commitment did not come with an asterisk beside it when they put it in their platform. They didn't say, "We'll move toward tendering seasonally dependent contracts." They did say they would do it every year. Yukoners who voted for them on that basis — who depend on contracts to feed their families and to make their mortgage payments — are both genuinely concerned and upset by the fact that the government has failed to meet its own target and seasonally dependent contracts are slowly starting to trickle out, well after the date when the Liberals promised they would always be out by.

Mr. Chair, the Premier made reference to the booking of the pension deficits for Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon College. I am pleased by the update he provided about changes to regulation that may be coming down the pipe that may change how governments have to book this. For those who are listening who are not clear on the structure of this, what the solvency deficit refers to is — a pension plan is valued on the basis that the pension plan were terminated as of the valuation date. That has not always been the way it has been booked under Public Sector Accounting Board standards and that has been criticized by a number of governments across the country because effectively, for government entities and government organizations, it's highly unlikely that they

would wrap up all of their business and terminate all of their employees within areas, especially such as health care, education or other parts of the public service. The argument has been made by a number of Finance ministers across the country that requiring governments to fully book the valuation of — if the pension plan were immediately terminated — is, in fact, an unnecessary step and that it should be done more on a going-concern basis, recognizing the actual predicted drawdowns in future years and booking those annual costs.

The Premier has said that they had to book the \$4 million there. We do question that. We question that on the basis of — among other things — page 14 of the 2015-16 Public Accounts and the indication of the Public Accounts as approved by the Auditor General with a clean bill of health. The Auditor General indicated that the letters of credit from Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon College were sufficient and that a cash payment was not required for those amounts.

If the Premier indicated they were told otherwise, we would challenge him and request that he provide not only to us, but to the public, any documentation from the Auditor General of Canada indicating that or any documentation from the federal regulator of pensions, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, commonly known by the acronym OSFI.

I would also welcome information about the timing with which the government is now receiving updates on the hospital and college pension plans. I know that, going back a few years, when the hospital and college first approached us with pension plan deficit issues — that was in 2006 — during my early days as Minister of Health and Social Services. At that time, I know that the information that had been received by the Hospital Corporation in the case — which was the one for which I was responsible as Minister of Health and Social Services — the hospital had been informed by the federal regulator of concerns and knew the information from their auditor for the previous fiscal year for the hospital. They had received the information in June 2006 and the information was provided to government, subsequent to that date. I would be interested in hearing which month the government is now being informed of solvency deficits in those areas.

Again, if the Premier can provide evidence to back up his claim that they were required to book that \$4 million in the 2016-17 fiscal year, then we will certainly accept his statement if — and only if — he can provide evidence to back it up.

Also, when the Premier is talking about his overall increases to the size of the public service, he is failing to recognize that where the point of predicting the economy that he is referring to — in referencing the substantial increase to the Department of Finance, I would point out to him, in fact, that he seems to be failing to recognize the areas where government typically runs into issues with capital project delivery and program delivery.

In fact, if the member will refer back to the advice that I gave to him during my remarks at second reading on the budget, I actually pointed to areas where government, in the

past — through the structure of Management Board minutes — has at times impeded the delivery of capital projects. I gave him and his colleagues advice on how to avoid that in the future, because part of our job here in opposition — we believe as well that we want government to do the right thing for the Yukon. We want government to get the contracts out and have them work effectively and efficiently. We would rather not be in a position where we can criticize contract delivery because when we have the opportunity to criticize it, that also comes with the fact that there are Yukon citizens and their families who are paying the price for a poor decision by government or by a project delay on the part of government.

If the member would heed some of that advice as well as listen to senior department officials across government, and ask them for information on how to improve project and program delivery and procurement — that, coupled with the report of the Procurement Advisory Panel that was done last summer, would be a good starting point for the member and his government to actually help government employees across government and to help contractors in working together to ensure that contracts are put out the door and delivered on time and on budget, or as close to it as possible. We think that the choice to significantly increase the size of government by over 200 employees is simply a mistaken decision that we do believe rests entirely on the shoulders of the current government. I would note too — to the Premier and to every minister — that it's important as well that, if they are trying to send a message to government departments of the need for financial management and fiscal control, it is important for them to show leadership at home — so to speak — and to demonstrate that through their own behaviour and their own decision-making.

As I ran out of time in my previous remarks, I want to note again that, on April 4, the Premier appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and we were concerned by statements he made. The Premier said — and I quote: “We’re looking to remove power from our debt cap as well. The federal government will definitely have to help us out with that very important consideration.” I understand that the Premier indicated earlier on the floor of the House that he has not made that formal request yet, but the question for us is why he actually even wants to make that request and considers it a high enough priority that he made that request to the federal finance committee.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** There are a lot of statements but not a lot of questions. I will try to go through that again and just answer the questions as well as I can — based on 20 minutes of preamble, I guess.

I will start with the FTEs. We will provide the information. We will put it out there. I have asked the Member for Lake Laberge if he is unaware of the 133 hires that his government did last year, because that is a substantial part of the 201 hires in total. That is our statement on that.

As far as providing some kind of Management Board documents, you cannot provide something that wasn't discussed. These weren't our hires; they were his government's hires. I think he knows that — he understands

that if we provide Management Board submissions, there is nothing to show because we didn't make that decision. It was his government for those 133. I'm not going to continue to reiterate that. We are going to move forward here.

For the record, special warrants — on the point of accuracy — thank you, Mr. Chair, for clarifying language in the Legislative Assembly, and I apologize. Warrants are fiscal-year specific and we did one for the spending of 2016-17 so that we can get through this debate. That's the point — we're here now.

We do have two special warrants here. There have been 62 special warrants issued since 1994-95. We have been on record saying that if you're in your 14<sup>th</sup> year, you probably shouldn't be doing special warrants. But again, based on the circumstances of a transition and the lack of a supplementary budget, we feel that, even though I'm not a big fan of special warrants, we had to get them done.

In looking at the books and seeing how the fiscal scrutiny needed help, we also wanted to do things right so that's why we're a little bit late in the session.

The Special Warrant No. 2 for 2016-17 included the \$3.5 million for additional teachers in Education — again, he's asking me to break these things down but I think we've been over these things quite a bit. We're in Hansard many times breaking down the special warrants, but I will say again that for the bigger special warrant, Special Warrant No. 1 for 2017-18 — it is a big number. I agree with the member opposite on that — \$334, 440,000 in O&M and also \$92,535,000 in capital to provide spending authority for the first three months of the fiscal year while the Legislative Assembly is here debating the full year of spending authority.

In general, the special warrant will cover one-fourth of personnel and non-personnel, which includes, as the member opposite knows very well, grants, contributions and contracts paid and commitments from April to June, plus the full cost of any grants, contributions and contracts that are paid and/or committed to in a three-month period.

It kind of makes sense for the timing of this Legislative Assembly and it's us doing a fiscal accounting of the spending as we're in the Legislative Assembly to make sure that the money gets out the door — money like community municipal grants that were due on April 1 and also annual contracts, or large construction projects where the full project value must be committed to before the summer construction season starts, or to continue on with construction of infrastructure that has already been in progress. I think we have been pretty forthright in that.

It is worth noting — as far as comments on the debt cap — the previous government did leave us with an infrastructure deficit in power generation and distribution. We may ask the federal government to remove power from our debt cap so that deficit can be addressed. While we have not made a final decision on this, we are gathering evidence as promised and that's what we're going to do.

I hope that answers the member's question. Again, I don't want to reiterate too much here. I would really like to give the Member for Whitehorse Centre an opportunity to speak as

well today. Again, as far as whether or not we're looking forward to increasing that debt cap, we've answered the question already.

As far as money lapses — another question — it's typical for a government to lapse money and lapses are going to be less with better planning, basically. We're hoping to prove that this is possible with the strategic investment that we're making.

I think that is pretty much all the questions, without a whole bunch of preamble here. Just a clarification: the member opposite is incorrect. The pension solvency issue has actually been going on since 2004, not since 2006. I think that is all the questions from the member opposite for now and, if not, I am sure he will use his 20 minutes to ask these questions again.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier is actually partially correct in his statement about the pension plan solvency deficit, in that the first deficit that was addressed was for the Yukon Hospital Corporation and for Yukon College — although I'm not as intimately familiar with that one as I am for the hospital, since I was Minister responsible for the Yukon Hospital Corporation at that time in my capacity as Minister of Health and Social Services. The discussions with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the request for government assistance took place in 2006. The first year, there was a solvency deficit for the hospital — the member is absolutely correct — in 2004, but the request came in 2006. In December 2006, this was one of the first issues brought to my attention when I was given my initial briefing by the Department of Health and Social Services. Then, in early 2007, government concluded the agreement, which at that point saw the government provide \$10.4 million in cash to the Yukon Hospital Corporation to help them cover the solvency deficit for the 2004-05 fiscal year.

That's just a clarification for the member. I understand why he felt that a correction was necessary; I'm just providing more information on that, so he can understand how that actually transpired.

In the case of the transition costs where members said the government spent less than was issued, we would be interested — I won't actually ask him to provide that in the House, but I would ask him for a legislative return providing information about the amounts actually paid to the people for whom contracts were shown on the contract registry. The number of \$111,000 for transition costs was based on information from the contract registry. I would just ask him to get back to me with a legislative return. I'm not going to ask for those specific contracts here — just respecting the privacy of the people who are mentioned, so I won't draw them into debate by name. At this point, I would just ask for accountability by the government and explain to us, out of the \$111,000 that Yukoners looking at the contract registry would believe was spent, if less was spent, what was the actual breakdown?

It's interesting the member — it's another area where we have seen the Premier have a change of heart. I recall the Premier, in opposition, being critical of government's decision

to invest in Mayo B and in the connection of the two grids together so the Dawson-Mayo grid was connected to the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid, commonly called the WAF grid. That investment and partnership with the federal government, which led to the connection of, first, the extension of the powerline up to serve the Minto mine, for which then Sherwood Copper made a contribution toward the cost of the line extension and government covered the rest — Sherwood Copper paid the full cost of the spur line.

At that point then, of course, they later became Capstone, which is now the current owner of the Minto mine. I would note then as well that the connection — the Carmacks-Stewart interties, as it was referred to — was part of the overall project along with Mayo B. It's interesting that the member was critical of those types of investments in the past because of the fact that some long-term debt was acquired through a bond for those purposes. Now — disturbingly so, in my opinion — the member is indicating that he believes there is an infrastructure deficit in power and indicating that, if I understood him correctly, they haven't formally requested power to be removed from the federal debt cap, but plan to do so.

Of the long-term debt that is on the Yukon's books — in total, \$143.8 million — the majority of it is due for borrowings by Yukon Development Corporation for hydro assets. What concerns us is that it would appear to us from his testimony to the House of Commons finance committee on April 4 that the Premier plans to borrow more than the \$198.5 million of unused borrowing capacity that currently exists under the debt cap, because it would seem to us that there would be absolutely no need to ask the federal government to make any changes to the debt cap if the Premier's plans were less than that remaining \$198.5 million, which remains under the federal debt cap.

Again, my question is twofold: How much money is the Premier considering borrowing to invest in electrical infrastructure? Secondly, how much money is the Premier considering borrowing for other infrastructure? Based on his statements to Yukoners in the past — if memory serves, I believe he said he didn't want to leave any federal money on the table and he left the door open — we understood with those comments about borrowing money — to access money from the federal Building Canada for things such as roads, bridges, water infrastructure and so on.

Again, twofold: How much is the Premier looking at borrowing for hydro and power assets? How much are they looking at borrowing for other assets?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I appreciate the Member for Lake Laberge not using his complete 20 minutes this time.

I just want to correct the record again. Take a look at Hansard again. We didn't say we were planning on increasing — that we're planning on looking at increasing the debt cap. We're gathering information as far as power. We're gathering information as far as the debt that we were left with. Gathering information is one thing. Planning to exclude or include — the member opposite is speculating and I would encourage him to listen to the responses and the wording. I didn't say that we were planning to do that. I said that we

were gathering information. Again, I'm sensing a theme with the Yukon Party here. They're trying to put some words here in my mouth and it's just not true.

