

**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, October 20, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House that Motion No. 1189, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, has been removed from the Order Paper, as it is now outdated.

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will now proceed to the Order Paper.
Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Yukon Commonwealth Games athletes

Hon. Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the House to pay tribute to a young athlete, Zach Bell — a Yukon Commonwealth athlete who grew up in Watson Lake. Zach won a bronze medal at the 19th Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India. On behalf of Yukon government and our citizens, I want to congratulate him for this remarkable achievement.

The 2010 Commonwealth Games ran October 3 to 14 and included many of Canada's highest calibre athletes. I am proud that Yukon was represented so well on this world stage.

I would also like to congratulate two more Yukon athletes who joined Zach Bell and competed at the Commonwealth Games in their pursuit of excellence. One of those athletes was MacKenzie Downing, a swimmer who competed in the 50-, 100- and 20-metre butterfly events. Her results were an outstanding eighth, ninth, and sixth respectively. The second athlete was Emily Quarton, a weightlifter in the 58-kg women's group. Emily's result was also outstanding with a fifth-place finish in the combined snatch and clean and jerk event. These talented and dedicated athletes inspire Yukon youth and athletes of all ages.

Mr. Speaker, Zach Bell was the only man on the Canadian cycling team in both track and road events. The track event he won the bronze medal in was the 20-km scratch race which is an 80-lap, mass-start competition. His other impressive results included: 15th place in the 40-km points race; 11th in the 168-km road race, and seventh in the individual time trial.

At only 27 years of age, Zach has competed in many international and national competitions, including 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia, the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, where he earned a seventh-place finish, and of course these 2010 games in Delhi.

Cycling is Zach's passion, and we are proud that he has found great personal success while representing Yukon and Canada at the highest level across the world.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon is proud of the support we have provided to Zach over the years, but I need to share with you that Zach also gives a lot back to the Yukon sport community as

well. Right now he is in the process of investigating different ways of supporting northern athletes to become the best that they can be.

Zach believes that getting athletes to international competitions such as the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics is a huge accomplishment and he wants to establish something that will have a permanent impact on the north in a positive way.

He values the Yukon sport system and is an advocate around the world about his community and the support he has received in his quest to become the best he can be.

Mr. Speaker, in Yukon we are fortunate to see Yukon athletes achieve goals of world-calibre status. As a government, we are proud to support sports by funding coaches' and officials' training and by providing our athletes with training and competition opportunities.

Please join me in applauding Zach and his fellow athletes, around the country and the world, who make us all very proud. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Zach's mother and father, Karen and Greig Bell, who are in the gallery today. Welcome.

Applause

In recognition of Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I rise today to recognize Learning Disabilities Awareness Month. Celebrated by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada since 1987, October is a time to recognize that every individual has the right to learn and the power to achieve. The October 2010 theme for Learning Disabilities Awareness Month is to increase national awareness of learning disabilities by changing the perceptions of learning disabilities and choosing hope and optimism, not boundaries.

As a society, we often find it easier to recognize the visibly disabled who overcome tremendous challenges. It's easier for us to accept that someone who faces life from a wheelchair or is hearing impaired must travel a different path to success, but people with invisible handicaps are often expected to attain the norm without effort. They don't always receive credit for their attempts or positive reinforcement in their moments of triumph. Sometimes they may be criticized for having trouble in the first place.

Learning disabilities are neurological disorders that affect how the brain stores, processes, retrieves and communicates information. They can affect language processing, written expression, math skills and fine-motor skills. Some of those affected may have trouble interpreting auditory information. Others struggle with interpreting visual information and still others have trouble with concentration and focus.

Learning disabilities are invisible and lifelong. Those with learning disabilities can be of average or above-average intelligence and may not have any major sensory problems, yet their struggle to keep up with people of the same age in learning and regular functioning can be devastating without the understanding of family, friends and their community.

Today we know that about one in 10 Canadians lives with a learning disability. Some may never know. Others have already found a way to cope, and still others may be struggling

with disdain, ignorant labels like “lazy”, “careless” or “stupid”, and a profound lack of understanding from their peers and community.

As the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada aptly points out, it’s harder to achieve your full potential when others don’t see it in you. As a community, we can help those with learning disabilities compensate through alternative ways of learning, accommodation and modification. Most of all, we can help by embracing the creative possibilities offered by those who experience and process the world differently than we do.

This October we honour the children and adults living with a learning disability, diagnosed or not. We honour all the dedicated educators who will see the immense potential of students with learning disabilities and the many community organizations and volunteers who offer a helping hand, encouragement and understanding. We also honour the family members and other supporters of persons living with learning disabilities. The learning disabled have to walk a different road to success, but they don’t have to do it alone.

I would encourage all members and indeed the Yukon public to get involved with several of the learning disabilities events going on this week and at this time I would also like to introduce some of the board members, some of the staff and some of the volunteers with the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon. They include Esther Chassé, Paulette Tremblay, Meghan Colgan, Kirsten Froyland and Joel Macht.

Mr. Fairclough: I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the Third Party to pay tribute to National Learning Disabilities Month. Learning Disabilities Association of Canada is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization founded in 1963 with the mission of representing children and adults with learning disabilities and those who support them.

Learning Disabilities Month helps raise public awareness of learning disabilities and promote early identification, diagnosis and treatment. A learning disability is a neurological disorder that causes a person with average or above-average abilities to have chronic trouble learning and using certain skills. The skills most often affected are listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, mathematics, reasoning, organization, and social skills. These are skills that individuals must use every day to fulfill their roles as students, as family members, employees and citizens.

Every Canadian with a disability has a right to learn. One in every 10 Canadians has a learning disability. It doesn’t mean they can’t learn, Mr. Speaker; it simply means that they need access to proven supports that are critical to their success. Dealing with social and emotional challenges is part of growing up, but it can be particularly challenging for individuals with learning disabilities.

By building a level playing field for individuals with learning disabilities, we enable them to function as citizens with equal opportunities and to develop to their chosen potential. Education gives every student the tools they need to reach their dreams and to achieve their full potential.

There are 53 chapters of the non-profit, volunteer Learning Disabilities Association across Canada, dedicated to improving

the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities. The Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, or LDAY, as it is affectionately known, has been instrumental in helping Yukon families since 1973 by providing services and programs that have helped families deal with social and emotional challenges that affect the lives of individuals with learning disabilities in today’s society.

We encourage people to respect and embrace learning differences and the creative possibilities they offer. By changing the perceptions of learning disabilities, we can provide hope and optimism. Every individual has a right to learn and the power to achieve. When we support people with learning disabilities, everybody wins. We would like to thank the many volunteers, the staff and board of directors of LDAY for their dedication and support to those with learning disabilities.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Foster Family Appreciation Week

Hon. Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge Yukon Foster Family Appreciation Week this October 18 to 24, 2010.

Foster parents play a crucial role in our communities. They generously open their hearts and their homes to Yukon children in need.

Les familles d’accueil jouent un rôle crucial dans nos collectivités. C’est avec un cœur généreux qu’elles accueillent chez elles des enfants yukonnais dans le besoin.

Foster parents can be male, female, seniors or middle-age. Some work full time, while others choose or need to stay at home to look after the children. Some foster parents offer respite care, where they look after children for a short period of time to give parents a break, whereas others have foster children full time. While foster parents may vary greatly, one thing that they have in common is their devotion to Yukon children. They graciously share their time, love and energy with children in need of care.

Health and Social Services commends Yukon foster parents for their important role – caring for our next generation. When a child’s parents are unable to care for them, foster parents ensure that children are well cared for and loved, when they need it most.

If you know a foster parent, I encourage you to give them your appreciation, not just during Foster Family Appreciation Week, but at other times throughout the year. Their contribution to our community cannot be understated.

Si vous connaissez un parent d’accueil, je vous incite à lui dire, non seulement durant la Semaine de reconnaissance des familles d’accueil du Yukon, mais aussi tout au long de l’année, à quel point vous appréciez le travail qu’il accomplit. Sa contribution à la société est inestimable.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to introduce representatives here in the Legislative Assembly for the Yukon Foster Parents Association. They are Betty Lou Linville, Veronica and Calvin Milenk and Wendy Leas.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci, M. le Président.

Applause

In recognition of Spirit Day

Mr. Cardiff: On behalf of the House, I rise today to pay tribute to Spirit Day. Today, October 20, has been set aside as a day to wear purple and honour the memory of seven gay youth who committed suicide in recent months. Purple represents spirit on the rainbow flag flown by the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. There have been many tributes in this House about the issue of bullying. There was *Be the Change* and cyber bullying.

The bullying of LGBT youth in schools and communities has led to the most tragic of outcomes, where a young person takes their own life. One such person was Tyler Clemente. Tyler jumped off a bridge and died after webcam footage of his sexual encounters were streamed across his university campus.

The organizer of Spirit Day, who is a Canadian named Brittany McMillan, had this to say — it was basically a plea to those victims of bullying and torment: “Please know that times will get better and that you will meet people who will love you and respect you for who you are, no matter your sexuality.”

This year a survey of 7,261 students in the United States found that nine out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school. This survey found that nearly two-thirds of the students felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation and nearly one-third of LGBT students skipped at least one day of school in the past month because of concern for their own safety.

So, on October 20, we symbolically wear purple, and we remember and reflect on the lives lost due to homophobic bullying. Wearing purple, on its own, won't change anything at all, but it promotes solidarity and awareness and it opens the conversation. This is a day about raising awareness of problems that arise from bullying based on sexual orientation.

It is a call to action to all of us. Our society needs to become not just tolerant, but accepting of all people. We need to personally stand up and challenge all those who exploit and perpetuate anti-gay prejudice. We need to make our schools, our workplaces, our homes and our communities more accepting of people and less tolerant of bullying and prejudice.

I'd like to thank the Yukon Employees Union for bringing this day to our attention. The labour movement in Canada has a strong history of promoting equity and fighting discrimination and prejudice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mitchell: While having had one of my constituents already introduced today — Esther Chassé as a board member of LDAY — I would also like to introduce her partner, a long-time, now-retired civil servant in the Department of Finance, and most importantly, an excellent first-baseman on the ball diamonds, Leo Chassé.

Applause

Speaker: Is there a further introduction of visitors?
Returns or documents for tabling.

Reports of committees.
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr. McRobb: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that, when opposition House leaders are in agreement at the beginning of each fall sitting, that certain Crown corporations, such as the Yukon Liquor Corporation, Yukon Housing Corporation, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation, do appear before the House in that sitting.

I also give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to stop ignoring the nearly 50 outstanding motions for the production of papers that remain on this Assembly's Order Paper and respond to each one by providing the information requested as would have already been done by a government that was truly open and accountable.

Mr. Fairclough: I give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:
THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all costs for discussions, consultation and the implementation associated with the Government of Yukon's adoption of British Columbia's student performance tracking system.

I also give notice of the following motion for the production of papers:
THAT this House do issue an order for the return of all papers regarding the consultation of the Yukon Teachers Association on adopting British Columbia's student performance tracking system.

Mr. Inverarity: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to ensure that all computers, fax machines, printers, photocopiers and scanners that have memory on their internal hard drives be wiped clean before being sold or otherwise disposed of out of any Government of Yukon department or Crown corporation.

Mr. Cardiff: I give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Yukon government to immediately — rather than “as soon as possible” — appoint a member of the Yukon Party caucus to the Select Committee on Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act*.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: WCB witnesses before Committee of the Whole

Mr. Fairclough: One of the promises this government made to Yukoners was that it would be open and accountable to the public it's supposed to serve. Unfortunately, the government has never lived up to that promise. Here's an example: each fall, the government brings in representatives from the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to answer questions.

Last Wednesday — after waiting until the sitting was already half over — the government informed us that officials from WCB would not be appearing this fall.

Will the minister responsible or the Government House Leader confirm officials from WCB will not be appearing this fall?

Hon. Mr. Hart: Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, Occupational Health and Safety Board are required to attend the Legislative Assembly once a year, and we will meet that commitment.

Mr. Fairclough: That's not what the Government House Leader said to us as of last week at a daily meeting between House Leaders. The government informed us and the Third Party that officials from WCB would not be making their annual appearance in this Chamber — so much for being open and accountable. Now the minister just said that they will be here.

Officials from WCB, as the minister said, are required by law to appear in this Chamber. It is written into the act; it is mandatory and it's not up to the government to pick and choose when they appear. Now the Government House Leader said, "No." The law says, "Yes." We have 12 days left in this sitting. What day will WCB officials appear?

Hon. Mr. Hart: For the member opposite, we will be in conversation with the chair and the CEO of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and we will discuss which day we can get those individuals in here and when they are available to attend the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Fairclough: Mr. Speaker, time is running out. Here is what the *Workers' Compensation Act* says in section 102 and I quote: "The chair of the board of directors and the president of the board shall appear annually before the Legislative Assembly."

Now the officials have not appeared this year yet. They did not appear in the spring, and the Government House Leader told us last week that they will not be appearing in the fall. That's what she said. Why is there a difference here, Mr. Speaker?

Each year, when officials are here, there are a number of questions, and usually good answers are provided on what is happening at WCB. Now we know in the past that the chair has appeared and so have the alternate chair and usually the president. Section 102 says, "shall appear," not "if the government feels like they should appear or not."

Why is the government refusing to give a date when WCB shall appear in this sitting? Why is there a difference between that minister and the Government House Leader?

Hon. Mr. Hart: I will reiterate what I said earlier in response to the member opposite's question: there is a requirement for Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, Occupational Health and Safety to attend the Legislative Assembly once per annum. We will meet that commitment; we will have the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board here in the Legislative Assembly. As I said, it's once we have worked with the president and the chair of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board to see when they are available so that they can attend the office here at the Legislative Assembly to respond to the member opposite's questions with regards to the operation of the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. I look forward to that day here in the House.

Question re: YEC/YDC witnesses before Committee of the Whole

Mr. McRobb: I would like to follow up on a similar issue with the minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation. This also speaks to how open and accountable this government really is. It's the tradition of this House for officials from the Yukon Development Corporation Board to appear in this Legislature each fall. Last week, however, the Government House Leader told us this wasn't up for negotiation. We were simply told that officials from Yukon Development Corporation would not be appearing this fall as they usually do. No explanation was given. Can the House Leader explain why these officials won't be appearing this fall?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: The member knows full well that, a few short months ago, the corporation was before the House as witnesses. The members opposite spent a great deal of time questioning the representatives of the corporation and, given the fact that it was such a short time ago, the government side thought it best to allow the opposition more time to see if they can formulate some questions that might be new in content for the benefit of a constructive debate and for the benefit of the witnesses who come before the House, so they can provide good, solid, productive and constructive information to the House and to the public.

Mr. McRobb: There's lots going on at the Development Corporation these days and I'm sure the public would appreciate hearing from officials about some of the issues, such as Mayo B, the power arrangement with Alexco, recent rate hearings, and so on. However, this government, in its open and accountable way, has slammed the door shut. It told us that officials won't be appearing this fall and provided no explanation.

This is not characteristic of a government that promised voters it would be open, accountable and fiscally responsible. When we ask the minister questions related to finances or policies of this corporation, what does he do? He tells us to ask the officials, but, Mr. Speaker, how can we do that if this same government doesn't allow those officials to appear?

Will the House Leader or minister reconsider this decision and now allow these officials to appear in this sitting?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Of course the member knows full well that the corporation has been providing the public updates on the Mayo B project. In fact, the contractor of record even toured the member of the Third Party through the project. It has

been on an ongoing basis that the public has been given information on the good work of the corporation.

By the way, regarding the member's point about finances and so on with the corporation, I think if you look back at the public record — and I could stand corrected — those were questions that were asked repeatedly, not only by the member to the government but to the witnesses, Mr. Speaker. In the context of what we have been experiencing over the last number of weeks in this sitting, the fact that we want to ensure that the opposition has time to formulate their questions, ensure that their questions are relevant to what's actually happening with the corporation, that would be a real plus for the public to hear from the opposition questions that relate to reality.

I think the time given here for the opposition to formulate those questions, do some research, get a better handle on what the corporation is actually doing out there for the Yukon and for the benefit of the Yukon public would really help the witnesses and the House and the opposition in their questioning.

Mr. McRobb: If we assessed the responses we get in Question Period the same way, we would just tell this government to stay home, because it provides nothing useful to the questions.

These officials traditionally appear each fall. Last year, this government bought an extra half year, because it switched the chairs of the corporation. That's no reason to bump all future schedules half a year. This Premier professes his government is open and accountable; it tells the public whatever they want to hear, yet this government does whatever it wants.

