

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Wednesday, May 2, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.**

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

*Prayers*

**DAILY ROUTINE**

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

Tributes.

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of the Rick Hansen Foundation**

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** I rise on behalf of the House today to honour the Rick Hansen Foundation, whose goal is to build a healthy and inclusive world. Twenty-five years ago, Rick Hansen wheeled through 34 countries in 26 months to complete his now-famous Man in Motion Tour. His incredible worldwide journey electrified and inspired an entire nation to believe that anything is possible and moved thousands of people to make a difference in their communities.

Since 1988, the foundation has funded research to provide better care and outcomes for those who sustain a spinal cord injury and contributed to improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

The results are tangible: more accessible physical spaces and modes of transportation, more services and programs for those with disabilities, more people walking again after spinal cord injuries, and improved medical treatment for those with spinal cord and related injuries.

This government, and in particular, the Department of Health and Social Services, shares the foundation's goals and supports people with disabilities in a number of ways.

The Family Supports for Children with Disabilities unit promotes early intervention to increase a child's lifelong learning potential, coordinated access to supports and interventions and inclusion of children with disabilities in community life.

Adult community services provide employment, counselling, income assistance and supportive outreach services. The department also houses a suite of decision-making legislation to protect Yukoners, whether temporarily or permanently disabled.

The *Decision Making, Support and Protection to Adults Act*, the *Care Consent Act*, which applies to children as well as adults, and the *Public Guardian and Trustee Act*, protect the rights of Yukoners who are unable, through disability or illness, to make decisions for themselves.

As well, through its Mental Health Services palliative care program, residential care programs, and respite care services, the department offers support to Yukoners at all stages of life and at all levels of ability. Also, almost every other department in government offers some form of assistance to help Yukoners dealing with disabilities.

Earlier this year I had the honour and privilege to meet Rick Hansen at an event with the Yukon Council on Disability and the Yukon Solutions Team right here in the legislative building. It was a great opportunity to acknowledge the success of this government's investment in the Rick Hansen Institute's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary legacy fund initiative. Five years ago, in 2007, the Yukon government entered into a partnership with the Rick Hansen Institute to provide \$100,000, or \$20,000 a year, to help create more accessible and inclusive communities for people with spinal cord injuries and mobility disabilities.

What we found encouraging then and now is that this money was used in the Yukon for Yukon residents. The money flowed from the Rick Hansen Institute to the local group specially created, the Yukon Solutions Team. This is a small amount of money that provides huge benefits to individuals and helps improve health outcomes and enhance the quality of life for its participants. We look forward to our continued partnership with Mr. Hansen's foundation and more successful projects from the Yukon Solutions Team.

I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about a couple of people I know personally who have been inspired by Mr. Hansen. First off, at the meeting with Rick Hansen and the Yukon Council on Disability.

Mr. Darryl Tait was in attendance. Mr. Tait belongs to a lifelong Yukon family and suffered a paralyzing injury as a result of a snowmobile incident a few years ago. He has certainly been inspired by Mr. Hansen and has had the opportunity to meet him on numerous occasions. Mr. Aidan Love, a young man and member of a family known also to many Yukoners, was recently paralyzed in a snowboarding accident. Rick Hansen visited Aidan last month during his rehab in Vancouver and provided him with an autographed copy of his *Man in Motion* book. Aidan and Darryl are still talking about what an inspiration Mr. Hansen is in their lives.

On May 22 there is an event in Vancouver celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Man in Motion tour, which Aidan and his father plan to attend. On behalf of the House, I would like to recognize the achievements of the foundation.

*Applause*

**In recognition of Yukon Association of Community Living**

**Ms. Stick:** I rise today on behalf of the Legislative Assembly to pay tribute to the Yukon Association of Community Living. I am here to pay tribute to the work that the staff and the volunteers of YACL do to include persons labelled with intellectual disabilities in our communities and in our lives. May is Community Living Month.

At the Yukon Association of Community Living, every month is Community Living Month. That is their goal and what they strive to achieve in the Yukon. Many people would ask, "Well, what does 'community living' mean?" "Community living" means individuals have the right to choose their type of work and to be paid fairly for it.

Community living supports an individual's right to choose where and with whom they live. Too often, availability and funding for programs depend on a person's diagnosis and the severity of needs. When emphasis is placed on choice and sup-

ports, inclusion happens. Community living happens. Community living supports individuals having full access to community-based recreation and leisure.

Segregated activities should not be the only option for individuals with intellectual disabilities. That is why you will see YNCLUDE performing in Nakai Theater's Homegrown Festival next week, and in the Local Light Cinema Night with a four-minute film titled "Grace & Beauty". Community living supports individuals to make and maintain friendships, to have life partners and to feel love. Community is the place we all live in. Inclusion means being fully involved in our community, to make choices about employment, housing, recreation and relationships by including all people with a disability into community life. That is the ultimate goal of the Yukon Association for Community Living. Respect and equality for persons with intellectual disabilities will be the result of their work. We extend our gratitude to this hard-working organization, without which we would be a poorer community.

*Applause*

### In recognition of the pages

**Ms. White:** This is an unusual thing, Mr. Speaker, but I would ask the House to join me in thanking Zane Hansell, who had his last day earlier this week, and Katie Doerksen, whose last day is today. Thank you so much for the work you have done for us this session.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Introduction of visitors.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I would like to ask members to join me in welcoming a frequent visitor to this House and a long-time resident of Riverdale North, Mr. Wayne Hrynuik.

*Applause*

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

Reports of committees.

Are there any petitions for presentation?

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

### NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to proactively approach its space management needs by investing \$884,000 of the 2012-13 budget in space planning and tenant improvements.

Further, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Government of Canada to allow increased immigration for those willing to take on entry-level jobs that employers find difficult to fill.

Further, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to continue funding the FireSmart program to reduce the risk of wildland fires near Yukon communities.

**Mr. Hassard:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to explore physical upgrades to Yukon campgrounds to enhance the accessibility for, and amenities available to, visitors and users.

**Mr. Tredger:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT the Select Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges shall convene as soon as possible to begin considering changes to the Standing Orders and other rules of conduct that would improve the fair, open, efficient and modern operation of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, including:

(1) ensuring thorough debate on budgets and other government legislation;

(2) including provisions for members' statements in the Daily Routine;

(3) applying reasonable time limits on speeches and replies during motion days, in departmental budget debate, and in debate on legislation;

(4) providing equal party representation on all standing, select and special committees of the Legislative Assembly;

(5) including provisions to increase opportunities for members of the public to appear as witnesses or to make presentations about matters currently before the Legislative Assembly;

(6) establishing a code of ethics for Members of the Legislative Assembly;

(7) establishing fixed dates or extended notice periods for legislative sittings;

(8) providing for an automatic legislative sitting within 30 days of any special warrant authorizing additional government spending;

(9) prohibiting members wishing to leave the party of their election from crossing the floor;

(10) allowing the submission of electronic petitions;

(11) revising the rules governing the use of electronic devices in the Legislative Assembly;

(12) providing members with French language translation services upon request; and

(13) reviewing best practices in other legislatures and their potential applicability in Yukon.

THAT the Committee report its progress on the aforementioned considerations in each legislative sitting and bring forward recommendations on the same as soon as practicable.

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

THAT this House urges the Department of Health and Social Services to assist families caring for adult children with disabilities and to implement inclusion for adult children with disabilities by:

(1) providing a range of day programs for disabled adults;

Actually, I am going to withdraw this motion, and I would like to redo it for tomorrow. It has poor language. Sorry.

**Speaker:** Are there any other notices of motion?  
Is there a statement by a minister?

This would normally bring us to Question Period, but not quite. Prior to proceeding with Question Period, the Chair will rule on a point of order raised yesterday by the Member for Copperbelt South.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** During yesterday's Question Period the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, in response to a question from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, said, "I point out that they want housing to be developed but it would be somewhat hypocritical of the members to argue that housing should be developed, but not in his backyard."

At that point, the Member for Copperbelt South rose on a point of order and said, "I believe you have ruled in the past that using the word 'hypocritical' to describe the position of a member in this House or a party in the House is out of order."

In his defence, the minister said that he was not using the word to describe the position of the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes. Rather, the minister said, "I did say it would be hypocritical of him to argue against housing in his backyard if that's what he was doing while saying housing is in a crisis."

The Chair believes there is a point of order in this case. Members will recall that on March 22 of this year, the Premier used the word "hypocrisy" to describe statements made by the Leader of the Official Opposition. The Chair ruled the use of the word out of order and the Premier withdrew the word.

The Chair appreciates that the minister's use of the word yesterday, and the context in which it was used, were different from what occurred on March 22.

The Chair also appreciates that members may, at times, find inconsistencies in statements made by other members. However, using words like "hypocrisy" and "hypocritical" is problematic.

When used to describe the words or actions of another member, those words carry a negative connotation, regardless of the intent of the person using them. These are words that are best avoided in any parliamentary context, hypothetical or otherwise.

The Chair thanks the Member for Copperbelt South and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for their contribution to resolving this point of order.

We will proceed with Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Health statistics

**Ms. Hanson:** The 2001 Auditor General's report of Yukon health services and programs showed that there were over 1,700 alcohol-related emergency room admissions in 2009-10. That is an average of 4.8 emergency room alcohol-related admissions per day. No one is happy with this statistic.

The Auditor General also tried to find statistics about diabetes, another chronic condition, but the Auditor General

found: "The Department does not collect all community based diabetes data. The diabetes data is incomplete, and the diabetes rate may be understated."

If not properly managed, chronic health conditions can be a significant health care cost driver. We know the number of alcohol-related emergency admissions. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services tell us if he has information on emergency room admission due to chronic conditions, other than alcohol-related, such as diabetes?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** As the member opposite probably well knows if she has read the Auditor General's report, the Department of Health and Social Services does not currently have an electronic health records system. Consequently, many of the things we would like to follow and track, we are unable to do at the present time. Many of the statistics that we do have also do not always meet the requirement in terms of reporting or tracking.

So, no, I don't have all that data currently available. Hopefully, at some point in the future, we will have a system in place that will provide it.

**Ms. Hanson:** For the minister's information, I have read the Auditor General's report numerous times.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party has said that it intends to allocate funding for a "new emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital to accommodate the increasing number of visits and reduce pressure on the emergency department staff". In the absence of any other option, thank goodness for the emergency department, but most Yukoners would agree that it is important to keep its focus on the people who need it for what it is really designed for: urgent acute care. Use of the emergency department for chronic care management is often the result of inadequate primary care options.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Health believe that expanding the emergency department is a good way to meet the needs of Yukoners living with chronic conditions?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** No, Mr. Speaker, I don't necessarily believe that. Consequently, we are looking at a number of different options. As we've just announced recently, there will be a medical-facilitated detox available at the Sarah Steele Building sometime in the very near future. We also implemented an alternative care clinic for persons not only with substance abuse problems, but other problems associated with substance abuse, such as mental difficulties. That clinic was established on a trial basis. We'll evaluate the trial and determine whether or not this is something we should continue with.

**Ms. Hanson:** I thank the minister for his comments. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge all the front-line workers supporting those who are managing chronic conditions, whether addictions like alcoholism, or chronic health concerns like arthritis, heart disease, mental health and diabetes. The Auditor General made these comments about the emergency room admission data provided by the Hospital Corporation: "This information was not provided to the Department and the Department did not request this data from the corporation in order to determine what it might be able to do to assist these high-risk individuals."

The question is really this: How can we track our progress when the hospital and the department aren't sharing information, when they are not talking to each other about these very critical issues? As we move forward, how will we know if our efforts are helping?

My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services: Can he tell Yukoners if the hospital is now sharing information with the department and can he confirm that this information is being used to plan the best quality patient-centred care for Yukoners living with chronic conditions?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** First of all, I have to say that the Hospital Corporation and the department communicate on a daily basis. To me, the member opposite appears to be making the issue a whole lot larger than it is based on an Auditor General report that is prepared by a number of people who come here and take a snapshot at any one particular moment in time. I'm not so sure that the Auditor General, in all the reports they do on every government, is always interested in doing reports that are actually going to assist departments in future endeavours. I find sometimes that the Auditor General is more interested in making a splashy headline than in actually assisting these departments to improve services. However, we are taking into consideration all of the Auditor General's comments and we will be dealing with them in due course.

#### **Question re: Cellphone regulation**

**Ms. Moorcroft:** A different question about communications — Yukon citizens want cellphone competition, but also deserve fair contracts and consumer protection. Many members of this House may have heard troubling stories of consumers being charged outrageous cellphone service and cancellation fees. In some cases, companies entice customers with introductory offers that automatically fold into long-term contracts with fee increases and cancellation fees that can run into the thousands.

Will the minister tell this House whether the Yukon Party government would consider regulating cellphone contracts to protect Yukoners' pocketbooks?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Of course, when it comes to the regulation of the telecommunications industry, that's done by the CRTC. Of course, the Department of Economic Development, on behalf of Yukon government, does make regular submissions to the CRTC with regard to their regulatory activities. We are aware of other jurisdictions taking some action in the manner such as the member opposite is implying, and we're assessing how those are working in other jurisdictions before we move forward ourselves.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** There is a serious power imbalance between consumers and cellphone companies. Consumers can face outrageous cancellation fees and hidden charges in these one-sided contracts.

As the minister referred to, the problem has become so rampant that Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Manitoba have laws that protect cellphone customers from what can only be described as profiteering by some companies. Nova Scotia is introducing such legislation. Ontario is developing legislation too.

Will the minister commit to getting out in front of this problem and introducing legislation to protect consumers from unfair cellphone and mobile data contracts and fees?

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** As I said, of course, when it comes to the regulations of the telecommunications industry, the CRTC is the lead there and we do understand that the CRTC is perhaps considering whether or not to regulate cell service. It's something they haven't regulated in the past, and it is something they are assessing — whether or not they want to step into that. As the member opposite indicated, a number of other jurisdictions are taking steps. I'm aware of the steps they are taking and watching with great interest.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I'm glad that the minister is watching with great interest, and he should know that the legislation that Nova Scotia is bringing forward caps contract cancellation fees at \$50, and the legislation also stops companies from automatically renewing contracts and from changing fees and service options without the consumer's consent. This position is supported by some new companies in the sector. It promotes flexibility for customers and competition.

Once again, we hear that the Yukon Party Cabinet's position is that they don't recognize that one of the functions of legislators is, in fact, to enact legislation, and what is needed here is legislation that protects consumers from profiteering. Again, will the minister commit to getting out in front of the problem and introducing legislation to protect consumers from unfair cellphone and mobile data contracts and fees? Other jurisdictions have done it; he can't punt it off to the CRTC.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Of course, as I said before, we maintain a positive relationship with the CRTC, in terms of providing our input to their regulatory activities in the territory. The CRTC made a recent ruling, which is very interesting and indeed groundbreaking, related to the introduction of possible competition in the telecom industry in Yukon. We know, of course, that the NDP is always looking for a new place to regulate and a new thing to regulate. That seems to be the priority of the Official Opposition.

As I said, we are going to take a measured response to this and look at what other jurisdictions do before we jump to conclusions and act ourselves.

#### **Question re: Old Crow ice road**

**Mr. Elias:** Six weeks ago, I tabled a motion in this House urging the Minister of Highways and Public Works to facilitate the construction of a winter road connecting Old Crow and the Dempster Highway next year. It is an issue that has become very important to my community, and I would like to return to the topic today.

A winter road would bring tangible benefits to residents, governments and companies doing business in the area. Some of these include the ability to bring in bulk building materials for housing and other projects, as well as bulk loads of fuel. There would be a chance to bring in private vehicles, large household items and remove old equipment and contaminated waste, not to mention industry achieving their business goals as well.

Given the demonstrated need, will the minister commit to getting a winter road built for 2013?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** This government does identify Old Crow — our most northerly community — the only community that is not accessible by road. This is something that I have been in discussions about with the department. We have collaborated in the past with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation when we needed to get supplies up to build the school after the school burned down. That was something that we couldn't get up there by air so we did that, and it has been done in the past. We have been contacted by many different people in the industry, such as in the mining development industry, who have expressed an interest in this winter road, too.

This government is committed to working with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, working with the member opposite on looking at putting a plan together to see the feasibility of this and looking at all the different options out there.

**Mr. Elias:** It's also important to mention that this would be a cost-saving to taxpayers since the government wouldn't need to use large Hercules aircraft to fly in its equipment and supplies. A number of partners have been coming together to make a winter road a reality next year. To date, these partners include the community of Old Crow, the Vuntut Gwitchin government, the Vuntut Gwitchin Development Corporation, the Yukon Electrical Company and its parent company, ATCO, and Northern Cross Limited. Now, we just need to get the Yukon government and the Government of Canada on board.