Again, gathering information. These are great conversations.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, on a point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** Referring to Standing Order 19(h), I believe you ruled on it earlier here. The Premier is charging another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood by using the phrase “just not true”.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, it's an interesting call of a point of order because what I'm doing is defending what the member opposite said — that I was planning to do something. It's kind of a catch-22 here. The member opposite is standing up on a point of order because I'm explaining that I didn't say what the member opposite said I said. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, on the point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** Just to further clarify, I was referring to the Premier's statement that you ruled on earlier and just caution members not to use the words “not true” or “untrue”, which the Premier used in his previous statement. That is what I was referring to.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, I would just ask that you refrain from using that language.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to correct the record and out of respect for the Legislative Assembly, I will just restate what I stated earlier, which is that the previous government left us with an infrastructure deficit in power generation — okay. We may ask the federal government to remove power from our debt cap so that that deficit can be addressed. We have not made a final decision on that. We are gathering evidence as promised, so this is a consideration. The bigger point is — and this is what we're doing — we don't want to increase the debt cap. We don't. But we have to account for the debt. Basically, what we're going to do — Mr. Chair, we're not going to burn down our house for firewood. We are going to make some intelligent financial decisions and, in those, we have established the Financial Advisory Panel and we hope to find solutions through that process. Again, we don't want to be increasing the debt, but we are gathering evidence as promised. Let's move on from that.

I just want to go back again to the solvency issue. I think the member opposite — and he can correct me if I'm wrong here — was talking about the concept of the college — you know, you have to have this money for the solvency because if these agencies or these corporations or entities — if they all of a sudden went bankrupt or whatever. Of course the college isn't going to do that and of course the Hospital Corporation isn't going to do that.



I had a fantastic conversation about exactly that with the federal Minister of Finance, and his response was, “Yes, but the post office could.” There are other agencies that are under these types of pension plans that could. You can’t justify one and not the other, so it’s more of a whole-of-government approach from them on the solvency issue. Again, it’s one of those things we’re caught in. We have to have the money available. We have to have the money up-front for those issues. However, we’re looking at a solution, and I’m happy to say that the plan moving forward is a good plan and we’re going to try to accomplish something that — I have a press release from a previous government — Fentie’s government actually back in 2005 — and I’ll quote here: “The Yukon government will work with Yukon College and the Yukon Hospital Corp. to address identified pension plan shortfalls within the two organizations, Premier and Finance Minister Dennis Fentie says.” He’s quoted in the press release as saying, “‘We’ve been approached by both the college and the hospital to help them address some serious deficits in their pension funding,’ Fentie said. ‘We want to assure employees that we will be working closely with both organizations to preserve the integrity of their respective pension plans.’” The press release goes on to say, “The government has agreed to sit down with both to help them find a solution to their problem.”

That was in 2005. Mr. Chair, hopefully this year, with the conversations we have been having — debts versus assets — we hope to have a solution for Yukoners and, as soon as we get any more information on that, we will get back to the member opposite.

I believe that’s all for the questions.

The member opposite talked about procurement and talked about the grid. I’m going to leave that to my ministers to answer those questions because they have the technical expertise to explain what we’re doing on both those files. Again, we have been very clear on procurement as to what we’re going to be accomplishing in this government’s mandate, and I stick by my team’s decisions to move in that direction because it’s very necessary, for sure.

I think that’s it and I will sit down. If there are any other questions I have missed, I apologize but will concede the floor to the member opposite.

**Mr. Cathers:** The Premier may have indicated to this House that they were just considering whether to request removing power from the debt cap, but that’s not actually what he told the federal finance committee. According to the transcript of his testimony in front of the federal finance committee, the Premier said — and I quote: “We’re looking to remove power from our debt cap as well. The federal government will definitely have to help us out with that very important consideration.”

Again, Mr. Chair, that is why we’re asking the question. This is an extremely important question. This is not one that is just to be left to ministers to answer, because the issue of how much money government is prepared to borrow, or considering borrowing or might borrow, is one of fundamental importance to every Yukon taxpayer and indeed future

generations who will be left to pay the bill for any borrowings, especially if those borrowings become excessive and interest rates rise in future years. It is a very important consideration and, in my belief, that consideration is very much something that the Premier, in his capacity both as Premier and as Finance minister, should be the minister responsible for discussing in the House. If prepared to enter into debt and take on long-term borrowings, the Premier needs to be up-front with Yukoners and tell them how much and where.

I would note there are some very important considerations with this. As a recap, the questions we’re asking are based on the fact that the Premier was clear with the federal finance committee that they were looking at removing power from the debt cap. For Yukoners who are not familiar with the books, the Yukon government has a net financial surplus but does have some long-term debts on the books. Most of those long-term debts are borrowings for the Yukon Development Corporation for hydro assets. Some of those debts go back to, I believe it would be, four governments before — back to the time of the NCPC purchase and following that. Some of those debts are quite old, although they have been restructured somewhat, including some of the debt that is held internally and loans are owed by Yukon Energy Corporation to Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon government. Several of those loans were restructured to lower the interest rate to market rates. Even so, as I pointed out to the Premier in debate before, the decision to take government cash for the LNG generator project, for example, is something that is leading to the revenue for those interest payments made by the corporation coming directly back to the Yukon government. Ultimately, using that cash to purchase a capital asset is also creating a long-term revenue stream for government throughout the course of that loan being in place.

The reason that I am asking the Premier the questions about debt and deficit and not asking individual ministers is that I think the question of whether government is prepared to borrow money for hydro and electrical infrastructure is a fundamentally important one to the Yukon.

The question for the Premier relates to — if the government is investing in the expansion of hydro generation and transmission and distribution with the objective of increasing, for example, the economic growth, mineral development and so on — those may be laudable goals, but there are a lot of Yukoners who remember what happened in a previous era under a previous government when some of us were still too young to vote — back in the Faro era — where government, because the Faro mine was by far the largest private sector employer in the Yukon, entered into debt that then was reflected on people’s power bills for years after the Faro mine went bankrupt and left government, Yukon taxpayers and ratepayers footing the bill for the closure of the Faro mine. There is risk if government is considering borrowing money to take on a large industrial customer, and there are many Yukoners who are of the view, in that case, that companies should pay their own way and not have the government pay it for them. They are more supportive of

models such as what we did in the case of the Minto mine and with Alexco whereby, as part of a condition of them accessing the grid, they had to pay 100 percent of the costs that were solely attributable to the addition of that company. The Minto mine had to pay, I believe, roughly \$7 million toward the construction of the main line. They also had to enter into a take-or-pay power agreement with Yukon Energy Corporation that was a binding agreement between Yukon Energy Corporation and the Minto mine. It gave government some security for the limited risk that was taken by government in extending the main transmission line further north.

If the Premier has a different view and is prepared to expand the electrical grid — not just with federal investment, as we had sought and would be continuing to seek if we were still in government — but if the Premier is prepared to take on those debts on the Yukon's own books, then the question for Yukoners is: Why is \$198.5 million of borrowing capacity not enough? If the Premier wants to remove power from there, how much more than \$198.5 million does government plan to borrow? Is government considering borrowing for hydro or other electrical assets? How much is government looking at borrowing for other infrastructure? If the government isn't considering borrowing more than \$198.5 million, then there is absolutely no need to request a change to the federal order-in-council cap on Yukon's borrowing and it certainly doesn't fall under the category of how the Premier characterized it to the committee, which was very important.

Again, I look forward to hearing those answers from the Premier I hope.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The answer is no. We're not looking to take on the consolidated debt. Again, if we were going to ask for more debt it's not like we're going to use it. A good example is that I have a Visa card in my wallet. The balance is zero. It's good to have a credit limit that's high because of emergencies and those situations, so as the narrative that the member opposite is moving toward, the answer is no.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Chair, I think we'll have to chalk that up as the Premier not disclosing to Yukoners what the government is currently thinking, because his characterization of having a Visa card with a zero balance is not a comparable characterization. Visas are often used by people, including myself, for convenience, for the air miles or the Canadian Tire points — that would be a MasterCard in that case, to be technical — but Mr. Chair, if government is actually going to the step of telling the federal finance committee in the Premier's first appearance before them that it's very important to remove power from the debt cap, that suggests that the government has thought about this topic more than they're telling this House and telling Yukoners. Again, the Premier's characterization —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I'm wondering if the member opposite can be directed to the proceedings under Committee of the Whole, section 42(2) of the Standing Orders that

indicate that "Speeches in Committee of the Whole shall be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration." In addition, presumably this portion of Committee of the Whole is for questions and I'm not hearing too many questions coming forth. Certainly the member opposite, in my submission to you, is straying from the topic of general debate with respect to the budget.

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, on the point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair. In general debate under these circumstances on the budget, I believe the member is asking relevant questions with respect to the budget that we're debating. I see no point of order here. I believe it is just a dispute between members.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Mr. Chair, with all due respect to the members opposite, the debt cap is not in the budget. This is not about the budget. It's not a general debate about a budget and I would ask the members to maybe have the conversation about budgetary items.

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, in past debates, it has been ruled by speakers and chairs that debate in general debate could be very wide-ranging, and it's disturbing that the government is trying to shut down debate about important questions. I don't believe there is a point of order.

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on the point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** On the point of order, Mr. Chair, at no time am I attempting to shut down debate. I'm trying to make it relevant for the members of this House and for the public — and that the comments and questions are required by the Standing Orders, not by any ruling. I'm not suggesting or referring to former rulings. I'm suggesting that, based on the Standing Orders, they're required to be strictly relevant. Those are the words in the orders: strictly relevant.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** On the point of order, I'm going to allow the debt cap because it is relevant to the budget.

**Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In the question for the member, what I'm actually baffled by is that the government doesn't understand the importance of this topic to Yukoners. This is an issue where, if government is planning on taking on long-term debt or is contemplating it, these debts will go past this current government. They will be paid for; they will still be on the books. If government takes on debt — just as, when in government, we inherited debt from a previous NDP government's decisions — which still continues on the books to this day — the long-term debts are passed on to future generations of Yukoners and to future governments. I would argue, just as we debate the budget, the topic of whether taking on debt is appropriate and whether government is prepared to is an extremely important one.

I do have to point to the Premier's statements to the federal finance committee, which indicated, and I quote — and this was just on April 4 — so we're relying on the

transcript prepared and posted on the parliamentary website of the Government of Canada. I did not witness that but, just as with Hansard, we do assume the official record is accurate.

According to the official transcript on the Parliament of Canada website, on April 4, when the Premier appeared by videoconference before the House of Commons finance committee, he made this statement: “We’re looking to remove power from our debt cap as well. The federal government will definitely have to help us out with that very important consideration.”

I don’t seem to be getting answers from the Premier on this, but I would point out that I think the Premier’s claim to Yukoners that, effectively, a request for an increase in borrowing capacity doesn’t mean government is going to use it, is a strange claim. The question is — this government is busy, the Premier is busy and the federal government is busy. You have a limited amount of face-time with the federal government, with the Prime Minister, with the finance committee, et cetera, so why talk about topics if they are not a priority? Why speculate on something that relates to an area that you indicate you don’t actually intend to go there — so don’t worry? It does remind Yukoners who were talking to us of when the Premier said, “Don’t worry, I don’t like special warrants”, and referred to the use of special warrants in April of last year as showing a lack of respect for this Chamber and for democracy itself.

Again, the question —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

### Point of order

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I hesitate to interrupt the member opposite, but for a good portion of the afternoon, he has asked the Premier questions and he has then speculated that those answers are untrue. He didn’t use the word “untrue” but, nonetheless, he is imputing false motives to the Premier.