What did the Premier tell Yukoners a year ago? He said he would be making officials available to answer questions in this Assembly. We know the government is still dealing with the fallout over his secret, private privatization plan. Is that why this Premier doesn't want these officials to appear?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Member for Kluane delved into that so-called privatization plan in great detail. The member got the answers from the witnesses, but you know what's interesting here is the Liberals have now changed their tack. It used to be that we were selling the assets of the corporation. Once they got the answers from the officials who came before the House as witnesses — and it was pretty clear by the presentation of those witnesses and from all the so-called evidence that the Member for Kluane has tabled that we weren't selling assets — the Liberals have now changed their tack and now we're selling the energy future. Well, when it comes to staying home, I think there's a good example of who should.

Question re: Housing statistics

Mr. Cardiff: Information from the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation indicate that 44 percent of the housing stock in Yukon is in need of repair; 1,230 houses in the Yukon are considered uninhabitable. In 2009, there were just 116 new housing starts in the Yukon, and there are currently just 14 vacant rental units in the entire Yukon.

Does the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Housing Corporation find these figures as deplorable as I do?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Just to correct one comment on there — the statistics look at apartment buildings of four units or more; they do not include all of the in-home rental units, et cetera, just to correct that record. But yes, it is deplorable; I agree. Housing was turned over, and so many programs were turned over to territorial governments a number of years ago and then the funding made available for that slowly dropped, and actually, in the next couple of years, it does more than slowly drop, it will go down exponentially; until about 2030 they expect the Yukon to be completely on its own. With such a massive amount of funding loss, the housing stock isn't getting the attention that it desperately needs. We know that; we work within the budget and with the money that we have and the programs that we have. But again, the federal programs are being reduced and when we do get money, it's earmarked for very specific uses. It can't be utilized where our staff and the Yukon Housing Corporation staff know that it should be, so I agree completely.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, it's good that the minister agrees with me, but he can't go on blaming the federal government forever.

Now, the current situation is partially due to a lack of affordable serviced lots. It's due to a lack of creativity and flexibility by this government and not working with its partners — First Nations, municipalities and non-government organizations. It's also due to a lack of political will. The Minister of Health and Social Services was quoted in the media recently as saying he cannot address the issue of homelessness until he has the data. Well, the data has been compiled. When will he release it?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again, I have to correct the record when the member opposite talks about partnership and mentions First Nations. Again, I have to point out that First Nation housing is a federal responsibility. Most of the federal responsibility has been in terms of on-reserve or off-reserve programs. Yukon has neither. Yukon is unique in Canada in our structure, historically we have been unable to access any of that funding. In earlier program, the territorial government was given \$50 million to address housing needs. I do have to point out to the member opposite that I think it was something like \$32 million that was turned over to First Nation governments directly. The decision is theirs of how they want to use it — whether they want to repair existing housing, whether they want to build new housing or whether they want to buy a hotel. It's their responsibility.

When we look at other projects that we have been involved in through the Abbeyfield project, through Habitat for Humanity, et cetera, for the member opposite to say that we're not partnering and extrapolating or putting out and leveraging those funds, I think is very misguided.

Mr. Cardiff: Mr. Speaker, he can't go on blaming the federal government and he can't abrogate the government's responsibility to all Yukoners. Now the government has been sitting on two reports containing detailed statistical information about the local housing situations. These reports could help it develop the proper policy responses to address the various and serious housing needs here in the Yukon.

The housing adequacy survey and a housing and poverty indicators report were supposed to be released this spring, but it didn't happen. They were supposed to be released during Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. That didn't happen. I believe these reports may be embarrassing to the government. I believe they say the government is not doing enough to provide adequate, affordable and safe housing and that's why it has been sitting on these reports. Is that true?

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Again for the member opposite, we are aware of the problems as a government. I think the Yukon Housing Corporation as a Crown corporation is well aware of it, but let's look at what actually happened.

\$34.4 million built a 48-unit seniors housing complex and a 36-unit student housing complex at Yukon College. We had participation in the innovative Falcon Ridge affordable housing project; \$10.5 million into the 32-unit Whitehorse affordable housing project; \$2.2 million for a nine-unit seniors project in Haines Junction; \$3 million for an eight-unit seniors housing project in Teslin; \$4.5 million for a 12-unit seniors housing project in Watson Lake; \$2 million for a six-unit project in Faro; the Habitat for Humanity project at 810 Wheeler; \$2.5 million for the Abbeyfield project, et cetera.

I would suggest that the member opposite re-check his facts and learn what this government has done. The previous Liberal government, in their short tenure — zero; they built nothing.

Question re: Lake Laberge zoning

Mr. Cathers: My constituents who oppose Takhini Hot Springs Ltd.'s application to change zoning are business owners, teachers, lawyers, people with expertise in land planning, real estate agents and government employees, to list but a few. Some have been involved in local planning for more than a decade, including developing the area plan and zoning regulations. They know the rules and they know when someone is trying to change or reinterpret the law.

On the other hand, the minister keeps getting the facts wrong. The corporation does not have a right to develop condos. It does not have the right to subdivide into 12 lots and it does not have the right to develop 24 residential housing units. I'll try again to be constructive and help the minister understand the zoning regulations. Does the minister understand the difference between a primary use and an accessory use and can he please tell this House what he thinks the term "accessory use" means?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. It gives us an opportunity to clear up the obvious confusion on this issue. The area that we are referring to is zoned CMT. It has permitted uses that include principal uses of hotel or motel, resorts, RV parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities, eating and drinking establishments, skiing/hiking facilities, travel guide and guest cabin accommodations, equestrian centres and public utilities.

It also includes accessory uses which include two single-family dwelling units, accessory buildings, and minor agricultural pursuits. Discretionary uses include parks and playgrounds. The schedule also includes a special provision that states that land owners of several contiguous properties zoned

as commercial mixed-use tourist accommodation may be able to consolidate the residential development potential of these properties in a single lot, subject to the conditions addressed within the Hot Springs Road local area plan, as amended from time to time.

I can't be much clearer than to read the regulations; we certainly recognize that the company has the legal ability to significantly expand and develop the properties as they exist. The existing zoning legally allows up to 24 residences to be located with no further rezoning. If the member doesn't already have a copy of schedule A — which I'm sure he does, but, just for the sake of additional information, it's also available online.

Mr. Cathers: I'll remind the minister that I actually sent him over a copy of the sheet he just read. I'm glad he's reading the regulations, but he still does not appear to understand them. To quote a Land Planning official: "Accessory uses can't appear to be the dominant use of a property." In other words, only an activity listed as a primary use can appear to be the dominant use. If the Takhini Hot Springs Ltd. application were approved, condos would be the dominant use of two of the new lots. This is yet another way the zoning regulations, as currently worded, block condo development. CMT zoning allows residences only as an accessory use.

As I have already pointed out to the minister, CMT zoning also does not allow condos. My constituents involved in the land planning are in agreement about the intent of the plan in zoning. It was never intended to allow the corporation to build condos. Some of the people are lawyers, land planners and real estate agents.

They know this file and they clearly understand it better than the minister does. The plan and zoning contain a provision to allow for a small co-housing project, not condos. Does the minister —

Speaker: Minister responsible, please.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: I appreciate the constituents out in that area. I know many of them personally. I've seen the petition that they have signed. We're certainly trying to work with the proponent of this project and the residents to address the issues in the neighbourhood. We also need to recognize the legal rights of property owners that must be respected.

The Hot Springs Road local area plan was adopted after extensive public consultation. The zoning regulations were amended to support the publicly endorsed plan. Amendments to the zoning regulations are guided by the local area plan. We've gone through all of the designations regarding CMT, including the sections that refer to the fact that land owners of several contiguous properties designated commercial and mixed-use tourism accommodations may be able to transfer their residential development potential to a single lot subject to the following conditions. Further in through the local area plan, it's identified that residential units may be in the form of a single-family dwelling, duplex or multiple-family dwelling. This application seeks to action simply what is already allowed under the local area plan.

Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary, please.

Mr. Cathers: Mr. Speaker, again the minister is mistaken. I would point out that though the land planners have changed, the people who were involved in the process are still there. The Hot Springs Road area plan and zoning contain a provision intended to allow for a small co-housing project; they do not allow the corporation to build condos and were never intended to allow condo development.

Another point the minister fails to understand is that there is a difference between a right to apply and a guarantee of approval. The zoning doesn't give the corporation a right to consolidate residential development potential; it allows them the opportunity to apply to do that.

The regulations say they "may" be able to consolidate residential development potential; it does not state that they "shall" be allowed to do so and in law there is a very big difference between "may" and "shall" — the difference between an opportunity to ask for something and a guarantee you will get it.

Any other applicant who applies for a subdivision or zoning change stands a chance of being denied. The minister seems to be saying this corporation has a right to it. Does he understand why citizens are upset and feel the corporation is being shown favouritism over other individuals and other applicants?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments coming from the Independent Member for Lake Laberge. They will certainly be taken into consideration in this process. As I've said before, there is a process that is underway, one that is attempting to address the needs, not only of the proponent of the project, but also to address the interests expressed in the community.

We do, however, have to recognize that the local area plan does include what the zoning already provides for and recognize the regulations that are on the books. We'll continue to take his comments into consideration on this matter, as we'll take into consideration the views and thoughts of his constituents.

Question re: Student information system

Mr. Fairclough: The Education minister told us yesterday a few things about his department's failure to track students. He acknowledged the Auditor General's finding that his department "... does not regularly analyze ... data to identify, report, and address critical gaps in student performance."

He acknowledged that and, in response, he cut a cheque to buy a faulty student tracking system used in B.C. He also failed to answer a simple question yesterday, so I'll ask it again: did the Education minister consult with the Yukon Teachers Association before buying this system — yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: This government has responded significantly to the issues brought forward by constituents, parents, teachers, First Nation people through the work of the education reform project, through changes under New Horizons, through the secondary school review — we're seeing those changes.

We've also taken seriously the comments from the Auditor General, which has led, in part, to the implementation of the British Columbia enterprise student information system. It is

part of the Department of Education's commitment to address the recommendations in the Auditor General's report and the *Education Reform Final Report*.

The Department of Education has undertaken extensive research and conducted focus groups, discussions with school staff, including secretaries, teachers, administrators and counsellors before deciding that the BCeSIS is the best information system to meet the needs of students here in the Yukon. Our old system was over 20 years old. It was not being supported any more. We needed to replace it with a current one and one that was able to provide the information that we needed and that was also consistent with what we're doing in western and northern Canada.

Mr. Fairclough: Why didn't the minister consult with YTA? Teachers in B.C. warned that the system didn't work. It crashes without warning, it runs too slowly to be used and it loses and distorts information. The YTA raised similar concerns before the system was brought in, but the Education minister ignored them again. This fall, after the government instituted it anyway, YTA filed a grievance. Yesterday the Education minister said, "We're not seeing the challenges that are being reported in other jurisdictions."

Could the minister explain then why teachers are still so opposed to this tracking system?

Hon. Mr. Rouble: There is relatively few comprehensive kindergarten to grade 12 student information systems on the market. One can't walk down to the local Staples and pick one of these up off the shelf. Our current system, Win School, is no longer being supported. It's over 20 years ago. It's not web-based. We did the research. We did consultation groups. We worked with our partners through the Council of Ministers of Education. We looked at the relationships that we have with other jurisdictions through the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol. Given the fact that we follow the B.C. curriculum and the B.C. graduation program, our students and staff are best served by that eSIS system, since it's designed to support that program of studies.

We will continue to work with our administrators, our teachers, our secretaries and others who use the data, because the data has already been proving helpful in arranging such things as bus-stop schedules, to ensure that we're making the transition appropriately and that the system is meeting our needs now and into the future as we go forward.

Question re: Motions for the production of papers

Mr. McRobb: This Yukon Party government promised voters it would be open and accountable, but in practice has proved to be closed and evasive. In the past four years, both the Official Opposition and the Third Party have formally requested this government to produce certain documentation through the mechanism known as a "motion for production of papers". Both opposition parties have felt it necessary to obtain this information in order to fulfill their obligation to the Yukon public to hold this government accountable to the public.

The opposition parties have stepped up nearly 50 times, yet this government has backed down each time. Then, why has this government chosen to ignore each of these requests for documentation on behalf of Yukoners?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: I would assume the question is directed toward me. The government side doesn't ignore its commitments; the government side has been very conscious of the commitments it made to the Yukon public, and I'm sure the Member for Kluane is well aware that many documents are presented to the opposition; briefings are provided to the opposition; we go through endless discourse during debate. You know, what's interesting in that regard, however, is that we have consistently seen that the time spent on debating budgetary items and departments and so on, from the opposition side, has been very lacking, especially from the Liberals. In fact, we've experienced sittings where, in the final days, millions upon millions of expenditures were passed in this Legislative Assembly without one comment by the Official Opposition, the Liberals, in this House.

They have tended to spend their time manoeuvring their way through the political arena in attempts to find some traction with the Yukon public. Commitments by government are very solid; there's a lot of hard work that goes into delivering on their commitments. I think, if you look around the territory these days, much of those commitments are actually being realized.

Mr. McRobb: This Premier knows he's the one who calls the order of debate in this Assembly, not the opposition. The public expected much more from this Yukon Party government because it promised the voters to be fully open and accountable. It would have been reasonable to expect at least some progress to have been made in response to these 50-some MPPs in the past four years, yet this government has come up empty.

I'd like to recite the content of some of these MPPs now: budget information, health care studies, education reform, investment policy, financial position, energy studies, audits and other various reports, agreements with other governments, public safety studies, contracts, spending records and environmental test results.

Mr. Speaker, this government owes the public a full explanation. Will this government now commit to responding to each of those requests for documentation?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: You know, the interesting part of the Member for Kluane's question is that virtually every one of the areas he has just recited are in the hands of the Official Opposition in the form of budget documents that go with detailed briefings, in the form of the public accounts, in other matters that we have presented to the House, in the required reports that we table in this House — the list goes on and on and on.

Maybe the member's problem is that we're not reading minutes of corporations and tabling those minutes. No, the government is not going to do that. We have every faith and confidence in the people, the Yukoners we appoint to boards and committees. That is their area of purview and responsibility and we allow them to do that. We wouldn't interfere in this matter. I think the Member for Kluane's problem here is he is desperate to interfere in all aspects of government and that's not what the Yukon Party does.

We focus on our commitments; we focus on the public interest; we deliver on those and that's why I say again, if one

were to look around the Yukon these days, there is prosperity, there is a confidence, the Yukon is positioned very well nationally and internationally, and I think we'll continue on that track, Mr. Speaker. It is producing results.

Mr. McRobb: This Premier has again declined the opportunity to demonstrate that his government is prepared to walk the talk and again he ran from the question. This Yukon Party government promised Yukon voters it would be open and accountable, but in practice it has proven to be closed and evasive. I'd also like to put on record what the Premier was quoted publicly saying last November. "This government has clearly stated to the public that we're going to make every effort to make the Assembly work better and one of the ways is to provide information."

Here is another quote: "I'm also responsible to ensure that the Yukon public has the facts and that they are fully informed."

If this government is so open and accountable, then why is it so closed and evasive? Will the Premier undertake to provide these documents now?

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are extremely proud of delivering on those commitments. I don't think there has ever been a more open and accountable government in the territory. All we have to do is look back at recent history and the disaster that befell the Yukon under the former Liberals.

The member's talking about openness and accountability. Well, amendments to the ATIPP legislation ensured that access to information but that protection of privacy is enhanced. The legislative briefings, including adding supplementary budgets to those briefings, were not done before. This government has done that. The Public Accounts Committee — we actually got the Public Accounts Committee back up and functioning, albeit the Liberal leader quit once but didn't understand that he couldn't quit. It's an instrument of this Assembly. What about all-party committees? Look at the functions of all those initiatives that the government has undertaken. Now, those are just a few small examples of what we've been doing in openness and accountability. But if the member is so fixated on this issue, call those motions for debate and let's debate them.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OPPOSITION PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 1123

Clerk: Motion No. 1123, standing in the name of Mr. Mitchell.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition:

THAT this House urges the Yukon Government to support the efforts of the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition to build supportive housing for the homeless population in Whitehorse in the following ways:

(1) directing the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to work together with the coalition, to ensure the project is approved and the budget is spent by March 31, 2011;

(2) including in budgeting, operational funding of a predetermined amount annually for the purpose of providing supports for residents of the facility; and

(3) working with all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations and stakeholder groups to support a Housing First approach to ending homelessness in Yukon.