Looking across the floor, I can see at least four ministries that would benefit greatly from winter road access into Old Crow. Will the minister, on behalf of the Yukon government, work with these existing partners and liaise with the federal government for their support, as well?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Highways and Public Works has been approached by Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation about this possibility and the collaboration on construction of a winter road. In the near future, our officials will meet to discuss this project and determine the potential roles and responsibilities of each party moving forward. So, Highways and Public Works has collaborated with the Vuntut Gwitchin in the past, and we're more than willing to collaborate with them again, looking at planning, understanding that there is no money in the 2012-13 capital budget for this. YESA planning and a lot of other stuff needs to get written into this, so we're committed to meet in the near future to discuss this project and identify roles and responsibilities for each individual of interest.

**Mr. Elias:** I believe the YESA process has already been approved for this period of time.

The last winter road to Old Crow was eight years ago. It proved to be cost-effective for getting goods in and out of Old Crow. This was a good investment of public funds in the past and that investment would still make sense today.

This year's budget includes \$38 million for Yukon highway maintenance expenditures. The government maintains all-weather roads 365 days a year to every other community in the territory except Old Crow. The cost of the Old Crow winter road is expected to be less than \$1 million. We're approaching the government with a business plan here that is eight years in

the making and a partnership plan today, and we're not asking for a handout.

Will the minister allocate the funds needed to make a 2013 winter road a reality and help maintain Old Crow as a healthy community that has access to the goods and services its residents need and other Yukon communities already have?

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Identifying the million dollars for the road — that is the exact cost that is close to what we've identified in the past. Back when they built it in 1998, the cost was almost \$700,000.

This is something that this government is committed to working on. As I talked about, we have been waiting for a business case from the interested parties. Our officials are going to meet in the near future, like I alluded to in my previous answer, and discuss the project, the terms and the potential roles and responsibilities. We understand the price of fly-in materials; it costs money to fly. If we can save money by building a road and get a lot more accomplished, we will work with the interested parties on this.

#### **Question re: Adults with disabilities, day programming**

**Ms. Stick:** I mentioned in the tribute to community living this afternoon that every month is Community Living Month. In this same vein, every day should be community living day for families caring for their adult child with disabilities. Every day, many Yukon families caring for their adult children with disabilities face complex situations. One of these problems faced by these families is that they are being told that there is no room in existing day programs or that the individuals' needs are too great. Without day programming options, individuals and their caregivers are left to their own means. Can the minister tell us how his department is addressing this lack of appropriate and available day programming for families caring for their adult children?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** At the present time we offer a number of respite programs, not only for adults with disabilities, but others as well. We offer respite programs in Macaulay Lodge, and we have a number of NGOs, a perfect example of which is Helping Hands. I know from my use of the Canada Games Centre how the Helping Hands people are out there on a daily basis, and it is wonderful to see.

So we do have a number of respite programs in place. I know right now there is a waiting list of approximately four individuals who are looking for respite on an ongoing basis, and the department is making every effort to accommodate those folks.

**Ms. Stick:** The minister partially answered my next question. Initially, I was speaking about day programs, which is a community involvement — being in the community, being active, and having purposeful, daily activities.

In terms of respite care, many adults with disabilities require 24-hour, seven-day-a-week care, and their families are not always receiving the respite they need.

Can the minister tell us of any other respite programs that might be available and that are appropriate to an individual? Sometimes it is not appropriate that a 30-year-old man or

woman go to Macaulay Lodge to receive respite, as that is seen in the community as a seniors facility.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is probably aware of most of the respite facilities or services that are offered in the City of Whitehorse. I've mentioned a couple. There are other NGOs, such as Challenge and Teegatha'Oh Zheh, that also offer respite, but we are always looking for new contractors or new NGOs or existing NGOs to continue to offer this kind of respite, because we realize how difficult it is — if you are in the process or in the business of looking after some individuals — to provide that service on a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week basis.

Again, the department is working in that area. We will continue to provide respite in the areas we currently do. As I said, though, there appears to be a very small waiting list at the present time, but we're working on it.

**Ms. Stick:** The parents and caregivers of adults with disabilities are aging. I know of more than a few cases where the caregivers are now in their 60s, and this is in Whitehorse and in the communities.

It is often the parent who is doing much of the work in the home providing the care to the adult child and may even be looking after an aging spouse or aging parent, who also requires care. We are seeing more and more parents who are themselves becoming seniors with their own care needs. These parents worry about what will happen to their adult child when they are unable to provide the care to their child. They worry about who will be responsible for this care.

Can the minister tell us if there is long-term planning in place to assist parents and caregivers providing this care that takes into account the caregiver's age and ongoing ability to provide that support?

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** I believe I have already answered the question in some manner. We are not only aware of the age of some of the caregivers, but we are also in the process, or we have identified people who will be moving from the young persons category to the youth category. We are also tracking when they will become adults and what their disabilities are, and we are projecting into the future the requirements for care for those individuals. So, we are very aware of who the young people in our society are who currently need care. We know what the ages are as people progress. Not only are we extrapolating that information and considering what we're going to need in the future, but we're taking a more active look at things that will be needed, both in the short term and long term.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to introduce to the House former colleagues Robyn Findlater, Elecia McLelland and Ben Gribben, Duran Henry and Mr. Fred Stick, carvers from the Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

*Applause*

### Question re: Mount Lorne local area plan review

**Mr. Barr:** When the Hamlet of Mount Lorne local area plan was adopted in 1995, 17 years ago, there was a provision built in to review the plan after five years. On behalf of the residents of Mount Lorne, the hamlet council has been request-

ing a review of the local area plan for the last 12 years. Will the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources agree to the Hamlet of Mount Lorne's request for a review of the local area plan?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would point out, in response to the member's question, what I have indicated to the chair of the local advisory council and another member of that body when we met. At this point in time, what we are currently doing in the Mount Lorne area is asking residents about the possibility of reducing the minimum lot size for lots in that area, allowing people to subdivide their own lots and considering the possibility of developing the McGowan option lands. What we have done in Mount Lorne — as we've done in a number of other areas, including the Mayo Road area and the Mendenhall area — in response to the issues around land availability and housing right now, we have expedited the opportunity to ask residents in those areas if they would like to reduce minimum lot size. In the case of the Mayo Road area, the majority said yes; in the case of the Mendenhall area, the majority said no. We're looking forward to hearing more from the people of Mount Lorne through the consultation.

**Mr. Barr:** The hamlet council and the residents are not opposed to development, but they want development in respect to the local area plan. Mr. Speaker, the local area plan calls for phased-in rural residential lot development and agriculture development where the land supports viable and suitable agricultural operations.

If the Yukon government had followed the plan, more than 80 lots would have been made available over the past decade. Will the minister work with the Hamlet of Mount Lorne and residents to implement the existing plan?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** What I would point out to the member, again, as we saw yesterday in Question Period, the member had some of his facts wrong, including yesterday when he had the wrong department conducting the current review in the Mount Lorne area. It is, as I mentioned to the member yesterday, the Land Planning branch within Energy, Mines and Resources, not the Department of Community Services that does this.

Again, as I've indicated to the member, currently we're reviewing issues particularly around the possibility of developing land in that area through two methods — one being the possible development of McGowan option lands and the second being the reduction of minimum lot size for existing residents. I believe you were indicating that I should wrap up my response, Mr. Speaker, so I will do so.

**Mr. Barr:** I would just like to say that some of the member opposite's response did not lend to positive decorum and are not conducive to the positive decorum of this House, I believe.

Will the minister commit to moving forward and directing his department to immediately work with the Hamlet of Mount Lorne to implement elements of the existing local area plan that address land development needs, implement an immediate review of the local area plan, and develop a process for the subdivision of existing serviced lots?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Again, what I do have to point out to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes — and I am

sorry if he is offended by me pointing out that he does not have some of his facts correct, but I do have to bring that to the attention of those listening to this debate. I'd also point out to the member that, in fact, the Mount Lorne development area regulation was put in place in 2006 under the Yukon Party government. Prior to that, the local area plan had been in place from 1995, when it was first put in without the appropriate zoning in place to actually implement that plan for quite some period of years. Again, we acted to implement the regulations. There was an amendment to the local area plan in 2008, and in 2009, there was an amendment to the regulations. Again, what we are consulting with residents in the area about now is the possibility of reducing minimum lot size to allow subdivision and the possibility of developing the McGowan option lands — both aimed at meeting this government's commitments to land availability and to providing further housing opportunities for Yukoners, an issue that the member himself has raised on a number of occasions.

**Question re: Literacy programs**

**Mr. Tredger:** Many Yukon students have benefited from the Wilson Reading program. It is a research-based, multi-sensory reading and writing program that addresses the learning styles of students with language-based learning disabilities. It is also beneficial to any student lacking basic reading and spelling skills. The Department of Education has invested many years in the Wilson Reading System and has trained many classroom-based teachers to present it. Wilson Reading has been praised by students, teachers and parents across the Yukon.

What is the Minister of Education doing to ensure that this successful program continues in our schools?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I've heard positive reviews on Wilson Reading from not only the member opposite but a number of the educators and people involved in the education system that I've visited in the communities. So with respect to continuing that initiative, as well as other initiatives such as Reading Recovery — I've not been advised of any changes or departmental initiatives to make any changes to those programs, so I would assume that we would be continuing on, business as usual, with Wilson Reading, with Reading Recovery and with all the initiatives that the department undertakes with respect to literacy.

**Mr. Tredger:** I thank the minister opposite for his answer. I noticed there is an advertisement published for a half-time position with the department to work with the Wilson Reading program. However, it is concerning to see that this half-time teacher would also be responsible for students affected by FASD and English as a learned language. Any one of these areas of responsibility — Wilson Reading, FASD, or English as a learned language — are worthy of increased attention, research and development.

Mr. Speaker, how does the minister ensure that the ongoing training and support of classroom teachers and Wilson instructors will continue?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I believe we discussed this during debate on the Department of Education earlier this session, probably more with respect to Reading Recovery and the stag-

gered intakes for training. So I'm assuming that when it comes to other literacy programs, there may be staggered intakes for that type of training as well.

I guess when it comes to the operations of the department and the staffing allocation, we do have the staffing allocation advisory committee that's in place and they work very hard. They're certainly committed to maintaining a number of the guiding principles, including equity, transparency, predictability, timeliness, responsiveness and accountability. So I think that's a very important aspect of the new staffing allocation that was introduced by my predecessor and continues today.

So again, when it comes to allocation for literacy there is Reading Recovery teacher allocation, literacy intervention specialist allocation — there are a number of different FTEs that are allocated to different aspects of literacy within the public schools and then of course there are substantial programs that occur for adult literacy as well. I should also mention the tremendous amount of investment that we've made in public libraries.

**Mr. Tredger:** Many schools have included the Wilson Reading System in their school growth plans. Others would like to. Often schools rely on individual and small group instruction as part of their overall literacy strategy. As well, many primary classes have successfully used Foundations, which is a part of the Wilson Reading System. There are many students and schools benefiting from the Wilson Reading System. If their school growth plans are to be supported by the department, it will be absolutely necessary to continue to train more teachers in the Wilson method. A sustained, long-term plan must be developed and followed.

How is the minister planning to provide sufficient support to enable the Wilson Reading System not only to expand, but to continue?

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** In the numerous visits that I've made to public schools throughout the territory in the last number of months, I think the one thing that many administrators and teachers have said is that certainly compared to their previous experience in other jurisdictions, Yukon schools are very well-resourced. Again, when it comes to the school growth process, it's to use evidence and work collaboratively with the staff and the community to improve the success of each Yukon student.

So I certainly support the department's initiative on the school growth process, because I believe every school has unique needs, and again, the needs of the school. A number of schools the Member for Mayo-Tatchun used to be staff on certainly had different needs from those of Robert Service School, where the Member for Klondike used to teach, and every other school throughout the Yukon. So, again, I think we have to look at schools individually and assess what their needs are from a demographic perspective of each school and move forward based on that.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 197

**Clerk:** Motion No. 197, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

**Speaker:** It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake: THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to continue to financially support the Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise to speak to this motion as it is one that I believe we can all support. Originally founded by the owners of Sundog Retreat centre, the program reorganized itself as a non-profit organization called the Northern Cultural Expressions Society. Whatever the name — Sundog or Northern Cultural Expressions — the mission of the organization has been to open up opportunities for young people to channel their energy into artistic expression and business development.

Many of these young people are described as at-risk youth. Addressing the needs of at-risk youth has been a national priority for both Canada and the United States for many, many years. As I researched for today's motion, I spent some time reading on the Internet about this area. According to Wikipedia, the term "at-risk" came into use after the 1983 article, *A Nation at Risk*, published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. At-risk students are those students who have been labelled either officially or unofficially as being in danger of academic failure.

The National Centre for Education Statistics lists the following factors that lead to an at-risk label for students: low socio-economic status; living in a single-parent home; changing schools at non-traditional times; below-average grades in middle school; being held back in school through grade retention; having older siblings who left high school before completion; and negative peer pressure. Without intervention, at-risk youth may make poor life choices that lead to greater if not perpetual engagement with the social safety net of society.

I would like to talk about the financial aspect of this motion. Canada has a strong track record of funding programs focused on youth at risk. As part of Canada's economic action plan, the Prime Minister has announced support for programs that address the educational needs of youth at risk. I think that it is helpful and a hopeful signal about the importance of helping youth at risk and their future contributions to Canada. Just over two years ago, Canada stepped forward to financially assist a program to offer youth life skills to make smarter choices.

On April 6, 2010, Canada announced an investment through the National Crime Prevention Strategy of \$2,464,000 to the Northern Cultural Expressions Society to implement the cultural resilience project in Yukon.

This project works with at-risk First Nation youth who have prior involvement with the criminal justice system. The program focuses on arts-based programming, specifically carving, and includes one-on-one counselling, cultural program-

ming and resource development that enables the participants to strengthen their social and emotional competencies, develop their artistic abilities, learn new coping skills and enhance their sense of self-worth.

The Government of Canada supported an important project that helped youth at risk make better choices and prevent further involvement in criminal activity. A few minutes ago, I noted that addressing the issues of youth at risk is a national priority and the national crime prevention strategy, which is administered by Public Safety Canada, is one of the ways Canada responds to these issues. The strategy provides funding support to selected projects that help prevent crime and increase knowledge about what works in crime prevention. It is a part of the Government of Canada's plan to tackle crime in order to build stronger, safer communities.

The NCPS's priorities are these: addressing early risk factors among vulnerable children, youth and young adults; preventing recidivism among high-risk offenders; fostering crime prevention in aboriginal and northern communities; and preventing youth gang and drug-related crime.

I wonder if the northern and aboriginal crime prevention fund may be an option for the Northern Cultural Expressions Society. This fund assists communities experiencing multiple risk factors and other challenges that affect their ability to respond to crime issues, such as remote geographical location and limited capacity. It achieves this by providing time-limited funding to support culturally sensitive initiatives that foster the development and implementation of crime-prevention approaches in aboriginal communities, both on and off reserve and in the north. In addition, it assists building the knowledge and capacity required to develop or adapt culturally sensitive, effective ways to prevent crime. I mention it because it seems that much of the work that the Northern Cultural Expressions Society does is based on interacting with First Nation cultural traditions.

I also want to mention the youth gang prevention fund, as it helps reduce youth gang activity and youth violence by investing in community-based prevention programs in communities across Canada that target youth at risk. The youth gang prevention fund is used to support programs that provide the following: community-based educational and cultural opportunities for youth at risk, such as enhanced conflict resolution and problem-solving skills as alternatives to gang involvement through paid part-time work opportunities and vocational training; homework and school support; opportunities to socialize and participate in recreational activities; and intensive and individualized mentorship to help youth at-risk make positive lifestyle choices; and care for children with serious emotional, behavioural and mental health needs and their families.

In looking at these funds and reviewing the material, I see that Canada has funding available for programs that address the needs of youth at risk. It seems to me that what Northern Cultural Expressions Society is doing matches up very well against that list of activities. The Northern Cultural Expressions Society has a vision of helping emerging artists develop the artistic, social and business skills required for personal success by providing opportunities for young people to channel their energy



to artistic expression and business development. They do this by assisting the society as it encourages young artists, who often may not have experienced success in a traditional classroom or workplace setting, to use their new carving skills to move out of the cycle of physical abuse, emotional neglect, justice system involvement, substance abuse and multi-generational effects of residential school.