He has also used, I would say, insulting language by using a word like “claimed”. When the Premier makes a statement here in the House, it is to be respected. If the subject matter or the topic is disagreeable, that’s fine. But using language like “claim” in my submission to you, Mr. Chair, is inappropriate and it does breach Standing Order 19(i) and (g).

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** I’m using statements consistent with what past opposition critics have used when in general debate. I don’t believe there’s a point of order. I questioned the accuracy of the Premier’s statements. I did not accuse him with uttering a deliberate falsehood.

### Chair’s ruling

**Chair:** I’m going to find that there is no point of order here. It’s a disagreement between members.

**Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just note again in this area with the debt cap that we’re relying on the Premier’s statements. We really question why government would bother to, or even want to see, an increase in borrowing

capacity if it doesn’t intend to use it. It just simply doesn’t make any sense to us why government would want to request an increase to borrowing capacity but not actually intend to use it. Why government would see a need to request, as the Premier indicated on April 4 to the House of Commons finance committee — the Premier indicated at that time that he wanted to see a change to the debt cap to remove power from what was captured under it. Again, that leaves, not only us, but Yukoners asking the question: Since there’s \$198.5 million of unused borrowing capacity left under the debt cap, why ask for changes to the debt cap unless you plan to borrow more than that \$198.5 million? I hope the Premier will answer that. It doesn’t seem he has been very willing to provide us with more information on this so I will move on to other areas.

Mr. Chair, I would ask the Premier: Can he confirm which infrastructure projects are going to be started under the New Building Canada fund for this year and which projects may face delays as a result of the government’s failure to meet its own timeline of getting seasonally sensitive tenders out by March 31?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, I have answered the member opposite’s question already and I’ll reiterate that the answer is no. We’re not planning on taking on more debt. It’s as simple as that. We’re planning on turning the ship around. I have answered his question.

It is worth noting as well, that one other territory has requested and received extensions. Also, it’s worthy to note as well that the federal government decides the current debt caps. The answer is: no, we’re not planning on taking on more debt. We want to bring some more fiscal scrutiny and turn the ship around.

If I can direct the member opposite’s attention to a document that he already has, which is the Budget Address document, under tab “Long Term Plans”, pages 2 and 3, “Multi-Year Project Listings” — there are the answers to your questions as far as the New Building Canada Funds. It is all there in black and white, as the member opposite knows.

**Mr. Cathers:** I think perhaps the Premier didn’t hear the question because what I asked for was which projects will be started under the New Building Canada fund for this year and their start dates. We know the information that is presented in the budget, but this is an area I’m asking the Premier about in general debate because it relates to multiple departments. I’m asking the Premier this in my role as Official Opposition Finance critic because it relates to the accuracy of the Premier’s budget. The Premier has stated in his Budget Address and outside this House — he has characterized the previous budgeting process as not working well. He has made some statements that we think, in fact, reflect a lack of understanding of how the budget is developed, what cost pressures government faces in the year and what issues around program delivery become a challenge.

In asking which projects under the New Building Canada funds will begin this year, I would also appreciate a breakdown of which of those are projects have recently been

approved and which were approved by the previous government.

So again, Mr. Chair, I do want to note to members — I know that when we were in government during the last term, the Official Opposition of the day didn't spend a lot of time in general debate. That was not the case during the two previous legislative assemblies where the Official Opposition Finance critic took the opportunity to ask the Premier wide-ranging questions that they believed — and in fact we believe also — are areas that the Premier should be accountable for on behalf of the government and he should be prepared to answer those questions.

I would just encourage members to look back through Hansard from those previous legislative assemblies and they will see that both our questions and the manner in which I am framing them are no more aggressive and no more wide-ranging than previous Official Opposition Finance critics and other members engaged in.

We do take very seriously our responsibility on behalf of Yukoners to ask the government questions about the budget and its plans.

One area that we find it strange is that the Premier is claiming to be more accurately budgeting and he claimed that the delay in calling the first real Sitting of the Legislative Assembly of this term where members get a chance to debate the budget and to ask questions — the Premier indicated at the time that the reason for that was members needing time to understand the finances and be able to do the budget better. Then, in the presentation, we see in the budget — and again I would note the Premier has pointed to officials and tried to suggest we were blaming officials for the choices. But we know very well, as do most Yukoners and virtually every single government employee, that decisions about things like what is contained in the budget — the departments may make recommendations, but ultimately they take direction from the Premier and ministers, and, in fact, although government can attempt to hide behind those officials in an attempt to avoid scrutiny, we know that officials also typically react to the strategic direction and indications they get from the government. So the question on that would be: On the choice that ultimately the Premier is responsible for — to shorten down the budget highlights from 11 pages of detailed text to four pages that are heavy on infographics — how does the Premier see that decision to provide less information in the budget highlights as being consistent with his commitments to Yukoners to be more open and more transparent to them, including as it relates to the budgetary process?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As the Minister of Finance, I will direct the member opposite's attention to page 2 of the Long Term Plans in the Budget Address where we have under: Community Services — New Building Canada fund (small communities fund) — for this year \$1.155 million for the mains. We also have future years planned as well. There is just over \$30 million for 2018-19. For 2019-20, we have another \$34.5 million and then for 2010-21, \$38.3 million.

With respect to my Minister of Community Services — I would ask the member opposite to ask for a detailed

breakdown. He can get that information. I don't have that information at my fingertips right now. I think the best way to get that is from the minister, and I don't want to steal any of his thunder when it comes to the good work that he and his department have done on this file. I would probably miss a few of the highlights that he would have a more detailed explanation for, so I wouldn't want to steal that opportunity from the Minister of Community Services.

When it comes to the former budget highlights, there was a list that basically repeated the budget speech. We are getting away from a process that really didn't resonate with Yukoners, in our opinion. The members opposite can disagree with that. But I believe we are using those infographics to make the budget more accessible to Yukoners who aren't — I mean it's a lot of information and a lot of detail. I think that is what we are trying to do. If it doesn't work out, then I will take the member opposite's suggestions to go back to the old-fashioned way of doing it if we don't see that resonating with Yukoners.

**Mr. Cathers:** I guess I am not going to get an answer from the Premier on the details of infrastructure projects. I would point out, with all due respect to the Minister of Community Services, the reason I am asking the Premier is because in delivering those projects, while the Minister of Community Services is the lead on Building Canada, as was the case during our time in government, in fact that project delivery depends on a number of factors that are outside the minister's control. That includes services that are provided by other government departments, such as the Department of Highways and Public Works and its procurement support. It includes its work in contracting. It includes, as well, financial approval, in most cases by Management Board, and if those projects have not been given Management Board approval or require Management Board approval due to a change in costs, it is the Premier himself in his capacity as Minister of Finance and Chair of Management Board who is responsible for choosing when that gets on the agenda or if, indeed, that item comes forward for consideration by Cabinet wearing its hat as Management Board.

I was concerned, as were some of my colleagues, by the Premier's comparison of the Yukon's finances to NWT and Nunavut and the debt cap. I would ask the Premier to state for the record — I certainly hope he's not indicating that he's intending to follow their example in terms of financing. With all due respect to the other two territories, they have both struggled with their finances and had more difficulty with things such as long-term debt than the Yukon has. The Yukon has been proud in recent years — in the past 14 years under the Yukon Party we were proud, as indeed we heard from Yukoners as well, with the responsible financial management and the fact that we had money in the bank in comparison especially to NWT and Nunavut, but also to other jurisdictions across the country. Our finances were in a much better situation with a lot more black ink and not as much red ink as others had.

Perhaps the Premier could tell the House if the current Liberal government is now looking to the example of NWT

and Nunavut for their budgeting process, financial management and so on as an example of where they want to get to or was that illustration just provided as a reference to the fact that both of them are already deeply in debt and that future generations of citizens of both of those territories are going to have a very hard time paying the bills for those debts.

Before sitting down, looking forward to questions from the member — I would just encourage him in the budget highlights, as I look through the Budget Address and the budget highlights — that really the change in the budget tabled by this Finance minister and the budget highlights section, with the exception of all the red ink, is much prettier to look at. It might be easier if somebody is trying to provide that information to a class of students in grade 2 and trying to explain to them what's in the budget — then the Liberal presentation is probably a better way to do it — but for Yukoners who are interested in understanding the details of major projects across the territory, they want to see the fine print. They want to be able to look at what they're used to during the last 14 years and prior to that as well. They are used to being able to look at the budget highlights to understand the most important projects in their ridings, in their communities and ridings across the territory and so on. Some of the things that are not kept in the past — in the 11 pages of budget highlights for example that were in the budget last year, there was detail about projects that the Premier didn't mention in the budget speech because it was recognizing certain projects that were important — the details were important to individual Yukoners, but the Premier didn't think that it was worth the House's time to have him stand up and go through every specific detail during the Budget Address.

Mr. Chair, we didn't get a clear answer on the plans as far as future debt. We got a very disturbing comparison to NWT and Nunavut. The only thing that I am pleased with is that the Premier has indicated he might reconsider the choice to narrow down the budget highlights to four pages — heavy on infographics and low on details — because again we've heard criticism from Yukoners who look at the budget highlights compared to past budgets and are asking, "Where is the information? How are we supposed to find this out in a succinct manner?"

I would also note that the Premier claimed that the reason this Sitting was so late was because they were taking the time to get the budget right. We've heard very clearly from the Premier and from officials that this budget doesn't have anything budgeted for a carbon tax. In fact, we know from statements of the federal government and the Premier that a carbon tax is set to come in this fiscal year, so the question of its financial impact on departments is an important one that is not budgeted for in this year's estimates. I would note that if it does affect the cost of fuel — going back several years when there was a significant spike in the cost of diesel fuel and gasoline. At that point, it was a major cost pressure for every single department of the government, especially those who use a lot of fuel like the Department of Highways and Public Works. There was a very serious cost pressure on their budget because of anticipated fuel costs and predictions in those

areas. Every minister and every deputy minister was concerned about the financial impact if gasoline and diesel prices went even higher. The question of why there isn't even a contingency booked for the expected Liberal carbon tax is really a question that we're hearing from Yukoners and they're wondering how a budget can be more accurate if it's leaving out important facts?

I would like to move on to another area — diversion credits that are made available for recycling. The government has continued them this year. Has the Premier booked diversion credits for future years within the long-term financial plans — yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think the member opposite is going to have to expand a bit on — what diversion credits? I'm not really sure what he means by that.

But I'm going to re-answer a couple of questions because he keeps on going back to the debt cap. I'll answer it again. He's going dangerously again to re-asking questions that we have already answered. No, we're not planning on taking on more debt. What we are doing is we're planning on turning this ship around. I'm very pleased with this government's proactive approach when using the panel to do such actions. That's the answer to that.

He asked again about the budget highlights so I'll answer that again. We feel that the best way to do the budget highlights is in debate in the particular departments so it would be great to be able to get to those.

I do want to say as well that what we did add, which was never in the budgets in previous years, was the economic outlook and we're very proud of the government working really hard to make sure that information is available. To this end, we've moved the economic research unit from the Bureau of Statistics to the Department of Finance to ensure that the forecasting across the entire department can be aligned and the same information and the same planning assumptions are all there in tandem. It's great to finally see in this document the economic outlook actually being there.

Again, I guess we'll see if Yukoners prefer the new style of more information as far as economic highlights. Hopefully, when we get to line by line, we can have the debate of the highlights per department as we said.

Can he give me some more clarity on his last question?

**Mr. Cathers:** I am sure the Minister of Community Services can advise the Premier that diversion credits for recycling processors were put in place for non-refundable recyclers. It also supports the increased diversion of waste. That is something that occurred under the past government. It has been extended, I understand, by the current government.

The question is whether that is single-year funding or whether that is booked in the government's finances. The reason I ask is because, although the actual costs will vary based on the number of tons of things — such as clean cardboard and plastics that are diverted from landfills — the question of whether that number is included in future years' financial plans is a question for the Premier as Finance minister — whether the amount for this year is just one-time

funding or whether he has included that in the numbers for future financial years.