Mr. Mitchell: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue and this motion this afternoon. I would just like to start by stating that the wording and the deadlines in this motion were suggested by one of the NGOs we will be talking about this afternoon — the deadline specific to some federal funding. We are certainly open to friendly amendments on this motion if the government can agree to move forward on the substance of it.

With regard to any direction provided to or by the ministers that we've stated in the motion, we want to make clear this should be done publicly. For example, a letter of expectation is given to the Yukon Energy Corporation Board every year by the minister. That letter is made public so Yukoners know what direction has been given by the minister or the government.

We have suggested a similar letter be developed for the Yukon Housing Corporation. For example, if the government wanted a project like the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition's suggested project to go ahead, it would say so in the annual letter of expectation, and this would be made public.

Again, with Yukon Development Corporation and Yukon Energy Corporation, when the government wants something done, they can use an OIC to provide direction. For example, when the government wanted to set power rates for mining companies, they did so by OIC and they did so publicly. They used an OIC to stop rate rebalancing from proceeding at this time. It's open and accountable and the public knows what is being done on its behalf.

The supportive housing projects that are needed could also be completed through the Department of Health alone. The minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation does not have to be involved at all, if he so chooses.

There are significant differences between each and every one of us as individuals, not just in this Assembly, but within our society. There are differences between the members of this House and the political parties we are affiliated with. There are also differences in the way government can fulfill its responsibilities. But in spite of all our differences, there are rare opportunities, perhaps too rare, where we could all come together and agree on something. Supporting our fellow human beings and empowering them to live full, rich and meaningful lives should be and is one of those issues.

Supportive housing is the focus of this motion. Establishing adequate supportive housing in Yukon and sustaining an environment where supported living is both effective and economical cannot be accomplished by any one individual or indi-

vidual corporation or one non-governmental organization or by a single government.

It is going to take everyone working together on this issue if we're going to achieve meaningful and lasting results. So I'm here today to ask each member of this House to help me find practical solutions to this very real social problem and to filling this very genuine need.

When we say supportive housing and supported living, what do we mean? There are many different ways that supportive housing can be achieved. Supportive housing has been built and has operated in dozens of neighbourhoods throughout Canada for several decades. There is plenty of experience on the critical factors for success, as well as on the main challenges. We don't have to start from scratch on this issue.

A great deal of practical knowledge has been built up over the years; a mountain of valuable material is available from a variety of sources. We can learn from the lessons of other areas and jurisdictions and apply these learnings to the specific and unique circumstances of Yukon.

Supportive housing can be controversial, but evidence shows a positive impact of supportive housing, not just on the lives of the people living in the housing, but also in the vibrancy of the entire community.

Supportive housing has a positive impact on local economies, and it also has a positive impact on government revenues. For example, the cost of supportive housing can be much less than the cost of doing nothing, such as allowing people to drift into housing insecurity, homelessness or perhaps to become institutionalized. In fact, there are a number of experiences where, in other jurisdictions, there was some opposition initially to a supported living project, only to see that evaporate as neighbours got to know the project and its residents.

The proper role for government and elected officials in these matters is to demonstrate leadership in creating inclusive neighbourhoods, listening and providing pragmatic solutions to the concerns that are raised. Government and non-governmental funding practices do present a number of practical challenges to those who want to create supportive housing. Oftentimes, as has been mentioned earlier today, there are restrictions for the funding that becomes available through federal programs. Housing investment dollars are sometimes not coordinated with support service dollars and it therefore becomes difficult for project sponsors to manage complicated funding processes.

It is important for government to be a reliable partner with the sponsors of these projects. Private sector developers will not likely address the full scope of supportive housing on their own; it's going to take non-governmental organizations with support from government if we are going to see this move forward. A viable business plan is just the start; there is currently a maze of programs and rules in Yukon that create a significant administrative burden to anyone or any group advocating for supported living. In all fairness, Mr. Speaker, this is not a problem unique to Yukon. Similar hurdles can be found in most parts of Canada, but if we remove the road blocks to meeting the housing and service needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, we will all benefit as a result, not

just the people whom we are seeking to serve. The government has an especially important role in coordinating and problem solving in the complicated process of building supportive housing. Tackling this issue is not easy, and it cannot be done, as we've said, by any individual, or alone by any one government for that matter.

Mr. Speaker, an example of how many partners are required and how much work is needed, even to make the smallest headway, can be found through a recent event that took place here in Whitehorse just a few weeks ago. I'm referring to the 2010 symposium, *Walking Together*, which was held September 28 and 29, 2010. I know the Minister of Health and Social Services attended. I know the other ministers may have gone. I attended when I could. We were sitting on these days. This symposium brought many people together from many different places. It brought together people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or FASD. It brought together those supporting people affected by FASD, decision-makers, researchers — all came together to share information, to inform each other's practice and to provide the impetus for individuals and groups to make a commitment to try something different in their work and in their community.

Let me refer to the objectives of the symposium: "(1) to provide opportunities for participants to share and learn about positive approaches (success stories)" — and there are some — "and current research aimed at preventing FASD and supporting people affected by FASD; (2) to promote dialogue and build relationships among people with FASD, those supporting people with FASD, decision-makers, researchers and others in order to foster networks of support, information sharing and links between research and practice; (3) to celebrate successes, inspire hope and spark individual and group commitment to try at least one thing differently as a result of the symposium."

There were some action items resulting from the symposium. One of the goals of the symposium was to spark action on FASD. People were invited to put their idea for action on a sheet of paper and post it on the wall. Other people could then sign up to help out with the proposed action, so there was an interchange of ideas and support that resulted from that.

The actions coming out of the symposium include: "(1) develop a mentoring program (for high-risk women) based on the PCAP model. Also consider integrated services for women and models such as the Maxxine Wright Place; (2) start a support group for caregivers/parents of children with FASD; (3) build Yukon capacity for FASD training — work together with trainers to develop common training, prepare resources and help trainers to offer FASD training; (4) share information between diagnostic teams in Whitehorse and Juneau, Alaska; (5) offer videoconference info sessions on FASD using video clips and speakers from the symposium to spark more discussion."

So far, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about FASD, but that is only one of the potential clients for supported living within Yukon, although it is one that two different NGO proposals are hoping to address, at least in part, with their proposals.

Now, to talk about the Yukon initiatives and get back to the actual wording in the motion — this afternoon's debate is about raising awareness and garnering support for the efforts of

organizations like the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition, and I would add the Challenge Community Vocational Alternatives, as two groups in their efforts to address a well-established need for supported living and supportive housing in Yukon.

The Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition is a made-in-Yukon non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing affordable and supportive housing to our most marginalized individuals. Their goal is to provide housing for the hard to house, but they can't do it alone.

They have made application, the minister is well aware, to the Yukon Housing Corporation, but I want to take this beyond that and say that, regardless of how the government chooses to fund this, we think it's important a funding source be found. They are supported in their application by such organizations as Blood Ties Four Directions, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and the Salvation Army, just to name a few.

The objectives of this organization are as follows: (1) build safe, beautiful and healthy housing for the most marginalized in our community; (2) community collaboration is at the core of project design, development and management; (3) green building and accommodating technologies integrated into project design; and (4) prioritize long term financial sustainability and operation management.

This coalition envisions supportive housing with self-contained suites that is affordable and includes common space, innovative building technologies and on-site services to support healthy living. This is a far better solution than allowing the hard to house — and this group is specifically focused on the challenges of those they refer to as the "hard to house" — to remain dependent on the Salvation Army shelter or other temporary solutions. Those solutions, and that shelter in particular, should be available for emergency use — for people who have a short-term need who have found themselves in a difficult situation.

What's happening in Yukon today is that the 10 beds that they make available at the Salvation Army are really simply there on a permanent basis for a clientele that finds itself going there daily in order to have a place to sleep, a place to get away from inclement weather, a place to provide shelter. That's not a good solution; that's not a way to move people into more independent living.

Now, this group's job — the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition's — is not easy. They can't do it alone. They need our help, and we should provide such help as we are able.

In speaking to some of the proponents of this particular project, one of the things that became obvious is that, for any of the people who work in these front-line, non-governmental organizations and, for that matter, even for those of us who live within this community, who may attend or belong to some of these organizations, or simply going about our business here in the capital city, for example, as well as in other communities — the Yukon is so small and intimate that we know many of these people on a first-name basis. There are people who are virtually homeless; they have no real, stable home. They're

living by going to the Salvation Army, by being dependent upon other non-governmental organizations. We see them on our streets and, unlike perhaps Toronto or Vancouver, we actually greet them by name.

How is it that we can greet people by name and allow them to continue to be without any kind of permanent, decent place to live? How is it that we can expect that, if that's what we're doing, if we're saying, "Hi, Bill", or hi to somebody else, that they're ever going to have an opportunity to be better integrated into our society — when we know their names but we allow them to continue to live, day to day, on this basis?

Another group that is looking for funding on their application — and they've gone directly to CMHC for seed funding for a housing application, so their application is not to Yukon in and of itself, but I want to talk about their project — because no doubt we could be supporting this project. It's Challenge Community Vocational Alternatives, based on First Avenue. We all know — we just refer to them as "Challenge."

Now Challenge Community Vocational Alternatives has been serving marginalized Yukoners for many years. In particular, they deal with people who may have brain injury; it could be FASD, which is a form of brain injury, people who deal with a number of different challenges. Those could be mental challenges, these could be physical challenges — people who are differently abled.

This organization has submitted an application for seed funding also on a supportive housing project. The goal of Challenge CVA is to provide on-site housing for the consumers who are currently utilizing their services. A primary objective is to provide as many accessible, affordable rental units as possible.

To this end, Challenge wants to provide permanent accommodations for at least 20 persons with disabilities, who are currently in a transient living environment.

They have a proposal — a proposed supportive housing project that will be accessible, affordable and targeted at supported and semi-supported living for marginalized Yukoners, especially for those who self-identify with disabilities or who are differently abled. Challenge CVA is proposing a facility that would have a full-time, on-site manager that will provide a safe, secure environment, as well as living supports and line-of-sight needs.

The letters of support from community organizations within their application really tells the story. Organizations such as the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon — which we paid tribute to today — the Territorial Court of Yukon and the judge thereon, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the Yukon Association for Community Living, Second Opinion Society, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, and the City of Whitehorse have expressed their sincere support for this project.

The need for supportive housing is the same as the need that's identified in the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition, although the specific problem to be addressed is different. Both of these organizations are responding to a different aspect of the same issue.

So the big question that sort of reoccurs is: "What does home mean to you?" Because to the people who would be

served by these projects, it would mean a real home — one that they could call their own, a place where they could live but a place where they would be assisted and have help in some of the extraordinary or special challenges that they face.

I've cited two organizations today from within Yukon. They're two of many organizations that are attempting to answer this question of: "What does home mean to you?" Unfortunately, there is no single answer. There's no single solution or one-fits-all response. We have to all work together, or we risk getting nothing done at all. I'd like to talk about some of the socio-economic impacts of supportive housing. There was a gentleman here last week during Yukon Anti-Poverty Action Week from the Wellesley Institute. I'm going to refer to some of the work of the Wellesley Institute in Toronto — a study from 2008, entitled *We Are Neighbours: The Impact of Supportive Housing on Community Social, Economic and Attitude Changes*.

From the executive summary of that report: "... the term 'supportive housing' is used here to refer to affordable, quality housing for people with mental health issues that ensures: secure tenure ..., protected under law, integration in the community, choice of housing, choice and flexibility of support, independence and privacy."

The following represents some conclusions of a study of two Toronto supportive housing buildings for people with mental illness, many of whom were previously homeless, and the communities that surround them. It's very interesting what they find. From their summary conclusions, supportive housing makes for great neighbourhoods; supportive housing combines bricks and mortar with special supports to meet the physical and mental health needs of tenants; integrated support services allow people to live independently in the community; people who live in supportive housing know its value.

Almost inevitably, when a new supportive housing project is proposed, concerns will be raised about those people and the impact of that project on community safety, cohesion and property values. "Public data shows that supportive housing does not hurt property values or increase crime. Supportive housing tenants make important contributions to the strength of their neighbourhoods; tenants contribute a modest amount to local businesses and the economy; ... they participate in the friendliness and social interaction amongst neighbours and in neighbourhoods ... In short, supportive housing residents are just the kind of great neighbours that every community needs."

From the key findings — again, I want to refer to this issue of property values and crime rates: "There is no evidence that the existence of supportive housing buildings have negatively affected either property values or crime rates in the neighbourhoods. Property values have increased and crime decreased in the period considered by this study. Neighbours do not think that the buildings have a negative impact. The opposition that initially existed to this supportive housing had virtually dissipated, with no expression of negative attitudes found among immediate neighbours."

Regarding the modest contribution to local economy — the local economic footprint. "Interviews with neighbours and 36 tenants and staff of both buildings indicate that the local

economic ‘footprint’ of each building is modest, primarily because of the tenants’ low income.” However, the residents and the tenants of these supported living facilities do shop at local convenience stores, they shop at local pharmacies, and they frequent local coffee shops and restaurants. In other words, like all of us, they contribute to the economy of their local community. “Some local store operators recognize the importance of tenants’ business by offering them small amounts of short-term credit.”

“Contributions to neighbourhood actions and vibrancy: The study found that each building contributes to the strength of their local neighbourhoods in different ways, depending on the length of time they have been open and the character of the street.”

One building on a residential street has been there for almost 20 years. “Tenants have initiated a new approach to front-yard gardening on the street and participating in collective action with their neighbours around noise and speed reduction and garbage removal.”

Another building on the commercial side of a mixed-use street found that “tenants have stronger relationships with business operators than with residential neighbours, and have created an important new, vibrancy along what was a drab section of the street.”

Some issues around contributions and crime: tenants of these housing projects have in some situations experienced themselves being targets for criminal activity and, in response, tenants and staff “have developed internal ways to handle crime that protects both the tenants and the entire neighbourhood.

“Current city planning approval practices” — again referring to Toronto — “create regulatory hurdles that make it more difficult for supportive housing projects to move ahead.” Laws dealing with land use planning require that planners “should consider buildings in physical design only and not the personal characteristics of potential residents, planning practice has often allowed opponents to engage in questions about the economic or health status of future residents.

“The cumbersome regulatory process creates unacceptable delays that can, in some cases, defeat plans for new supportive housing. Supportive housing projects sometimes require approvals from a variety of authorities in addition to planning approvals.”

These different facets — although the studies referenced are from other jurisdictions, they really appear again and again and so we can learn from them.

Some recommendations from municipal government: (1) the city should act on the strong evidence that shows supportive housing facilities are not harmful to neighbourhoods and they contribute to strong communities. City planning rules should recognize that supportive housing is a necessary part of every neighbourhood and set targets for all parts of the city; (2) the municipality could create a streamlined, ‘single-window’ approach that assigns projects to staff who are responsible for securing and assisting with securing necessary approvals; (3) “ensure that all planning and zoning are neighbourhood building processes and recognize that housing is a human right for

everyone”; and (4) “establish clear supportive housing targets as part of it 10-year housing strategy”.

Now, recommendations that were made for provincial governments — and they would be applicable to the territorial government here — are: (1) funding for supportive housing is currently fractured among several departments — for example, here, within Yukon Housing Corporation, within Community Services and within Health and Social Services. We know that sometimes there are good projects that struggle because the money is sitting over here and perhaps a different department is being proactive at wanting to address the need. We can work to better use the inter-departmental approach. I know the minister has spoken about that at times — both the Minister of Health and Social Services and I believe the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation.

Again, this is from other areas. Other provincial governments are consolidating and integrating fractured funding and support services into local health integration networks, or LHINs. Again there, as well as here, funding for supportive housing and services has, in the past, been inadequate to meet the need.

Additional recommendations we might suggest for the territorial government would include setting specific targets for supportive housing in Whitehorse and in other communities, in the context of an overall housing strategy, and making adequate funding available to meet those targets and ensure that funding flows through programs that ensure the housing and supports are properly coordinated within each community at the local level. We could also look at funding portable services that meet the needs of individuals who have a mental illness or another challenge of ability but do not, or will not be able to, live in supportive housing, but there’s funding that follows the person with needs.

We can also ensure the curriculum in schools and programs for mental health professionals, social workers, community workers, land use planners, and all other related professions include sections on the research related to mental health and housing.

Referring to those LHINs — or local health integration networks — it includes recommendations that, as they take on the responsibility if they were to be formed for funding supportive housing, “there is a danger that supportive housing service requirements will be forced to compete with a variety of other unmet health needs in local communities for a limited pool of ...funding” — and that needs to be considered — “...funding programs should recognize that small providers often provide services and meet a unique need, and also deserve support.”

