

Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Wednesday, November 28, 2012 — 1:00 p.m.

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

Prayers

Withdrawal of motions

Speaker: The Chair wishes to inform the House of some changes that have been made to the Order Paper.

Motion No. 275, standing in the name of the Member for Mayo-Tatchun, and Motion No. 255, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, have been removed from the Order Paper as they are similar to Motion No. 309, which the House adopted yesterday.

DAILY ROUTINE

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

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I'd like to stand and acknowledge a friend and a constituent of mine, Mr. John Robbins. I invite Members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming him here today.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I'd like to ask members to join me in welcoming two folks — Justin Ferbey, the CEO of the Carcross-Tagish Management Corporation, and Norman Fraser, who is the keynote speaker at this week's RIC workshop held on Monday, which was hosted by the Yukon Technology Innovation Centre and the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre. I ask members to join me in welcoming them.

Applause

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: In the Legislative Assembly today I have my sister, Harmony Istchenko. She is a great person, single mom and does a wonderful job. Please welcome her.

Applause

Speaker: Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Mr. Cathers: I have for tabling today a letter dated October 23, 2009, from the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to Chief Liard McMillan of the Liard First Nation regarding the Yukon *Oil and Gas Act*.

Speaker: Are there any other documents for tabling?
 Are there any reports of committees?
 Are there any petitions?
 Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

NOTICES OF MOTION

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to revitalize the territory's trapping industry by:

- (1) earmarking trapping as a strategic industry priority;
- (2) developing a trapping program that refocuses on a set of Yukon-made, grassroots initiatives;
- (3) developing the cottage industry aspect with particular reference to the potential tourism market, restorative justice, education and health benefits;
- (4) reviewing applicable government regulations and policies for ways and means to enhance trapline use and trapper profitability;
- (5) maintaining and expanding the territory's Yukon Trappers Association fur depot and attendant operations;
- (6) using trapper education to encourage more holistic trapline management and provide targeted fur-handling instruction;
- (7) investigating the potential for marketing lesser valued furbearer species and normally discarded parts within Yukon;
- (8) investigating the applicability and usefulness of Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur program components to Yukon fur industry; and
- (9) developing and implementing communications strategies and delivering mechanisms relating to a within-Yukon fur industry initiative.

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

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to improve Internet reliability by working with the private sector and others to construct a second fibre-optic Internet connection.

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

THAT this House do order the return of the *Oil and Gas Consent and Economic Development Agreement* referenced in the letter tabled November 27, 2012, by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that:

- (1) the Government of Yukon already has capable, qualified project managers who can oversee the construction of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School;
- (2) the Department of Education already has capable, qualified communications staff who can inform the public of developments related to the construction of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School;
- (3) the money spent by the government on an independent contractor, who will be retained to do the actual project management, and the money spent by the government to contract an individual to handle the communications exclusively for

this project throughout the construction phase could be better spent on finding a replacement for the school's gym; and

(4) the Government of Yukon should cancel these unnecessary and expensive contracts.

Speaker: Is there a statement by a minister?
This brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: Pharmaceutical costs

Ms. Hanson: For over 10 years, the Yukon Party government has taken no action on one of the fastest growing areas of health care spending: Prescription drugs. When I recently noted that prescription drug spending in the Yukon is growing at a rate of about 12 percent annually — we're talking about a 215-percent increase in drug spending over the last 10 years — the minister indicated he wasn't — and I quote: "...sure where the member got that number, but it's not something we have calculated anywhere in that budget."

In fact, these alarming numbers come from page 7 of the Health and Social Services departmental strategic plan. The sustainability of our health care system depends on getting value for money. This government has failed to respond to the recommendations about rising drug costs and its own internal audits.

What has this government done to follow up on the recommendations of both the 2008 *Report on the Audit of the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits Programs* and the 2011 *Phase Two Follow-Up On Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits Program Audit*?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We are currently participating with other health ministers across the country in a project directed to the health ministers by the first ministers of the provinces. The first step in that process was to recently negotiate an agreement with drug companies for six drugs that are in use across the country. The negotiations allowed all provinces and territories to reduce the cost of these six particular drugs by about 82 percent. Now, this is for only six drugs, but it is only the beginning of this process that we hope to see continued in the years to come.