For Yukoners who are listening, the reason this is relevant is because the amounts for the last year the Yukon Party was in government were over half a million dollars in total spent on diversion credits. This is a significant cost item for government and more than a half-a-million dollar question for government about the accuracy of its future financial plans.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I didn't hear the question completely. The Minister of Community Services will be happy to answer that question. We're looking in general debate for less specific questions. We can go into every single line item here in general debate, but I think the best use of the time for taxpayers' money is to have the ministers who are responsible for these particular parts of the budget to answer on behalf of those departments.

I know the minister responsible is champing at the bit to get to that debate.

**Mr. Cathers:** I have some bad news for the Premier. Just as every Premier has found out, the Premier doesn't get to decide what questions the opposition members choose to ask in general debate — whether members choose to ask them in general debate with him or whether they choose to ask them in department debate.

As the Premier knows, we asked for a 40-day Sitting prior to the Sitting being called, and that was because of the questions we wanted to ask in individual departments on behalf of Yukoners and based on our own review of both what the government has made available through the budget and policy announcements, and what it hasn't indicated and made available.

The question relates to the Premier's promises to improve budgeting and the assertion he made to the public that the primary reason for delaying this Sitting of the Legislative Assembly from when it was usually done was that, to get a budget ready for the Spring Sitting, he was — and I'm paraphrasing — going to do the budget better than any other Finance minister had ever done it in the history of the world.

I'm being slightly facetious, of course, for the record, Mr. Chair.

The Premier did indicate that government was taking time to get the budget right. The question comes down to the accuracy of future financial years. In the case of diversion credits, they are a major line item. The question of whether that is included and booked in future fiscal years, or whether the funding for this year is one-time only, is not only a relevant one but one that is perfectly reasonable to ask the Finance minister and it is appropriate that the Finance minister should be able to tell this House if it is or isn't booked in future fiscal years.

If the government is planning on moving away from diversion credits or stopping them, then we would be interested in hearing that explanation — what the rationale is for that and why, and whether they believe that recycling will still continue in this territory for non-refundables if diversion credits are not provided.

It does relate as well to the questions of the pressure on landfills and it affects a number of departments — Community Services, Environment — and, of course, the overall waste that is put into every landfill across the territory and the amount that is transferred from transfer stations operated by the Yukon government. Any waste that it brings in is affected by whether the government continues to support incentives to keep waste out of landfills.

Again, the question is: Is the money available for diversion credits right now booked as a one-time item just for this fiscal year or is it included in the cost for future fiscal years?

I will also ask the minister that same question about the announcement that was made that the interim electrical rebate is going to be continued for this fiscal year. Is that \$3.5 million for the IER included in the financial projections for future fiscal years or is the government planning on eliminating the interim electrical rebate?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Yes, the diversion credits are there and ongoing in the fiscal framework, and yes to the question on the money being there for the interim rebate as well.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the answer from the Premier on those specific areas.

Mr. Chair, in response to the federal budget released in March, when asked about the money committed to the territorial health investment fund and the fact that medical travel was not specifically referenced, the Premier stated that we're able to use that money as we see fit and that medical travel is, of course, where we're going to be putting a good chunk of that money.

In looking at the budget information that our critic for Health and Social Services, the Member for Watson Lake, received at the budget briefing, it appears that there's a reduction of some \$600,000 in the budget for a drop in medical travel funding from the federal government and the area that the Premier and Minister of Health and Social Services announced with a fair bit of fanfare — the additional federal dollars for mental health and home care — we see an increase of just over \$300,000 in the budget according to the information we saw for the line items for home care and continuing care — so again, just over \$300,000 in commitment — but we see a drop according to the documents that we were provided of some \$600,000 in the money for medical travel.

The question first is: Is that information correct? Does the Premier agree with those numbers, or have we misunderstood the information because of the way it was presented in some way? If indeed we have seen a decrease overall of over a half-million dollars annually in medical travel and a fairly minor increase for both home care and continuing care, the question would be: Why has the government simply walked away from the table instead of pressing the federal government for additional funding in those key areas?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The simple answer is that the member opposite is misinformed, and he might be misinformed for good reason. I think with the previous government's negotiations with Ottawa, THIF had a lot of strings attached to

it. Those strings have been removed, and that's from my Minister of Health and Social Services doing a great job for Yukoners by making sure that this funding has fewer strings attached and reinstating that money for four years. I'm very proud of her and of her work in that department — but yes, not a decrease in federal health funding. There is not a decrease. The member opposite is incorrect.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would appreciate the Premier providing a detailed breakdown on that because it certainly appeared — according to the information that was shared with us in the briefing on the Department of Health and Social Services budget, there is clearly a \$600,000-reduction on one line item for medical travel and it appears that a corresponding offset is just an increase of \$300,000 for two areas, which were announced with quite a bit of fanfare, but don't appear to have much cash attached to them.

For Yukoners listening, I'm not sure how the Premier comes to the conclusion that the THIF had a lot of strings attached to it. There was a requirement for a reporting to the federal government, but in fact the details within what first started out as THAF, the territorial health access fund, and was due to the work of the Premier of the day and the former Member for Klondike, Peter Jenkins, in his capacity as health minister, the good work that they and officials did in making the case — along with the other two territories — to the federal government about the inadequacy of per capita funding and clearly making the case for the unique needs of the three territories, resulted in the territorial health access fund being created after the Prime Minister of the day had emphatically said no to any additional health funding for the territories. As well, the details of that spending did require federal approval for the categories, but the details of the THAF spending plan were developed by officials of the Department of Health and Social Services. Indeed, the Deputy Minister and ADM of Health Services both deserve a lot of credit for their own work and the work of staff who reported to them for the excellent job they did in coming up with a plan for the use of territorial health access funding.

I would note that, in part, the details of that plan were developed after I gave direction as the Minister of Health and Social Services, that government wanted to put additional funding into incentives for health professionals, including the family physician incentive program, but it was officials who came back with the detailed plan and came up with a way to make it work and a way that has been part of Yukon's success in attracting family doctors. It has also been part of the success as well in over 100 Yukoners being trained as doctors, nurses and other professionals across the board, with the support of bursaries.

To simplify it for the Premier — in that case, we weren't told by the federal government what we had to spend the money on. We came up with a plan to spend the money. There were some areas when THAF became THSSI and then THIF. There were certain category changes and we weren't able to fund all of the things we funded in the past under the new criteria. Certain areas were picked up within government budgets, such as the mental health nurses who the Premier is

referring to, which originally started as two and then became three. The two rural mental health positions were ones that were created as part of the good work done by officials in the Department of Health and Social Services during my time as their minister, but in fact it is those officials who deserve full credit for bringing that need to my attention. The only credit due to me is getting Management Board approval for the spending plan for those additional nurses.

In that area, in our debate about new staff, the Premier was questioning whether we wanted to see those new positions for addictions and mental health cut. If the Premier will note, we have noted publicly — and I made mention in my speech at second reading — the fact that those specific increases are ones that, from the information we have seen so far from government, look like valuable enhancements to the capacity in rural communities toward addressing mental health needs.

I would ask the Premier to explain or correct the record on his indication that the THIF funding had a lot of strings attached to it, because I don't believe that's accurate. Perhaps the Premier could ask for a briefing on that and would potentially then inform his future comments here in the House on that.

Moving on to other areas, would the Premier indicate what the government's vision is for land and lot development? In addition to the lots that are included within the budget for this fiscal year in phase 3 lot development in Whistle Bend, what does the government see as the relationship between the Yukon government and communities? Where does the Premier believe the Yukon government is responsible for land development and what does he see as the respective roles of the territorial government, municipality governments, the private sector and individual Yukoners? I would note that specific questions related to that are whether the government has any plans here or in communities such as Dawson City to release existing titled land that is on the government inventory for sale? Is the government contemplating any changes to the current land development protocol with the City of Whitehorse?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When it comes to THIF — the member opposite talked about the new criteria requirements. They used to have to approve projects that supported a federal initiative, and that's the criteria the member opposite speaks of — those are gone. Basically, right now, we submit a plan — that's it. The funding from THIF is 100 percent the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Services. We're very happy with that negotiation and it's good to see that there is just a plan that has to be submitted, and that's it.

When it comes to the development of lots in communities, what we will be doing is working in partnership with our partner governments, whether they are municipal or First Nation. There are some great opportunities coming up when it comes to the land resources that First Nations represent. The member opposite knows what is going on there as far as the ability for mortgages on First Nation land. It's a pretty exciting time as far as new options coming on the table.

We will be working with our federal, municipal and First Nation governments to come up with plans when it comes to addressing the needs in each community and to our commitment, again, that all communities matter and that all communities are different.

The needs in one community compared to another — they change for each community. We are looking forward to continuing those dialogues with our partner governments. There will be a great conversations to be had this weekend at Association of Yukon Communities in Faro.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate that partial answer from the Premier. It didn't provide a lot of detail, but I would hope that the Premier will come forward with details in a few days, including one question the Premier didn't answer, which is a fairly specific one. It is also a document signed by a previous Premier with the mayor of Whitehorse. Is the government contemplating any changes to the current land protocol and lot development protocol? I might be missing a word from the proper name on that, but it exists with City of Whitehorse. After the current phases of Whistle Bend that are under development, does the government plan to continue to have the Department of Community Services take the lead in getting that work done? Or is the government considering handing over additional responsibilities and resources to the City of Whitehorse?

I would also, in advance of the AYC meeting that is coming up on Faro this weekend, ask the government what plans it has for the comprehensive municipal grant. Is the Premier planning to make changes to the CMG along with municipalities? If so, will he commit first of all that no municipality will see a reduction in their funding?

Does the government intend to make any adjustments to categories such as the existing supplement that is available for structural fire protection? It was implemented under the minister of the day — then-Minister of Community Services, Elaine Taylor. We provided for the first time specific funding for municipalities to help them with the costs of providing municipal fire protection services. We in the Official Opposition believe that it is time for that amount to be increased to meet the needs of those communities. We also would ask if the government is considering an increase of that and, if they are not currently, whether they will take that suggestion under consideration. What provisions do they have as far as ensuring that the money is dedicated for fire protection purposes instead of general revenue?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** As far as fire protection, we are in negotiation. That is the whole purpose of the negotiation. That will be forthcoming after the minister meets with all stakeholders. There will be no reductions or changes to the community municipal grant.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate the partial answer from the Premier on that. It is an area that we are simply asking the government on behalf of Yukoners who are wondering what government is putting on the table. What is the Yukon government after in those negotiations? What are its priorities? Is it offering additional resources? What resources are they offering that may be additional? Are they targeting

any specific criteria — for example, structural fire protection? Is there a requirement for specific spending accountability in terms of where that money is spent?

The other area I would just note is whether they are planning on increasing the comprehensive municipal grant. How much is government considering increasing it? Has that money been booked or has a contingency for that money been booked in future fiscal years that's shown in this budget?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The answer to the member opposite's last question is yes. Again, we're in negotiations right now and we're not going to talk about negotiations here in the Legislative Assembly. That's what negotiations are for. We will take all the member opposite's concerns and questions under advisement and add those to the negotiations.

**Mr. Cathers:** I guess we're not going to get an answer on that particular file.

Again, I would just point out to the Premier that the questions I'm asking on behalf of the Official Opposition are also questions that are of interest to Yukoners. Yukoners in municipalities and Yukoners on town councils or who are employees of municipalities — not to mention everyone who receives the services of municipalities — want to know what the government's vision is for meeting their needs and whether government is planning to do more or do less or change their relationship. I won't spend much more time on this. I understand that they are in negotiations, but I would point out that there's nothing untoward about the Yukon government indicating what its priorities are or what it is hoping to get out of negotiations.