Turning to the federal government and where they need to act, “Canada now stands alone among developed countries in lacking a national housing strategy that would include supportive housing.” This is not something that we as Canadians can be proud of. “In 2005, federal, provincial and territorial housing ministers promised that they were working towards a new Canadian housing framework, but progress has been stalled since then.”

“The federal government has provided some funding for pilot projects in several communities. Pilot projects can provide

useful lessons, but Toronto and Canada have plenty of successful models of supportive housing.” There are also successful models in Vancouver, in Winnipeg and certainly across the United States. So it is proven that this can work. “Long-term funding for housing and supports are needed, not more pilot projects.

“The federal government should establish a country-wide housing strategy that includes specific targets for Toronto...” for Whitehorse, for Vancouver, for communities in Yukon and across the country. Of course, they should “make adequate funding available to meet those targets.

“The Mental Health Commission of Canada must include studies of the contributions that supportive housing makes to their neighbourhoods...” in the continuing effort “to eliminate stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness...

“The design and programming in supportive housing should foster and strengthen several successful approaches; an atmosphere of support and security, internal communities among tenants, child and pet friendly spaces, and openness to the neighbourhood.” If we were to go the extra mile, normal amenities that most of us take for granted would be included within the supportive living environment. Studies have proven, for example, that “...gardens are important, along with porches, benches, patios and community-use rooms.” While this may seem to be a little off-topic at first glance, it does help to answer that basic question: what does “home” mean to you? And it moves us away from something seeming like an institutional setting.

Housing providers should foster this and strengthen the community development function within their organizations. Supporting the tenants who want to participate in neighbourhood-building activities and community organizations, such as Neighbourhood Watch, is an example of a critical success factor.

Community organizations play a vital role in supportive housing. Challenge, CVA and the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition are good examples of community leadership specifically directed at addressing supportive housing.

When you look at the other organizations that are supporting these two proposals, it shows that many of our non-governmental organizations, as I’ve listed here this afternoon, believe that this would help to address the needs of their clients. What these organizations are striving to achieve cannot be accomplished without our help. There’s a role for us as legislators to support these organizations and to provide funding to make sure that projects like these can get off the ground.

Regarding recommendations for community organizations, community leaders like those I’ve just mentioned and others, such as private sector business organizations, must also “take an active role in building strong neighbourhoods by engaging supportive housing providers and tenants in their work.” Community leaders can continue “to promote the assets that supportive housing tenants can bring to a neighbourhood.” So, it’s important that we get the business community to buy into this concept, along with all other neighbours.

Supportive housing is not intended to be a catchall for the homeless. Tenants who could be served through supportive

housing share a common need. Tenants could include individuals who live with FASD, as I mentioned earlier, with various brain injuries, with mental health issues, cognitive or physical disabilities, autism, as well as individuals who are recovering from substance abuse problems or even just struggling to develop basic life skills.

We need to be here to help. If I were to offer a comment to potential tenants of supportive housing, it would be this: “Get involved and stay involved! Supportive housing tenants know, first-hand, the value of supportive housing in their lives.”

It has been proven elsewhere that supportive housing tenants also know their presence and contribution to the world around us is good for our communities. So the intent of this motion is to bring consensus to the identified need for supportive housing, for supportive living facilities. No one person, organization or government is going to do this alone. This motion, as tabled, speaks to that cause and touches on the issues that need to be addressed, some of the actions that need to be taken, the people who need to be engaged and the organizations that have a stake in the outcomes.

This motion, as tabled, can also be improved. I would challenge the members opposite and the Third Party to contribute to that end, as long as we are focused on improving it, because, too often on Wednesday afternoons in this Assembly, things break down into silly games of changing motions to try to show up one political party or another. If members read the Blues, they will see that I have not had one critical comment to make in my presentation this afternoon about the government of the day. I’m not here to criticize; I’m here to advocate.

I believe we all want this. I believe every member of this House wants an effective and efficient solution to problems and therefore, an effective and efficient supportive housing program to exist. If we can’t build a home for the hard-to-house, we can at least provide such individuals with an opportunity to live in a safe and secure environment when they so choose.

I could speak to this motion at greater length; I could speak all afternoon, because there is a lot of information, a lot of data and a lot of detail, even within the two applications that I have referred to here. But I am actually not going to do that, because I am very keen to hear what other members have to say on this important topic. The key message here is that we don’t need to study this issue endlessly. There is, as I have mentioned, a wealth of information in the literature from jurisdictions across Canada, as well as from across the United States. It works. It’s now time for us to act. I urge all members to support this motion and its call for action, and I very much look forward to hearing positive contributions from members opposite, from my colleagues, and from the Third Party.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to talk about the motion on the floor. A lot of the things that the member opposite is saying I think all of us agree with; there’s not a huge discrepancy on that, but I would just like to go through some of the misconceptions that the member opposite has in terms of what we’re really talking about. The affordable housing initiative is a federal government program — something like \$1.95 million or \$1.97 million. It allows

\$75,000 per unit to help subsidize. I think all of us would agree that \$75,000 doesn't build an awful lot. There are dog houses I have seen that are probably up in that range, and that really doesn't allow us a big flexibility. So, the Yukon Housing Corporation made the decision very early on to offer this program to non-governmental organizations first, and see where that went.

Now, I do have to correct the member opposite's numbers, here. The information provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation — which is what we live with here — is that we have to commit all of the affordable housing initiative funding by March 31, 2012, not 2011. I'm not at all sure where he got that one. We have to claim all of the funds by June 30, 2012, not 2011. We have to show all matching contributions by March 31, 2013. This latter date is also the deadline for all affordable-housing initiative construction.

On June 24, the Yukon Housing Corporation — and I've asked the Housing Corporation to provide me with this information because, again, it's an independent — I realize that the Liberals don't believe that and they've made it very clear in this House that they would interfere with the Housing Corporation, but clearly they are an independent corporation and that's not what we're going to do — so I asked for the data to be provided. My understanding at the time was that 11 different NGOs picked up packages and information and discussed it. Three came back. That went out on June 24, 2010. The Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors met and they made decisions regarding three submissions received under the affordable-housing initiative, with one exception — because that's obviously what the motion is about

Without giving a lot of details on the other two, the first group was given conditional approval for \$1,050,000 to build 14 new, affordable-housing units in Whitehorse. My understanding is that was specifically for fetal alcohol syndrome sufferers.

The second was the group we're talking about today. That submission was suspended pending a review of the submission and evaluation of additional information. Again, deal with data, deal with fact; don't deal with magic wands or opinions. We are the custodians of the public purse. This is something our government does; I would hope the Liberals wouldn't disagree with that.

The third was very heavily a project that was private sector, not NGO and, at the time, it was rejected.

If we look at the one we're talking about today, the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition, the coalition is comprised of a number of different NGOs and their plan is to build and operate — as the member opposite has said — a 20-unit affordable housing project in downtown Whitehorse effectively targeting the hard to house.

We have no problem with that comment, with that categorization. At the time, the submission was suspended, due to a lack of information in three important areas: there was no indication or details of construction financing, no business plan, no information of what to build, how to build it or how to pay for it. Second of all, long-term mortgage financing was a big part there. There were no outlines on that. And as the member opposite

has stated, there would be extensive operating and maintenance costs and the necessity to involve Health and Social Services in discussions regarding that operation and maintenance funding. Unfortunately, I understand there was no indication that any of those discussions occurred, so the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors agreed to suspend the review of the applications so that the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition could have additional time to provide the information.

Once that information is received, Yukon Housing Corporation — and they were hoping for September 2010 — it would then be evaluated and presented back to the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors for review and decision. Unfortunately, none of that information was received by the corporation according to what I've been told.

At the request of the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition, the Yukon Housing Corporation did, I'm told, send a letter to a financial institution explaining the affordable housing initiative — because this is a rather unique funding scenario — and offered for the Housing Corporation to meet and discuss the program — what level of funding might be available to the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition and the levels of funding that would be available and services the Yukon Housing Corporation would offer, including the oversight of project management.

Now I'm informed by the corporation that there was a meeting between the coalition and the Housing Corporation on Friday, September 24, and the discussions indicated that progress had been made on some of the areas that I mentioned before.

The Yukon Housing Corporation has reactivated the file and anticipates receiving the required information by October 1, but I do have to point out that, at this point, I'm told by the Yukon Housing Corporation that that information hasn't been received either. When that information is evaluated and a report has been prepared for the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors, which is tentatively scheduled to meet in the third week of October — that's coming up pretty fast — but although the representative of the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition feels confident about securing the financing from a bank — and I won't mention which bank — there is some concern that that still might not be feasible.

So, again, the Yukon Housing Corporation has requested future meetings to deal specifically with the issue. I am not aware of any further meetings that have actually been secured and set up. That's sort of an overview of where we sit with this. Again, what concerns me is that the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors is doing their good work and their due diligence on all of this; however, Liberals are again, by way of this motion, suggesting that government insert itself into the corporation.

Again, I refer specifically to the motion that says: (1) directing the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to work together with the coalition to ensure the project is approved. That's the responsibility of the Housing Corporation. It is not the responsibility of the minister. The members opposite — the

Liberal members — are being very clear in what they're saying. They would interfere with the Housing Corporation. That's not to say that it isn't a good idea. I agree with many of the things that the Leader of the Official Opposition has said in terms of needs, but we're speaking specifically on this motion to an individual thing. The Liberals are now requesting that the government and the two ministers insert themselves into the discussion. This is presented to the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors. They adjudicate, they evaluate, they look at this and they make their recommendations. This is really not the minister's purview. That bothers me. It bothers me a great deal, actually. The Liberal leader says that he would support it. Yes — philosophically, that's a great idea — but I get the impression from the minutes that his Liberal Party government would insert itself and potentially interfere with the Housing Corporation directly. That scares me.

If that were the case, what programs would he cut? Because there are a number of implications, particularly in operating and maintenance and no indication, that I've gotten anyway, from the corporation that the proponents have actually talked to Health and Social Services, who would have a serious budget implication. What would they cut to get this? Where would the money come from? Where does the operation and maintenance come from? You can't just print more money. It's got to come from someplace. Where would it come from? That's the huge problem that we have in so many of these debates in this House. It's very easy for the Liberals to say we would do this, we would do that. But how would they do it? Where would it come from?

Now, again, to sort of summarize and continue on this and some of the things that have been accomplished, the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Liberal member is referring to the affordable housing initiative funding — a federal program — and it is appropriate that I provide members of this Assembly with some of the historical information, which I've already tried to, but let's go back through some of the other aspects of it, as well as current efforts with local non-governmental organizations.

The purpose of the affordable housing initiative is to encourage non-governmental organizations and the private sector to build new, affordable housing with financial incentives. It is a federal program. It has limits. I would agree with the member opposite that the federal government has not given us a great deal of latitude on this. It's something that might be of value in a major city. It has some limitations here. That's why we work on a tri-territorial basis — a pan-northern basis — with the federal government and convince them that it is different up here. We are quite substantially different.

It came to me that while we were meeting with the expert from downtown Toronto, brought up by the Anti-Poverty Coalition, I might add, with funding from our government. We paid for him to come up, and that's good; I have no problem with that. I certainly have no problems at all with that. But I can remember a sign that I saw on one of the business establishments when I first came up to the Yukon. It was a very neat little sign that said, "We don't really care how you do it down south."

The north is a very — well, "very unique" is a double negative. It is a unique place that has no similarities with that. In the meetings with this expert, he kept referring to on-reserve/off-reserve. When I pointed out that off-reserve didn't exist here since we don't have reserves, all of that First Nations funding was unavailable to us. He agreed. He was familiar with that. For the rest of the meeting, he continued to talk about off-reserve funding, which told me very strongly that it didn't quite register. But we did get a lot of good information out of that.

Having previously practised in my profession in the middle of Moss Park, Regent Park and the low-cost housing projects in Toronto, I know the area very well. I know the programs very well. I know the people very well. It is unfortunate that some of the NIMBY — "not in my backyard" — syndrome exists, because I never had a problem there. I never had a cheque bounce. I took cheques without identification from people who lived in those projects. Never in the four years that I had the practice there did one bounce. I had a couple bounce from Rosedale — from the very expensive parts of Toronto. I never had one from the so-called "projects".

Now, when you look at that affordable housing initiative — and that buzzword has appeared in a number of different forms in a number of different programs. This particular incantation — this particular version of the affordable housing initiative initially specifies non-governmental organizations, so that's where we went with that, and that's how the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors ended up with that.

If the money isn't spent, then it will open up, and it will open up. As I mentioned, the third program that came in had basically too much of a private sector component. That could open up again later. It's not a dead project; it's just that it doesn't fit the criterion right now. So, the funding assistance is really aimed at reducing the capital cost of building new, affordable housing units for Yukoners.

Now, before I begin, I would like to identify an error in the motion we're debating today again. It says: "... to ensure that the project is approved and the budget is spent by March 31, 2011." Again, I'll review for the member opposite, who might not have been listening — I take this opportunity to advise all members of this Assembly of the funding criteria for phase 3 — which is what we're really talking about — of the affordable housing initiative as developed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which is the funding agent for this.

We are required — and I'll go through it again: (1) to commit all affordable housing initiative funding by March 31, 2012; (2) we have to claim all affordable housing initiative funds by June 30, 2012, not 2011; and (3) we have to show all matching contributions by March 31, 2013. The latter date is also the deadline for all affordable housing initiative funded construction.

In October 2002 — and I do have to say that's right on the transition between governments — the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation signed an operating agreement on behalf of the Government of Yukon with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, so that the Yukon Housing Corporation could access up to \$5.5 million in funding through phase 1 of the affordable-housing initiative — a very different program.

The corporation allocated \$3.5 million of these funds to offset the cost of the construction of the 48-unit seniors building that was initially utilized as an athletes village for what I think was a tremendously successful Canada Winter Games. It's now fully occupied by seniors and it has certainly been a success story.

Yukon Housing Corporation then issued a call for proposals and we received numerous applications from non-governmental organizations and the private sector. As can well be expected during proposal calls, the requests for financial assistance exceeded the remaining operating budget of the affordable housing initiative in its phase 1. After careful consideration and discussion, the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors — Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors; I'll repeat that for the members opposite — selected two private sector applications and provided the proponents with conditional approvals. The members opposite may remember the joint news conference that was held in Whitehorse in April 2005 that included the Yukon Housing Corporation, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the two private sector proponents.

After this announcement, regrettably, one of the private sector proponents decided not to proceed with their project. It is unfortunate in that it was designed to be a supportive housing project for seniors and, I believe, the first ever built and operated by the private sector, but the group withdrew.

The other developer did proceed and this became the Falcon Ridge development in Copper Ridge. Initially, the developer was provided with conditional approval for both home ownership and rental units. As the project proceeded, the developer redefined their business plan — you need to have a business plan and show where you're going and what you're going to do — and focused solely on the construction and sale of affordable home-ownership units.

The developer was provided with \$7,500 in assistance per home to offset the capital costs of constructing energy-efficient and accommodating homes. In total, the developer submitted claims for 23 home-ownership units, for a total of \$172,500.

What happened in this case was that there was a pre-determined maximum selling price of \$177,500 per unit, including the \$7,500 assistance. Market conditions led to increased property values throughout Whitehorse, including the value of the newly constructed home. Although the developers conditionally approved for 44 home-ownership units, they actually submitted claims for 23. However — always a however, Mr. Speaker — it is important to note that the entire development was built to Yukon Housing Corporation's energy and accommodating home standards. It was a good proposal.

Now the members opposite, both opposition parties, suggested that this was a terrible subsidy that was given to a company that not only wasn't from Whitehorse but was in fact not even from Canada. The fact that it generated \$23 million worth of construction in a rather short period of time and all of the benefits that I've mentioned before, they seem to have missed that.

Again, they simply did not read what this government provided to them. The board of directors noted that during the re-

view of applications stemming from that initial call for proposals — as I say, none were actually received from rural Yukon. The board agreed that in the event that conditional funding was not accessed, the board should review the needs for seniors housing in rural Yukon. Because of the de-commitment of funds — in other words, they gave the funds back or simply notified us that they wouldn't access them — the original — coming back from the original private sector projects, the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors — for the Leader of the Official Opposition, I'll repeat that: the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors — then allocated \$1.8 million in funding for the construction of a six-unit seniors building in the community of Haines Junction. As this building was under construction, the corporation modified the plans and decided it was best to construct three additional units. I'm very pleased to remind members that \$400,000 was approved by this Legislature — I don't believe the Liberals voted for it, but anyway it was approved by the Legislature — to cover the cost of the additional units. That building is now a nine-unit building.