The Northern Cultural Expressions Society offers the participants the opportunity to acquire new carving skills. In the process of carving, they learn not only a marketable skill; they also learn important life skills. Originally funded by Service Canada, the Carving Our Path project ran 44 weeks and supported nine young people under 30 as they began to carve and sell their work. Youth who have largely experienced failure in traditional school or work opportunities succeeded through the individualized attention and their tangible artistic successes. Youth received a weekly stipend to supplement their initial self-employment income.

The Journey Far carving project, which Yukon funds, supported more experienced carvers of all ages. It had a similar structure to the Carving Our Path program with a greater emphasis on advanced carving skills development. Both programs focused on a mix of carving skill development, business and marketing skill development, life skills and work skills development in order to facilitate successful careers as artists.

I just want to mention that their goal seems to coincide with some of the funding program goals. The Northern Cultural Expressions Society goals are to increase development in the Yukon First Nations arts and culture sector; expand the Yukon First Nation presence on the local and national arts scene; enhance tourism experiences for visitors; mitigate the effects of residential schools; share with Yukon public school students First Nation educational opportunities; and provide positive role modelling and cultural opportunities for Yukon First Nation youth. I think these are commendable goals, and I wish the society well in achieving them.

I want to encourage the Northern Cultural Expressions Society to continue to build partnerships with governments and agencies such as the Government of Canada and the National Crime Prevention Centre. Given the strong First Nations component, I would encourage First Nations to continue supporting this program.

I think this is a good motion, and I commend it to the Legislature.

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to say that I'm honoured to be standing here today to speak on this motion, and I would like to also say that I will be putting forward a friendly amendment to also add later on the continued support of Yukon government along with Canada's government to allow this program to flourish and to grow and to be what I know it has been and what it is struggling to continue to be.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Barr:** I would like to again introduce visitors, because a couple more people have come: Ben Gribben, carver and friend; Robyn Findlater, colleague and friend; Elecia

McLelland, colleague and friend; Duran Henry, friend and carver — we call him "Hollywood" sometimes; Fred Stick, Jr., carver; Naomi Crey, colleague, and the young fellow who came after I had left, but I have seen his work and I saw him before he could carve or ever hold a knife, and I know that it is amazing what he has been able to achieve with his artistic abilities. If you take the time to go down there, you will see how amazing his work is. I cannot do that kind of stuff.

*Applause*

**Mr. Barr:** This program is for individuals who did not succeed in the academic education system we seem to have and that also seems to reward academia in our grade schools and further on. The folks I have introduced today and who attend Northern Cultural Expressions Society and who would like to be a part of that are contributing members of our society, in such a way that when I saw them enter this room I had to hold back my tears because, to me, they are my family, friends of extended family, our citizens, our family and the responsibility of our territory.

It's often said it takes a community to raise a child, and I believe this is so true. We are all our own children, and I believe we all need support at various times in our lives, no matter what walk of life we come from — gender, race, creed, age.

I'm happy that the member opposite has brought forward this motion. I'd like to give you a little bit of history about Sundog, as we fondly call it, and now called Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

It was an idea that Andrew Finton had many years ago. He and his wife Heather worked with youth all their lives, in various countries, and they loved the folks, and they worked endlessly and tirelessly. Andrew saw folks falling through the cracks and that our academic education system doesn't seem to fit the needs of all of our folks. He wanted to develop a program that would assist the other various needs. He came to me at CAIRS many years ago and said, "We want to do something about this. Do you know any young guys who might want to learn how to carve and have any artistic abilities?"

So we started to seek out some folks. James Babineau went out to Sundog, a former artist in residence, because we knew at CAIRS that dealing with the residential school — the intergenerational impacts of those kinds of things — we had to tap in with people who had an ability to be comfortable and to be able to move forward to build relationships. So what better way than to just meet on the common ground of art?

Some names were put forward and there was the first retreat that enabled some folks to go out to Sundog. From there the program became successful and more successful, to where there was a first — I guess we would say a house or a storefront over at the Qwanlin Mall. Some of the carvers are still involved since those first days.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Barr:** I need to introduce Sara Villeseche. She's sitting above the group. I just want to apologize for that, Sara. Sara is another carver. Please welcome Sara.

*Applause*

**Mr. Barr:** As I was saying, as this program went on, it became so successful that not only did it finally give people a place to go, but as you will see in this House itself, it also started to give a reality to the struggles of many within First Nations, many cultures, to gain the ability to share a proud culture and a proud artistic ability.

If you look in the House here — I've said it before: this is Calvin Morberg, this plaque here; this is Mike Morrow from Tagish with the wrought iron. Calvin Morberg — on the other side Jared Kane, this plaque. If we start to travel around this territory, we are going to see works of art that we didn't see in this territory in the prevalence — we did have carvers and we do have carvers that did come before, and there are pieces of their artwork that are on display; however, not from the age group that we have now on a continual basis that serves to drive our economy. I'd also say that this program touches, because it deals with a holistic approach, the Health and Social Services — our minister across the room — our Justice minister across the room; our Economic Development minister across the room; the Tourism and Culture minister across the room.

I'll come back to this, but I just want to say that this program has to do with the medicine wheel and takes the approach of child, adolescent, adult and elder and all of these are part of this program. Without one, as we know, it doesn't roll like tires. If you flatten out one, it doesn't go forward. So what we're dealing with today is the ability for this program to succeed with all of those elements.

I have seen this program change lives and I have seen the support and love that is extended by the folks we have visiting us here today to anybody who walks through those doors — the people who oftentimes society would choose to overlook, and there is a home there. It is so wonderful to witness this and be a part of this and it's in our community and not only in this community, but this program reaches out to all the communities.

The advanced carvers also — is this in jeopardy? There are 100 elementary school students that the carvers we see here today are sharing their skills with and they are young carvers; they are the ones who will be filling their shoes, as we know and I speak of the medicine wheel. It's a circle of life and there has to be a beginning. As we all go back to the earth, it starts again.

What we're looking at is not only this one particular group that meets every day, but it also goes out to the communities to foster growth. They've been to Teslin; they've been to Watson Lake; there have been folks who have been to Burwash Landing. They are carvers who will go and extend outreach to share their artwork and themselves, facilitating workshops in their schools and communities with folks we've overlooked, but they're actually leaders in our world and our territory today who are sitting with us.

As a person who has struggled with alcohol and drugs in my own life, I know I was overlooked so many times and it was the love and the care of people who allowed me into their lives and said, "Hey, it's going to be okay. Today is another

day. All you need to do is do better next time. It is okay. They are not mistakes, they are opportunities to learn."

This program gives that. How many times in our lives do we need just that — a place that we will know we will be accepted, cared for, challenged — it's not a free-for-all — challenged to grow in a loving way? This program does that. I couldn't say enough about the positive things that we may be at risk of losing if we do not choose to continue to fund this at a level that is adequate.

Some of the programs that have extended from this — some people may have seen the canoe project, the dugout canoe project. It's on display now over at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre — the new house down that way.

Not only was I honoured — I had an adze and I did some of the work on that thing. The carvers who are up here and everyone who is in here — Sara, you couldn't stop her. You could not hold her back from going into the bush. Her feet were cracking and bleeding and she said, "No, I'm going to get more wood because we need the wood for our fire. We need it for our spiritual fire whenever we're going to be doing the steaming of the canoe." You would not believe the audacity of that young woman and the other carvers. That's just one example. You don't get that at youth camps, okay? You just don't get where somebody would be looking for any excuse not to go out and physically work through the mosquitoes, across the water, getting branches in your face — with wounds. Finally her mom and all of us sat down and said, "Hey, not right now. You can go back, but let's tend to these cuts."

Work all day, swinging that thing. I mean, I said I adzed a bit. After five minutes, I was pretty darn tired and these guys went for 10 weeks. They paddled it out. They went in with a log. There's a movie about it now. There's a book that's being written about it now. It's being used across the country and it has been shown in various parts of the world. I'm involved with other folks down throughout the States who've said, "So, we need support. It's important to be able to know how we can help folks such as folks who attend Northern Cultural Expressions." He says, "What do you need help for? We're learning from you." We are leaders with people who are identified as leaders. White Bison program for one — world-renowned.

Within the program and that canoe, elders are involved in this from all various communities all over and from different parts of Alaska. There are teachers, master carvers who have come to help with the advanced carvers. I'd like to tell you a little bit about that.

I heard the member opposite say that there are these things that are in place. and that is exactly what we are talking about today — that these things are not in place at the present funding level. There is not a counsellor; there is not a master carver any more; there is not an executive director; there are no stipend fees any more, as was said; there's not even the possibility of a continued — and it has been like this for a few years — a continued program as it exists. Yes, there are federal dollars in the amount of close to \$500,000 that are there for the next three years. That, I must clarify, does not have anything to do with the existing program. That money cannot be used for the counsellor, for the carver, for the stipends, for the beginners pro-

gram that is no longer in existence. This beginners program used to be funded by Service Canada; that's \$300,000. I was speaking with the chair of the board for the cultural society who said that Service Canada employment sees no value in this program — shame, shame — no value in this program.

I can't swear in this House, so I will not. I will respect this House. However, shame on us if we do not. We have an opportunity. What has been given is the \$345,000 from the Minister of Tourism and Culture. I commend Tourism and Culture for putting forward that amount of money. What was originally asked for was \$898,000 that would allow this program to have a beginners program and would allow for a master carver. I mean, if you're teaching carving, you should have a teacher. And if we're dealing with folks who are overcoming all these obstacles in their lives, as the member opposite spoke of — I did counselling there; I was one of those folks. That's not there now. Those are two integral parts — if we're looking at the success of this, let alone no beginners program. What has happened with the advanced carvers, the Journey Far section that this \$345,000 begins to cover, is only that. As I was saying, they can sell their artwork, and they'll make money off of that. But what used to happen with the stipend — anyone who is an artist knows the phrase "starving artist". With today's rent, the stipend — and it varies. When you start, you get a full stipend that might give you in the neighbourhood of \$800 a month — something like that.

As you progress, that goes down, so you will get \$400 a month. So although it is a job, and it is meant to help you learn how to work — show up for work, get there, be on time — there all kinds of life skills are involved and those of us who do not have them can learn from this experiential learning.

This amount of money is not cutting it, so even though there was \$898,000 asked for, that would have been split up by the Health and Social Services minister, the Justice minister, the Economic Development minister, the Education minister and the Tourism and Culture minister — divide that up and how much is that? It would be approximately \$130,000 each — for each department — that would allow this to operate in a way that would have a counsellor, a carver, a stipend, and a beginners program. It would have all these things that are not there now.

It states in the numbers here that it could be \$619,000. That would begin to address some of the needs — so I think that's \$125,000. I think that would cover that, but no, it's \$345,000. And as the motion states, I do encourage the territorial government to increase the amount of money, and we can continue to lobby. But, as I stated, there seems to be no value with the federal government, as far as Service Canada proposes.

We're looking at — and what I've had in discussions is that it's most likely that all the benefits and all the lives we see here today — the ones to come forward — that we will not have this program if we choose not to — if we choose to turn our backs on it. And that would be that we're turning our backs on our family, our extended family, my family, your family.

All of us have been touched by residential school impacts. It's cost-effective. I think of one fellow — this is the kind of

program that it is; just another example — I won't mention any names and it comes and goes with various folks living at the shelter. They don't even have a place to live, right, and this is for a few years. This isn't something that is just temporary. They haven't had a place to live for a few years, so they live at the shelter. Before Christmas, as I was saying before, he was coming out because he didn't want to spend Christmas in the shelter, and there had been about four folks living in an abandoned house at 40 below. This is a program that helps some of those folks who don't have a place to go at night when it's 40 below, because our youth shelter is not even open at 10:00 p.m., and they have to be out by 8:00 a.m.

I don't know if I have expressed enough around this, but I'm just begging you guys to find it here among us to do the right thing. I would like to make an amendment at this point.

*Amendment proposed*

**Mr. Barr:** I move

THAT Motion No. 197 be amended by adding the phrase "and the Government of Yukon" between the words "Canada" and "to".

This is a friendly amendment for the House. With that, thanks for your time, everybody.

**Speaker:** Order please. The amendment is in order.

It is moved by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes

THAT Motion No. 197 be amended by adding the phrase "and the Government of Yukon" between the words "Canada" and "to".

The Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes has 20 minutes on the amendment.

**Mr. Barr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'll try not to repeat myself, but maybe just go in a little bit more depth, if I can, and say that, once again, these are our family. This is my family, your extended family, our community. We in the north take care of each other. I remember when I first came up here. I grew up in northern Ontario and it was common courtesy that if you saw somebody on the road, especially in the winter, you stopped and gave them a hand.

I remember the Member for Klondike sitting in Montana Services in Carcross with his friend at the time on the way to Dawson, on the way from a trip — and he's looking at me and it just reminds me of this — and I believe it was winter. I think it was winter — Christmas, it was Christmas. We got to talking and sure enough nothing is open, you're not going anywhere, not much available in Carcross and you're trying to get to Dawson for Christmas and the car is back up by the summit. I asked the Member for Klondike, "Oh, how are you doing?"

"Well, my car is —"

"Well, let's get at her." We drove up there and along the way, you know, we just figured out if we'd just take one nut off each tire, because it flew off, right? There are no nuts. I mean, even if you had a spare, you can't put it back on, so, "Well, geez, this is — put our heads together." We worked together. We worked together for a common goal. We thought about it

and realized that we could even use the tire that flew off and went down in the ditch, so the Member for Klondike went and got it. We took a nut off of each of the other three tires so all of them had three — good enough — didn't even have to get a tow or anything. They were on their way and got to Dawson for Christmas.

The point of the matter is that just seems like the right thing to do. When I first came to the Yukon, I was told it was the law — and I believe it still is — that if we as Yukoners see somebody on the highway in the cold of the winter, it's our duty to stop and help that person — even if I don't want to. What does that say about us? That's amazing; check it out if you're not sure. It might be on the books; it might have been taken off, but to me it sure makes sense, because we have extreme temperatures and we can't let people die. I relate that to folks sleeping at 40 below. We have a responsibility to not let them die.

This is where I would like to emphasize what is happening now. This program is without adequate funds and with this amendment, it will be topped up to the point where it can exist — because I am told that, at \$345,000, it will not. With this amendment, you might have a drop-in centre, but you won't have all the rest of it. That's not going to cut it. As I was saying about the medicine wheel, without this amendment you're going to be losing a part of it. You're going to lose the beginner program. You've got to have new people coming into this program as the ones are going on and moving on. I will say that some of the folks aren't here because they're at Emily Carr. They've gone on to Emily Carr. They've gone on to other prestigious art schools. They've gone on and decided, "I'm not a carver. I'm working in the trades. I'm in the mines." We will offer money for people to go on to university in our present system. We'll offer money to go on to college in our present system. We'll offer money to go on to do trades. Why does this Yukon government not come up with the rest of the money and, if it is not successful through the Government of Canada, guarantee that we will give the same opportunities to the folks who come through these doors as ones who want to enter our universities, our colleges and our trades. Why not? That's not unreasonable — just because maybe they don't fit into the box of our society that we've always had. We have an opportunity, once again, in the Yukon to be leaders and address an issue as we see it and not throw it out. So I would implore members here to vote in favour of this amendment to the motion. Yes. And spread the love.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In speaking to the amendment put forward by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes, first of all what I have to indicate is that the Government of Yukon does fund the Northern Cultural Expressions Society. In fact, I have to remind the members that it was not an NDP government or a Liberal government that provided funding for this organization; it was the Yukon Party government. In fact, this is something that we responded to some years ago. At the time I was acting minister, signing on behalf of the lead minister, and I signed the original contract. This is something that we have continued to support. We have continued to identify the

Yukon government's ongoing commitment to continue funding at the same level for the Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

What I do have to draw to the member's attention is that what we have here is an issue which is not uncommon in dealing with the federal government, and has been a long-standing matter under federal governments of all stripes. The federal government has a tendency sometimes to fund programs, provide significant amounts of money, and then, after the initial term of the program, treat it as a pilot project or a "boutique" program, as they are sometimes called, withdraw that financial support, and leave the territorial government — or provinces, in some cases — in the position of having to decide whether to keep the good work going that was being funded and step into the void the federal government has left, or allow the program to not continue.