I'll give a good example of that from our time in government. When we sought to extend the rural well program into municipalities, we made it quite clear — I made it quite clear, both on the floor of this House and to Yukoners outside this Assembly — that we were trying to get that change. We also made it quite clear to municipalities when we proposed four basic options for extending the rural well program into municipalities or developing a comparable one that we were open to whichever option was their preference or to an additional option if municipalities were to come up with a different suggestion that was at all reasonable. We received the results of that consultation which, again, we were very open — not only with the Legislative Assembly, but with the Yukon public as a whole — about what we were hoping to achieve and why. We heard back from two municipalities that they wanted a fee for administration so that they didn't have any additional administration costs. While that was a request we weren't thrilled to receive, we did, as part of getting the deal to extend into municipalities, agree to that request to tack on that \$500 fee so that would occur.

Again, I would encourage the Premier to recognize that for a government that campaigned on being more open and more accountable to Yukoners, that includes being accountable to the public as well, not just providing information in discussions with other levels of government. I'm saying that with great respect for those other levels of government and understanding that there are sometimes detailed discussions that occur there first. However, I would



note that there is nothing the matter with the Premier including 11 pages of budget highlights, sharing information that prior to taking office they indicated they would share with the public and have had a change of heart.

In those areas of the priorities in CMG — comprehensive municipal grant — negotiations, I guess I'm not going to get an answer from the Premier unless he's had a change of heart, but I don't think there is anything untoward in Yukoners asking to understand what the Premier is trying to achieve.

Moving on to two areas of tax credits — which again depend on the government legislative agenda — the previous Yukon government worked to support families by maintaining the children's fitness and arts tax credits after they were eliminated by the federal government. Will the Premier commit to continuing to support Yukon families and maintain this tax credit or is his government considering changing it?

Secondly, we saw no mention of the Yukon small business investment tax credit this year in the budget. Does the government commit to upholding their promise to increase the ceiling for the Yukon small business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** The answer to the first question — so for the tax credit, we're examining the tax credit right now to make sure that we're maximizing the benefit to all small businesses. As far as this question about the tax credit — fitness and arts, we are continuing that credit. There is no plan to change it.

**Mr. Cathers:** I thank the Premier for that answer. I'm going to return to one of the Premier's favourite topics briefly and just refer to an article about statements made by the Premier of Manitoba that appeared in the *Winnipeg Sun* dated yesterday. For members who are looking for it, it is an article in the *Winnipeg Sun* by Joyanne Pursaga that was posted yesterday. In those statements, the article indicates that Premier Brian Pallister of Manitoba says he plans to exempt Manitoba farmers from paying a carbon price. He added that agriculture and agri-foods in that province "... account for more than 33,000 jobs and about five percent of the provincial GDP..." and that carbon pricing has the potential to "... negatively impact on that sector." Those statements and recognition by the Premier are very much in line with my own questions and comments earlier in this House about the potential impact on the agriculture sector here in the territory of a carbon price.

I would ask again whether the Yukon government is committed to seeing a carbon tax that exempts the agriculture sector and puts them on an even playing field with other jurisdictions like in PEI and Manitoba, particularly in light of the fact that Yukon farmers already pay substantially higher fuel prices than farmers in those areas and already face challenges in terms of competition.

I would ask the Premier whether they're committed to ensuring that the Liberal carbon-pricing model that they're discussing with the federal government doesn't see Yukon farmers paying a carbon price that is not paid by farmers in other jurisdictions.

I appreciate the answer on the small business investment tax credit, but what is a little disturbing is that I didn't hear the Premier indicate they're not keeping their campaign promise, but it did sound a lot like the Premier was indicating that the government was considering whether they were going to keep their campaign promise to Yukoners, which was a commitment to increase the ceiling for the Yukon small business investment tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increasing the asset that it took from larger companies to qualify.

Moving on to another area, I would ask the Yukon government — with regard to government's promises to reduce community reliance on diesel energy — if the Premier has any concrete plans on how to do so and financial estimates on any plans they have in place?

With regard to the \$1.5 million that I believe is the number in the budget for partnerships with First Nations and communities, who is eligible for that and for what type of projects? How would that be determined?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I will ask the member opposite to be a little more specific about which \$1.5 million he is talking about. I didn't catch that. As far as the tax credit — as the member opposite knows, tax credits take time to develop and we are looking at the evidence and are committed to addressing that issue.

As far as carbon pricing, we're waiting to hear back from Ottawa. Once we do, we'll know the parameters as to how we're going to rebate those dollars back to Yukoners. The agricultural sector is an extremely important part of our economy. As well, you take a look at those specific parts of the pan-Canadian framework — talking about the north being a special case — and make sure the carbon-pricing mechanism doesn't unduly make things disproportionate for businesses in areas where they can't reduce their emissions.

**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:** The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

**Mr. Cathers:** I'm continuing on in debate with the Premier and asking questions about the budget. One question I would like to hear from the Premier on that I intended to ask him earlier is — one of the areas where government lapses a significant amount of money is in personnel dollars. If positions are created and funded and if those positions are vacant due to retirement, temporary absence, departure or during the recruitment process, during those times the money is still there attached to the position but the person is not. Some of those dollars can be consumed at times through a thing such as overtime but, overall, in vacancies across departments, there are typically very large annual lapses in those areas.

The question for the Premier is: What is the total anticipated lapse for personnel across all government departments for the 2016-17 fiscal year?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We are planning on spending all of our personnel dollars. Risk management happens in this consideration that the member opposite talks about — lapses that are attached to personnel in regard to vacancies, but we have every intention of spending the dollars allocated.

**Mr. Cathers:** That was a very interesting answer from the Premier because typically, in previous years — every single year — money that is available — rather than simply having the department spend it on other purposes, those funds are typically used to go back into general revenue or to fund cost pressures that were unanticipated within a fiscal year. The total amount that we're talking about, for Yukoners who are not familiar with it — actually probably most people are not — if you're looking at recent fiscal years, I can tell the member that based on the last budgetary cycle that we were part of, at that point, the total lapses for the last year — for which the actuals were on, based on the period 12 variance report — were \$5.9 million in lapses in personnel across government departments. With the number of vacancies that we have seen here under the Liberal watch, including the delay in hiring deputy ministers for over half a year and the issues that we heard the Yukon Employees' Union take issue with the government on in a press release that the YEU issued, where they talked about — and drew to the government's attention — the fact that these vacancies and acting positions across departments were having a significant impact on program delivery and having a cascading effect on hires across the department. I don't have the release right at my fingertips as I thought I did, but — oh yes, I do.

At that point, in a press release issued on April 19, Steve Geick, the president of the Yukon Employees' Union noted that the Yukon Employees' Union was withdrawing from collaboration with the government. In the YEU and Public Service Alliance of Canada press release, they referenced the fact — and I quote: “When elected last fall, the Yukon's Liberals promised Public Service excellence as one of their platform commitment. The platform states that a Yukon Liberal government will review hiring/promotion processes to ensure they are open and transparent.

“YEU urges the government to act swiftly to show the strong leadership they promised.”

Moving on to a different section of the press release, the YEU referenced the fact that in the PSC, the top positions were either vacant or temporarily staffed, with both the Public Service Commissioner and the director of Labour Relations temporarily acting. Referencing that they were quoting the government's online staff directory as of the date of the press release, the YEU believed that there were at least five deputy ministers, seven assistant deputy ministers, 17 directors and a multitude of managers and supervisors who were acting. The press release noted that they believed the list to be incomplete.

Again, as I mentioned in my remarks, I believe, at second reading on the budget, I noted to the Premier — I want to make sure that the Premier is crystal clear about the fact that

we're not criticizing people who are in those positions. In fact, as I stated at that point, some of the people who are filling those acting roles, if they were to be ultimately selected for that job, they would do in my belief an excellent job in those areas. In most cases, the people who we are aware of at the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister level, as well as below that, are competent people.

As I mentioned in my cautionary note and advice to the Premier when I first rose to debate the budget, I acknowledge the fact that I don't think the Premier and his Cabinet have fully understood the effect that a delay on hiring deputy ministers has. As I mentioned at that point, someone being in a temporary position for a month or two doesn't have a significant impact on that department. It does have an impact, but usually the lights are still on and business is still generally conducted as usual. But it comes down to — in terms of personnel decisions and strategic decisions around matters such as policy and advice to be provided to government — if those acting positions continue beyond the three-month period — a somewhat arbitrary number, but it is roughly around that time period, in my view — and if they continue to the point where they are half a year, you start to see a cascading effect across those departments from the lack of action in that area. I have two questions on that. The first is: When does the Premier plan to follow the advice of the Yukon Employees' Union and appoint, choose, select and hire permanent choices for those deputy minister positions?

Secondly, my question is — in light of the Premier's statement that he didn't expect there to be any lapses for personnel and considering there are far more vacancies than in a typical fiscal year, we would expect that in fact the amount lapsing for funded positions that aren't filled would be higher than the number of \$5.9 million in monies that are lapsed and returned to the public purse. In our view, it would appear to us that this number would probably be somewhere between \$7 million and \$8 million. Again, the question for the Premier is: Does he wish to correct his statement and indicate how much money is expected to be lapsed based on the period 12 variance report for the 2016-17 fiscal year for personnel across all government departments? If the money is not being lapsed for those positions, what is it being spent on within those departments? That money is dedicated to personnel and it would seem that, rather than exercising the fiscally prudent approach of cash management that we used successfully for 14 years, the Premier is perhaps telling departments that, if they don't spend the money, they won't get it next year. That can lead to a department culture of good managers spending money on things they don't really need that fiscal year because they don't want to lose the money for the next fiscal year.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** When we include lapses, we include it for everything, not just personnel. The member opposite mentioned lapses as being a normal part of fiscal planning and delivery. I agree, and I am happy to confirm to the member opposite that we are aware of that and that there have been no changes in the methodology for estimating lapses. They are contained in the other adjustment figures, as the member

opposite knows — and that is the long-term fiscal plan as they always have been. There are no changes there.

When it comes to vacancies, I agree. You don't want these things to go on forever — that is for sure. The member opposite knows very well that in 2015, 11 Yukon government departments saw one or more new deputy heads appointed.

Five of these departments saw nine acting deputy heads appointed. Some deputy head appointments were necessary because of resignations or retirements, and several appointments were simply transfers laterally — so lots of movement in the previous government as far as some of these positions. We're actively working as expeditiously as possible.

I know the Minister of Highways and Public Works can talk about the great conversations he has had with Mr. Geick and others as far as remedying the situation that we find ourselves in.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Chair, that response is a bit disappointing. It's again disappointing that we've asked a detailed question, and when they are questioned about lapses, the Premier first indicated that there wouldn't be any, that they were going to spend the money. Then it appeared that ministers and officials informed him otherwise, and the Premier corrected the record but he wouldn't give a breakdown on that and to simply say that those lapses are included in other lapses — it's a pretty simple question. What are the total anticipated lapses anticipated to be for the 2016-17 fiscal year for personnel across all government departments? Those amounts are part of other numbers in the budget. They are not in anything that we saw specifically broken out. They're certainly not included in the four pages of budget highlights that are heavy on infographics and weak on actual information.

Again, the question relates to not only whether or not there was a deficit for the 2016-17 fiscal year, but the government's overall financial picture. Is the Finance minister telling me that he's not aware of what the lapses are for personnel across departments, or rather what the anticipated final lapses are estimated to be for this 2016-17 fiscal year? If that's the case, I would strongly encourage the Finance minister to do — as every Finance minister whom I have ever personally worked with has done in the past — and recognize that knowing the anticipated amount for lapses on personnel is one of the single-most important things that a Finance minister should be doing because it has a very significant effect on the cash possession of the government and whether the government is able to lapse or revoke money from the current fiscal year and, overall, save money in the bank.