The Yukon Housing Corporation then proceeded to phase 2 of the affordable housing initiative. This time, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation allocated \$300,000 to the Yukon along with a number — and I would suggest a very large number — of very restrictive conditions. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation would cost share up to a maximum of \$75,000 per unit and all units built under phase 2 — a total of four — could only be social housing units. We had no ability to use it for anything else.

This differed greatly from phase 1 where the Yukon Housing Corporation had the flexibility to fund social housing, to fund affordable housing, to get involved in home ownership programs and home repair. I am pleased to advise members of this Assembly that this \$300,000 allocation has finally found a home and has been directed to the planned Abbeyfield project in Whitehorse.

The most recent allocation of funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is what is called "phase 3" of the affordable housing initiative. The allocation is \$1.97 million of which \$750,000 is contained in the 2010-11 main estimates of the Yukon Housing Corporation — the main estimates, again, that the Liberal opposition voted against.

What is fundamentally different between phase 1 and phase 3 of the affordable housing initiative is the decision in 2009 to focus funding specifically on non-governmental organizations, or NGOs. Under this latest proposal, the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors invited the NGOs to submit proposals to construct new affordable housing, with rents based on median market rent. Successful proponents could access a grant of up to the \$75,000 per unit if they had matching contributions — it could be land, cash, financing in place — excluding a second federal funding stream as part of the overall financial plan. In other words, they couldn't use a second federal program as their contribution to this federal program, and that's only reasonable.

Under the terms of the agreement, they would be obliged to sign a 10-year affordability clause, which links the rent they

may charge at a level below the posted medium rent, as published by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics. In the event all funds are not committed, then the Yukon Housing Corporation may proceed with a second call for proposals, targeting non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

In March 2010, the Yukon Housing Corporation ran numerous advertisements in local newspapers advising non-governmental organizations that as of April 1, 2010, applications and information packages would be available. So again, going through what happened after that, initially the corporation set a deadline for submissions as of 4:00 p.m. on Friday April 30, 2010. However, the corporation received requests from non-governmental organizations to extend the deadline because they needed more time to accommodate the interested parties. We have to all admit, I think, that a lot of very good NGOs out there have limited capacities, so I'm really pleased that the Yukon Housing Corporation made that decision. To accommodate the interested parties, the corporation extended the original deadline to 4:00 p.m. Friday May 14, 2010. Now, in addition, during the month of April, officials with the Yukon Housing Corporation developed a much broader definition of "rent" and requested a review from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on Yukon Housing Corporation's ability to use this new rent definition within phase 3 of the affordable housing initiative. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation did not take issue with the proposed rent definition; they have been really good to work with on all levels.

Yukon Housing Corporation issued a second addendum to the call for proposals identifying those changes. Originally the rent definition was solely based on median market rent, but it was expanded as follows, and I quote: "The rent definition that Yukon Housing Corporation wishes to utilize in support of the affordable housing initiative is as follows: For those clients eligible to receive social assistance, affordable housing rents shall not exceed the shelter component of social assistance, including shelter and utility allowances as defined under the social assistance regulations. For those eligible for social housing, but not receiving social assistance, affordable housing rents shall not exceed 30 percent of gross monthly household income and for all others, the median market rent or the average market rent, whichever is greater."

The whole intent of this change was to provide non-governmental organizations with the greatest degree of flexibility when identifying their potential client groups in rental recoveries. In late May 2010, the review and sorting of three submissions under phase 3 of the affordable housing initiative was initiated by the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors.

Not with interference from a government, as the Liberal leader and the Official Opposition have said they would do — that they would interfere. The Housing Corporation did that review and scoring and, during the process, the two internal Yukon Housing Corporation working committees entrusted with the review and scoring came to the conclusion that none of the applications provided sufficient information. Again, looking at most non-governmental organizations that I think all

of us have had some involvement with, capacity is always an issue, so, that wasn't a huge surprise.

So a decision was made to approach the three non-governmental organizations and provide them with a list of questions and a timeline for submitting additional information. It makes perfect sense. As this process unfolded, the Yukon Housing Corporation received a request for additional time and all three non-governmental organizations were granted that additional time. Once the Yukon Housing Corporation received the additional information, both the technical review committee — totally within the Housing Corporation — and the project review committee — totally within the Housing Corporation — reconvened and completed the scoring and evaluation of all three submissions.

Although the original meeting of the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors was postponed because of the additional time provided the three non-governmental organizations, they did meet in late June 2010 and reviewed the submissions. After careful thought and discussion, the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors decided to conditionally approve \$1.05 million to one project, and I've mentioned that one.

It suspended the submission received from another applicant because of lack of information on which to complete the evaluation and scoring on the submission. It declined to offer funding to the third non-governmental organization because of the private sector component, as I mentioned.

So throughout the past summer, officials with the Yukon Housing Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services have worked with the two non-governmental organizations in terms of securing construction and mortgage funding, and the submission of additional information. In the meantime, this government is providing more affordable housing to Yukoners in need, and we're doing so on several fronts. I think this has to be part of this consideration.

We're constructing new housing; we're upgrading and repairing existing housing; we're providing loans so people can repair their homes or create rental accommodations, and mortgages, so they can buy homes. This year the Liberals voted in the spring sitting against almost \$7.2 million in the budget that was added to the loan portfolio — which the Liberals have concluded was an attempt to privatize. Boy, it sure would be a higher level of debate if they would actually read the documents we provide.

In May 2009, the Government of Canada and Yukon partnered on a joint investment to build new housing and renovate existing affordable housing. Both levels of government officially signed an amendment to the Canada-Yukon affordable housing program agreement. This resulted in a joint investment of \$60 million over the following two years. As a result, Yukon announced a series of housing projects that will benefit from this funding. To the credit of the Yukon Housing Corporation and some of the incredible people and the foresight they have over there, many of these projects were already on paper in the files. This allowed them to take these files, activate them and very, very quickly — as the announcements were being made that the funding was available — they were already planning to get tenders out for construction — way ahead. It has been

pointed out by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation many, many times that Yukon was so far ahead of other jurisdictions. It may be quite likely that — the opposition has all of their programs mixed up — this program is 2011 and that is somewhat more written in stone.

The CMHC — Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation — has said that they are suspicious that there are provincial governments that may not be able to fund all of the money that they were given, and that there may be a possibility of re-profiling that under some other program to get it to us, because we are in desperate need of funding for improvement of housing.

The announcement included federal funding of \$51 million over two years under the so-called Canada economic action plan. \$50 million is for northern housing; that's there, but a little bit more flexibility. As well, \$1 million was announced in programs to specifically assist seniors and persons with disabilities, and to renovate and retrofit existing social housing.

The territory is also contributing a further \$4 million for those initiatives and, since signing the agreement with Canada in May 2009, the Yukon Housing Corporation has expended and committed almost \$37 million to build new social housing and to repair and upgrade existing social housing. Through Canada's economic action plan and contributions from the Yukon, almost \$60 million is budgeted during the 2009-11 period for the construction and repair of housing.

This has put an incredible strain in capacity on the Yukon Housing Corporation. One would think it wouldn't be difficult to spend \$60 million; I can assure everyone that, in some cases, it is very difficult because of the time frame and so that other programs, which aren't under the constraints that are out in 2012, 2013 and 2014, are slowed down a little bit so we can get these programs in place a little bit faster.

All of that budgeting is in addition to the \$36.6 million invested in seniors housing in Haines Junction, in Whitehorse and in housing for student families at Yukon College. That's on top of the \$60 million.

I'm repeating this information because it does warrant repeating. The Liberal Official Opposition seems to be not paying attention or listening to this. With this new construction, the Yukon Housing Corporation has increased its housing portfolio by 158 units, or by approximately 40 percent — that's 40 percent, four-zero percent. The Yukon Housing Corporation operates 576 social housing units in 10 different communities.

What are the records of previous governments? The short-lived Liberal government: zero. They didn't build one. Mind you, in all fairness, they weren't here for very long — the shortest lived majority government in the history of the Commonwealth of Nations. This is what the members opposite say is a good thing. Well, we don't consider it a good thing — zero.

So, since 2005 — again, to summarize — this government has invested almost \$100 million in new affordable housing. For the members opposite to say that not much has been done — \$100 million on one hand, zero on the Liberal hand. That is an incredible difference. I hope Yukoners reflect on that. I recognize it has been said by the members — particularly the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin — that none of them were mem-

bers of that government. They weren't. But, instead, they researched; they looked; they decided to get involved in politics. They decided where they wanted to go and what they wanted to do. They said, "That's a great party to get involved in. I want to get in there and build nothing." I just can't believe that Yukoners are going to fall for that. I just can't.

Let me break down some of the new construction. In Whitehorse, we added 32 new units to our stock with the family-focused building in Riverdale, which will house single parents and their children. We worked with the Women's Directorate on this family housing project and this group has been identified as having the largest need for housing. It was identified by the Women's Directorate; it was identified by Health and Social Services; it was identified by the Yukon Housing Corporation.

The intent is a development that will include amenities that benefit the positive growth in the development of families. This includes recreational areas, suitable fencing, a marvellous enhanced interior design and a layout specific to the needs of young families. We've added six more family units in Ingram subdivision and will be starting construction shortly on another six units in Takhini North. We have a new 30-unit seniors building underway in Whitehorse that I don't think anybody could miss behind Earl's at Spook Creek, down on the riverfront, to replace the aging 13-unit Alexander Street residence — so we're adding even more. And there are more plans for more housing for seniors in Whitehorse.

As well, we've constructed 48 new units for seniors near the Yukon College and another 24 affordable housing units for student families, which the Yukon College manages. This isn't just looking at Whitehorse. In Haines Junction, we've added nine seniors units; in Dawson, a new 19-unit residence is under construction to replace the old 13-unit Korbo Apartments, making a net gain of six more social housing units.

In Watson Lake, we're building 12 new seniors units. In Teslin, a new eight-unit residence is under construction and in Faro, we're completing six new seniors units.

As we talked about earlier with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, we are also putting — probably not double-wide trailers but stick built — in Ross River, in Carmacks, in Dawson and in other areas as the money gets toward the end and we know what we have to spend on that.

So building seniors housing in the rural communities is important because our seniors buildings are built to promote independent living and the opportunity for seniors to reside in a barrier-free environment, thus enabling seniors to remain in their community. The five-year trend shows that all communities have grown in overall population and size. People over 50 years of age in each community are forming a larger percentage of the overall demographic. We are also working with the Department of Health and Social Services on a new senior Abbeyfield project in Whitehorse.

I do have to reflect on the one project up in Falcon Ridge that I mentioned earlier. They were built to affordability standards, green home standards and access and such. I have a friend who bought one of the townhouses up there. When we went there one night for dinner, she couldn't imagine why the

stairs were so wide on the one wall and one side was so thick until I pointed out what our accommodation standards are and that that would accommodate a lift for a wheelchair or for a person to sit in a lift and go up to the second floor. These are all built in. They're all part of that.

We've worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to build a new children's receiving home. The children's receiving home is a temporary home for children and youth who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect and who need a period of assessment and stabilization.

Since 2002-03, the Yukon Housing Corporation has loaned over \$71 million to Yukoners to help address housing needs. Almost all of this money is repayable with interest, save for a small percentage of repair loans that have subsidies to further assist applicants most in need.

In addition to our Yukon Housing Corporation projects, there has been involvement with the Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is an important partner in housing and the Yukon Housing Corporation, I hope, will continue to work with this organization in a very proactive manner to address the need for affordable housing. In addition, the Yukon Housing Corporation will provide, free of charge, ongoing technical assistance to that organization to assist them in building to the SuperGreen standard.

As mentioned yesterday in Question Period in debate, we can't control the price of land. We can't control the price of lots. What we can control is how the buildings are built so that people moving into those accommodations will be able to have a lower operation and maintenance cost and lower heating costs. As I say, down in Watson Lake, one of the buildings that went up — I think the heating cost one month, in the dead of winter, was about \$117. So all of our jokes about heating it with a cat — that might take two cats because cat food is expensive but, other than that, it has been an incredible project and incredible technology. I do have to credit Yukon Housing Corporation technical people who developed that.

SuperGreen energy is, in fact, a child and creature of the Yukon Housing Corporation. I can remember having a member of the opposition at one point a couple years ago catch me in the hall and be critical because we weren't sending people to attend a meeting on energy efficiency until I pointed out that, in fact, we were teaching that course in energy efficiency.

So, at the time, we allocated — I forget the exact amount of money — to purchase land in downtown Whitehorse to be used by Habitat for Humanity to build a threeplex. I believe that it actually ends up in this supplementary budget. I do thank the opposition — I think for a change they actually voted for this. It tells me they didn't read that, either, or they probably would have voted against it, but we're very pleased they supported it.

Another way we're helping to house Yukoners, combat homelessness and provide more housing is through our rental suite program, with repair and construction funding. This program provides preferred interest rate loans to homeowners who have an accessory suite in their home. I ask anyone listening to please, if you do have the capacity for an accessory suite, come

in and talk to the Housing Corporation technical people. There are programs available to upgrade or develop and construct suites. It makes perfect sense and may help a lot of people in a lot of different ways so, please, take advantage of that.

The funding can be for full modernization or to upgrade health and safety items, to allow the suite to conform to bylaw requirements — always necessary. In times of low vacancy rates, or for the dedicated renters — I mentioned inlaw suites or people who just simply don't want to purchase — funding can be used to construct a new suite. Yukon Housing Corporation's technical officers will conduct site visits and provide technical advice throughout the repair or construction process.

We also help with our rental rehabilitation program, which provides funding for rental property upgrades. This program provides preferred interest rate loans to homeowners of rental accommodations. These may be single-family rental units or multi-unit residential complexes — either way. The use of funds for upgrading energy efficiency and barrier-free accessibility is certainly encouraged. A full range of technical expertise is available from the Yukon Housing Corporation. Health and safety upgrades must be addressed on all projects. In other words, if you are getting funding for a project, you must address building code and health and safety issues as well.

In the near future — we'll speculate a little bit — there's a plan for the Yukon Housing Corporation to issue tenders for a project in Takhini North, to issue tenders for the Abbeyfield seniors building and, as I mentioned to the Member for Mayo-Tatchun earlier, the replacement of double-wide modular houses in rural Yukon, and multiple tenders for the upgrade of existing buildings. The Yukon Housing Corporation estimates that after the completion of the new buildings the Yukon Housing Corporation will have an additional 101 affordable housing units in its portfolio.

The new buildings will feature Yukon Housing Corporation's SuperGreen energy standards, thus ensuring reduced energy consumption which, in turn, means fewer greenhouse gas emissions; they're also lots cheaper to run.

So the Yukon Housing Corporation is also upgrading units currently in the social housing portfolio, thus improving the quality of life for tenants and potentially reducing the corporation's operation and maintenance.

I hope that gives a little bit of an overview of what we've been doing. We certainly are actively providing, as well, training and hands-on house rehabilitation skills and techniques to a variety of First Nations, particularly Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, over the next few weeks. I encourage the member to get involved in that and to make sure there is very good attendance to that.

We do have one of our staff members within the Yukon Housing Corporation leading that activity, but all of the staff is playing a part. The staff over there has been incredible, given the fact that their workload has gone up almost exponentially in the last couple of years. We have had staff in Carmacks, for instance, doing in-depth structural and air-change inspections. On Monday, we are going back over there and doing what they call "blower door tests" on units for additional information and

to gather a lot of information that will allow us to set baselines from which to measure success.

There are limitations of what we can do within that but, as I say, we can certainly provide advice and training, and some of those courses are directly more involved with building your own home. We realize that within many of the First Nations building their own home may not be where it is. But by taking the course and having a better appreciation of what subcontractors do and what's done, that may give people a lot of information, in terms of working on their own homes — or contractors or whatever. We're happy to provide that information and get involved with that.

When we again look at — I mean, I could go on and on and on with the programs — the seniors home and yard maintenance program, there is a seniors lending library, public resource library, materials for use by all persons and organizations interested in seniors housing issues. There are books, reports, publications, videos. This is all within the Yukon Housing Corporation's head office in Whitehorse. I point to the corporation's website, which gives a link to a current resource list. There are a number of other programs that are involved in that. And, of course, we then have to look at private, non-profit housing: Kaushee's Place transition home, 24 beds and five second-stage housing units; Gateway housing, a 39-unit seniors apartment complex; rent supplement involving subsidies to subsidize rents in eligible private rental accommodations.