The grid option is the one we are advocating here today through the motion brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Watson Lake, which is to send a very strong message to the federal government that they should continue their support and not be in the situation of withdrawing their funding from worthwhile programming. So, again, the specific amendment put forward by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes is one the government can and will support. We have funded, and will continue to fund, the Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

In response to specific comments made by the member, suggesting that the government should guarantee that if the federal government doesn't fund it, the Yukon government will pick up the slack — the member should be able to connect the dots and figure out what the federal reaction to that would be if the Legislative Assembly or the government were to send the message to the federal government, saying, "This is an important program. We want you to continue funding it, but if you don't, we'll just pick up the slack and pay for what you have pulled out of." That would be a very weak message from the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

The message the government believes we should send to the federal government is, "It is a program that has been supported by a great many people. This is an area where the Yukon government stepped forward to fund it and has continued to fund it. We are maintaining our funding at the existing levels going forward. The federal government should not withdraw its funding — should not back away from its responsibilities in this area."

So, again, I hope the members will join us in sending that signal to the federal government to continue funding this program — find a way to fund this program under one of their many programs and out of their much larger resources than the territorial government, rather than sending a weak-kneed message that we're only going to hold their feet to the fire on this issue and only going to ask them to fund the program.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, the government will be supporting this amendment, but I hope the members will join us in sending a strong message to the federal government that they really should maintain their support for the program.

**Mr. Silver:** I'd like to just make a brief statement that we would absolutely be supporting the amendment to this motion. We'd like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for his impassioned speech today. I would just like to add to his story about helping me at Christmas. I don't think, even if there wasn't a law, I'm sure the member would still pick me up, even though he knows I'm on a different team.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** I'll just speak briefly to the amendment. The Government House Leader, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has indicated that we will be supporting this.

Again, the organization goes back to 2006-07, I believe, and we have had many departments support many different projects from the Department of Justice and, of course, the Department of Education. The figures I have in front me show that the Education department was one of the initial funders at a substantial amount — close to \$130,000 at that time. Health and Social Services has funded projects, as have Tourism and Culture, the Executive Council Office and Economic Development.

Just a quick rundown of the projects that have been funded, either multi-year or one-time funding: Journey Far project; dugout canoe project; First Nation art education project; additional funding for the Journey Far carver project; the Sundog carving program manual has been funded; miscellaneous funding for NCES; fee-for-service funding for youth to attend the program; the Totem Pole project; some transitional activities; and then, funded through the Department of Economic Development, the development of a business plan. Total Yukon government funding for this organization is \$2,184,303.

There has been significant commitment made by the Government of Yukon. Again, as the Member for Lake Laberge indicated, we certainly want to send the message that we want to make sure that Canada continues to maintain its funding levels so that this program can continue to do the good work that it has been doing for the past number of years. So, again, we will be supporting this friendly amendment from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

**Ms. Hanson:** I rise to speak in support of this amendment, and I will just give a quick comment with respect to the Member for Lake Laberge. This is an opportunity for us to rise above petty partisanship. This is not an issue of whether or not it is an NDP or Liberal or Yukon Party government here. This is in fact the Government of Yukon that represents all Yukoners.

We present a much stronger voice and stronger pressure on Ottawa when we do that in a united way. We've seen this in the past when all parties have united in this Legislative Assembly to express our views on issues as far back as land claims. It was all three parties that represented this territorial government in united support of an important initiative in this territory. So, I would encourage all of us to try occasionally to rise above the pettiness of partisanship and really talk about why this is important for us as Members of the Legislative Assembly repre-

senting all Yukoners. I am pleased to hear that the members opposite will support this friendly amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I will also speak briefly to the amendment brought forth by the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

It is a real honour for me to be the Minister of Tourism and Culture and support projects like the Northern Cultural Expressions. It is also a real honour to see a number of the carvers in the gallery today, a number of which I have known for many, many years — Ben and Owen.

Tourism and Culture will be supporting Northern Cultural Expressions in the amount right now of \$345,000 a year, as we all are well aware, and with the support of my colleagues, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Education.

I do support this friendly amendment, but as a previous business owner, I know what it takes to operate a business and this, at the end of the day, is like operating a business. It takes partnerships within the community and not just government to bring success to NGOs such as the Northern Cultural Expressions Society, which I might add is a very worthwhile program.

At the end of the day, we want this program to run effectively and efficiently. I'm happy to see that my colleagues on the floor of this Legislature will support this friendly amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Amendment to Motion No. 197 agreed to*

**Speaker:** We'll continue with debate on the amended motion.

**Ms. Stick:** I rise to support this amended motion before us. I know this program and I'm very familiar with many of their staff and many of the participants, both past and present. These young people are fortunate to have a program that trains, supports and guides them, but they are the ones doing the hard work in this program. They are the ones who are going out to our communities, to our schools, working with different people, with other young people and teaching and training them and sharing their carving skills.

I know the support is there from the staff for these young people and for these individuals, including my nephew, who has left now. I am proud of what he has accomplished and what he has created and continues to create. I am proud of the opportunities he has taken advantage of in this program. I have many pieces of his work, and it's not just because he's my nephew, but because it's beautiful. I have some in my office. I invite any to come down and see. I have carvings; I have sewing that he has done, and it is all beautiful.

This program does deserve the ongoing support of our federal government and our First Nation governments, but this government, too. We're all happy — we're happy as a government to purchase the art, to display it in our Legislature, to give it away as gifts to dignitaries and to friends. But we should also be happy — no, we should be proud to support this program and the community it supports. These individuals are our citizens, our community, our friends and yes, my family.

They work hard, they try hard, and they are deserving of financial support. We have heard about the surplus this government has. I say, take a small part of it, guarantee it, give it to this program — not so it can maintain the status quo, but that it can grow and offer more opportunities to more young people in our communities. I don't want to talk about youth at risk or those types of terms or labels we put on people. These are our youth — they are my nephew; they are his friends, and they are other people's families. Hats off to this program and what it has done for these young people. I admire it and respect them and feel they need our unreserved support. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** It's my pleasure to speak in support of not only the original motion brought forward today by the Member for Watson Lake, but the motion as amended with the friendly amendment from the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes.

I'd like to speak about this, maybe from more of an education perspective and how important this program is. I think we need to send that message to the federal government — that this is more than just a carving program. I know the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes spoke about it — it's about experiential education, something that is extremely important, as we look to help students become successful. I know he referenced a number of students who have gone on to art school beyond this program and also those who have gone into trades and have used the life skills they learned in this program to do that.

It's a tremendous program, and I'll also offer toward the end of my remarks a perspective on how this is contributing to our community from a fundraising initiative that I did for the Yukon Hospital Foundation that involved a piece of work from two of the artists — two pieces of work, in fact.

When we look at the strategic plan for the Department of Education, our commitment to New Horizons, we'll find a reference to experiential education, and I'll just read that into the record now. In experiential education, a student constructs knowledge, value and skill from direct experience.

They can be instructed from within and outside the classroom, making use of a diversity of learning environments. A number of Yukon's experiential programs, such as Music, Arts and Drama, and Achievement, Challenge, Environment, Service, which is the ACES program, provide practical, hands-on experience for students in social studies, science or artistic curricula. The department has developed a new experiential program with Yukon First Nation perspectives, history and culture, called CHAOS 9, which is Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoor and Skills, which commenced in January of 2011.

Again, the department continues to support the application and integration of experiential teaching strategies in all Yukon classrooms, thus making experiential education available to all students. I referenced other programs that are being offered in Yukon schools, but this program — originally the Sundog Carving program, which is now the Northern Cultural Expressions Society carving program — certainly fits that bill.

When we talk about the Southern Tutchone bicultural program being offered by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations,

it's a bilingual and bicultural program intended to increase the level of Southern Tutchone content and perspectives in the St. Elias Community School, which is, of course, located in the community of Haines Junction.

That initiative was designed in collaboration with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations as a way to enhance the amount of Southern Tutchone content being taught to all kindergarten to grade 2 students in the school.

I think that is certainly a tremendous experiential learning or First Nation programming option that compares very well to what is being offered through the carving program that we are talking about here today. Of course, a northern strategy project is the Old Crow experiential learning that happens by working with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to help implement the Old Crow northern experiential project for 2011-12. The Department of Education is certainly pleased to partner on that. I have heard tremendous things about that program and the success, not only for the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, but a number of the people who have been involved.

One of the main instructors now living in Saskatchewan has been retained by the department to develop curriculum based on this program that we can share with other Yukon schools.

There have been presentations by consultants with respect to this program at a school-wide teachers conference, education summit and the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education to share those best practices.

We continue to work on a number of other initiatives when it comes to experiential learning. One only had to attend the bison feast recently held at Elijah Smith School. Unfortunately, I was unable to make it, but the Member for Whitehorse West and our Premier, I believe, actually attended that event. It was a tremendous opportunity for those students to not only go out and hunt the bison, but also participate in the feast. I know that, when speaking with the principal, he was amazed, when the carving of the meat took place, by how the students were so engaged and were able to get in there. It was very much a hands-on experience for them when it comes to that.

Of course, we have other experiential learning opportunities more on the academic side as well such as the science fair. I know it was before Christmas when we had the winners of the science fair come into this Chamber for a tribute that I was very pleased to give to them. I should let all members of the House know that those fortunate students are off to the national science fair on May 12. We certainly wish them luck, and I know they will represent the Yukon very well and do us proud.

Another experiential opportunity was the bridge building competition that was held here in Whitehorse a couple of weeks ago. The community of Carcross was very well represented. The Carcross participants did well in winning a number of categories, including the open category. I had the pleasure of assisting with adding the weight to that bridge. I think it was something in the 230-pound range before that bridge, which was made of popsicle sticks and glue and a little bit of dental floss, crashed. That open category was fantastic for me because it was an adult and a child, so it really offers that opportunity for those parents to become partners in education on projects

like that. Again, when we look at projects and programs like that or the Northern Cultural Expressions Society carving program, I think they are one and the same.

They really offer a tremendous opportunity for students to gain new skills and for adults to learn new skills as well and to participate in something that is very worthwhile. Of course, I know the Minister of Justice — and also with his responsibility for Tourism and Culture — will speak more to the specifics of what this program does, but I'd like to offer just a little bit of information as to what the Department of Education has contributed since 2006-07.

I spoke briefly to this in responding to the amendment put forward, but the First Nations art education program is one that has received consistent funding since the second year of operation through our department. The Journey Far carver project received Education funding earlier on in the program and we assisted with the Sundog carving program manual. Off course, there is also miscellaneous funding to the society for materials and carving workshops that are being held in our schools.

I am very, very pleased to speak in support of this motion as amended. It's a tremendous program.

I'll close on my experience with them — I know the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes spoke very eloquently and with a lot of passion about the value of this program and how this helps to contribute to individuals and helps to change lives — I think he mentioned this in his remarks.

We see that, I think, through the Department of Education with programs that are being offered at the Individual Learning Centre and the Teen Parent Centre, which is another program that is offered by the Department of Education that does exactly that, which is changing lives. So I can certainly relate to what he has mentioned.

With respect to another way that they're contributing to this community — a number of years ago, when I was president of the Yukon Hospital Foundation and working with the manager of special events for that organization, we were always trying to find new ways to raise money and we were just beginning the campaign to purchase an MRI machine for Whitehorse General Hospital. One of the fundraising events that the manager of events came up with was something called "Chair-ity". It's not spelled the traditional way. It's "Chair-ity". So what we did was solicit donations of plain wooden chairs and enlisted the support of a number of visual artists across the community to use their talents and manipulate those chairs any way they felt would be creative and that type of thing.

It didn't take very long for — I believe it was Sundog carvers at the time or perhaps it had morphed into its new title — but we had two chairs from that organization. The final amount of funds raised through the auction I think of about one dozen chairs was over \$15,000, so just tremendous. Events like that aren't possible without the support of the artists, including those two young carvers from the Sundog carvers, I believe it was called at the time. When we're sending this message to the federal government, this program is life-changing as the member opposite alluded, and it's also contributing to our community in other ways, such as contributing to the purchase of an MRI machine for Whitehorse General Hospital. I'm sure sto-

ries abound about other activities that this organization has engaged in that help to make our community a better place beyond making individuals better people, as alluded to by the member opposite.

Again, I wanted first of all to take time to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion today. I think it's great; it's great to have hosted representatives of the organization in the gallery here today. Again, I thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for the personal touch that he brought here because I don't think any member in the House is as engaged in that program as he is and can speak with quite as much passion to this motion as he did.

So, again, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for indulging me and allowing me to really relate this to experiential education and the community improvements that this organization is making to help make the Yukon a better place to live. So, again, thank you to the Member for Watson Lake and thank you to all members for supporting this motion.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise to speak to amended Motion No. 197 regarding federal funding for the Northern Cultural Expressions Society. This society gives marginalized youth a chance to learn essential skills that can be supported as they begin to apply to them.

Participants receive direction in three key areas: carving skills, business and marketing for artists, and life and work skills. This introduction provides students with the tools to become successful, self-supporting artists. Opportunities through the Northern Cultural Expressions Society are particularly important in that they are provided to youth at risk. With these new skills, these young people can rely on a part of themselves that is real, that is tangible and that is always growing. As a musician, I know that my skills are sometimes the only thing that I can really call my own, and attention to my trade has made me the person I am today and I'm sure that the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and the students who were in the gallery today can attest to this as well.

Many of the students come to the society after unsuccessful experiences in traditional schools and workplaces and it gives them another chance to develop necessary life skills and financial independence. As a teacher in Dawson City, I have referred students to this excellent program, and I have seen the difference that it makes in their lives and the lives of their families and in the community as a whole. I know firsthand the positive effects from these carving programs and certainly support their continued funding.

The Northern Cultural Expressions Society has experienced significant funding uncertainty in recent years. The carvers are funded by a variety of partners, including Arts Underground, the Individual Learning Centre, Teslin Tlingit Council, Kwanlin Dunn First Nations, Little Salmon, Carmacks First Nations, and Gwich'in Council. The Yukon government is also providing funding. Last month, the Minister of Tourism and Culture spoke about the society and how his department was reassuming responsibility with government for providing \$345,000 for operation and maintenance this year. The society has previously received funding through the departments of

Justice and Education. It would greatly relieve the society's funding uncertainty if it had a permanent relationship with a government department, and it benefited from multi-year funding arrangements. The Government of Canada has also supported the Northern Cultural Expressions Society through Service Canada funding.

As all members are aware, significant federal budget cuts are being felt across federal departments. We are certainly seeing the effects here in the Yukon. If the society's federal funding is actually being cut, this would be a great loss to the society and to our communities.

This motion urges the Government of Canada to continue funding the society, and we can certainly support that, as we do support the amendment that the territorial government does the same. The society members do good work. They teach the skills that help a selection of our young people live in ways that are healthier and self-supporting and outside of the justice system.

This is good for all members of the community, well beyond just the students and their families. This motion has our support today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** I'd like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward. I would also like to thank the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for making the friendly amendment to this motion. Being the Minister of Tourism and Culture, the lead department on this file, it's really an honour to speak to this.

I spent many years working in a group home setting and as a former business owner of a company that catered to young people, I have some experience in dealing with young people from various backgrounds. Having a son with autism, I also know that a one-size-fits-all approach often does not work.

In responding to the many requests that cross my desk, I am guided by our platform commitments. We have committed to provide resources directly to NGOs assisting Yukoners with substance abuse and addiction issues. We also committed to continue to work with First Nations to explore opportunities for land-based treatment of substance abuse. I will remind everyone that indeed it was the Yukon Party that initially funded this program.

I want to speak first to the "why" of this program. The vision of Northern Cultural Expressions Society is to help emerging artists develop the artistic, social and business skills required for personal success by providing opportunities for young people to channel their energy to artistic expression and to business development. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a great vision.

I'm a firm believer that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We know that young people at risk and without assistance sometimes get themselves into a world of trouble and that trouble can be very expensive, both to themselves and society. We also know that with some assistance, these same young people can become productive, contributing members of society. Early intervention can and does provide a better quality of life for both a young person and for those around him or her.

That brings us to the "who" of this motion — who are the people involved? The first part of that answer is to focus on those receiving the services. The young people receiving the services in education are typically youth at risk or those who excel in settings, other than the traditional classroom setting.