Again, it's a simple question: What are the anticipated lapses for personnel across all government departments for the 2016-17 fiscal year?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I'll correct the member opposite. We're planning on spending all of our personnel dollars. We want to make sure that we develop the programs and services that we set out. Things happen for sure during the year. I don't know if the member opposite is trying to tell me that his government in the past had manpower-specific lapses because

I don't think that's true. That's not the procedure. I will confirm to him again that we haven't changed the methodology for estimating lapses and, Mr. Chair, there are lots of different lapses — lapses in judgment, lapses in accountability, lapses in attention — and again, we have not changed any policies and we're planning — my words, not the member opposite's — on spending all of our personnel dollars.

**Mr. Cathers:** We have heard two different answers from the minister: first, that there wouldn't be lapses in personnel, that they are planning on spending it all; then that they were including the numbers for the other lapses; and now we hear again that he is back to the first answer, saying that there won't be any lapses for personnel.

The question would be: Why not? Typically, in any given fiscal year — and contrary to the Minister of Finance's understanding, I don't know what the current Management Board is asking for information from the Management Board Secretariat and the Department of Finance in this area — but I can tell the member, for information purposes, that the lapse of \$5.9 million in personnel across all departments in the most recent year for which we had the information was not unusual. The previous fiscal year to that, the total lapse in personnel across government departments was a total of \$5.6 million.

I give the minister some examples of this. Some specific areas include, for example, the area of the emergency response centre and the 911 call centre. I'm sure both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Community Services are aware of that, because those newly created positions were created under contract with the RCMP. Some of the positions were the 70:30 split between the territorial government and the federal government paying for them. A couple of them were fully funded by the Yukon government.

Because of the fact that the RCMP recruitment and hiring process often takes a number of months, even though we had budgeted for those positions to begin about six months into the year, the RCMP hiring process ended up taking longer than originally anticipated because of all the work. They do have a fairly rigorous process around screening candidates for suitability and, in some cases, have to weed people out for that.

I can see, according to Facebook right now, the RCMP are currently advertising for staff to fill those positions, so clearly at least some of them haven't been filled. That is an area where, for those positions, the money can either be used for other projects or can be lapsed and returned to general revenue. Overall, I would encourage the Finance minister, if he is not receiving that information now, to request it. In the past, we have always had that information available to members of the Management Board of the day. It is something that has a significant impact when the Premier is ruminating with his colleagues on future years' financial plans. Understanding what is happening in the current fiscal year is an important part of that, and lapses in personnel are a significant element of that and also an indicator of where you have potential gaps in having your people in place to deliver programming.

Again, it's a simple question — and maybe we'll get a third answer this time. What are the total anticipated lapses in personnel across government departments for the 2016-17 fiscal year?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Again, we are planning on spending all of our personnel money. It is typical, and I have said this before today — I think I have said the exact same thing to the member opposite before. We agree that it is typical for governments to lapse money. There are fewer lapses if you plan better, so we are hoping to prove that it is possible, within the strategic investments that we are making, to have fewer lapses. Again, we are planning on spending all of our personnel money.

**Mr. Cathers:** I am going to offer the Premier some friendly advice that I have a feeling he is not going to take. I would just note for him that if the message is sent by the Premier to government departments that the Premier doesn't like to see lapses in money — even if it's framed in the context of wanting to budget and predict better — if managers have the sense that they need to use the money or lose the money the next year or have the sense that the Finance minister is going to be leaning on ministers if ministers are lapsing money, that sends the signal throughout government that tends to lead to the choice to spend money when money could perhaps be saved. If managers have the understanding that the government appreciates efficiencies and that the Premier and Cabinet welcome it if officials find a way to come in underbudget in individual areas and will appreciate that behaviour rather than criticize it, it has a big impact on the culture of government, and it will have a multi-million-dollar impact on your bottom line. Again, it is interesting that we got two different answers from the minister on that question.

I want to move on to another area. I know it is one of the Premier's favour topics. In the area of carbon pricing, we debated earlier today what model will be put into place. The Premier seemed to indicate to this House that he didn't believe the national news stories about which model would be used were accurate, or at least he hadn't received confirmation from the federal government of that. I have two questions for the Premier in that regard. First of all, has he asked what the fine print is? Secondly, if even the Yukon government and the Premier haven't seen the fine print on the federal carbon tax yet, then why is the Premier still supporting the imposition of a carbon tax on Yukoners? Why has he not told the federal government that the Yukon government is opposed to the imposition of a carbon tax until and unless that has been thoroughly costed out, shared with Yukoners — subject to public consultation — and supported by the people of the territory once they see the fine print and the effect on their personal finances?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I think we have been very clear on our position on carbon pricing — the federal carbon-pricing mechanism. Again, unlike the Yukon Party, we are not going to speculate about the media. We are not going to read the newspapers and decide policy based on what we read in — the *Vancouver Sun* was one of the papers that the member

opposite talked about today. We will pretty soon be hearing some quotes from *Brietbart News*, I am sure. We have been very clear on this and the member opposite knows that. We are waiting for the federal government to respond. We have been working with Ottawa very closely on this file. When we know, we will tell him. We have the annex. We have the pan-Canadian framework — more to come. Again, we are looking forward to it.

We're very anxious to find out where Ottawa is, as far as the variables that are on this federal carbon-pricing mechanism, because we did commit to giving that money back to Yukoners and Yukon businesses.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, I would encourage the Premier to actually read his own remarks in Hansard and think of how they come across to a Yukon family or a Yukon small business that is looking ahead to the next 12 months of what they'll have to do, trying to decide what things they can spend money on, trying to decide their personal finances — everything from whether they choose to buy a home or buy a new vehicle or buy their son or daughter some sports equipment that they don't absolutely need, but would be nice to have.

As I mentioned and reminded the Premier and his Cabinet previously in the House, Yukoners and people across the country who are making those personal financial decisions, including decisions about major purchases, many of them plan very carefully. Especially for those who have limited means and are the working poor, so to speak, within the labour force, or people who are contractors who are just now hoping that, now that the government has finally gotten around to putting some of the seasonally dependent contracts out now that were supposed to be out by March 21 — those people are looking at what they can afford to do. They want to know what they are going to have to pay in taxes and to whom and what the rebates will look like.

The Premier's messaging on this is, shall we say, odd. It's interesting to hear, on the one hand, the Premier saying that his government is working closely with the federal government on the carbon tax file, then on the other hand, he says they really don't know and don't have any control over that, and it's just the federal government and they're waiting for them to tell us what's going to happen and what we have to do.

A new question is: Rather than continuing their steadfast support for a carbon tax, will the Premier reconsider the government's position and lobby the federal government to not impose a carbon price on Yukoners until after there has been thorough consultation with the public on the details of the carbon-pricing scheme and on the rebates, as well as economic modelling on who would be eligible, when they will receive the money and which Yukoners will receive nothing back?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** With all due respect, I thought we were talking about the budget. This is a federal carbon-pricing mechanism. The member is still stuck in election mode, talking about an exemption that doesn't exist. He'll be talking about Sasquatch next.

If he has a question about the budget, then I would like to hear it.

**Mr. Cathers:** I would remind the Premier that, as he is dismissive of questions from the opposition, not only is that not in keeping with his commitment to be more open and transparent to Yukoners, but since our questions are ones that we are hearing from Yukoners, he is also being dismissive to Yukoners.

In the Liberal election platform, the slogan was to be heard, but there was never any indication in that slogan that they would actually respond to Yukoners' concerns, rather than simply tuning them out and having their comments go nowhere.

The Alberta model for carbon tax indicated — and this is a case where the Alberta NDP government is being more transparent than the Yukon Liberal government. They listed in their budget in a document, entitled *Fiscal Plan: Climate Leadership Plan Budget 2017* — they got into details on their climate leadership plan overview, their leadership funding, the economic analysis of the impacts on a carbon tax and carbon pricing. What the Premier needs to recognize is that if he is not being forthcoming with information to Yukoners who are asking how much their taxes will go up and whether they will be eligible for a rebate or not and whether their sector will be exempt or not — we know that the government appears to have fully bought into the ideology of the argument that a tax on carbon is the way to save the planet, but in any taxation model the devil is always in the details.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on a point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I have raised this point of order before. I appreciate that there is lots of latitude with respect to the budget. The last question that the member opposite has asked and the discussion he is currently having — or the submission he is making, as far as I can tell — are with respect to carbon pricing. Carbon pricing is not in this budget. Certainly, government is open to asking questions and it has done so in Question Period — and I submit to you that is the appropriate place for these questions, and that his questions should be directed to be — as noted in Committee of the Whole, the Standing Order — directly relevant to the topic today. I am suggesting to you that they are not, if he is asking questions about carbon pricing, which is not in the budget, Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, Mr. Chair, I am asking questions that are no more wide-ranging than those that have been allowed in previous general debates in this House. The member may wish to actually read Hansard from the past. In this case, I am specifically comparing information contained in Alberta's budget to information that is not contained within the Yukon government's budget and I'm asking why. I believe that is very relevant.

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on the point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** On the point of order, and with the greatest of respect, we're not debating the Alberta budget. We're debating the Yukon budget. Carbon pricing is not in it. If the member opposite wants to compare or ask a question with respect to our budget, I think there is no issue with that whatsoever, but at this point, it is not, subject to Standing Order 42(2), directly relevant to this debate.

**Chair:** Mr. Cathers, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Chair, on the point of order, I am asking questions that are no more wide-ranging than have been allowed by MLAs in this House in the past and I am disturbed that the government is trying to shut down debate because the Government House Leader doesn't like the questions. I don't believe there is a point of order.

**Chair:** Ms. McPhee, on the point of order.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I don't have any feeling one way or the other about the questions, except that they are not relevant.

I guess I do feel that the Chair's position should be respected and that, regardless about whether or not these kinds of debates have been permitted before, the Chair should make a ruling today and not be influenced by necessarily what other Chairs have ruled.

#### Chair's ruling

**Chair:** I am going to rule that there is no point of order here. The key phrase in general debate being "general". It really is difficult to limit it, so carbon tax not being in the budget has some relevance.

**Mr. Cathers:** Again, what I'm pointing out, just as I compared the Liberal budget to the last government's budget and criticized the fact that we had 11 pages of budget highlights and the Premier has chosen to reduce that to a lot less information and issue four pages instead of highlights that are very heavy on infographics and shy on details — just as I am criticizing that, I also believe that it's relevant to criticize the fact that the Alberta government, in their fiscal plan for 2017 to 2020, on pages 55 and 56 in their climate leadership plan, costs out and details the fact that under their carbon pricing, which is reported to be the model that is going to be imposed on the country, we see that an estimated 60 percent of Albertan households would get a full rebate, but 40 percent do not.

It notes as well that, in their case, the model that is being used may be a net rebate overall, but you have a situation here where in January 2017, according to the Alberta government's budget, \$138 million in rebates were provided to 1.1 million households. Again, that leaves out a lot of families within Alberta and is very much in line with the comments that were made in the 2016 election by the then-star candidate for the Liberal Party, who, in debate, indicated that the great thing about a carbon price is it is a redistribution of wealth. One of the concerns we hear regularly from Yukon families is that they are concerned that a carbon tax may be a way of making a tax more palatable. I've heard the characterization made before that it's really not much different from the GST, but the Liberal government is being smarter and branding it a carbon

tax. Maybe if Brian Mulroney had called it the “green services tax” people would have welcomed the increase on their taxes.

Our point on the carbon tax is that for a government that talks about evidence-based decision-making, we see some appalling gaps where they’re not interested in evidence at all. In the case of a carbon price, if the argument is made by someone that a carbon price will have a positive impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, that should be backed up with economic modelling on what products that is applied to for that to work, what the cost of that carbon tax has to be, what the effect of a rebate will be and whether there are any distorting impacts as a result of that tax on the economy.