There are 35 units in Whitehorse, including six within the Whitehorse cooperative. I don't know if the members opposite are aware of that. And, of course, there is the social housing, which includes six social housing units in Carcross, 18 in Carmacks, 66 in Dawson City, four in Faro, 13 in Haines Junction, 19 in Mayo, 16 in Ross River, 13 in Teslin, 33 in Watson Lake, 330 in Whitehorse — and that includes the rent supplementation program — for a total of 518, and more that we're building every single day. Much of this information is available on the website. I do encourage people to read that in more detail and get a better handle on it.

I do have to go back to my original concern, being that much of this motion, I think, has some direct problems — again, “directing the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to work together with the coalition to ensure the project is approved.”

It is the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors who approves. It is the Yukon Housing Corporation Board of Directors who are meeting with these groups or at least offering to meet.

The motion continues: “including in budgeting, operational funding of a predetermined amount annually for the purpose of providing supports for residents of the facility.” Without the business plan, without the information, Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to evaluate that. You are asking a government to fund something that has nothing to do — I am sure the Member for Mount Lorne will have his turn to get up, rather than making off-microphone comments that he's not responsible for. If he would listen, perhaps he would have a better understanding.

And to work “...with all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations and stakeholder groups to support a Housing First approach...” et cetera. It's a good thing, but again, the bulk of the motion is specific to one group, the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition. It asks the government to interfere with the process — to interfere with the project. I know the Liberals stand together. “They're all in that together,” as the Member for Kluane likes to say. They would interfere. We will not. We are going to follow the process.

We follow the process on the Peel watershed; we're not going to presuppose it and come to conclusions ahead of time. We follow the process under Chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*. The Liberals have been very clear that they wouldn't do that; they would insert themselves and interfere at every level.

Amendment proposed

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: With that background and some good information, I would like to move the following amendment to Motion No. 1123. I move

THAT Motion No. 1123 be amended by:

(1) deleting the words “support the efforts of” and replacing them with the words “work with”;

(2) adding a comma and the following words after the word “coalition”: “the Options for Independence Society and other associations.”;

(3) adding the words “and others with housing needs” after the word “population”; and

(4) deleting all of the words after the word “Whitehorse” and adding the following words: “and in other Yukon communities.”

Speaker: The amendment is in order. The amendment reads as follows:

THAT Motion No. 1123 be amended by:

(1) deleting the words “support the efforts of” and replacing them with the words “work with”;

(2) adding a comma and the following words after the word “coalition”: “the Options for Independence Society and other associations.”;

(3) adding the words “and others with housing needs” after the word “population”; and

(4) deleting all the words after the word “Whitehorse” and adding the following words: “and other Yukon communities.”

Minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation, you have 20 minutes on the amendment.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: I think I've given a pretty good overview of some of the concerns on this. I think on this side, we certainly agree with the need for housing and many of the things that have been spoken about in this House. The problem is that the motion is so restrictive and really hinges on the Liberal philosophy of interfering with independent boards and committees, and that's not acceptable to this government.

With that removed, and with an understanding that this government will not interfere with independent boards and

committees, then I think that it is a much better motion and I urge all members to support it.

Mr. Cardiff: Well, I'd just like to say that the minister's comments this afternoon are a good example of why the government needs to select a member to sit on the select committee responsible for legislative renewal, because quite frankly, the minister has not been constructive. I listened to the comments of the mover of the motion, who was constructive — that was the intent of the motion — but the minister hasn't been constructive with the consistent criticism, sniping, excuses, deflective language and repetitive language, which is one of the things we need to deal with in this Legislature. Basically —

Unparliamentary language

Speaker: I don't believe I have ever ruled on the term "sniping" in the past. I think it has an application; however, the honourable member is personalizing the debate. I know the honourable member is articulate enough to carry on this conversation without a personal attack on another member. The Member for Mount Lorne has the floor.

Mr. Cardiff: I will attempt to do better in my comments. The amendment to the motion I'm going to have a hard time supporting because I don't believe that it really embraces the intent of what it was that the Leader of the Official Opposition was trying to do. By the minister's admission, two or three proposals were put in front of the Yukon Housing Corporation.

The minister often criticizes members on this side of the Assembly for not doing their homework. Well, I would submit that the minister did not do his homework and he didn't read the proposal that was submitted by the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition. It takes away from the intent of the original motion by removing the words, "support the efforts of". When we talk about this, we have to realize that we're talking about the efforts of volunteers who are doing this off the side of their desks, on their kitchen tables, in coffee shops and restaurants and in meeting rooms on their own time. This isn't something that they necessarily do for a living. They're doing it because they believe in it. The housing situation and the statistics that I quoted in Question Period are deplorable, and he agreed with that. Yesterday we had this conversation about filling those gaps as well.

We in the Yukon had the distinct privilege of having someone with us who has some pretty broad knowledge about housing, not just in Yukon, but in Canada and what the needs are. I am going to read a few excerpts from this report from the Wellesley Institute. We were pleased to have a briefing with Mr. Shapcott, so I am going to read a little bit from this and then we'll get back to the motion.

"Precarious housing in Canada, whether defined by the level of inadequate or affordable housing, homelessness, or under-housing, can be solved in this decade;" — that's a can-do attitude, Mr. Speaker. "...the mechanisms already exist, but the will to do so must be nurtured" — which is what we're trying to do with the motion.

"People's ability to find, and afford, good quality housing is crucial to their overall health and well-being, and is a telling

index of the state of a country's social infrastructure. Lack of access to affordable and adequate housing is a pressing problem and precarious housing contributes to poorer health for many, which leads to pervasive but avoidable health inequalities.

"The lenses through which we consider precarious housing combine two concepts: health equity and the social determinants of health. Health equity suggests that the role of society is to reduce the health-disparities gap between those who are advantaged and those who are marginalized or disadvantaged by shifting the equity gradient upward. The social determinants of health recognize the non-medical and socio-economic contributors to better health. For example, the greater a population's income, education, access to health care and affordable housing, the better their health will be."

To take a little bit from that, that's what this group is trying to do. They are trying to equalize that and help those who are marginalized. We'll talk a little bit about where the O&M is going to come from because the minister didn't read the proposal.

I would also like to quote a little more from this report for the member's benefit: "Extensive literature exists on the powerful and adverse relationship between homelessness and poor mental and physical health. The evidence, both at a national and international level, indicates that individuals that are homeless tend to have multiple, complex health needs that are often exacerbated by periods of homelessness and/or stays in marginal or temporary accommodation.

"Epidemiological studies point to elevated rates of poor health among individuals who are homeless, including mental illness, infectious diseases such as HIV and TB, and substance-abuse related ailments and injuries.

"Much of our knowledge of the mental health issues for the marginally housed relies upon research conducted with the homeless who represent some of the most extreme life circumstances and, as a consequence, are likely to experience the most extreme rates of morbidity and early mortality. The health experiences of the hidden homeless have received little attention. There may be graduated improvements in health associated with improvements in housing stability. What little health research does exist in this area seems to support this theory."

That's what we're trying to do with the original motion and what is taken out with the amendment.

Housing insecurity and homelessness in Canada are like an iceberg — the biggest part of the problem is largely hidden from view. 'Unsheltered' people sleeping on benches in urban parks may be the most common image of Canada's housing troubles, but they represent just a fraction of the overall numbers. While the housing and service needs of people who are absolutely without a home are urgent, the needs of millions of other Canadians who are inadequately housed deserve serious attention and an effective response."

That's what I believe was the intent of the Leader of the Official Opposition in presenting the motion. The minister in his remarks, talked about the few projects that have been applied for under this phase 3 — which is focused on non-governmental organizations, I might add. I think that it would

be good for the government to support those non-governmental organizations and they could do that in a number of ways.

The minister likes to take credit for a lot; he likes to talk about the Habitat for Humanity project, which is largely built by volunteers, and another group of people who are working off the sides of their desks and in the living rooms and coffee shops of this territory. The minister talks about the Housing Corporation working with them. Well why can't the Housing Corporation work with the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition and support their efforts too in kind, the same way that they are working with Habitat for Humanity, where they provide technical advice, they've even provided land, which is one of the other things that a government can do to support some of these non-government organizations in the projects that they are trying to do.

Earlier I referred to those who are hard to house, and I talked about the social determinants and some of those who are hard to house. They're people who have illnesses; they are people who have addictions problems. If the minister would read who's on the steering committee — Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services, Blood Ties Four Directions, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon, the Salvation Army, the Yukon Status of Women Council, and the Second Opinion Society are all involved, and they represent those clients. That's what this report is talking about and that's why the motion was focused on this project. It's one of the projects that stands a chance to be successful and it meets a defined need.

I have to apologize for being so critical of the minister, but I heard the remarks of the mover of the motion, and he didn't have any criticism for the minister; he tried to do this in a constructive way and the minister, in turn, stood up and, in less than 60 seconds, immediately criticized members on this side of the House — and that's not constructive. That's the reason why we need that person on the select committee for legislative renewal.

We had this need in the Yukon and in Whitehorse, specifically, because that's where a lot of people are coming to receive the support they need. There are a lot of people who come from communities because the services these societies that are on the steering committee provide aren't available in rural Yukon necessarily, and they end up coming here to Whitehorse, living on the street, living precariously, couch surfing, living in substandard housing because they can't afford anything more.

I would encourage the minister to review and maybe even meet with the group, because I think the government can — and should be able to — support this.

One part of the motion that the minister takes issue with — and if he wanted to, he could have amended the motion to remove “directing the Minister of Health and Social Services and the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation to work together with the coalition...”. He could have changed that a little bit. He could have changed that, if he took exception to that and to have worded it so that, as opposed to “directing,” it was more like “working cooperatively.” I am sure that

the creative minds on that side could have come up with some other wording.

The other piece that the minister seems to take issue with — he definitely seemed to, because he removed “working with all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations, stakeholder groups to support a Housing First approach...”

So the minister doesn't support a Housing First approach to ending homelessness in the Yukon because he removed that. Maybe one of his colleagues could amend the motion.

But I would like to talk about the minister's concerns about operation and maintenance funding a little bit, before we wrap this up. If the minister read the proposal, he would find out that this was a 50:50 funded proposal — \$900,000 through the affordable housing initiative from Canada and the Yukon, and a total cost of \$1.8 million. Half of it is financing from the First Nations Bank. The projected revenue is basically — the minister mentioned this so he is aware of it — that they changed the definition of “rent”, so that basically the rent is the shelter portion of social assistance, because a large number of these individuals with addictions problems or health problems are going to be on social assistance. It makes sense that the Minister of Health and Social Services would be interested in this as well, and we'll get to that part.

So the projected yearly revenue is close to \$150,000 to meet the mortgage payments, and the O&M was \$132,000, with a net yearly income of \$16,000.

Then there were projected staffing costs. This is where the Minister of Health and Social Services comes in — and I see my time is running out. The request — and that's why it's in here — was for \$248,000 yearly for a program coordinator, case managers and resident support workers. There are also projected to be in-kind contributions from all of those people from all of those organizations that are sitting on the steering committee. When the minister talks about doing our homework, I would encourage him to look at the proposal and to have a better understanding of it and, what's more, to work with the organization and other organizations — that's why it's called the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition. The minister seems to think it's one organization. By the definition of the title, it's a coalition.

So there are many individual groups that are supporting many hard-to-house individuals with many needs. Some of the most important needs they have are those that will make improvements to their health. And this minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation and the Minister of Health and Social Services could do something positive by supporting it. I'm not saying “interfere”, I'm saying “support it”. Just come out publicly and say you support it. That's all we need.

Mr. Mitchell: Most of the points I would have made on the amendment were made more eloquently than I could have made them by the Member for Mount Lorne, and I thank him for his comments.

There used to be a comedy routine I can recall from the 1960s by Bill Cosby, entitled “Why Is There Air?” What's happening here this afternoon and what seems to happen al-

most every Wednesday afternoon is not a comedy; it's more of a tragedy that I would call, "Why Are We Here?"

There will certainly be adversarial debate in any Assembly. That's the nature of politics and we have 30 minutes of it every day in Question Period. That is to be expected, and as the Speaker has often noted: people will hold strong opinions and different opinions. I would really hope that on Wednesday afternoons we could get away from it. What we've seen in this sitting is one Wednesday afternoon where this same minister, the Housing minister, filibustered for three and a half hours to prevent others from having an opportunity to address a motion that they were interested in addressing. This is a different —

Speaker's statement

Speaker: Order please. I think the honourable member is imputing an intent to the minister. The way I understand it, the honourable member is saying here today that there was a predetermined desire on one member to speak so other members couldn't. That's out of order. Every member is allowed to speak in this House at length and that's why we have the rules that we follow. The Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase that. Unfortunately when one member speaks for the duration of the afternoon, it precludes other members getting into the debate. In fact, in my opening remarks this afternoon, I invited friendly amendments, and I recognized — as the minister pointed out — that there was an error in this motion when I first tabled it because it referred to March 31, 2011, whereas the funding that the motion speaks to actually has to be committed by March 31, 2012. I made mention of that when I said that we would welcome friendly amendments to the wording and to the deadlines because one can't amend one's own motion, so that's the way it is done, and there was certainly an opportunity to do that.

I can recognize when the minister says that there were three applicants; we were aware of that. We were aware that one application was rejected, but that two remained in the queue, and the minister has named one of the other ones here that remains in the queue — that being the Options for Independence Society. We don't have a problem; we wouldn't have a problem because the object of this is to address the need, and the need is supportive housing, supported living.

If the minister wanted simply to be more inclusive, that would have been perfectly acceptable and we would have seen that as a friendly amendment, but we feel that this amendment, as presented — although in order — really takes the heart and soul out of the intent of the motion that I brought forward to this House this afternoon. First of all, it weakens it because it deletes the words "support the efforts of" and simply says "work with". What does "work with" mean? It doesn't really tell us what the government's commitment would be, in saying "works with".

We're looking for the government to support a worthwhile project. As the Member for Mount Lorne has said, if the minister has a concern with the word "directing", the motion could easily have been amended to say "directing the Government of

Yukon to work with the coalition", rather than naming a minister or a department. Let the government decide how they want to do that. I mentioned earlier it doesn't have to require any single department. Funding and support can be done in a number of ways.

When the minister removes the three numbered sections, (1), (2) and (3) in the original motion, as the Member for Mount Lorne has said, the issue of operation and maintenance was addressed in the original application of the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition. I might suggest that it's also addressed in Challenge's application — and Challenge, as the member says, brings to the table equity in the land that's there. They also have some funding on hand themselves that they're prepared to dedicate to this. Northern City Supportive Housing has indicated on a cost-sharing basis how they would approach it and they have identified the fact that the government is spending money already for many of this clientele through social assistance and other O&M funding. So, yes, it could be better spent.

The minister said during his remarks, "What would the members remove? What would they cut from the budget?" Yes, we would suggest that it would be more creative to allow the money that is currently going to social assistance to keep people on a treadmill — that the identified clients who would become the accepted tenants in such a facility — that same money could go toward covering the O&M because, in effect, it would act like rent.

But the real concern that we have is the third portion, "working with all levels of government, non-government organizations, First Nations and stakeholder groups to support a Housing First approach to ending homelessness in Yukon." We don't have a problem if the minister and the government prefers supporting the efforts of more than one NGO, as the Member for Mount Lorne said and as the minister's amendment suggests. That's being inclusive, which is great. There certainly is an opportunity for there to be more than one project that moves forward over time, although as we all know, the finances are limited. We can't exactly do 20 things at once.

When the minister removes the wording that talks about working with all these NGOs, First Nations and stakeholder groups, to support a Housing First approach to ending homelessness in the Yukon, he has removed the heart and soul from the motion. That I cannot support. It may be in order, Mr. Speaker, by our rules, but it achieves nothing compared to what we were hoping to achieve today.

I brought forward this motion as a constructive motion. There has been lots of debate here and I recognize that this minister has been heavily involved in it, certainly in Question Period, as well as in the department debate on the Yukon Housing Corporation. Perhaps the minister simply couldn't resist an opportunity to carry forward with that debate, but I said I would be constructive today and that's what I did in the time that I spoke to the original motion. I did not criticize the government in any way. I did not criticize any departments and I certainly didn't criticize any ministers. That was the approach I had hoped we could have today.

There is something wrong with this Assembly. It does cause me to say: why are we here when anything that a member brings forward constructively has to turn into a “gotcha” style of debating, and doesn’t deal with the issues at hand? I think it does a disservice to the volunteers who work with the non-governmental organizations, and there are many of them that have been cited today. They don’t want to see that happen. We don’t want to see that happen. The government shouldn’t want to see that happen. Although it is no doubt preordained, based on the numbers in this House, we will be voting against this amendment because we feel that it is empty of the action that needs to be taken if it’s carried forward in that manner.