There are also a number of other things we're doing within the territory currently. One is taking a look at how we are — because the government is the largest single purchaser of drugs — dealing with, especially, the more expensive drugs in terms of fees for pharmacists, as well as a number of other things. Thanks.

Ms. Hanson: For 10 years, the federal, provincial and territorial governments have said that this is a priority. Yukon needs a comprehensive strategy rather than a piecemeal approach.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Yukon has a lot of catching up to do with respect to both the *Pharmacists Act* and the pharmacy purchase agreements in order to ensure our health care system is providing appropriate care to patients while getting value for money. Inaction is potentially dangerous to Yukoners and definitely costly to taxpayers.

In most jurisdictions, on-site pharmacy audits are conducted at least once a year as a critical part of the control of the claims system. Although Yukon's pharmacare office has the right to audit pharmacies, as I understand it, the Yukon Party government has not directed it to do so.

Does the minister agree that accountability in the health care system is important and, if so, Mr. Speaker, when will he order an audit of the billings and claims of Yukon pharmacies?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, as part of the ongoing work we are doing in terms of an IT system for drug purchases across the territory, this will be part of our program. By implementing a pharmaceutical information technology system, we hope to be able to identify where people are shopping around their prescriptions and other things that happen that we aren't currently catching, or at least we aren't catching a few of them.

We know that in cooperation with the various pharmacies in the territory that a lot of this kind of stuff is prevented. What we're trying to do is implement a pharmaceutical information technology system that will allow us to further streamline the process.

Ms. Hanson: I have for tabling documents from federal pharmacy audit specialists that show pharmacies in both Whitehorse and Watson Lake made incorrect billing claims under the non-insured health benefits program. These documents include references to prescribers' authority and guidelines, incomplete information, lack of signature, prescription splitting and repetition of professional fees, inconsistency in dosage and days, incorrect person, incorrect pricing — to be clear, the documents I am tabling pertain to Yukon pharmacies billing the federal government. These documents support the urgency of what the Yukon New Democratic Party has been calling for for years: The government needs to take action on the recommendations of its own internal audit in order to ensure patient safety and to contain costs.

Will this Yukon Party government commit to timelines to improving both the procurement and distribution of prescription drugs in Yukon for the benefit of patients, pharmacists and taxpayers alike?

Hon. Mr. Graham: We're currently looking at the system; we're looking at implementing a pharmaceutical information technology system. Once that is completed, I will be in a better position to answer that.

Question re: Highway maintenance

Ms. Moorcroft: I have a question about highway safety for the Minister of Highways and Public Works. This summer, stretches of the Alaska Highway south of Teslin were resurfaced — something that is done routinely every year. However, local residents have reported that the new bituminous surface treatment is not safe. Six rollover vehicle accidents have supposedly occurred at two sites south of the Teslin bridge since the roadwork was done last summer.

Has the minister directed his department to fix this problem?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I thank the member opposite for the question. We have a set of standards for when we do rip and reshape within Highways and Public Works. It's the same

standard that we've been using up the Alaska Highway in the Shakwak project where we have kilometres and kilometres of roads that have a gravel surface when we're fixing the road, so issues that happen at individual stretches are looked at on a case-by-case basis, but the standard is the same across the Yukon.

Ms. Moorcroft: BST construction depends on many factors. Among them are aggregate structure and gradation, binder grade, design process, traffic volume and pavement structure condition. Other considerations include specific construction methods and equipment used.

Teslin residents reported to us that on an approximately 15-foot section south of the bridge, new BST surfaces were laid now without stripping away the old layer first. If correct, this means the surface preparation wasn't adequate, and this is where most of the accidents occurred.

The minister just said that there are standards. Do tenders for roadwork require that contractors meet best practices in design, pavement and material selection and construction standards? Will the minister look into what went wrong on this section of the highway near Teslin?