For an area as important and wide-sweeping as a carbon tax, it is effectively a very significant change in the Canadian tax code and tax structure. Whether you call it the Yukon Liberal’s carbon tax or the federal Liberal’s carbon tax or their joint carbon tax, it doesn’t really make much difference to the Yukoners who are paying the tax and know that the only message that they’ve heard from the Liberal government here and the Liberal government in Ottawa is: We’re going to hit you with a tax; we’re telling you not to worry — all the money will come back to the Yukon — but we won’t tell you who is getting it. We won’t tell you if 40 percent of households won’t see a rebate. We won’t tell you whether certain businesses will be exempt or not. We won’t tell you whether or not you’re going to have to pay the money to Ottawa and have to wait 12 months for a refund. We won’t tell you whether the process is going to be as cumbersome and frustrating as dealing with the Canada Revenue Agency, where even if you have a refund, you may have to go back and forth through letter after letter to actually get them to give you the money.

Even if you have submitted an eligible rebate, they may do things like — there are a number of people who have been reassessed on previous taxation years and had to prove they were a northern resident, for example.

I know I’m not alone in this, but I had the frustrating experience of receiving a letter from the Canada Revenue Agency right at the start of the 2016 territorial election, asking me to retroactively prove that I had been a resident of the territory during the previous taxation year for which I had claimed the northern resident deduction. For 60 days of that term, I was sitting in this House.

My point is that if it’s frustrating for me, it’s frustrating for other people, and I have heard multiple complaints from constituents who have had very long and frustrating exchanges with the Canada Revenue Agency. The point on this is: if the process for this is similar to that for a rebate, or if we aren’t even being told what it is, will the Premier agree to take a step back on this and recognize that they need to give time for the carbon tax details to be shared with Yukoners and for Yukoners to provide their input on it?

I see the Premier laughing about this, but this is no laughing matter for Yukoners who are concerned. There are people here in this territory — the number of people going to the food bank. Every one of those people who is currently employed —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Cathers:** I hear the Leader of the NDP. I will provide her an opportunity to ask questions, but I’m asking questions here on behalf of the —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Cathers:** It’s interesting. We hear both the Liberals and the NDP laughing at the concerns of Yukoners — laughing at the concerns of Yukoners on fixed incomes. Senior citizens — I see the Leader of the NDP making a little violin motion there.

We need to understand that there are Yukoners who are genuinely concerned, Yukoners who are currently going to the food bank, even though they are employed, and they’re wondering how much money am I, as a citizen, going to pay for this tax increase.

It’s interesting that both the Leader of the NDP and the Premier seem to find this a laughing matter. Again, this is about transparency and accountability to Yukoners, and telling them what they’re going to have to pay.

Again, my question for the Premier is: If they still don’t have the fine print on this, will he agree to push for the postponement of a carbon tax until after it has been fully consulted on with Yukoners and they understand the fine print of this Liberal plan?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** To correct the record, we’re not laughing about any concerns of low-income Yukoners. We were basically wondering when the member opposite is going to give the Leader of the Third Party an opportunity to speak in general debate.

That’s okay. A little levity in here is always a good thing, Mr. Chair.

The simple answer to your question is, no, because you don’t have it right. You’re presenting this in a way —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Chair:** Mr. Kent, on a point of order.

**Mr. Kent:** I believe the Speaker, in a previous ruling during this session, cautioned members to direct their remarks through the Chair. The Premier is not doing that, by referring to the honourable member as “you”.

**Chair:** Mr. Silver, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Thank you to the Government House Leader. I absolutely agree. I will direct my comments through you, as the Chair.

Mr. Chair, the member opposite is misinformed or he does not fully understand where we are right now. I feel for him because he wants to know what the rebates are going to look like. He wants to know what the process is going to look like. But he is asking us to make a decision without the evidence, and we can’t do that. We promised Yukoners that we wouldn’t do that.

What we are going to do — and I have said this many times in the Legislative Assembly. It would be nice if we could get past this. Once we get the information, of course we are going to reach out to these concerned citizens. I am reaching out to the member opposite, the Member for Lake

Laberge — if he could keep track of all of the concerns that he is getting from his constituents and make sure that he brings that forward when we do get into the consultation period and when we do start reaching out to Yukoners once we know what Ottawa is thinking.

I am not going to speculate, as the member opposite is doing, as to how this is going to roll out. It's almost like building a house before knowing the building codes. You could totally do it, but it is probably not the smartest thing to do.

We have been working with the federal government and we know that, as committed in the pan-Canadian framework, the federal government will work with the territories to find solutions to address their unique circumstances. Until we know more from Ottawa, there is not much more to talk about, but I am sure I am going to get more questions from the member opposite on this. We are standing by our commitments that we will make this revenue neutral, and I appreciate the question from the opposition — what does revenue neutral mean? We need to know the variables. Once we know the variables, then we can open that up to the opposition. They will know as soon as we will as far as knowing what the mechanisms are. I know that there is some speculation in newspapers and the opposition has come in here with the speculation — duly noted.

When we know more from Ottawa, we will be better able to work with Yukoners, work with Yukon businesses and families to make sure that the carbon-pricing mechanism does what it's supposed to do and doesn't impede business in those areas where we can't make reductions and also that other part that we have talked a lot about in the Legislative Assembly — marginalized individuals as well. All this is the information that we do know. It is the information that we have been sharing with the opposition. We have been very clear and we have been very up-front in sharing the information that we have, including the information that we knew from the previous government as far as the pan-Canadian framework.

That being said, we do respect the fact that Yukoners are interested in knowing how this will work — so are we.

**Mr. Cathers:** It looks like I am not going to get any answers on this issue. Again, I would encourage the Premier and his colleagues to take a step back and to realize that, if what the Premier is saying is accurate and if even he and his colleagues don't know what the carbon-pricing scheme will look like yet, then they need to give Yukon businesses — especially small businesses — time to understand it. For government to make a major taxation change without actually consulting with Yukoners on it is something that we believe is also contrary to the spirit and intent of the *Taxpayer Protection Act*. I would point out — at risk of being rude — that if the territorial government were trying to make some of the changes in a carbon tax, it appears to us they would not be able to do it because of the *Taxpayer Protection Act*. There are Yukoners who are seeing this as effectively a technically federal tax that is very welcome to the Yukon government and that they are in these negotiations with Ottawa and they're doing it this way, rather than developing a local model, as a

number of provinces are, simply to do an end run on the *Taxpayer Protection Act*. There are Yukoners who are very genuinely upset about the fact that they don't know the fine print on what this tax increase will be.

After raising this with the Premier earlier this week in debate, I went to a community meeting in my riding and I had one of my constituents come up to me after that to thank me for raising the point in asking the questions and standing up for concerns that were on his mind. I know he is not alone in this. Apparently I'm not getting answers out of the Premier in this area. I would again point out that it's easy perhaps when you're sitting in wherever the Liberal strategy room is, crafting your platform and crafting your commitments, to come up with nice taglines like "Be Heard." But when Yukoners see situations like the 19 days of consultations that we heard from school councils — we understand in the case of, I believe, the Watson Lake School Council, they actually received a letter asking for their input on the school calendar after the deadline for that feedback. There were negative days of public consultation for that school council and perhaps for others. We are still hearing concerns from school councils across the territory that tell us that they felt that they were really not given an opportunity for input. The department and the minister were telling them — they felt — what it was going to be.

Again, that 19 days of consultation in that case — we have heard as well from Yukoners who are concerned about the fact that the government, in proposing its consultation paper talking about amendments to the *Human Rights Act* and the *Vital Statistics Act*, had only an 11-day consultation period. They also launched it during the March break when a lot of people are out of the territory. There were people who are telling us that they are disappointed and that they wish they hadn't voted Liberal, because they feel that they have had campaign commitments to them broken, and feel that the government only listens when it wants to listen and only to certain people and only on certain files.

I would ask the Premier a simple question: For consultation with the public and stakeholders on any matter that government wants to have meaningful consultation, how many days does the Premier see as the minimum necessary time period and what does he think is generally appropriate for consultation time periods?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** On the carbon pricing as well — just to sum up as the member opposite did — we also went door to door and we also heard concerns from Yukoners. What I heard at the door was: The NDP has a plan, the Liberals have a plan — what is the Yukon Party plan? Let's say that they can't get their exemption. What is their plan? It's like blocking the GST — we don't want to pay the GST, but it's coming anyway. Well, what's your plan? I think that was also heard at the door. The member opposite goes into saying that some people don't want to vote for the Liberals again — well, okay. You hear that for all parties, I'm sure, and I'm not going to go down that road. I'll stick to the questions on the budget here today.

Again, as far as consultation goes, we're committed to consulting with Yukoners and stakeholders in all areas, whether on vital statistics or National Aboriginal Day or for any other thing that we're moving forward with. I think Yukoners are happy with the new approach and the new direction of this government. What I'm hearing is that you have a government that wants to do more when it comes to consultation and a government that wants to do more when it comes to reaching out to the stakeholders.

We're new in our early mandate here and I'm very proud of the commitments on this side of the House. I'm very proud of how much work this government has done so far in getting out there. Every time we stand up for Question Period to hear the engagement — whether it be with the contractors associations or whether it be with other governments or whether it be with women's groups or the Women's Directorate, I think we're doing a good job.

Can we do more consultation? Absolutely, yes. When it comes to summers and people being busy, I understand the criticisms for sure. We're going to do our best to make sure that we do a fulsome process when it comes to consulting with Yukoners. As people see this government mature and get used to its role, I think they will be happy with the new approach and with our commitments.

**Mr. Cathers:** I'm going to move on from the carbon-pricing debate and note, for the record, that the Premier didn't give an answer on how much public consultation he thinks is appropriate to be meaningful public consultation. Again, we see another indication from the Premier of how, as he said, the view is a little different over here and there are a number of things that the member said in opposition that apparently no longer reflect his viewpoint and he has backtracked on them.

I'm going to ask the member a few questions. First of all, my last comment for today — probably, at least — on the carbon price is the point that the Premier did sign on to an agreement to do it, and I would encourage the Premier in the future to never sign on to a binding agreement without reading the fine print because that's what Yukoners expect you to do.

Mr. Chair, the Premier has talked a lot about his much-touted Financial Advisory Panel, and the Premier said he would share the terms of reference. When is the Premier going to share the terms of reference for that panel and let not only the Official Opposition but Yukoners know what those terms of reference are?

Next I would ask — in the area of extended care, in the Premier's mandate letter to the Minister of Health and Social Services, he states: "Work with Yukoners to create solutions to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care, both public and private, while keeping the Whistle Bend Continuing Care development at 150 beds". This looks like a modest compromise after the Liberals put forward a community petition prior to the election calling for the stop work of the continuing care project. Can the Premier please confirm that those 150 beds are expected to fill up right away? When will the facility be fully staffed? If there is a need for more beds in Whitehorse, would the government be open to

adding on to the building as per the original concept of potentially adding 150 beds?

Secondly, the government promised extended care in Yukon communities so that Yukoners could age in place. Does it plan on keeping that commitment and, if so, how many continuing care facilities and with what level of care are they looking at building in Yukon communities, and what is the overall cost of that?

Last, but not least, are they prepared to borrow money that would affect our available borrowing under the debt cap to build those facilities to make their campaign promise, or are they looking reviewing whether they will keep this promise as well?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I have to say that was a scatter shot of questions. A lot of preamble and then about — I think he asked several different questions on several different topics all at the very end. I'm going to have to ask him to get back on his feet and ask those questions that I don't respond to right away.

I'll start with carbon pricing again. Don't sign on to something that you haven't — okay, I believe it was his government that signed on to the pan-Canadian framework. I believe it was his government that signed on to that first, about this time last year, and then started doing their working groups — their clean technology, innovation and jobs working group. After signing on to the pan-Canadian framework, then they started having working groups — the departments of Environment and Finance, his government — on carbon-pricing mechanisms. These were all in July. They signed on to the agreement this time last year but then, in July, started doing the working groups.

There's that, so let's move on. Again with the carbon-pricing mechanism, I want to give a shout-out to our Minister of Community Services for providing me with a scientific approach and analysis of the different models that are available in Canada, in the United States and in the world, models that work in certain jurisdictions, how some of them wouldn't be able to work here because of our limited industries, and those types of things.