Mr. Fairclough: I’d like to also speak briefly on the amendment put forward by the MLA for Porter Creek North. This is an example of how the Yukon Party has conducted business in this House. We have brought forward motions to debate on the floor of this House. They come back with the Yukon Party spin on it.

We felt, and we feel, that the amendment that has been put forward has changed the motion dramatically, and steers away from the supporting efforts that NGOs and organizations out there have put forward and brought forward to the Official Opposition and, I’m sure, to government, and to the Third Party, asking that work be done in this manner. The minister feels that replacing the words “support the efforts of” and inserting “work with” is an improvement to the motion that was presented. I would think that governments should be working with organizations and NGOs anyway, but they put a tremendous amount of effort into direction to governments, to municipalities and to First Nations for the good of the people out there. That’s why we had those words “to support the efforts of” in there.

We had thought that the motion that was presented originally was one that government could support. They could amend it, but not gut it, not change it, not that dramatically. I mean, improve it — everybody has the right to do that. Even the government side said so with any one of the motions that come forward to the floor of this Legislature. Anyone out there listening to the mover of the amendments to this motion would not feel comfortable in how the government is conducting themselves in this House.

I really feel that none of the government side is speaking to this amendment, so the minister — the MLA for Porter Creek North — is taking on this task, it appears, on his own, because nobody else wants to talk to it. None of them wanted to talk to it. They have put him front and centre in trying to relay a message to the public out there about the Official Opposition. Whenever that member speaks, it goes to show how bad it is on that side of the House and how divisive it is on the government side.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Point of order

Speaker: Member for Klondike, on the point of order.

Mr. Nordick: Mr. Speaker, the debate today is supposed to be about an amendment; it’s not supposed to be about personal attacks. I feel that the member is not currently speak-

ing on the amendment; he is just making personal attacks against the mover of the amendment.

Speaker: Mr. Fairclough, on the point of order.

Mr. Fairclough: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am just carrying on the line of discussion as it is taking place from the mover of the amendment.

Speaker’s ruling

Speaker: From the Chair’s perspective, there is no point of order. No Standing Order was cited. I can’t think the Standing Order that may be applicable; however, honourable members, we have talked about this before. If you don’t want harsh words thrown back at you, don’t say them.

Member for Mayo-Tatchun, you have the floor.

Mr. Fairclough: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that clarification.

It is too bad that we can’t work more cooperatively in this House. It is too bad that amendments like this have come forward. It is too bad that the government felt that a major change to the motion had to take place. It is too bad that they felt they need to have that control in this House over direction is given to government through a motion like this. It is too bad that they had to change the motion so dramatically that it gutted the original motion.

Like the Member for Copperbelt said, we can’t support this. We can’t. Why didn’t the government think about this a little bit more? Why didn’t they put their thinking caps on, look at this motion with a lot more seriousness than I think has taken place here? The Housing minister could have gone to the Official Opposition and said, “Look, this is where the improvements could be made,” instead of speaking over an hour about Liberal positions that he presumes on things that don’t even relate to this motion.

Why didn’t they do that? They promised to improve decorum in this House. They wanted to raise the bar and we’ve seen nothing but the contrary, particularly from the Minister of the Yukon Housing Corporation. It’s reflecting very well out there in the public. We’ve hearing it over and over from the voters out there. It reflects on his team. They’re all painted with that brush. They sat there today listening to the member opposite and didn’t say a thing or even write a note to the minister, and then he moves an amendment like this.

Mr. Speaker, we can’t support it.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the amendment? Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.
Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.
Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.
Mr. Nordick: Agree.
Mr. Mitchell: Disagree.
Mr. Fairclough: Disagree.
Mr. Inverarity: Disagree.
Mr. Cardiff: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 8 yeas, four nays.

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

Amendment agreed to

Speaker: Is there debate on the main motion as amended?

Mr. Cardiff: Well, unfortunately, for all the reasons that I stated earlier when speaking to the amendment, I'm not going to be able to support the amended motion. This is another example, I believe, of why we need to get down to the hard work, roll up our sleeves and do the work around legislative renewal so that we don't witness what we have witnessed here this afternoon.

The amendment took away from the intent of the original motion specifically by removing the support to a Housing First approach to ending homelessness in the Yukon. I believe that by supporting the organization that had put forward the proposal, we were supporting many organizations and the needs of many of those who are difficult to house and who are living in very precarious situations with immense needs. I would hope that the ministers — all the ministers on that side, for that matter — would take a closer look at what was being proposed, or what is being proposed, because I still think that it's a proposal that's very much alive. I don't appreciate the deconstructive nature of the amendment or the comments by the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

We had an opportunity, I believe, to do something constructive and beneficial for some of those most marginalized and most in need here in the Yukon. But the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, with the support of his colleagues, basically ditched the effort that was made by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I would encourage them to review the proposal — to look at it closely, to look at what they can do with their departments, working without boundaries — not working within those silos — to ensure the success of this project, which is supported by many community groups and addresses a real need here in the Yukon.

The proposal — and it's just the first of what could be many positive steps — but the proposal was to house 20 individuals who are living in very precarious situations, and situations where they don't have the supports they need in order to get by from day to day.

I believe that, for those reasons, I unfortunately will not be able to support the amended motion. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Horne: In assessing this amended motion, I think that the key thing that the opposition wants to talk about is addressing homelessness. I was astonished to read the motion, because just yesterday in Question Period, the Official Opposition alleged that the minister had interfered in the work of an arm's-length board and we were chastised by him for doing so.

Then I see they called a motion for debate that in points (1) and (2) calls on ministers to interfere with what appears to be an arm's-length board to ensure that a project is approved and the budget is spent within six months. Never mind that they are a coalition, the opposition wants the ministers to wade in there and force them to plan, approve and spend — all within six months and over the winter as well.

You know, we just had a meeting with Michael Shapcott last week and it was very interesting to speak with him and to learn that we are addressing a lot of the issues that are general across Canada, in that 44 percent of the homes require renovations, and that we are in the midst of doing just that. The First Nations are responsible for their homes — the renovations thereof — and they are funded separately from the Yukon government, although the Yukon government does funnel money to First Nations. I was very pleased — and it was acknowledged in that meeting — that we are working toward helping the people who need homes — those who are most in need of a home.

It's amazing to think of how much has changed since we took office in 2002. Back then, when we took office from the Liberals, the biggest housing problem people had was figuring out who they could sell it to. Back then, given the Liberals' management of the economy, it was a buyer's market. That has changed today. It wasn't just a Whitehorse problem either. I mentioned earlier that under the Liberals' watch, my riding's population suffered a great decline. The next biggest problem they had was finding a U-Haul in the territory.

Now, when I talk to people looking to move to the Yukon, the challenge they face is finding housing options. As I looked at this amended motion, I asked myself: what is this motion trying to accomplish? I think that we need to recognize that the best solution to housing is to empower people to make their own choices and their own decisions. That means allowing the marketplace to establish the supply, the demand, and the price for the goods. We have been working diligently since taking office in 2002 to rebuild our economy so that Yukoners have jobs that will pay for their housing needs, and an economy that will encourage people to invest in Yukon real estate.

I believe that in one particular month — October 2008 — under our watch, more lots were sold than were sold in the entire years of 2000 or 2001 under the Liberals. We recognize that some people will not, for various reasons, be able to afford to pay the fair market value to rent their housing. In response, we have been working with Canada and other partners to address this need for affordable housing.

I would like to talk about our partnership with Canada for a few minutes. The Prime Minister announced almost \$24 million in August as part of the federal and territorial govern-

ments' continued support for affordable housing options for Canadians living in the north. The Government of Canada is providing close to \$22 million toward the 323 new and existing housing units through Canada's economic action plan, the government's plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs during the global recession.

The Yukon government is providing some \$1,810,000 toward the action plan funding. New construction projects will meet Yukon's SuperGreen home energy efficiency standards and accommodating home standards for a barrier-free living environment for residents with disabilities.

Recognizing the distinctive needs of the north, Canada's economic action plan provides \$50 million for Yukon over two years to support the renovation and construction of new social housing units. For Yukon, this represents a further federal investment of \$1 million, which is being cost-matched by Yukon. These funds can be invested in repairs that include general improvements, energy efficiency upgrades or conversions, and modifications to support people with disabilities. In Teslin, this money is being spent on five existing social housing units with \$30,000 from Canada and \$30,000 from Yukon.

We have money through the northern housing project, which does not require the territory to cost share. In my riding this means an investment in Ross River: \$59,947 to renovate two homes. In Teslin, \$121,735 will be spent to renovate two homes, but our collaborative work with Canada goes far beyond renovations. In my riding, for example, we recently opened the Faro complex for seniors, which will provide six new housing units.

Funding from Canada has enabled the Yukon government to construct significant housing projects in the territory. While I was in Faro, residents were sharing with me what a long time it had been since a new building was constructed in the community of Faro.

The new seniors residence contains six single-bedroom units. The building meets Yukon SuperGreen home energy efficiency standards and accommodating home standards for a barrier-free living environment. Tenants will start moving in this fall. Along with the \$2 million federal contribution, the project also includes \$200,000 in funding from Yukon's seniors housing management fund.

We also have work ongoing in Teslin. I understand that interior work is ongoing and includes kitchen millwork, flooring, and mechanical and electrical finishing. As the MLA for Faro and Teslin, I want to say how profoundly appreciative we are of this investment in our communities. Let me share with you some of the work in other communities.

In Haines Junction, we added nine seniors units. In Dawson, a new 19-unit residence is under construction to replace the 13-unit Korbo Apartments, making a net gain of six more social units. In Watson Lake, we are building 12 new seniors units.

Building seniors housing in the rural communities is extremely important because our seniors buildings are built to promote independent living and the opportunity for seniors to reside in a barrier-free environment, thus enabling seniors to remain in their community. The five-year trend shows that all

communities have grown in overall population size, and the people over 50 years of age in each community are forming a larger percentage of the overall demographic. We're also working with the Department of Health and Social Services on a new Abbeyfield project for seniors in Whitehorse.

I want to look back to a few selected examples in Whitehorse. In November 2005, the Government of Canada and the Yukon government announced that they would provide \$3.5 million under the Canada-Yukon affordable housing agreements toward the construction of 48 new units of affordable housing here in Whitehorse. The athletes village residences consist of two, three-storey buildings that temporarily lodged athletes and coaches during the 2007 Canada Winter Games. It then became an affordable housing apartment and a Yukon College student family residence.

I understand that these buildings feature one- and two-bedroom units with barrier-free access design standards to accommodate mobility-impaired residents. In 2007, the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation announced a new social housing policy to benefit those in greatest need. For years, obtaining social housing was based primarily on an applicant's household income being lower than the identified income threshold. Asset value is now also used to determine the applicant's eligibility for the program, as well as the client's priority placement.

There are some exceptions to the application of the asset policy, specifically relating to victims of violence and seniors requiring relocation due to medical needs. It was just over two years ago that Yukon Housing Corporation and Habitat for Humanity announced they were joining forces to build a new multi-family project in downtown Whitehorse. As per Habitat for Humanity requirements, the home has been built by volunteers, homeowners and businesses, using cost-reduced or donated materials.

As the Minister of Justice, I am pleased to see that a notorious address, 810 Wheeler Street, converted to a property that is a benefit to the community. I think the name, Phoenix Rising, is so appropriate because out of the ashes of a very tragic situation arose an opportunity for us to provide a few families with safe and affordable housing.

Of course, we also have the new Whitehorse affordable family housing complex in Riverdale. We are extremely pleased that we have been able to provide more housing units for single-parent families. This project came about because of the consultation that we did in 2008. The research confirmed that the highest priority was for single-parent families. That consultation also indicated that the complex should be open to families led by both single moms and single dads. This was validated by statistical evidence. I did tour the facility and I'm very impressed with its safety, with the security aspects of the overall building, and also very impressed with the SuperGreen aspects of it.

I look at all the units that have been added to the inventory of social housing in Yukon. We really have done a lot to address housing for those in need in Yukon. We have increased Yukon's housing portfolio by 158 units or approximately 40 percent. My colleague, the minister responsible for the Yukon

Housing Corporation, has noted that the corporation operates 576 social housing units in 10 communities. Since 2005, this government has invested almost \$100 million in new, affordable housing throughout Yukon. In addition to the project in Riverdale that I have already noted, we added six more family units in Ingram subdivision and will be starting construction shortly on another six units in Takhini.

A new 30-unit seniors building is underway in Whitehorse on the riverfront to replace the aging 13-unit Alexander Street residence and there are plans for more housing for seniors in Whitehorse. As well, we have constructed 48 new units for seniors near Yukon College and another 24 affordable housing units for student families, which the Yukon College manages.

We worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to build a new children's receiving home. The children's receiving home is a temporary home for children and youth who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect and who need a period of assessment and stabilization.

Since 2002-03, Yukon Housing Corporation has loaned over \$71 million to Yukoners to help address housing needs. Almost all of this money is repayable with interest, save for a small percentage of repair loans, which have subsidies to further assist applicants most in need.

In addition to our Yukon Housing Corporation projects, we've been involved with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is an important partner in housing and Yukon Housing Corporation will continue to work with this organization in a productive manner to address the need for affordable housing. In addition, Yukon Housing Corporation will provide free-of-charge, ongoing technical assistance to the organization to assist them to build to the SuperGreen standard.

Another way we are helping to house Yukoners, combat homelessness and provide more housing is through our rental suite program with repair and construction funding. This program provides preferred interest rate loans to homeowners who have an accessory suite in their home. Funding can be for full modernization or to upgrade health and safety items to allow the suite to conform to bylaw requirements. We also help with our rental rehabilitation program, which provides funding for rental property upgrades.

In the near future, Yukon Housing Corporation plans to issue tenders for a project in Takhini North, an Abbeyfield seniors building, the replacement of double-wide modular houses in rural Yukon and multiple tenders for the upgrade of existing buildings. Yukon Housing Corporation estimates that after the completion of the new buildings, Yukon Housing Corporation will have an additional 101 — wow, 101 — affordable housing units in its portfolio.

This issue is very dear to my heart. I know that we need homes for people who cannot afford to buy homes on their own, who have families with very low incomes — and we are addressing this need. We have done it through consultation throughout the Yukon; we are providing for those people who are in need and we continue to improve our stock of homes for those who need it. I am proud to be with this government and

proud of what we have done for those in need, who need homes, families who need help.

Hon. Mr. Hart: I won't be very long for the members here. I would just like to take a few minutes to indicate that the Department of Health and Social Services has been working with many stakeholders involved in homeless issues throughout the Yukon in the past six to eight months and we've been working very closely with them on the issue of housing. We have been working, as has been stated in the House previously, on collecting the data in conjunction with them and then getting them to assist us in the development of that data so that we can at least have a basis from which to work and have some sort of idea what the problem may look like, as far as numbers may go.

We anticipate — as I said, we'll utilize the results of that information for our symposium early in the new year — probably in January — and we will go forth from there, prioritize our issues and get the input. As the member opposite has indicated I think several times, we'll be looking for the input from those who are affected most, just like we are looking to our task force with regard to individuals who are chronically inebriated. We have direct contact with those individuals; we will be having direct contact with individuals who are homeless in one way or another throughout the Yukon, and we are dealing with them. We are consulting with them to get their input — to give us some information so that we can go forth. We are doing that; we anticipate, again, having the basis of information so that we can go forth early in the new year.

All my colleagues have previously mentioned many of the programs that have been provided by this Yukon government and funding to assist with housing throughout the Yukon. I believe that the Housing minister has articulated quite well just exactly what each program has provided — how many housing numbers have been provided. The Minister of Justice has also reiterated some of those comments and put forth her issues on that point.

We have put through the new affordable housing facility in Riverdale. I, too, went through that facility. We went to view it along with several other NGOs and representatives who were there to look at the facility. I can't say that I heard any negative comments — maybe storage being one issue. But in essence, the facility was quite large and quite nice.

I have to say that that we're providing these units to single-parent families and they're all needed. I anticipate there's a long list of individuals wanting to get into that facility. I look forward to Yukon Housing Corporation and Women's Directorate getting our individuals into that facility, getting individuals living in that area into affordable and nice housing facilities.

In essence, again, there's a lot of information provided with regard to programs that have been done. I notice that the Korbo Apartments had not been indicated in discussions, but again, it's another large facility being built in Dawson City — as well as the replacement for the Alexander Street unit, which is 30 units being built on the waterfront. Again, a very nice improvement for that facility — for those individuals living at the Alexander Street unit — so I believe it'll be a really nice

facility when it's completed. I understand that, in fact, the top floor will be sort of like a carport where, in fact, many of the individuals will be able to utilize the top floor for shuffleboard and other things, like exercising outdoors under cover.