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: There are two types of BST. There is the rip and reshape and there's overlay. When we do the rip and reshape on BST, it's three litres per cubic metre of oil that is mixed with the aggregate that the member opposite was speaking to. When we do overlay, it done at 1.6 litres per cubic metre. We're just following the same standards we have followed on the 88 kilometres of roads that we have ripped and reshaped or overlaid this year. I can commit to the member opposite that I will look into this, but we have a set of standards. Occasionally, we do have accidents on the job site. We're reviewing our *Motor Vehicles Act* to look at increasing fines and look at some of the stuff of that we can do a better job at that end.

To that, I would just like to thank our staff. I haven't had the opportunity to stand up here and thank the staff who work hard. We had a pretty horrible summer when it came to weather; they worked through some adverse conditions and I'm pretty proud of the hard work that they did. Thank you.

Question re: Internet connectivity

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, Yukoners have been growing used to turning on their Internet, only to find no services available. Now some of these outages are minor and can be fixed within a few minutes; others are far more serious, can last for many hours and cost businesses and restaurants a lot of money.

If our sole fibre optic link to the outside world is damaged, customers pay the price and it happens regularly. In this spring's budget speech, the government acknowledged the problem Yukoners are facing. It said, "...broadband capacity could be improved and there is no redundancy."

While the speech acknowledges the problem, the budget provides no funding to actually fix it. The government's long-term capital plan makes no mention of any money either.

What is the government actually doing to address this problem?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: This is an issue that we've discussed at length in this House before. When it comes to the way that the government interacts with the telecommunications industry, it often is through the CRTC, which is the regulator for this. We know the CRTC is taking a new look at the north and at Yukon specifically. It has made some very recent decisions that have been well-publicized in the media today, which I won't comment on presently.

The important thing is that we know the CRTC is planning on taking a holistic review of services provided in the north and we intend to engage with them on that to provide input from the perspective of the government and citizens, as well as businesses, on the importance of telecommunications and modern infrastructure to the north.

Mr. Silver: I think we have all been in a restaurant or a store when the Internet goes down. A lot of people don't carry cash any more and they rely on credit or debit to pay. It's a major inconvenience for customers and a loss of revenue for businesses. As we hit the one-year mark in terms of this government, there has been little talk from this government as far as how to address the problem with funding.

In the budget speech the government said, and I quote: "This is a problem and we should work with others to fix it." Earlier this sitting the Minister of Economic Development was asked about the issue and he backed away from the commitment, saying it was a private sector solution and the government wasn't going to get involved.

We now know we have two different points of view on this issue from the government — one from the Premier and one from the minister. More important to customers is this: When is the government going to act on this issue with funding?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I've said before, we monitor the infrastructure development plans of the sole provider right now, which is Northwestel, and have noted that they have a modernization plan underway.

This, of course, has changed significantly as a result of some national-level decisions that were made by the CRTC with regard to their parent company BCE's purchase of a Quebec-based media company. We also engage with Northwestel on the development of their modernization plans, which will see services extended in the territory. We know that prior to the decision by the CRTC, they had intended to continue with infrastructure north to Carmacks and ultimately Dawson over the next few years. I'm sure that is very exciting for the member opposite.

Of course when it comes to these things, we recognize that the government will have a role to play, but there has to be the private sector there too. Government does not provide bandwidth and it does not provide telecommunications services, so if a project were to be presented to government, we would give it due consideration and thought, but it won't ultimately be the government that provides telecommunications services for Yukoners.

Mr. Silver: We would like the government to be the horse and not the cart on this issue. Yukoners want to know that their Internet is going to work when they need it. They depend upon it. The government can wait for the private sector

to do something, or they could partner with the private sector or the State of Alaska and actually get to work on providing a solution. There is no money at all in the government's own long-term plan to address this concern. I think that says it all about how committed this government is to finding a solution to this problem. We need a secondary fibre optic cable. This government should be partnering with the private sector and others to find a solution. It's going to require a capital investment from this government to get this project off the ground to start.