How do we respond to these young people in a way that's effective? That brings us to the second part of the answer, the part where we talk about who is providing the services. The organization was founded by the owners of Sundog Retreat, and was originally known as the Sundog carving program. The initial or introductory program called "Carving Our Path" was founded in 2004 with the assistance of Service Canada funding. This program grew rapidly, and in 2006, with the assistance of the Government of Yukon, an advanced carving program entitled the "Journey Far Project" was added for youth who had completed the beginner program. In 2009, the Sundog carving program changed its organizational structure from Sundog Retreat Inc. to a dynamic non-profit organization called the Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

I am given to understand that a key reason was that becoming a non-profit organization would enhance the opportunities for funding. I'm hopeful that I will have enough time at the end to come back to the "who" question and talk about the success stories from Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

Having talked about the "who", I'd like to talk about the "what". What is the Northern Cultural Expressions Society carving program?

It offers life skills development for individuals who may be at risk. It assists in skill development for Yukon First Nation youth that creates positive leadership opportunities, preserves traditional practices, and helps change intergenerational patterns resulting from the impacts of residential schools. It helps to develop entrepreneurial skills to increase self-sufficiency and confidence for artists and their families.

The organization offered four programs. The first, Carving Our Path, for young adults with multiple barriers to employment, aged 16 to 30, who were not in the school system and did not have full-time employment. It was previously funded by Service Canada, which is a part of the Government of Canada. Due to lack of funding, the beginner program is not currently being delivered and I would like to see the Government of Canada re-engage with the society as a funding contributor.

The second, Journey Far advanced carver program, is for high-risk youth and people with multiple barriers to employment who have graduated from the Carving Our Path program or who have demonstrated basic carving abilities.

The Yukon has funded this program in the past and I think we are just in the process of tidying up some details. I'm advised that the individual First Nations have also provided funding to specific participants. The third is the First Nations art education program which is targeted at elementary school students. I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Education, for providing the funding for that program.

The fourth program is the cultural resilience project. This is funded through the federally funded National Crime Prevention Centre. It receives \$482,000 per year until November 30, 2014. I applaud Canada for providing \$2.46 million over four



years from the National Crime Prevention Centre for the cultural resilience project. I truly, and I mean truly, hope that they continue to support this society.

I would now like to talk about how the program works. Participants of the Carving Our Path and Journey Far programs receive a small per diem which is based on the minimum wage hourly rate. This practice has been proven to be effective for helping participants to access basic necessities.

I am given to understand from discussions with the department officials that clients who receive the per diem would most likely be receiving social assistance. The per diem they receive is in place of social assistance and is used as a tool to encourage the youth's participation in that program. I believe it also helps establish the work ethic of showing up and showing up for work on time. I commend Minister Graham and his department for their work with these young people.

The program participants learn both carving and life skills through one-on-one and small group programming. In the process of teaching participants to carve, the instructors are also able to establish a link with the participants that allow them to discuss substance abuse and other personal issues.

I'd like to mention some of the past carving projects. The Carving Our Path project ran 44 weeks and supported nine young people — young people being defined as those under 30 — as they began to carve and sell their work, some of which is incredibly well done. This project was funded was Service Canada.

Each intake of youth allowed for nine participants aged 16 to 30, to learn carving skills, life skills, business planning and marketing skills. The program is life-changing. Youth who have largely experienced failure in traditional school or work opportunities blossom under the individualized attention and their tangible artistic success.

The Journey Far project is for more experienced carvers of all ages. It started in October of 2006 and was designed to provide 2.5 years of support to the carvers. This project has been funded by Yukon Justice in the past, and I have to commend the Minister of Justice for his work on that file. It had a similar structure to the Carving Our Path Program, with a greater emphasis on advanced carving and skill development. Both programs focused on a mix of carving skill development, business and marketing skill development, life skills and work skills development in order to facilitate successful careers and artists.

These programs also encourage the artist to contribute to the wider community through various outreach initiatives. The First Nations art education project connects emerging artists who serve as instructors to help Yukon First Nation students in the public school system. This project began in October 2007 and is funded by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit, Yukon Department of Education.

School students from six schools attend the studio and are taught by more experienced carving participants. These mentor-artists encourage students to build on their talents early and to stay engaged in school. I'm told that both the students and the mentors find this project very rewarding.

One part of the program is to encourage young people's entrepreneurial skills. These young carvers' range of artwork

includes masks, prints, panels, plaques, rattles, paddles and bowls. This work has been sold locally, nationally and internationally. I'm told beginner pieces sell in the range of \$25 to \$125 and advanced carvers sell their work anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on the size and complexity of the piece. I'm also advised that companies from outside Yukon have contacted the program about establishing a regular supply for art retail operations.

The participants have been featured in four gallery shows at Arts Underground in Whitehorse. Individual participants have also participated in a variety of other shows and sales and in stores and galleries in Yukon, Alaska and Vancouver. I think that speaks clearly to the quality of work being produced.

I'd now like to mention the canoe project. This involved a number of young males who participated in a 10-week substance-free intensive carving program. It took place on an island in the Yukon River between Whitehorse and Lake Laberge. By moving forward together, they carved a stunning traditional-style canoe. They started out with a very large log and they slowly but steadily carved it out over the intervening weeks. Following the completion of the canoe, they took it for its initial voyage down the Yukon River. The canoe has been displayed in the past at the Canada Games Centre. However, it will be permanently fixed in the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre on the Yukon River waterfront. There is a DVD documentary of this journey available. I own it; I purchased the DVD and I attended the documentary event at the Yukon Arts Centre. It's an incredible journey.

As I spoke with those involved with the project — some of whom are Yukon government employees; some are parents of kids in the program; some of them are the young people in the program — I was impressed with how frequently I heard the words "life-changing" to describe that program. As I look over their website, I see that one of their Tlingit carvers started out as a student and is now an instructor for the beginner program. One of his masks was presented as a gift to the Prime Minister and another commissioned by the Canada Winter Games Host Society. This artist represented Yukon artists on a trip to Russia in March 2008. Aside from his artistic accomplishments, he is now a responsible father and homeowner and provides role modelling and leadership to the youth.

A Kwanlin Dun carver presented his "Dancing Wolf" print to the Governor General in 2007 during her visit to the Sundog Retreat carving studio in Whitehorse. He has had his work selected for the cover of the Northwestel phone book.

Another Tlingit carver presented a mask to the Governor General at a state dinner during her 2007 visit to Whitehorse. Some of the artists have been invited to provide demonstrations at Arts in the Park in Whitehorse and some have presented to national Parks Canada staff gatherings. I know that some of the artists were at Winterlude in Ottawa a few years ago, and I also understand that the Yukon permanent art collection purchased a beautiful mask featuring porcupine quills.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate a comment I made earlier that it takes partnerships with the community, not just government, to bring success to NGOs like Northern Cultural Expressions Society, a very worthwhile program, and we want this

program to run effectively and efficiently. I believe this program has been successful in its goals, and I believe we should all support this motion. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** It is indeed my privilege to rise today to speak in support of this motion, as amended, and I'd like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this motion and also the member opposite for bringing forth the amendment.

A lot has been said today, and I do not want to be repetitive, so I am going to do my very best to really reflect upon some of my own personal experiences with this particular program and how I have seen it evolve over the years.

When I was Minister of Tourism and Culture, I recall reflecting upon every time there would be an opening of an art exhibit, whether it be Arts Underground, or the ODD Gallery in Dawson City, or the Yukon Arts Centre, or other places — and I would often reflect, and I still am of the view that, when it comes to the arts, the arts have this powerful ability to transform the way we think. They have the power to change or alter the way we view the perspectives that we hold about an initiative or an issue. I can say that, when it comes to this particular program, the arts have and continue to have that ability to transform lives.

This I have come to know to be true over the years. I was looking back and I recall the program was commenced back in 2006-07. It started as a vision and certainly has continued to evolve over the years, since it was first initiated. I certainly thank and commend all of those who had the vision. And I won't go through the names of the individuals who have been involved because there are many. Also, I want to recognize my predecessors and colleagues: John Edzerza, who served as Minister of Education, and also the Minister of Justice at that time, who was Marian Horne, as well as our former Premier, Premier Fentie, for their leadership, and for taking that leap of faith on a program such as this.

It was perhaps not proven at the time, but it was very much a vision of some to invest in individuals and invest in an experiential form of education and reach out to a number of individuals who, for one reason or another, may not have been reached through other traditional, conventional forms of education in the past.

I recall when that program first came about. I know that the Government of Yukon chose to initially contribute just over \$100,000 for the Journey Far carver project at that time, as it was once known. Of course, now we see that the Yukon government's contribution has grown to \$345,000, as is currently reflected in this year's budget and in previous budgets.

It's a very unique initiative. It combines training and wellness, in support of individuals becoming self-sufficient in their communities and achieving a better quality of life. It has been a tremendous success, and I don't think there is any dispute among members here today, as we have all heard.

It has provided opportunities for many, many of our youth over the years, some of whom were here in the Legislature earlier today, such as Duran Henry and William Callaghan. They are stellar examples of individuals who entered that program,

probably taking their own leap of faith, as well, and probably saw their lives transformed. Now, today, you hear of great success stories. Some of those initial, original students have now become master carvers. They have carried on their pursuits at Emily Carr University, for example — tremendous success stories. It's programs such as that — and other programs, I might add — the Individual Learning Centre, for example, another initiative that was brought forward by the previous Yukon Party government as another unique means of offering education to those who may not have received education through the conventional means, so to speak. But I can say that it has been a tremendous success and has evolved significantly over the years. As a result of that success, it has also attracted and leveraged other sources of funding, one of those being the Government of Canada.

I know a lot has been said on the floor of the Legislature about different funding sources coming through the Government of Canada, whether it was through the crime prevention strategy or other forms of funding, and that too is good.

I think it's really important that, sometimes, one-time funding — these "boutique" programs, as the former MLA for Klondike used to refer to them years ago — it's important to continue to take that leap of faith and to invest in stable, ongoing funding and I'm pleased to see that Yukon government has continued.

I recall that the first three-year funding came — I think it was back in 2009, if I'm not mistaken — and it was announced at that time that we would invest \$345,000 for each of the next three fiscal years and that was to help continue and help grow the Journey Far carver program, and whether it's advancing skills in carving, marketing — you know, essentially paving the way for carvers to ensure their future success as individuals who contribute to our economy, who contribute in a meaningful way to the quality of life as we know it and, in doing so — you know, contributing to their own personal wellness.

I know that having spoken to individuals like William and like Duran over the years has much touched me and touched many others, to be sure. I had the privilege of being able to visit the dugout canoe project some years ago when it was first initiated, along with the Chief of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Mike Smith, at that time. I remember arriving — it was a beautiful day; it was a very warm day, to be sure. There were lots of bugs, but the weather was fantastic. I remember coming down the river and all of a sudden it was like the waters opened, and there in fact was this place where it was very inviting. There were a number of the participants who were waiting there for us and pulled us in.

I remember we arrived and just climbed up a bit of the hill to get to the actual — there was a shelter that covered the dugout canoe. By the time that we had arrived there, it was a really exciting time because these participants, these students, had been there for quite awhile, and I was surprised at how intact each of these participants were, because they had been there without any other contact with their families or their friends over the course of that time. It was a very exciting time, because it was about the time just prior to the birthing of the canoe itself. I recall hearing about this, and of course it was a

very spiritual ceremony, one which I did not have the privilege of taking part in because that was to take place a couple of days thereafter, but to hear firsthand from the master carver himself, who was leading the project, and hear the experiences of each of these participants and all that they have contributed to the project unfolding — it was not just an investment in the project and in the canoe, it was an investment — it was really a story about the lives of these individuals.

I just recall seeing when we arrived that the canoe was full of these wood chips and of course the smell of cedar just enthralled or encompassed all of us. It was a very spiritual time because they were about to take these wood chips and they were about to — as soon as they had completed the digging out of the project, so to speak, and it was a process of digging. Sometimes they would reach a crevice. At one time, I heard directly, first-hand, that a piece of the canoe had actually broken off and it was a setback, but you know, due to the determination and through learning and through skills which made them stronger carvers, they were able to put that initiative back together.

Of course the project, though, evolved to the point that they were ready to give birth to this project — to the canoe. So by taking all of these chips and literally burning the chips and then, of course, filling the empty canoe thereafter with water and then sealing it and heating it so that it could birth itself; it could expand — and certainly it did.

It was tremendous and of course everyone's expectation was how far the canoe was going to move. In turn, the chips that were going to be burned, as was later told by the participants, each of those chips spoke to really a life of the participants' members who may have passed, who may have suffered from abuse, who may have suffered from addictions, or it may have represented an experience in their life. It really was a privilege and a significant project and I just want to commend them for that.

I also want to add that we were very pleased to contribute to that as well, in addition to the ongoing dollars — but it's that initiative in itself that those participants can see from beginning to end and take a piece of them and to learn so much more about their lives; to learn so much more about where they've come from and where they want to go.

That canoe, I was very pleased to see later on, was moved to the Yukon Arts Centre. As the Minister of Justice just alluded as well, it was later showcased in a documentary produced by Allan Code. I think Allan Code did just a superb job of interviews and really collecting the entire project, not just about building a canoe, but about all the stories that went with it and how that was showcased almost a year ago coming up this fall. It's that kind of story that keeps participants and key programs like this alive and well. It has been a real privilege to see it evolve. In fact, I know that it being housed within the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre was always the vision of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. I recall having the opportunity to tour Haida Gwaii and see first-hand, with elders from Kwanlin Dun and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations as well, to see their vision and to put together their vision of their respective

cultural centres and see first-hand the cultural centre that evolved there as well.

The elders shared with me at that particular event their vision of seeing the homecoming of the dugout canoe as an example of what could actually transpire. Speaking to revitalization of the culture of those peoples who have been lost, and that is what investments not only this program, but investments in infrastructure like the Kwanlin Dun First Nations Cultural Centre, which has been a great partnership all along. I just want to make reference to that again, I am very pleased to see it back where it belongs, and it was great to have seen it also on the water as well and to have it seen it actually come home.

The Minister of Education has also made reference to a number of other programs that we have helped invest in over the years that have perhaps not been as expansive or extensive as the dugout canoe or perhaps in this program all together, but the carving facility at Carcross — that is a tremendous facility that was developed in partnership with the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the Yukon government as part of the efforts to improve the waterfront, but also to serve as a place to expand capacity and training initiatives provided by First Nation members themselves.

We've heard about the bison feast, of course, and I think if anyone has not had the opportunity to take part in the actual annual bison feast held at Elijah Smith, I encourage everyone to do so, because it's quite an experience and again, the pride in those students' faces, as well as the teachers and the stories that go with those experiences, are bar none.

I know there have been investments when it comes to Old Crow. There's the bicultural program, as well, delivered through Education in collaboration with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations; Académie Parhélie, through l'École Émilie Tremblay — those are all examples of experiential programs that we continue to deliver in collaboration and partnership with our partners in Education and I commend them as well.

It's unfortunate I don't have a lot of extra time. I see I'm running out of time. But I do want to just say that this program that we're talking about today has and continues to produce significant positive outcomes, which is why our government has supported its operation through a number of funding sources over the past six years and continues to work with the board on seeing its vision through, as well. Again, I would like to thank all of the departments who have helped the society over the years, but most importantly, I'd like to just commend and congratulate all of the participants and the many individuals who have contributed to the success of the program. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I'd also like to thank and commend the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this motion forward and the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for bringing the love to this motion. The Northern Cultural Expressions Society — of course, we know, it evolved from the Sun-dog Retreat, and their mission was the same as it is today. The mission is to provide opportunities for our young people to

channel their energy to artistic expression and help break the cycle of substance abuse.

This motion that we speak to today can send a strong message to the Government of Canada that it is an effective program in our territory to help young folks break free of the bad life cycle and embrace the position to turn their lives around through this.

I want to speak to the importance of helping people help themselves. The program offered by the Northern Cultural Expressions Society helps people under 30 who have difficulties in life — abusive lifestyles and relationships — by giving them a focal point for their energies and open up new opportunities and provide them with the skill sets to create and sell artwork.

Self-reliance begets self-confidence; self-confidence begets responsibility; responsibility begets self-reliance. This is a healthy cycle that many of us as parents try to urge our children into. Often we don't have the tools or understanding of how to guide other human beings, even if they are our own children, into a healthy set of behaviours and a healthy lifestyle. Even if we do, we aren't always successful. In the end, many people end up in a negative cycle of abuse — physical abuse, emotional abuse, substance abuse. These people may not have the self-confidence to take care of themselves.

They become reliant on others. They give up the responsibilities for themselves and for other aspects of their lives. This lack of responsibility leads to lack of respect for themselves and the people and things around them. Again, the lack of respect leads to abuse, and the negative lifestyle continues.