We are also working very closely with all our groups in trying to get all the aspects required on social inclusion, including First Nations and the NGOs with which we are working. I look forward to that process and the results of the same coming in the very near future. I will be looking forward to attending those facilities early in the new year.

Speaker: If the honourable member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

Mr. Mitchell: I have already indicated my difficulty with the amendment; therefore, obviously I would have to struggle to support this motion as amended. I am disappointed that I am not able to support the motion as amended. I was quite open to there being changes but, unfortunately, it no longer includes the actions originally included in the motion. It's clearly a very different motion.

The Justice minister spoke to some of what's being done to create more housing opportunities for people who want to move to Yukon and there were statements about how people used to have to leave and such. I'll only say to that, that's all well and good, but this motion spoke to creating an actual housing opportunity for Yukoners who are living here now, but living on the very edge of society. That's what this motion was meant to do.

We don't disagree with creating more housing opportunities for more people to move here. This motion was intended to speak to a very real need for a very real group of people. They are out there; we all see them; we know they are there. We talk about them under many different parts of the budget. We talk about them when we debate issues having to do with justice; we talk about them when we talk about chronically inebriated people; we talk about them when we talk about youth at risk. There is a group of people out there and this motion was meant to do something positive on their behalf.

Since the portion that I find most difficult — besides not actually saying that we're going to support this proposal, which the motion no longer does — is the portion that talks about a Housing First approach, I'm going to take just a few seconds or a minute to talk very briefly about what that is.

My colleague for Porter Creek South was going to address that in his remarks, but I will do it here so we can get this to a vote and move on.

Housing first: a model to live by — the continuum of FASD and the benefit of 'housing first'. This is in fact a presentation — like a PowerPoint presentation — by the very organization that we were speaking about today, the Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition.

"First things first: housing is a basic human right, not a reward for conformity, recovery or clinical success. The housing first philosophy: individuals are better able to heal when they have a place to call home. Stable housing enables individuals to better address barriers and enact their goals.

"Core principles: access is low-barrier and follows a harm-reduction philosophy: abstinence is not required; zero treatment is required. Engagement and services are client-centered and individualized — there is a continuum of care. On-site and community support: comprehensive, intensive, integrated services; individuals actively encouraged to participate.

"Research says housing first models are evidence-based and lead to: higher housing stabilization; increased participation in services — more successful than with mandated programs; decreased involvement in criminal activity; increase in confidence and motivation; cost-effective service delivery; increased community collaboration.

"FASD and housing — what we know: housing is a protective factor; one size does not fit all; stable housing may reduce the effects of secondary disabilities; 'it was strongly recommended that a zero-tolerance policy in housing be viewed as not only unrealistic, but highly detrimental to the success of maintaining housing placements for older adolescents and adults with FASD.'

"The connection... the principle: low barrier, how this relates — decreases the challenge of navigating housing systems, validates housing readiness."

The principle of harm reduction: "encourages a person to care for basic needs first, accepts reality and complexity of people's lives, decreases risk associated with high-risk behaviours."

The principle of individualized service: "intensive long-term advocacy and case management, client can take part in daily living in a meaningful way."

The principle of on-site support: "navigating the city and systems no longer a barrier."

The principle of being client centred: "client can choose if, how and when to be involved; participation in healing treatment is a collaborative process."

Circles of support: "community collaboration is at the heart of a housing first philosophy; community collaboration also needs to be at the heart of our work with individuals who have FASD."

The Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition has put this forward "in the spirit of safe and affordable housing for all." The Northern City Supportive Housing Coalition's vision is to "provide 20 units of low-barrier and affordable housing to Whitehorse's most marginalized individuals." Their objectives are "safe, welcoming and healing spaces; community collaboration at the core; integrate green building and accommodating technologies; prioritize financial sustainability and operation management."

This is what I hoped we could have moved toward today; we won't, the way this motion is, but nevertheless I thank all members for their contribution to the debate.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question on the motion as amended?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Speaker: Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

Hon. Mr. Fentie: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Hart: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Kenyon: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Rouble: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Lang: Agree.

Hon. Ms. Horne: Agree.

Hon. Mr. Edzerza: Agree.

Mr. Nordick: Agree.

Mr. Mitchell: Disagree.

Mr. Fairclough: Disagree.

Mr. Inverarity: Disagree.

Mr. Cardiff: Disagree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are nine yea, four nay.

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

Motion No. 1123 agreed to as amended

Motion No. 122

Clerk: Motion No. 122, standing in the name of Mr. Cardiff.

Speaker: It is moved by the Leader of the Third Party

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to honour the commitment in the 2001 Yukon literacy strategy to make literacy programming accessible to all Yukon people, to develop partnerships with First Nation communities and to provide multi-year funding that would be relevant and accessible for communities at levels consistent with community training funds.

Mr. Cardiff: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to rise today to speak to this motion, but it's with some disappointment that we have to debate an issue like this, because I believe that much more should be done and could be done to address the needs in our Yukon community when it comes to literacy. I want to begin by describing the need. The need is that — we'll get into some of the statistics and the surveys a little bit later this afternoon — basically illiterate adults don't have the tools for their full participation in society. The inability to read and write and to have basic numeracy means a number of things. It can lead to problems with health and nutrition.

There is an inability to read things like the Canada Food Guide or labels on food products to make the right choices and be informed about what those right choices are. If you can't read or write or understand the numbers, you have a hard time making those choices and you end up being in need of supportive housing, for starters, because your health is poor. There's a whole litany of health problems that could befall you; it could affect your employment and your social condition. With regard to health specifically and access to health care, if you can't fill out the forms, you're going to have a hard time accessing the health care system. You're going to have a hard time under-

standing, again, what the right choices are to make about your health situation.

Workplace safety is something that I think is very important. You have to understand the information about the roles, about workplace safety and the signs that identify the hazards. If you don't have those basic literacy skills — the ability to read and write — your workplace safety will be compromised. That's an added cost to society. We have problems with workplace safety, we have nutrition problems, and we have access to health care being problems for these individuals. When it comes to housing, there is the ability to know what your rights are. The *Landlord and Tenant Act* may be difficult to read for those of us who have moderate literacy skills.

But if you're totally illiterate, then you're not going to be able to understand what the legislation says, or what the information says and that's going to affect your ability to find housing and your ability to know what your rights are with regard to your housing situation.

Most of these people — a lot of them — are over-represented in our justice system. A lot of them would be working in the lowest paid and the most insecure jobs in the workplace. The inability to read and write and have those basic numeracy skills — if that's the situation you are in, your ability to participate fully in the workforce is going to be compromised. I can tell you from my experience as a journeyman sheet-metal worker that it is very important, and one of the things I always stressed to the apprentices and other people I was working with was: read the instructions.

There is nothing worse than pulling a piece of equipment out of a box that requires some assembly and not reading the instructions. Regardless of how many times you've put the piece of equipment together before, sometimes things change. So it's important to be able to read the instructions and to understand how it goes, because the cost to your employer if you don't follow the instructions could be enormous, depending on what piece of equipment it is that you're assembling. If you're installing it incorrectly — if you're not following the instructions, and if you can't read the instructions, then how are you going to know?

If you install it incorrectly, it could cause damage to the piece of equipment; it could cause damage to the building or the unit that the piece of equipment is being installed in; and it could pose health and safety risks to the individuals you're working for, or the home that you're installing it in or the office that you're installing it in.

Statistics would also show that most of these individuals would experience twice the rate of unemployment, and that only makes sense: if you don't have the skills — if you can't read and write — there are certain jobs that are going to be out of your reach. Hence, you're either unemployed or you would be working in those lowest paid and insecure jobs.

It often leads to the marginalization of women. Women with low literacy skills can't aspire to working in many of these jobs. Part of the reason — if you're an illiterate woman, your access to training to increase your literacy skills is often difficult. Women are marginalized because of their childcare responsibilities. We need to do something better to assist those

women in achieving their goals and being able to gain those literacy skills, so they can become active participants in the workforce and can understand better and make those decisions, not only for themselves about their health and nutrition, but about their children and their health and their nutrition — also, to be able to assist them when they enter the education system.

Non-literate adults also, I would argue, lack active participation in democratic institutions such as elections and consultations. A primary example of this: I attended the policing review held earlier this summer at the Gold Rush Inn, and some questionnaires were handed out. It was a participatory thing where individuals around the table picked questions and surveyed other participants at the table.

Now, if you were unable to read what the questions were that you were supposed to be asking, and you were unable to write, your ability to participate in that process would be hindered. That may be why several individuals who had attended the meeting — because they thought that they had something to offer, they wanted to be there, they wanted to contribute to the police review, talk about their experiences — felt uncomfortable, because there's a certain stigma around being illiterate. Not being able to participate, there were a number of people who left and I think that that's unfortunate. That speaks to why we need to do more in the area of adult literacy.

As I said, it negatively would affect children's welfare if parents were unable to read and write and make those good decisions about education, health and nutrition. All these conditions cost taxpayers enormously in the long run. An investment in adult literacy would save money. The problems we have with literacy lead to poverty. They lead to homelessness. They lead to unemployment. They lead to these persons being socially excluded, just like they felt excluded at the police review meeting. By investing in these adults, we would actually be building something that the Premier and members on the other side like to talk about: our fiscal capacity.

I would like to review briefly some of the things that have been done with literacy and some of the reports. In 1996, there was the Yukon training strategy. In 1992, there was a revision of the training strategy. In 1993, there was the first Yukon literacy strategy. There was a revised training strategy in 1998. In 2001, there was a new literacy strategy that was intended to be a 10-year plan. I would assume that there would probably be a further review coming down the road. There have been reviews of it.

So in 2001, it established a community literacy fund to be administered by the Literacy Action Committee. The Literacy Action Committee had the capacity to approve multi-year funding with an emphasis on programs rather than projects. One of the criteria is that the literacy fund would be similar to those training trust funds and the funds would be relevant and accessible for communities.

The Literacy Action Committee, as I said, would have the capacity to approve multi-year funding with an emphasis on the programs rather than the projects but the maximum funding was \$6,000 per project for a multi-year program, which is a far cry from what the training trust funds were, which amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars. The literacy strategy was

reviewed to assess its effectiveness. There were community consultations; there was a summit meeting and there was supposed to be a draft of recommendations for the minister.

In 2007 or 2008, there was a final report and the recommendations that came from that literacy summit included support for sustainable literacy programs through the Literacy Action Committee; research the possibility of ongoing funding for literacy, especially community initiatives; the creation of a literacy partnerships coordinator position within Advanced Education; the research, design and provision of literacy programming; and building a model for First Nation literacy strategy.

We've had studies, studies and more studies, and reviews of studies, and strategies, and I think they all tell us the same thing. The International Adult Literacy Skills Survey, done in 2005, showed that the Yukon had the highest rate of literacy in the country — amazing. Thirty-three percent of the Yukon population scored at the lower levels; in Canada, the average was 48 percent. So one-third of the Yukon population was still performing below the threshold for coping with the increased skill demands of a knowledge society.

Now I heard the minister last week use this statistic to make us look good here in the Yukon. The reality is that the survey — and the minister knows this, although he might want to talk to the former Minister of Education because I know the former Minister of Education was at the briefing that was provided on this survey. It's not only misleading, but it's detrimental and it leads to the complacency by this minister about funding literacy in the Yukon. The survey, for starters, didn't gather data from rural communities or those adults whose first language was neither French nor English. If you looked at the deeper analysis that was done by the Yukon Literacy Coalition, it showed that there was a large disparity between the education and literacy levels of rural Yukon and those living in Whitehorse. Rural communities, First Nation communities and Yukon-born people actually have much lower literacy rates — that's from Census Canada — than the average Yukon level.

Some important points from the reports: the department professes to have lifelong learning as an objective, but it is not putting the resources needed into adult literacy. It's ignoring those needs. The recommendations of the Literacy Action Committee in the review report have not been followed. The Literacy Action Committee has disappeared since 2007. The government has not advertised for any projects or programs, and therefore the committee has not met. These were individuals from our community who are dedicated to trying to make a difference in our society and to help those people with low literacy skills.

The education reform report in 2007 stated that “the Literacy Action Committee... helps programs acquire developmentally appropriate learning materials and assists children with communication and literacy skills.”

So it assists children with communication and literacy skills. The focus of this motion is actually about funding literacy programs for adults — for those in need. I mean, there are a lot of programs. What happens is that the minister places most government support for literacy in the early childhood and the elementary educational levels. When asked about this

back in 2006 and in 2007, he provided me with a document of literacy initiatives. The list was Yukon Learn, which does do adult literacy — that's what their focus is — the home tutoring program, which was mostly targeted at tutoring kids in school who are having problems with literacy.

Reading Recovery is \$1.7 million, but that's in the public school system for our children. It's good that we are focusing there, as well. Literacy for math and other school programs; full-day kindergarten is \$1.9 million — that's considered by the minister as a literacy initiative. Yukon essential skills program at \$136,000 — Yukon Literacy Coalition gets \$10,000. Yukon Learn got a quarter of a million dollars; the Literacy Action Committee got \$120,000. The Whitehorse Correctional Centre got \$50,000 and I would argue that that is money for adults, but we need to focus on some of the things that the partners at the summit recommended.

Making literacy resources widely available on-line; community support for literacy programs; professional training in literacy; annual reviews of community literacy plans; a literacy partnerships coordinator; a focus on literacy for special needs adults; research of literacy education models; the development of assessment goals to see whether or not we're actually meeting the needs of those people who are in need of assistance when it comes to developing their literacy and numeracy skills so that they can participate in society and in the workforce; creating adult culturally relevant materials and at least one full-time person per community to coordinate literacy.

Those recommendations haven't been acted on and an example of that is that the computer drop-in program at Yukon Learn has been dropped because they can't afford the technical help and the instructors to keep up with the demand. The demand is there, but there is no indication from the Minister of Education regarding funding for that initiative.

There is another survey that is going to be coming up; hopefully that will give more help and more information to the minister so that he realizes what the problem is. The problem, though, with that is that many of these individuals can't wait. Like I said, they're marginalized — a lot of them. Just like if you're homeless, literacy is causing problems with your health and your ability to obtain housing.

So the Yukon will be taking part in this survey, and it is part of a three-year program from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development starting in 2011, which will develop a strategy for a program for the international assessment for adult competencies. Key concerns are productivity, demand for competencies, globalization, skill implications, rapid population aging, problems of the labour market transition for young adults, performance of education systems and labour markets, and wider economic and social concerns.

As a first priority, it is expected the survey will directly assess competencies in the domains of literacy, numeracy, problem-solving and information technology across all age groups. It's expected to cost about \$450 per person interviewed for the research. While research into literacy rates in the Yukon is needed, what we're saying through this motion is that program support and development is essential now — not in response to research that will be at least three years or probably more into

the future. The evidence is there now. We have low graduation rates; we have school dropout rates that show that adult literacy is not what it should be, particularly in the Yukon.

We've talked about the need to respect people — all Yukon people — regardless of their culture, age, gender, ability, financial means or location. The present literacy policy pushes aside Yukon First Nations and adults, and that's where the greatest need is. I'm not saying not to invest in the education system for our children; I'm saying we need to do more for adults.

We need to develop partnerships with First Nation communities. It needs to be a priority. I don't believe there are any First Nation language literacy programs. There is very little rural community involvement in adult literacy. There is no formal partnership with First Nation administrations in education. The literacy-based challenges of self-government and land claims have not been addressed for these communities.

We also want to see multi-year funding that would be relevant and accessible. So what could the government do? We would commend the government for the social inclusion thrust, but we need to act on the objectives of social inclusion and the elimination of poverty and one of the big factors of that is illiterate adults.

Poverty is not just the lack of money and illiteracy is not just a lack of reading ability. Both come about because of a lack of choice and opportunities in society. Literacy is power; it's what gives people the ability to participate. That's why those individuals left that meeting — they felt powerless to participate in the process.

There are some things the government could do to alleviate the drain on Yukon's productivity and the social and financial costs of illiteracy. The government does need to gather thorough and reliable statistics about literacy and poverty. It needs to make job creation a priority. It needs to build affordable social housing with flexible renting options that also support individuals and their needs and their literacy. The government could give childcare support generously to individuals seeking literacy training; it could legislate a living wage policy, as opposed to a minimum wage policy, so that people aren't struggling in their attempts to access literacy programs.

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

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Debate on Motion No. 122 accordingly adjourned