Will the minister commit today to moving beyond just talking about fixing this problem and actually fix it?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said, any time the government becomes involved in managing services it is always an interesting situation, so of course I don't anticipate that the government will ever be in a position to provide telecommunication services to Yukoners, so the private sector will be involved. However, I would note that throughout the years we've made considerable investments from government in cellular infrastructure throughout the territory and that has led us to being a fairly well-endowed territory when it comes to telecommunication infrastructure. About 98 percent of our territory has access to high-speed Internet — and of course there are issues. There are issues with a single line of fibre that heads south, and when it comes time to step forward and make a decision on a project, we will give that due thought and consideration.

But as I say, I have to reiterate that it won't be the government alone that makes these sorts of decisions. There has to be a role for the private sector there. That is something we believe in and it's disappointing to hear that the Liberal Party has departed from supporting the private sector in this territory.

Question re: Trapping industry support

Mr. Elias: The previous Yukon Party premier stated that we have earmarked the trapping industry as a strategic industry for Yukon. It's a fact that our territory's trapping industry is experiencing record lows in the number of trappers, harvested pelts, revenues and utilization of traplines. A few years ago the industry was identified as a priority, but now it has disappeared from the government's economic outlook. Unfortunately, the Klondike Soft Gold program did not achieve the desired effect in revitalizing the trapping industry in the Yukon. The fur trade used to be worth \$1.7 million in our territory, with economic spinoffs of up to \$3 million. There does not currently appear to be any formal support from this government to improve the trapping industry's ability to re-establish those revenues to the Yukon. Can the minister please clarify how it currently views trapping in terms of its place in the Yukon's economy?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thank the member opposite for the question. It's a good one and it's an issue that's important to us on this side of the House. The trapping industry is indeed an important aspect of Yukon — not only of our economy currently, but our history and culture. It has been a pleasure for me to meet with a number of different bodies that have a role in trapping in the territory, including the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

They have indicated to me, of course, that they are very interested in seeing development and moving forward with the trapping industry in Yukon. I have indicated to them that I'm open to suggestions. They have suggested that there is going to be a subcommittee of that group specifically aimed at looking at trapping in the territory, and I have a standing offer with them to meet with that group after they have formed. I should note, though, that we do provide financial support to the trapping industry in the form of a contribution agreement with the Yukon Trappers Association, which is a sum of \$35,000 a year, and those funds provide support for communications to the trapping community, trapper development and trapline utilization, representing the fur industry and trappers and to provide the fur sealing service.

So we are engaged financially, both with co-management boards, as well as the industry itself. I look forward to moving forward with some positive steps. In the member's motion today, I hear that he has a number of good ideas, and I look forward to hearing about them in the days to come.

Mr. Elias: As an expression of its value to the Yukon, the fur trade is directly represented in our coat of arms. Unfortunately, a 30-year decline in this proud facet of our natural economy is allowed to continue. This is very different from the Northwest Territories, where the government provides extensive support to the industry's practitioners, primarily through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs program. As a result, sales of fur in the N.W.T. increased by 71 percent between 2003 and 2008 and saw more than \$1.3 million in revenues annually. The minister's own evaluation of the Klondike Soft Gold program says that there is a need to refocus on a set of "within Yukon initiatives" supported by public funds.

Will the minister seize this opportunity and provide financial support to a grassroots trapping program that recognizes the social, cultural and economic value of the industry in our territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: As I said earlier, of course we do provide financial support to the trapping industry through our contribution agreement with the Trappers Association.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate that organization as they recently made a major step forward in putting their books back in the black. They had some difficult financial times over the years and, through some excellent leadership from the individuals in that organization, they were able to bring their organization back into a stronger financial position. In part, that was due to the contributions from the Yukon government.

Since I've been the Minister of Environment, I've met with the Fish and Wildlife Management Board a few times, and they've indicated a number of issues that they think would certainly improve the trapping industry in Yukon. I don't have time to list them all, but we've made trapper courses easier to access by being shorter and hosting them on the weekend to better accommodate work schedules. We're also in the process of addressing equivalency of other trapping training courses from other jurisdictions so we can recognize other courses as meeting Yukon requirements.