Programs such as this and some of the other programs that have come out that we've been talking about today are of utmost importance. The Northern Cultural Expressions Society starts to break this cycle by focusing the energy not on abuse and destruction, but on creativity and creation, which is important. After the initial expression of positivity, the participants realize that their energy created something that can help support themselves. They can show that selling their art will provide for them to feel responsible and respected. The initial break from their bad life cycle has carved — no pun intended — a new path to a healthy lifestyle. Programs such as these — the ones offered by the Northern Cultural Expressions Society — are far more productive to the individuals of our societies than simply providing welfare or housing and food.

Those latter acts enable a bad life cycle to continue, fueling it forward. These programs — Carving Our Path and Journey Far — break those cycles and bring people out of their funk and into a productive society.

I want to speak a little bit about carving and the art. A lot of this is about tradition. It is about First Nation tradition, whether it be carving, whether it be beadwork, whether it be sewing some of the potlatch vests we see people wear, and our members wear in the House — I was very impressed to see on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations bonspiel that they got Mr. John Burdek to come back and carve the trophies. He carved the trophies for years; they are beautiful. I have one in my office — a paddle that he carved. He is an excellent person and a role model for other members.

Ron Chambers, who is a very good friend of mine and a respected citizen, is a carver. Some of his carving implements and some of the stuff that he has, he uses for many cultural events. I have a set of beaded mukluks that my grandmother got from Grandma Marge many years ago, and they hang in my office. Some of this stuff is incredible art. Most of it, you cannot put a value on it because it is traditional art.

I commend this motion. I voiced my thoughts on this a bit and I urge the Government of Canada to continue to financially support this Northern Cultural Expressions Society.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, she will close debate on the motion as amended.

Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Ms. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes for his amendment. Certainly I appreciate the Government of Yukon doing its part to see this good work carry on and to help these young people and old alike. I just wanted to express my thanks to the members of the Legislature. Let's vote.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Order please. This is on the motion, as amended. Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Mr. Barr:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion No. 197 agreed to as amended*

#### Motion No. 198

**Clerk:** Motion No. 198, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin:

THAT this House urges the Yukon Government to support development of the agriculture sector with actions including:

(1) working with farmers and industry associations including the Yukon Agricultural Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon to implement the Agriculture Multi-Year Development Plan;

(2) developing a “Yukon-Grown Food Policy” aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally-grown vegetables, meat and food products;

(3) supporting the development of agriculture infrastructure that improves food security, facilitates access to market, and encourages local production of food;

(4) supporting the development of local markets for Yukon agriculture products through measures including supporting the operation of the Fireweed Community Market; and

(5) working with Yukon farmers to conduct agricultural research.

**Mr. Hassard:** Mr. Speaker, it’s a pleasure and a privilege to rise today and speak to Motion No. 198 — a motion to support the development of the agricultural sector.

If we are to know where we are headed going into the future, one only needs to look back on our past. Yukon agriculture came from humble beginnings in the mid-1800s when the Hudson Bay Company traders grew the earliest Yukon agriculture crops as they tried to augment their insufficient supplies at the time. This then rose to peak production during the Klondike Gold Rush, when farmers prospered with a booming population and limited transportation of goods into the territory by storing and marketing their produce through the late fall and winter. Until the mid-1950s, farms around Dawson City, Mayo and along the Yukon River produced healthy crops of vegetables and hay, delivered economically by a fleet of sternwheelers. Today, according to the Yukon Agricultural Association, there are approximately 160 farms in operation throughout the territory. Add to this community gardens and greenhouses in communities such as Dawson City, Haines Junction, Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Whitehorse and Teslin, with multiple community gardens throughout the city.

I would remiss if I did not mention my own hometown of Teslin where the First Nations youth engaged in a community food security project that included interviews with elders, Teslin Tlingit citizens, outfitters and youth alike.

Farming north of 60 presents special farming opportunities and obstacles. Although southern imports may be available at lower costs, several farms locally raise pesticide-free and free-range foods for prices lower than imported organic food. The report *Strengthening Yukon Local Food* completed in 2010 was prepared by the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal with funding from the community development fund and speaks to the importance of decreasing our reliance on food that is transported from southern jurisdictions and farms thousands of kilometres away. The term used in the report describes this as an “oil addicted food supply”. With the price of gas continuing to increase at break-neck pace and with only one road in and

one road out, there are serious concerns about the security of Yukon’s food supply on multiple levels.

There are certainly examples in the past of empty shelves at grocery stores throughout the Yukon due to a transport truck breaking down or having an accident during extreme winter conditions.

Mr. Speaker, there’s a strong, intelligent and progressive agricultural community that has been working tirelessly on the strategic vision that will require some action on the part of this government. In fact, there are proactive consumers who are making a conscious choice to buy locally grown foods. Many are working to build on partnerships and are creating farmers’ markets, buying clubs, cooperatives and community gardens or greenhouses. We can support this momentum in building a sustainable Yukon food system. To put this all in perspective, total sales of Yukon products in 2006 was \$4.19 million, while the cost of production was \$4.75 million. Essentially, we had producers who were subsidizing consumers. It’s time to turn the corner and support the Yukon Agricultural Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon in the development of the multi-year development plan as well as a grown-in-Yukon brand.

If you have toured the Fireweed Market in the summer as I have, you would see that there is an amazing mix of vegetables, meats and various other foods, all Yukon grown. The crowds are a testament to the support the agriculture industry has from Yukoners. This government is proud to have supported the development of the agriculture industry in the past, and I am proud to be part of a government who will continue to support this key sector in the development of Yukon’s economy.

I look forward to hearing from all members of this Assembly today, as I believe this is an important motion and truly deserves input from all. Thank you in advance for your time and input, and I hope to see unanimous support of Motion No. 198.

**Mr. Tredger:** I’d first like to acknowledge the Agriculture branch. There is a committed group of people, and they have done a marvellous job in preparing this. I’ve spent some time on the webpage. I’d like to just point out a couple of things that I would like to commend them for.

They have just released information. I’d like to congratulate them on that. It is 25 years now that the information has been circulated to Yukoners. It’s kept them abreast of recent things in agriculture and it has very well done.

I have also availed myself of much of the research that the Yukon Agriculture branch has taken part in. I know, particularly out at my place, I have several varieties of raspberries that were experimented with and recommended by the Agriculture branch. I attended the Gunnar Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest. They had a research demonstration and some plots that contribute to agriculture. I know many people who are small-scale as well as large-scale — people who work in the agriculture industry who took part in that and have profited from the research that was done.

I would also like to commend them for the master gardener’s course they are putting on and acknowledge that it has

helped many people get introduced to the industry and become part of the agricultural production in the Yukon. One caveat there: I would like to ask that they begin to work with rural Yukoners a little more on those. Sometimes we get Whitehorse-centric and we don't think of what's happening in rural Yukon, and I'll speak to that a little bit later as it relates to agriculture as a whole in the Yukon.

Also, the Yukon agricultural land link, where they have begun an internship where people can work on the land and get supported by the Department of Agriculture, and people who have various endeavours in the agriculture industry are able to connect with people who want to learn about working on the land and get involved in the agriculture industry, and that has been very beneficial to a number of people.

I would like to also commend the people of the Yukon who are involved in the agriculture industry. I have been inspired by them. They believe in what they do. They are committed to it — to growing and providing good and healthy food to Yukoners. The people I have met, who have been involved in the agriculture industry in the Yukon, have been very serious about it. They are independent people; they are thoughtful; they educate themselves; they have developed a lifestyle and they are committed to it, and we as Yukoners have much to thank them for.

We in the New Democratic Party support the intent of this motion, which is furthering the development of Yukon's agricultural sector. We particularly agree with the long-term goals of food security and of food sovereignty. Food security is when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Food sovereignty is the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems.

This vision is inspiring to us and history inspires us, as well. During Yukon's Gold Rush of 1898, we know that the gardens in the Dawson area provided a lot of food eaten by thousands of miners. Similarly, years later, the United Keno Hill miners ate a good amount of local produce. We have some statistics about Yukon food growing dated from 2005. We know we'll soon have updated numbers.

But it's pretty impressive what the Yukon Agriculture branch is doing and what the people of the Yukon are doing. About one to two percent of the food we eat comes from here. Much of our produce is hay. Of course, that goes to horses, so it doesn't count as people food. Yukon buying clubs make up almost one percent of food sales. We have about 150 farms in the territory, and they average 60 acres in size. Throughout the Yukon — and I know I can speak particularly for my area — people have been involved in agriculture for many years. I like to think of the people in Mayo, the people in Pelly and Carmacks, the people along the Pelly River and the Stewart River valleys, and the people in Dawson as central to the Yukon agricultural industry. Many of them are small scale, but some of them are large commercial outfits — or larger — I use the word "large" a little bit judiciously. The Pelly River Ranch has been operating since the mid-50s under the current owners.

They have been operating since the gold rush; 1897 was when it was first established. At that time, they were providing grazing and it was a stop-over place for horses. Later on, it became a place to fatten up cattle so they would go on the river boats to Dawson and help feed the miners. The current owners, the Bradleys, have lived there since the mid-1950s. They are raising primarily cattle, chickens and vegetables for local markets. I have learned a lot from them as my home is very close to theirs. I have spent a lot of time sharing stories with Hugh and learning about agriculture in the Yukon. In Mayo there are a number of farmers in the area, one of whom — Ralph Mease — has contributed a lot to the Yukon Agricultural Association and has participated in many of the visioning exercises that have taken place. In Carmacks they have developed a greenhouse; the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation has worked with people in the area and Agriculture Yukon to develop a very successful — it's about 12 years old. They are producing local produce that is shared among the people of Carmacks and in the First Nation.

Community markets are growing up, not just, as the motion mentions, in the Fireweed Community Market, but there has also been a Stewart Valley Community Market. They operate once a month through the summertime, beginning in May and through into September. They've been very successful. There are a number of spinoffs from that. For one, people realize, yes, it is possible to grow and produce our own food. There's an educational aspect to it, too. People share varieties. People learn that healthy, viable food can be grown in the Yukon and more and more people are starting to do that.

Many of the operations, as I mentioned, are small scale and with small-scale operations comes a couple of important points to consider. When I talk to people in my area, they are concerned about a couple of things. One is cold storage. I know that the department has worked with a number of people. I would encourage them to keep working with them to develop cold storage facilities so that small-scale people can produce goods, have them kept over, and they are available.

A second concern for people in my area is the idea of having a feed lot abattoir set up. I haven't heard any announcement on it yet, but I noticed that an order-in-council reallocated some land alongside the Klondike Highway, or the Mayo Road, that could in the future be turned into an abattoir, and I look forward to that.

I'll just recite a story that my friend Dale Bradley was telling me about, in terms of production of meat. Currently, they do their slaughtering at their ranch. That meat then must be kept in cold storage and delivered as in farm gate sales.

What that means is that because they are a distance from the market, he has to put it into his refrigerated truck and drive into Whitehorse, go door to door to sell it to his customers and deliver it to his customers. This usually takes him anywhere between two weeks and one month before he can do it. That's far too long for a working farmer to be away from his farm. If there were an abattoir and feedlot set up in a central area, he could drop those off, they could be finished, slaughtered and he would not have to be there to go through the process. I'm sure that's what the Agriculture branch and the Minister of Energy,

Mines and Resources is looking at when they request the rezoning. So I look forward to that.

We noticed a slight change between Motion No. 25, standing in the name of Minister Cathers, and Motion No. 198, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard, where increased annual funding has been replaced with —

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

**Mr. Tredger:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I was referring to Motion No. 25, standing in the name of the Member for Lake Laberge, and Motion No. 198, standing in the name of the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin.

Increased funding has been replaced with supporting the operation of — we in the New Democrats would like to take this opportunity to say we are in favour of supporting all of our community markets. They contribute much more to our communities than just food and other agricultural products; they are educational, cultural and social hubs. The markets in Stewart Valley — the Stewart Valley community market is but one example. I am sure that there is a farmer's market in Dawson City, and again I have heard good things about it as well. We do have more than one community market.

I also would like to reiterate my request for a rural perspective to be included when developing the territory's agricultural sector. This means consideration should include the distance from market, impacts on the time for the local farmers, the cost of transport and the freshness. I notice that 70 percent of Yukon's current agricultural land is located within 100 kilometres of Whitehorse.

I believe that with some work this could be expanded. I know most of the requests for land are for land in the Whitehorse area. I believe a large part of that is the closeness to market. Providing a working abattoir and a cold storage facility would go a long way to allowing areas like Watson Lake, Mayo-Tatchun and Dawson to develop an agricultural industry.

We believe in the development of the agricultural sector on both a small and a large scale. I've also wondered if consideration has been given to developing incentives to increase markets, like at mines. We know now that many of our operating mines and our larger exploration outfits are having their food trucked in all the way from Edmonton. It's not even being purchased locally. It's being purchased in Edmonton and trucked right to the mine site. Not long ago, United Keno Hill benefited from a thriving agricultural industry in the Mayo area.

That again, with some incentives, may be able to be replaced. We could build on Yukon's proud history of feeding miners in Dawson and Keno. We can do something like that again.

Development of Yukon's agricultural sector brings up the issue of land use planning. It is critical that our land — limited as it is that is agriculture-friendly — be set aside and reserved for agricultural production. Lack of a land use plan, by default, is encroaching on much of our agricultural land. We are interested in the status of land distribution for agriculture and wonder whether areas or targets have been identified.

Having said that, I would like to propose an amendment be made and I'm not quite sure of the order — do I read this into the record and then people get copies of it?

*Amendment proposed*

**Mr. Tredger:** I move

THAT Motion No. 198 be amended by:

(1) adding the phrase "First Nation governments" between the words "farmers", and "and" in the first clause, item (1); and by

(2) adding the words, "that does not include or promote in any way the use of genetically engineered or modified seed or organisms" after the word "research" in item (5).

**Speaker:** Order please. The amendment is in order. It has been moved by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun

THAT Motion No. 198 be amended by:

(1) adding the phrase "First Nation governments" between the words "farmers", and "and" in the first clause, item (1); and by

(2) adding the words, "that does not include or promote in any way the use of genetically engineered or modified seed or organisms" after the word "research" in item (5).

**Mr. Tredger:** On item (1) adding "First Nation governments" to the groups, I think almost speaks for itself, but I would like to add a few things. The history of farming in the Yukon has included First Nations. I know that in the Pelly area, the Faircloughs were one of the first farmers at the Pelly River Ranch. I know the Van Bibbers had extensive market gardens and many people in Pelly were gardeners and provided a lot of the produce for the town at one point. It was First Nations in Carmacks — the Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation — who developed a greenhouse in conjunction with Yukon Agriculture. They have worked very closely with Yukon Agriculture to develop and show how having a greenhouse is viable.

I know I've had interest expressed from all three First Nations in my area. The Na Cho Nyäk Dun, the Little Salmon-Carmacks and the Selkirk First Nations have all expressed an interest in encouraging their citizens to get into the agriculture field and ways that they can support them. I know that after seeing the success that Little Salmon-Carmacks had, the Selkirk First Nation is currently working on a greenhouse development and have, indeed, operated it for a year or two now.

The second aspect, involving First Nations early in discussions around agriculture, is that they're major landowners in the area. The First Nation governments have say over settlement lands, and they also have an interest in — they have a say over category A and B lands, and they have an interest in their traditional territories. I believe there have been some disputes in the past. Those may be alleviated to a certain extent by involving the First Nations early on to arrive at solutions and the identification of what land is available and what would be appropriate for agricultural use.

On the second item, a few years ago, close to 1,700 Yukoners petitioned the Yukon government to keep Yukon free of any genetically engineered seed or any genetically modified animals. Today another Yukon farmer is circulating a petition with a similar goal: to keep GE and GMO technologies far away from the Yukon. In the future, being GE-free may well become a research advantage. I know the Department of Agri-

culture has put quite a bit of effort into marketing a Yukon brand and a Yukon-grown brand on produce that comes from the Yukon. This is commendable, and it has a distinct advantage to Yukoners, but also many parts of the world. If we continue to keep genetically modified produce out of the Yukon, we can then label ourselves as genetically modified-free and the Yukon brand will benefit from that. If I look at the *Multi-Year Development Plan for Yukon Agriculture and Agri-Food, 2008-12*, which was developed in 2007-08, it states, "While support for a genetically modified organism-free zone is generally mixed, there is strong support for this concept, particularly among the organic and market garden participants of the industry."