With the carbon-pricing mechanism, we have been very forthright with information and, as more information comes out, we will definitely be providing that.

I appreciate the member opposite's friendly advice and will take it into consideration.

The next question was about the terms of reference for the Financial Advisory Panel. Those will be released this month. The panel needs to approve those first. Once they do, as quickly as possible we will be providing those to the member opposite. If he could ask the other scatter-shot questions, I will try to get those before we adjourn for the day.

**Mr. Cathers:** First of all, something the Premier said that does require me to respond to his point about carbon pricing — the pan-Canadian framework the Premier is mentioning. He likes to throw that out in debate, but I would encourage Yukoners to actually read that and the document that was signed on to by the then Premier Pasloski. It included specific language around looking at exemptions for the north.



Indeed, it was not a commitment to implement a carbon tax, contrary to what the Leader of the Liberal Party appears to be remembering from that. He might want to re-read that document as well.

I would also note that it's interesting — the Premier is talking about establishing for the Financial Advisory Panel but is saying they will set their own terms of reference or have to approve it. That seems quite odd that a financial advisory panel would be the ones —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Cathers:** I hear the Premier indicating that they have to approve the terms of reference. The strange thing about that is that a panel has been established without establishing their terms of reference yet — and that there would be a requirement for them to approve it, if they're being tasked to take specific actions.

I will go back to the questions that I apparently asked the Premier a little too quickly.

The Premier mentioned the Minister of Community Services' analysis of and report on the different carbon-pricing models that he provided with the Premier. I would ask the Premier and the government to make that information available to Yukoners. If the Minister of Community Services has done an analysis and can provide a detailed breakdown on other regimes and the rationale behind them, and if this is something that is part of what is informing governments' decisions, then I would simply suggest that, in the interest not only of accountability, but also to inform the public and all members of the Assembly, it would be helpful and appropriate if the government would consider making that information available to Yukoners and table it in this House. I would ask them if they would commit to a legislative return — or to the minister tabling that document in the House.

I will go back to the questions the Premier missed that I asked. In the Premier's mandate letter to the Minister of Health and Social Services, the mandate letter talks about and instructs the minister to work with Yukoners to create solutions to promote aging in place and a full spectrum of care — both public and private — while keeping the Whistle Bend continuing care development at 150 beds. This looks to be a modest compromise after the Liberals put forth a community petition calling for a stop-work order of the continuing care project prior to the election. I know that one of their candidates not only signed, but was collecting signatures on that.

Can the Premier confirm that if those 150 beds at Whistle Bend fill up and there is a need for more beds in Whitehorse, will the government be open to adding on to the building as per the original design, should the need arise? Or are they considering building other facilities either in Whitehorse or in rural Yukon? Also, will the Premier indicate if the Liberal government plans to deliver on its promise to support aging in place by developing extended care facilities in Yukon communities? If so, how does it plan to do so? How many facilities? How many beds? Is the government considering borrowing money to meet its platform commitments to Yukoners to do this?

I will add another question as well. We have called for a review of the medical travel program and the subsidy. We have expressed concern with what certainly appears in the budget to be a reduction in medical travel funding. The question for the Premier is whether the government is prepared to agree to our request for the government to review the medical travel program, including reviewing the out-of-territory subsidy, the eligibility criteria under the travel for medical treatment regulations and eligibility within the territory, including — I will give the Premier a specific example. The travel subsidy inside the territory is at the same level it has been since we increased it when I was Minister of Health and Social Services in 2006 or 2007.

I'm trying to remember the exact effective date of that, but the rate is the same as it has been since that point — gas prices have gone up. I have always heard from a constituent of mine who is a senior citizen of limited income and who has expressed their concern that, for physiotherapy appointments, physiotherapy is not currently covered under the scope of areas where someone receives a subsidy to travel into Whitehorse to receive specialist treatment. I would acknowledge it has been that way for a while and, in retrospect, an area that we should have included at the time. Is the Premier willing to consider reviewing the medical travel program, including the rates and the eligibility both inside the territory and out, and is the Premier willing to direct the minister, in doing this review, to consider whether there are any additional services, such as physiotherapy, that should be added to the list of eligible treatment for Yukon citizens?

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** I do find it quite ironic that the member opposite did mention that his government, for 11 years, did not change the medical travel rates and now he is asking us to do so. Again, I don't want to talk on behalf of my minister in this particular regard, but we're always willing to take a look at all of our programs and services to make sure that we're providing the best services for Yukoners. We're always reviewing these things, as the member opposite knows. The member opposite had 11 years to change those rates and his government did not. We will continue to review that and we will get back to the member opposite if any changes are made. Thanks for the suggestion.

I think that was pretty much the only question. I will just reiterate again that the member looked at one line item, saw a reduction and his hair is on fire. There is no deduction in federal funding in medical travel and no plans to borrow. I'm not sure what else the member asked, but I think that answers his questions.

**Mr. Cathers:** That did answer some of my questions, but there are a few points. The Premier didn't commit to sharing the Minister of Community Services' scientific analysis of different carbon-tax models with Yukoners, and also didn't indicate whether that information is based on information from the Department of Environment or other sources, or if the minister is now filling the role — if I may be slightly facetious — of chief science officer to the Yukon government.

That was one question. Another one was about the government's plans around continuing care — both in Whitehorse and outside of Whitehorse — including whether the government believes the Whistle Bend facility of 150 beds will be sufficient to meet the population needs and, if not, whether the government is looking at either adding an additional 150 beds or developing an alternate facility either in Whitehorse or in a rural community. Also, in light of the Liberals' platform commitments around aging in place, promising extended care facilities for seniors in Yukon communities and whether the government plans to do so in its long-term capital plans — whether that's included in the financial projections for future fiscal years, both from a capital standpoint and an O&M standpoint or not. Also, if the Premier is telling me that government is actually committed to keeping this promise, unlike a number that they've chosen not to keep already, is the government prepared to borrow money to build extended care facilities and continuing care facilities in Yukon communities?

In the area of medical travel, I would note that the Premier may have seen that as an overly detailed department question, but when something is spelled out — when we're talking about questions that relate to what's in the mandate letter and what direction has been given, in the area of the medical travel program, while the Premier is tempted to characterize it as, "Well, you should have increased the program while in office" — well, we did increase it once. We did significantly change the structure once and our contention is that we believe that it's time again to do it. When we increased the rates for medical travel inside the territory in 2006, it was a decision that we made at that point in time to increase the rates and costs have gone up since then.

When we made the decision in 2006 to change the eligibility for the per diem outside the territory from the previous structure which had only a \$30 per day subsidy available to Yukoners on day four of travel outside the territory, to the current level where it is \$75 on day two, we did that in the context of the current time and the available dollars.

There are a number of other specific areas that relate to things like when parents are able to be an escort for a child. I also heard from a constituent who expressed the concern that the medical travel policy and the decision made by staff, based on their interpretation of what the requirements were under the existing regulations and policy, resulted in a case where she was eligible to travel outside the territory to Vancouver for treatment, but because she was planning on going on to another destination after that for vacation, her application to have that trip covered was denied. She pointed out, as somebody who had worked for government for quite a few years that, in her view, while she could afford to pay it, she felt that was an unfair differentiation between the standard rule that applies to ministers and government staff, wherein if you are travelling outside the territory on government business, people are allowed to tack on personal travel, as long as there is no net cost increase to the taxpayers and as long as they pay the change fees.

This was an area that she felt was unfair and we think is worth considering — whether the rules that are in place for the general public and what applies to government employees and Cabinet ministers — if there's a difference in standard, perhaps the regulations should be changed to allow officials the flexibility, in a case like that, to say you're adding on travel that has no net cost to the taxpayer.

We agree this treatment, this service or this appointment falls within the definition of medically necessary, and therefore, as long as you pay any change fees and all additional costs, no problem.

Again, this is the type of thing that — I see some amused looks from the government benches — but I point out that, although the issue may not be important to them, for the person who raised this issue with me, it was quite important. I'm just giving some examples to the Premier of why things change over time. The medical travel program changes over time. The needs of Yukoners change over time, and we're asking whether they are prepared to review it because the regulations themselves — which do require, by the way, Cabinet approval — have not been reviewed or changed in a while.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** We're scratching our heads about the amused looks. I don't think anybody over here is doing anything else, other than listening to the member opposite right now, so I'll just let that go.

I hope what the member opposite can do — I mean, it's a very valid concern from one of his constituents. I wonder when the member opposite heard this from his constituent and when he sent the letter to the minister responsible. Because I don't think it has hit her desk yet. That's a very valid concern from a constituent, so we'll take a look again. We'll look upstairs to make sure that letter is there, because that's a great question and we'll definitely get an answer, once we receive that — if we haven't already — from the member opposite.

When it comes to health and aging — and I apologize for not answering this question the first time — we all know the road that we went down to get to Whistle Bend and we don't have to belabour the point of scoping around all through Yukon for a 300-bed facility and how hard that must have been, especially when this was not a campaign commitment.

This wasn't something that the Yukon Party campaigned on, yet all of a sudden — great news — we need 300 beds for the whole of Yukon, and now we are going to put them all in one and try to find someplace in Whitehorse for a 300-bed facility. I can't imagine how difficult that must have been for the members opposite to accomplish.

When you go back to the communities — when you go to Old Crow, Dawson City or Watson Lake or different communities — and talk to the elders there, thinking they don't want to go to Whitehorse to retire — that is the last thing the communities want. Whitehorse is the same, as far as all communities mattering, and every community needs its elders. The number 300 is justified Yukon-wide, yet the solution is Whitehorse only. We had a big problem with that.

I will correct the record as well. The member opposite spoke of some petition that the Liberals had. We didn't have a

petition. There was a petition but I didn't sign it. Nobody over here signed that petition. He is right that there was a candidate who did sign that petition. I suggested that person not sign that petition, but whatever. People have their free minds. We'll just leave that. Again, nobody over here had a petition. There was no petition from the Liberal Party, so I will correct the record for the member opposite. He knows very well that it wasn't our petition; he is being very clever.

As far as consideration of expanding the Whistle Bend facility, we have to staff it first. We have to get the plans right for the existing 150 beds, and that is going to be a mammoth task.

The previous government spent so long not planning for aging options for our elders, and then put this one-size-fits-all option together without planning for the operation and maintenance and without planning for the hiring. Where are we going to find the people to run these facilities? That's going to take some time, let alone to start talking about expanding it.

What our next step is — I know the minister is probably champing at the bit here to get into this debate — as far as aging-in-place options, as far as all communities mattering and taking a look at Yukon as a whole and reaching out to all the communities and what their options are when it comes to, in my opinion, one of our most important assets, which is our elders and the knowledge base that's there — to have everybody come into Whitehorse — I know it's something that the Third Party absolutely did not want to see either, and we share that.

Again, it wasn't a platform commitment but it came out. I think we spoke about this earlier today — as far as change orders and the concern by the Yukon Party. I believe it was the Yukon Party that talked about change orders. This side of the House thinks that change orders come so much more often —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** It was the Third Party that brought this up.

I think the change orders come when projects of this magnitude come out of the blue and when there's not a lot of planning for these types of projects.

Our plan is to build the evidence, and the next step; the Minister of Health and Social Services has talked about this. Aging in place is something we're looking at right now. Once we go down that road, we will take a turn and look at more options as far as our aging population.

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

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Silver 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 Committee of the Whole?

#### **Chair's report**

**Mr. Hutton:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*, 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 1:00 p.m. Monday.

*The House adjourned at 5:31 p.m.*

#### **The following document was filed May 11, 2017:**

34-2-3

Health insurance coverage for Nadja Cooper, letter re (dated May 11, 2017) from Hon. Pauline Frost, Minister of Health and Social Services to Brad Cathers, Member for Lake Laberge (Frost)