The opportunity may help to distinguish Yukon-grown products at the consumer level and possibly open up opportunities for production and trade with other GMO-free areas. This motion doesn't speak to making a GMO-free area. What it does is to say that does not include or promote in any way the use of genetically engineered or modified seed or organisms in research. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In speaking to the amendment, I appreciate the intent of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun in this; however, we will not be supporting the amendment, in large part because the approach that was brought forward and outlined in the motion by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin is reflective of dialogue that has gone on with farmers and Yukoners in this area.

It is something that is reflecting the spirit of what we committed to certainly in proceeding when re-elected to government. The insertion the member has proposed of First Nation governments in the role related to the multi-year development plan does not really reflect the details of that plan and how that role would occur.

What I would point out to the member is that we have worked with First Nation governments on projects such as community greenhouses in Haines Junction, one that the then chief and re-elected chief, Chief James Allen, had brought forward as a request to me at the time for government participation joining that First Nation's funding of the project. We did fund that.

We have also worked to support the agricultural activities, many including those that have partnerships from First Nation governments or First Nation citizens who are not connected to the governments. The role proposed by the member, I think, would lead more to confusion for those reading this than anything else.

So, while emphasizing the fact that we are very much interested in working with First Nation governments and First Nation citizens in pursuing opportunities to increase food production — including if there's interest by First Nations to consider development of their settlement A land, we would certainly be prepared to talk to them about how we might support them in that regard — the place in which the member proposed inserting it in the motion would, I think, lead to confusion and misunderstanding about how the multi-year development plan is actually laid out.

Secondly, the other amendment proposed by the member referred to research and began talking about genetically engineered or modified seed organisms. Again, what I want to emphasize to the member is that Yukon government is not currently funding and has no plans to fund research related to genetically modified or engineered products. The issue that the member is tying into this of the idea of making Yukon a genetically modified organism-free zone is one that has been a very divisive issue within the Yukon's farming community. It is one where the government continues to support farmers on either side of this issue, trying to reach common ground on this matter. We think that a divisive approach or approach with whichever side gets the most signatures on a petition doesn't deal with the real issues and concerns of those who wonder about the government's ability to identify genetically modified organisms or seeds and adequately police that and how that would occur. We are very supportive of that dialogue occurring.

We see there being potential upsides to the Yukon in identifying itself as being a place that is free from potential risks and as being an area that has food that Yukon citizens can be confident is healthy for them. At this point, we believe that there needs to be further discussion between farmers especially and involving other interested Yukon citizens on this matter. In recent times — as the member may recall from a year ago I believe it was, although it might have been a little longer ago — there was some very divisive debate within the farming community that spilled into the newspapers. We would rather see people make an effort to become comfortable with a common approach rather than picking one side over another in this.

We will not be supporting the amendment brought forward by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, but in fact I would say that some of the spirit of what I think he may be intending to achieve are matters that we could look at, and again, emphasizing that with First Nation governments in particular, we want to work with them on matters beyond the farm development plan the member has referenced.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I rise to speak in support of the amendment introduced by my colleague, the MLA for Mayo-Tatchun.

In preparing for this debate this afternoon, I read through the *Multi-Year Development Plan for Yukon Agriculture and Agri-Food*, and would note for the member opposite who just spoke against the amendment to the phrase "First Nation governments", in clause (1), is that, in fact, the Yukon agricultural multi-year development plan was prepared with involvement of First Nations.

My colleague from Mayo-Tatchun spoke about some of the history of agriculture in the Yukon, which has included farm production by First Nation citizens and residents of the Yukon.

We in the New Democratic caucus take a position that we support the governance goal of implementing land claims and self-government agreements. Accordingly, we believe that it is important to add the phrase "First Nations governments" when



we're debating a motion that urges the Yukon government to support development of the agriculture sector.

The Yukon agricultural multi-year development plan contains within it suggestions about improving our knowledge of the agriculture sector production and preparing a database of all previous studies, which would be helpful. The issue of genetically modified organisms was identified and written about in the multi-year development plan. I'm wondering whether the government has been able to deliver on having a compilation of those studies available for farmers and industry stakeholders, which I believe would include research on genetically modified organisms.

One of the items identified in this multi-year development plan, when it discusses the objective of maintaining or improving on the Yukon's reputation as a clean, minimal disease, minimal pest, low-intensive production area, speaks to an objective of investigating the advantages and disadvantages that may exist in a genetically modified organism-free, or GMO-free, environment.

I understand that a GMO study has been promised. This study would look at the benefits and opportunities and risks that would be created if a GMO-free area were developed. Currently in the Yukon, farmers are working to gather more support for making the Yukon a GMO-free area. Research and evidence is mounting on the dangers of genetically modified organisms. Many countries throughout the world have brought forward regulations or legislation or international agreements to ban GMO products.

Some countries do not allow the importation of GMO products. I believe that the evidence supports making the Yukon a GMO-free area and that it would not be of value to promote the use of genetically engineered or modified seed or organisms when so many other places have examined this question and concluded that GMO food is not healthy and safe. It has a lot of repercussions on the agriculture industry and indeed, on our health — and good food is vital to good health.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying that I support the amendment brought forward by my colleague and I hope that members will agree that adding the phrase "First Nation governments" to clause (1) of the motion would be of benefit. Also, that adding the phrase that we would not promote the use of genetically engineered or modified seeds or organisms would also be a good thing.

**Mr. Silver:** Whereas we would be in support of the first clause of this amendment to add the phrase, "First Nations governments" between the words "farmers" and the word "and", we do believe, however, that the second clause pertaining to a genetic modification is to be too large and too divisive of an issue to be tagged on to a motion to support the agricultural amendment. I do urge the NDP to develop a new motion, one specific to genetically engineered or modified seeds and organisms.

**Speaker:** If no other member wishes to be heard, are you prepared for the question? Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agree.

**Some Hon. Members:** Disagree.

**Speaker:** I believe the nays have it. The amendment is defeated.

*Amendment to Motion No. 198 negatived*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** In rising to support the motion, the one thing I'll just very briefly point out with reference to the points put forward by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun and the Member for Copperbelt South is that one of the areas we as government believe is important in proceeding forward with areas related to agriculture and developing the farming and market gardening sectors of the economy is trying to, as much as possible, gain some level of agreement and acceptance within the farming community of initiatives that are being proposed prior to proceeding with them.

So, again, we are very much supportive of people working among themselves to try to reach a consensus on major policy issues affecting that sector.

I'd like to again thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for putting forward this motion. It gives me pleasure both as minister responsible for agriculture and as MLA for Lake Laberge, where I have the honour of representing most of the Yukon's farming sector of the economy. To speak in support of this motion presented, I note that we made commitments during the 2011 election campaign to continue to support the development of the Yukon's agriculture sector. This motion is certainly reflective of our past actions and our desire to continue to support development of Yukon's agriculture industry, including taking additional steps in this term aimed at working with farmers to increase the production of Yukon-grown food. Working with farmers to increase the supply of locally grown food is a key part of our steps to improve food security, and supporting development of the agriculture sector with actions, including — as outlined in the motion tabled by my colleague — working with farmers and industry associations, including the Yukon Agricultural Association and Growers of Organic Food Yukon, to implement the agriculture multi-year development plan; developing a Yukon-grown food policy aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally grown vegetables, meat and food products.

That, I would note, is a matter that came up through requests from farmers, who happen to be constituents of mine and who identified the fact that developing a policy focused more specifically than the 2006 agriculture policy on addressing our opportunities for supporting the growth of local food production would have merit and look forward to working with farmers and industry associations and others to develop that specific food policy.

"Supporting the development of agriculture infrastructure that improves food security, facilitates access to market, and encourages local production of food" is (3) in the motion, of course. It is also an area that we believe is very important to supporting the growth of the Yukon's farming sector.

It has been identified by many farmers that the needs of the industry, really, in many cases relate to infrastructure on the fact that, although the Yukon's agriculture sector in some cases uses extremely modern technology, and in other cases our in-

frastructure, both fixed and mobile, is often well behind other areas of the country. Some of the fixed infrastructure, in particular, has at times in earlier eras in many of the provinces had support by the government in developing that infrastructure and in some cases may be a key component.

Examples of where we have funded infrastructure in the past include the purchase of the mobile abattoir, which came at the request of Yukon farmers, and purchasing a no-till drill and purchasing other mobile equipment that can be available for rental to farmers, but is not really feasible for many individuals, particularly some of the smaller operators, to purchase specifically for their own use because of a very limited demand for that piece of equipment. Developing local markets for Yukon agricultural products, including supporting the operation of the Fireweed Community Market, is something that we have done in the past and we will continue to do in the future.

It is really important for us to work with people who are producing the products to understand their needs, and to look both on the basis of research that has been done in the past and current feedback from industry to determine what, really, are the smart investments, both in terms of infrastructure and program support. Working with Yukon farmers to conduct agricultural research is again an area that has had investment in the past through programs including the Growing Forward program, and is an area that we see there being continued opportunity for learning more about the Yukon's climate and what can be grown well here.

What I specifically note with that, as members may recall, is that in fact some Yukon products grow quite well in our climate with the extended daylight hours in our growing season; others, because of the nature of that individual plant, do not grow well, and need specific steps taken to assist their growth, or do not grow and produce very well here at all.

A few areas I'd like to highlight in terms of land development is that in 2011, 582 hectares of Yukon land were reserved for future agricultural development. Again, this is an area that speaks to both what this government is doing and a specific question and concern identified by the Member for Mayo-Tatchun. I would also like to highlight the fact that the Yukon currently has 59 agreements for sale for agricultural land. A key part of having that land available is changes that were made in 2006 by the Yukon Party government at the time to the land pricing policy that was outlined in the previous 1991 Yukon agriculture policy. Up until the 2006 agriculture policy, land that was being sold went through what was referred to as the "two-for-one policy". Farmers could acquire the land but they had to put in development investments worth double the value of the property.

At the request of farmers and through the consultation and development of the 2006 agriculture policy, we heard very strongly from farmers, including many of my constituents who participated, that they believe that really did two things. It made it very hard for new farmers in particular to get into developing a farm. In fact, because of the structure where existing farmers for new pieces of property could go through a one-for-one pricing, where they had to put in development equivalent to the value of that property for those subsequent parcels, it

actually gave an advantage that was unfair to existing farmers while making it harder to new farmers and particularly young farmers who are more likely to have limited financial resources to actually acquire land, let alone develop that and get it into production.

So, considering the significant increases in land prices that have occurred within the past seven years — I believe the average housing price has gone up over 90 percent — the value of agricultural land has gone up significantly as well. I would point out that the change of the 2006 agriculture policy to the one-for-one pricing policy was a critical step, without which it's quite unlikely that we would have the 59 agreements for sale for agricultural land that are currently in place.

That being said, of course, we need to continue to respond to the needs of Yukon farmers and identify what steps need to be taken to continue to grow the Yukon's agriculture sector.

A few things that I would note under the Growing Forward agreement that I signed some years ago and that is currently underway and expires at the end of March 2013 — examples of projects funded under that agreement to date include the reclamation of 320 acres of farmland; wildlife damage prevention; market development initiatives, including community gardens and farmer market support; farm infrastructure including value-added processing facilities for cheese making and shearing wool; environmental farm plans and funding for best management practices; and, additional support programs funded through the Growing Forward program. This includes operation and maintenance of the mobile abattoir; the annual agriculture conference and banquet; and, commercial soil, feed and water testing as well as disease testing.

I would also like to highlight the fact that the Yukon Agricultural Association's annual general meeting is this weekend. I look forward to attending and to again hearing from members of the Yukon Agricultural Association about their priorities for government continuing its support for Yukon agriculture.

One thing that I would note as well in the Growing Forward agreement that was put in place — the multi-lateral agreement between provinces, territories and the federal government — there is a specific Canada-Yukon agreement which we were successful in getting more flexibility around funding for infrastructure projects than is allowed to most jurisdictions. That is something that we hope we will be able to get agreement for in this next development of Growing Forward.

The Growing Forward agreement — the "Growing Forward 2" agreement as it's sometimes referred to — is currently in the process of being developed and we anticipate being able to sign that agreement along with provinces, territories and the federal government when the Yukon hosts the Canadian Agriculture ministers in September of this year. So I'm looking forward to hosting colleagues from across the country at that time. It provides us with a good opportunity to make sure that our priorities and the specific issues, challenges and opportunities faced by Yukon's agriculture sector are understood by the federal government and by colleagues from across the country at the ministerial level. The importance of that is that when we engage in agreements like this, we have that support from provincial and territorial colleagues for allowing the agreement to

be sufficiently flexible to address our needs, which has been very important in the past, and is something that we need to focus on as well going forward.

In recognition of the time, I will truncate my remarks from what I had originally planned on saying. I do want to highlight the fact that Yukon has, for a relatively small portion of our total food production, a fair diversity of different types of Yukon products. Those include the market gardening sector; they include potato production. Many in this House will be familiar with my constituents Steve and Bonnie Mackenzie-Grieve, who, through Yukon Grain Farm, provide very noticeable and visible potatoes in Yukon stores. They are far from the only potato producers; the others, though smaller, also contribute significantly to the Yukon's food sector.

We believe that there is significant opportunity for the growth of the amount of Yukon's food needs that can be met from local food production, as was alluded to by another member earlier in debate — the fact that back around the Klondike Gold Rush and shortly thereafter, the Yukon had a significant portion of its food production occurring in the Dawson area. Really, that was a reflection of the time that, in those days, being able to obtain locally grown food was often the difference between eating and going hungry. As a result of improvements in transportation infrastructure, one effect has been that a greater share of our food is being imported from the south, but with a growing understanding from many citizens that locally grown food, which is healthy and more is known about its origin, is not only good for investing in the local economy, but is something that is a good practice for yourself, your family and your community.

It's also notable that with transportation infrastructure and an increased reliability of the Yukon's link to the south — that 25 or 30 years ago we had more food supply available in the territory through warehouses like the old Kelly Douglas warehouse due to a much less reliable link to the south. With that increased reliability, as members will note, there have been times where it is evident in local grocery stores that the truck has not arrived and we, in fact, do not have that large a local food supply to meet our own needs, in the event of a transportation disruption.

A few other things that are worthy of note — the value of the Yukon's agriculture sector has been noted as being in the range of — well, even as far back as 10 years ago, the Yukon's industry production was estimated at \$4.2 million, and the total farm investment, including lands, building, equipment and livestock, was reported at \$50.2 million. That's according to the 2001 Canadian census numbers.

Again, the availability of Yukon food and food supply is not perhaps as evident to everyone on a daily basis but, really, the Fireweed Community Market — I want to acknowledge the work done by all those who have made that market run and continue to operate it through their time and their personal contribution and volunteer hours to support the organization, as well as participate as vendors.

Really, I think that has been something that has gained a larger awareness by many Yukoners, who had not previously thought much of the Yukon's farming sector. The Fireweed

Community Market is a great opportunity to connect with producers to see some of the products and to get other Yukon citizens thinking about the opportunity for buying local products.

With your indication there, Mr. Speaker, I see I have actually used more time than I thought I had in my remarks and, in the interest of allowing other members to speak, I will conclude my comments. I would encourage all members to support this motion.

Again, I want to acknowledge the fact that the Official Opposition did suggest an amendment to the motion and, without dwelling on the previous question, what I would note is that the issues around First Nation governments and the opportunities to work with First Nations in advancing the growth of the Yukon's farming sector and increasing local food supply is something we very much support and we will, in other areas, continue dialogue with Yukon farmers. With that, I commend the motion to the House, and I encourage all members to vote in favour of it.

**Mr. Silver:** I rise to offer comments from the Liberal caucus on Motion No. 198 regarding Yukon's agriculture sector and government agricultural policy. The Yukon is not blessed with a temperate climate. We have a short summer and long, dark winters; we have dry, productive seasons and a lot of snow in the other two-thirds of the year. Our climate and our isolation mean that Yukoners are, by necessity, a hardy bunch. It takes a special kind of resilience to live here, from the earliest First Nation communities to the rush of immigrants during the Klondike Gold Rush to our friends and neighbours today.

Yukon agriculturalists, who make their living and produce our food in this climate and for isolated markets, must be among the most hardy and resilient of all Yukoners. We thank them for their contributions, and we thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward today.

This motion identifies a number of government actions to support our agriculture sector. They include implementing a 2008-12 multi-year development plan for agriculture, developing a local food policy, and investing in agricultural infrastructure, markets and research. The overall goal of these initiatives would be to encourage an agriculture sector that is active, highly productive and profitable.

In turn, the agricultural sector will provide Yukoners with fresh, high quality agricultural products close to home, while improving local food security.

Yukoners import the vast majority of their groceries today. This makes us dependent on outside markets for our basic food stuffs. It also means that our groceries require significant consumption of fossil fuels as they are trucked up to our communities. Increased local production will decrease this dependency. Local produce is fresher food, making it both more enjoyable and more nutritious than produce trucked in from distant farms.

We have heard from members today about the Fireweed Community Market, but I do want to speak a little bit about Dawson. The Vogt family has been producing fresh produce to Klondikers for many years — another reason to visit Dawson City in the summertime. Jack, Lucy and their family grow first-class produce. All items available at the Front Street Farmers

Market in Dawson City are excellent, for that matter. The industry in Dawson is growing. Thanks to Willow Peerenboom, we have fresh eggs in Dawson now. I would love to buy all of my foods locally. I have purchased meat from the Pelly farms for the past few years, and I am very grateful for the quality product from the Bradley family.

On a side note, the Bradleys also produced great quality kids and I've had the honour of teaching them in Dawson.

I also agree with the Member for Mayo-Tatchun with the need for an abattoir. The Bradleys' customers are not only in Whitehorse, but they are also all around the Yukon. I've witnessed the stress that this family has had to go through as they scrambled to find a processing solution.

This motion specifically references working with farmers and industry associations. Partnerships like this produce better quality government policies because they are informed by the people who know first-hand about industry and how it works and what needs to be expanded to prosper. The Yukon Agricultural Association and the Growers of Organic Food Yukon are both open to members from across the Yukon and both are still based in Whitehorse. We would want to be assured that the government actively seeks out partners in agriculture throughout the Yukon. It is not, after all, here in the downtown core that our agriculturalists operate. Rural Yukoners must be deliberately included. The agricultural multi-year development plan referenced in this motion was produced in December 2007 and covers the years 2008 through 2012. We are now entering the final growing season covered by this plan.

The motion being discussed today states that the Yukon government should work with partners to implement that plan and the plan is wide ranging. It covers infrastructure, regulatory, financing and research and development objectives. It also includes goals for specific sectors of the Yukon's agricultural industry, such as for feed, grains, poultry and vegetables.

It would certainly be possible to spend the full day today on this plan. I would like to focus my comments on the agricultural infrastructure. The plan identifies several areas where infrastructure needs improvement: permanent buildings, storage space and freezer space at the Fireweed Community Market would help. Improved local access to livestock veterinarians and parts and services for farm machinery would also be useful. The plan also highlights the need for a multi-use processing facility. A 2006 study by the Yukon Agricultural Association advocated for such a facility, including a fee-for-service, red-meat processing component; a white-meat slaughter and abattoir component; and a community kitchen for food processing.

We have heard the need for meat-processing facilities repeated many times since then. It is key to increasing production and it is a necessary service for our agricultural producers. We would hope that this would finally see some progress under the implementations called for in this motion.

We hope to see those infrastructure improvements made. We are also hopeful for the other improvements to our agricultural sector that are identified in this motion. This motion accordingly has our support.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** I wanted to speak a little bit to this motion, but I'd like to commend the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for this Motion No. 198. Most of the farms locally that we have in the Yukon right now are in the Whitehorse area. I want to talk about a little tidbit of information on some of the areas in the Yukon — the frost-free days. In the Whitehorse area, the agriculture around Whitehorse has 70 frost-free days. With a bit patience and innovation, things can grow and they do surprisingly well if you've been to some of these farms.

The Pelly farm, 1901 to 1954 — it's now the Pelly ranch — is one of the oldest farms in the Yukon. For more than 50 years the Bradley family — we heard of this — has practised sustainable farming, feeding their livestock only with what they grow. The location of the Pelly River Ranch was selected because of its proximity to the Dawson Trail back in the day. The Pelly farm was an important resting stop for weary travellers and provided winter boarding for horses that were required to pull the coaches along the Dawson Trail.

Near and dear to my heart, Mile 1019 is the experimental farm out in the Haines Junction area which I remember as a kid. That's near Haines Junction and it was operated by the Government of Canada from 1945 until 1968, and we'll get to the fact that the reason the location was there is that has the least amount of frost-free days, at 21. The rationale of this site was that anything could grow in this location. They grew a lot of stuff there. Eventually, the land was leased to the Tait family for market gardening and potato production. Yukoners, when they think of potatoes, think of Yukon Gold — that will come to mind. Yukon Gold potatoes were genetically the first Canadian-created potatoes. They were created at the University of Guelph School of Agriculture, and it was in Ontario that this was done. But they were brought to the Yukon, and for years and years, many Yukoners ate potatoes that Mr. Tait grew every year.

Some of the best growing conditions in the Yukon are in areas that we've discussed a lot in this House — the Mayo area and the Klondike Valley. The winters are severe, but the summers are the warmest and the longest, approximately 100 frost-free days. It's almost like some of the northern prairies where they farm all the time. Farming? Yes, it's the north's best-kept secret. It often comes as a surprise to many people that we even grow up here — that alongside Yukon's large mining and forestry industry, there exists a robust agriculture and food sector.

I'd like to talk about one of my constituents, Kevin Moore, who has a son that runs the farm at Mendenhall. He has different animals. They have greenhouses. They grow. He has a lease. He farms the right of way. He gets a permit from us and then he farms the right of way to feed his livestock, but he also grows. He wants to meet with the Member for Lake Laberge here. We're going to set up a meeting shortly. He has an idea — a farm to feed 200 Yukoners. Rather than the recent trend — produce locally food and then have it transported from hundreds of kilometres away. This means driving the industry so we can capitalize on this potential of Yukon growing and feed families — feed 200 families from a farm.

Yukon's traditional agricultural areas give farmers an opportunity to increase the exports to some of the communities

that might not have it — develop value-added products and supply new local food demands from nearby communities and markets. Those are the markets we've been talking about — the Fireweed market. This will increase revenue in the renewable resource sector and provide significant economic benefits to the region. Farms can thrive in the north. Yukon's small but vibrant agriculture sector is an example for other regions to follow.

In addition to livestock, northern farms are also engaged in marketing gardens, such as potatoes, sod — the sod farm is a great place — greenhouses, community-shared agriculture, specialty co-ops, and out of that you will get some niche markets.

A growing number of farms are also implementing organic production practices. As a market for organic crops expands, farmers continue to develop new expertise in this area, and that goes into the research end of things in the north. A clear indication of the growing relevance and importance of the agricultural sector to the Yukon is the interest being shown by some of our northern universities and colleges into the research end of things.

I commend this motion. I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing it forward. I encourage agriculture. I encourage the fact that people who apply for agricultural property get out there and try to feed 200 families in the Yukon. Use your agricultural lot for agriculture. It is not just a land grab; this is an opportunity to benefit all Yukoners through farming and agriculture.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** I am pleased to rise in support of this motion, although I am disappointed that the government chose to defeat the amendment put forward by my colleague, the Member for Mayo-Tatchun.

Good food is vital to good health. I think we need to think of farmers as essential service workers and we need to make agriculture sustainable for farmers. The People's Food Policy — and I will speak much more about that in a minute — says that the root problem is that food is treated as a market commodity, rather than as a necessity of life.

This motion begins with talking about the agriculture multi-year development plan, which sets out several goals that it contends are achievable to increase and sustain production, sales and profitability in the Yukon of the agricultural and the agri-food industry. The multi-year development plan conducted extensive interviews and a workshop to develop its overall goals. It was prepared for the Yukon agricultural and agri-food industry, the Yukon government Agriculture branch and the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, all based in Whitehorse.

It represents collaborative work of industry and government and in its consultations they included producers, retailers, processors, governments and First Nations. So, achieving the goals of the plan is key. While the plan title covers 2008 to 2012, and we are, I note, in the year 2012 already, the plan sets out targets for 2016. On page 8 of the document it states that, "Government will make best efforts to reach the following government targets by 2016 ... to make 25 percent of new farmland available through planned development areas." I

wonder what progress has been made in the past four years since the plan was developed to make farmland available through planned development areas. Secondly, the report indicates, "Government will make best efforts to help industry to achieve industry-related targets by 2016." One of those goals is to see a "200-percent increase in the production and sales of Yukon-grown agricultural products." At the present time, only one to two percent of the food we eat comes from here.

We fully support the goal of increasing production, and sales will follow, of Yukon-grown food.

But I just do wonder what progress has been made toward the goal of a 200-percent increase in the production and sales of Yukon-grown agriculture and how this goal is being monitored. Another industry target government will make best efforts to support is the completion of primary infrastructure projects, which should be financially self-supporting by the fifth year of operation, according to the plan. Has the government done any work to assess the mobile abattoir, and is it financially self-supporting?

In speaking about how growth can be achieved, there is a goal for the agriculture sector to foster an environment of inclusiveness between all stakeholders of the agriculture sector. Agriculture is not inclusive because of the very high agricultural land costs that prohibit many farmers from buying land to grow food.

As previous speakers have said in debate on this motion, food producers are located in urban and rural areas. We have spoken about the historical record at the time of the Klondike Gold Rush, where it's estimated the population was as large as 30,000 people. Local agriculture produced vegetables for feeding the people who were resident in the Klondike area at that time.

I also know from reviewing the records of residential schools in the Yukon that the church societies who ran the Chootla residential school in Carcross had, as part of their annual reports, a record of how much food was grown and produced by the children who were not, as we know now, getting a very good education, but who were, in fact, working. There were hundreds of pounds of potatoes and carrots and cauliflower grown by the children, who were taken from their homes and forced to attend residential school.

Now, to improve the further processing of vegetables and other Yukon products, the plan presents a strategy for expanding infrastructure and for considering a multi-use processing facility and developing detailed plans for the use of a commercial kitchen. I understand a study has been completed on a commercial kitchen, and I would like to know whether any action will be taken on that.

Clause (2) of this motion says that we will support the development of the agricultural sector by developing a Yukon-grown food policy, aimed at significantly increasing the production and use of locally grown vegetables, meat, and food products. I completely agree that we need a sound agricultural research plan that is achievable, that is supported by farmers, and one that would help produce more local food. I am very happy to report that one exists. Yukon farmers were fully involved in an extensive process that included hundreds of

kitchen-table talks, dozens of teleconferences, ongoing on-line discussions, and three cross-Canada conferences. *Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada* was released in 2011. This is the first-ever national food policy to be developed by the food movement itself — a network of organizations and individuals working to build a healthy, ecological and just food system for Canada.

The average net farm income in Canada is currently going through its lowest period in history. Sales-only incomes — not taking into account credit, government support and off-farm jobs — are well below zero. Canada lost 17,550 farms between 2001 and 2006 alone. This is one reason why we need to see a food policy and adopt the People's Food Policy, which is rooted in the concept of food sovereignty.

Food security is when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. That is the food security definition prepared by La Via Campesina.

We want to ensure that food that we eat comes from, as close as possible, to where it's produced. We want to support food providers in a widespread shift to ecological production in both urban and rural settings. We need to see strong federal poverty elimination and prevention programs to ensure Canadians can better afford healthy food and encourage the public to be involved in decisions that affect the food system.

Mr. Speaker, the People's Food Policy also talks about the need for change in our food system, which is being recognized at both Canadian and global levels. In 2008, the World Bank and the UN convened 900 experts to carry out a comprehensive three-year assessment of world agriculture. Their findings called for fundamental shifts in farming away from industrial production models and toward agri-ecology. Most recently, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food released a report that includes calls for a widespread global move from chemical to ecological agriculture, demonstrating that this approach could double food production in key areas of hunger in 10 years or less.

So it's well-recognized that organic agriculture food production is healthy for the environment and for the public. I think it's of great value that there was strong citizen and civil society involvement in developing this food policy that needs to be adopted by governments and supported here in the Yukon, as in Canada. This policy places the well-being of the majority and the health of our planet at the centre of all decisions. As the report states, it is time to reset the table.

So food sovereignty calls for a fundamental shift in focus from food as a commodity to food as a public good. Food production can strengthen communities, ecosystems and economies. Food sovereignty also recognizes that women bear primarily the responsibility for food provisioning, production and preparation, as well as the disproportionate effects of poverty and other forms of marginalization. I earlier read the definition of food sovereignty, which was first proposed by La Via Campesina, the global peasant movement co-founded by the Cana-

dian National Farmers Union at the World Food Summit in 1996.

The People's Food Policy platform and the report they prepared addresses indigenous food sovereignty, food sovereignty in rural and remote communities, access to food in urban communities, agriculture infrastructure and livelihoods, a sustainable fishery and reasonable livelihood for fishers. It also covers environment and agriculture, science and technology for food and agriculture, food trade and international aid, healthy and safe food for all, and finally, food democracy and governance.

We know there are challenges. We know there is a need to provide infrastructure and support for research and post-secondary training in food production that reflects the diversity of rural and remote bioregions and is inclusive of a range of food sources. Other members have spoken about the climate and geography of the Yukon and that as a northern environment it is harder to raise our own food.

One of the initiatives that the agriculture development plan spoke to was incubator farms and working to see farms that are not in production be put into production.

I would be interested to hear from the government whether that has been evaluated and whether that has been addressed.

Another strategy in considering research and development needs that is proposed is to look at greenhouse production systems in other circumpolar regions. Has this been done? We know Yukon College has a greenhouse that is used by the seniors living in the seniors residence on the college site. I note the suggestions for a greenhouse research facility to be established by the Agriculture branch, and to look at heating and lighting efficiencies to extend greenhouse production further into the shoulder season.

I think that there is value in supporting better public awareness about Yukon food production. The report suggests that semi-annual paid newspaper communications — I understand *What's Up Yukon*, a local free news publication, is interested in having a seasonal column on Yukon agriculture and I would encourage the Yukon government to support that.

The motion before us speaks to supporting the development of local markets for Yukon agriculture products through measures including supporting the operation of the Fireweed Community Market. Farm-gate sales continue to be an important means of selling farm food. What can the government do to make that easier, especially given that farm food is the safest as it is the ultimate in being able to trace where your food came from?

The multi-year development plan suggests developing a new Yukon-grown logo with tag lines and messages. Farmers suggest that a fair-trade Yukon logo is an approach that would ensure a fair price for food growers. To improve our knowledge of the agriculture sector production, a database of all previous studies would be helpful.

The *Multi-Year Development Plan for Yukon Agriculture and Agri-Food* has recommended that a compilation of these studies be available for farmers and for the industry stakeholders. Perhaps at the agriculture conference that the minister

mentioned is coming up this weekend, we might hear whether progress has been made on that initiative.

One of the challenges that I would like to address is that low-income urban residents often rely on Canada's 900 food banks and other charitable agencies, but even so, studies show that only between one-fifth and one-third of people who are food insecure make use of food banks. I think this illustrates how important it is to support access to food production for residents in cities who may be able to benefit from projects such as the Downtown Urban Gardeners Society where people can use a small plot of land to grow their own vegetables. There was also support last year for the garden near the clay cliffs where the urban gardeners society asked people to grow an extra row of food for the food bank.

We also have to acknowledge that part of agriculture is the indigenous foods; people hunt and fish to provide some of their food. We need to encourage indigenous fisheries and the continued ability of the Yukon to support the habitat for species that we do hunt and have a sustainable harvest.

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

**Mr. Hassard:** Just a couple of points: first, I'd like to thank everyone for their input on Motion No. 198 today. I'd just like to correct the Member for Kluane. The best-kept secret is, in fact, Faro.

I'd just like to read an excerpt from the *Dawson Daily News* dated July 21, 1909.

It reads: "Careful and systematic farming operations, with due regard to the peculiarities of the climate, would abolish the importation into the Yukon of many of the agricultural products required by the people of Dawson and surrounding district. If hay, oats, potatoes, et cetera, were grown in such quantities as would supply the local market, the price would be much less than is paid at the present time for imported products, the transportation rates would be avoided and the consumer would derive the benefit. Instead of the people of the Yukon paying large sums outside of the Territory for these products, the agriculturists in the Yukon would transact the business, and the money would be retained in the Territory, and probably invested in such a way as would aid in its future development."

It's just interesting to listen to everyone here today and to see that things really haven't changed that much since 1909. I'd just like to thank everyone again and hope that we get full support for this motion today. Thank you very much.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, if you are prepared, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Pasloski:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Graham:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Nixon:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Ms. Hanson:** Agree.

**Mr. Tredger:** Agree.

**Ms. Moorcroft:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Stick:** Agree.

**Mr. Barr:** Agree.

**Mr. Elias:** Agree.

**Mr. Silver:** Agree.

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

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

*Motion No. 198 agreed to*

**Speaker:** The time being close enough to 5:30, the House stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*