We are going to have the ability for trappers to challenge the course for those who have applicable training and experience. Also relating to training, we are looking at opportunities to increase our pool of qualified trappers to support community capacity for trapper-education delivery. Currently we have qualified instructors in Faro and Teslin. As you can see, we have taken a number of steps to promote the trapping industry in Yukon and have responded positively to the request by various organizations.

Mr. Elias: Well, it looks like I am going to have to enlighten the rookie minister. Trapping is about more than the economy. It addresses the spectrum of challenges confronting the Yukon. Trapping promotes health and wellness by getting Yukoners — especially our youth — active and out on the land. The opportunities for education are obvious and have been demonstrated by my own community's experiential learning program. Pressures on the justice system can be reduced when trapping draws people away from risky behaviours to a positive activity that provides a sense of reward. Respect and awareness for the environment is built into trapping. This can lead to new tourism business opportunities as our young people learn about the land and how to help visitors explore it.

How and when will the minister commit to the development of a grassroots trapping program that enhances trapline use and profitability and encourages Yukoners to participate in this important historical and cultural practice in our territory?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I appreciate the enlightenment from the independent Member for Vuntut Gwitchin. I'm humbled by his benevolent willingness to provide his incredible amount of knowledge. I wish to convey to the *Hansard* staff my sarcasm there.

I would note that we have been very willing to engage with the trapping industry. We provide them with funding; we've responded positively to requests from the Fish and Wildlife Management Board and others to make trapper training easier to access and more widespread. We've taken a number of steps to improve government's capacity to provide that training and ensure the communities have the ability to provide training for trappers in the communities.

So we've taken a number of steps over the past year, and I look forward to taking more steps forward. I'm not going to commit to a particular program without having seen anything put forward, but I would encourage those in the industry and those in co-management bodies, like the Fish and Wildlife Management Board, to bring forward proposals. As I've indicated to them, I have a very willing ear and recognize the value of trapping to the Yukon.

Question re: Homelessness

Ms. White: Yesterday we heard more excuses for the government's inaction on homelessness. Today's Yukon Party government likes to take credit for certain things done by their Yukon Party predecessors, yet they refuse to take responsibility for Yukon Party failures of the past 10 years that continue on to this day.

We've been told for many years now, and in the 13 months since the last election, that solutions to homelessness are in the works, yet we're still waiting. Many of us will hop into our

heated cars and head to our heated homes for hot meals and comfort. Some Yukoners aren't so lucky. We recognize not all issues can be solved overnight; however, the issue has gone unaddressed for far too long.

Will the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation tell us how this government justifies sitting on \$13 million of federal affordable housing money while vulnerable Yukoners continue to be at risk?

Hon. Mr. Kent: Over the past number of weeks I've been able to speak about not only the achievements of previous Yukon Party governments in addressing some of the housing issues for Yukoners, but also achievements in the past calendar year by the current Yukon Party government, including the announcement regarding new affordable seniors housing at 207 Alexander Street, the Options for Independence project, the youth shelter that the Minister of Health and Social Services announced, as well as the Betty's Haven project announced by the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate. The Yukon Housing Corporation has a number of initiatives underway, both on the project side and the program side, which will address issues for Yukoners along the housing continuum.

I should remind the member opposite as well that, from that \$50 million of northern housing trust money, the previous Yukon Party government gave \$32.5 million of it to First Nations.

We have spent an additional \$4.5 million of that on the Betty's Haven project. We're looking forward to hearing back from the Yukon Housing Corporation on ideas to spend the remaining amount of those funds that will leverage partnerships with NGOs, with the private sector and with other governments. We're very excited about those options coming back to us.

Ms. White: The minister is very good at listing past government projects. What we're asking about today are solutions to the problems currently before us — people without housing today. Problems have not been sufficiently addressed in the 10 years with the Yukon Party government, on which there has been too little action since the last election. Yukoners in need are looking for solutions, not excuses or empty promises. Will the minister commit today to investing the full remaining \$13 million of federal affordable housing money in responsible affordable housing projects before yet another year passes without action?

Hon. Mr. Kent: I don't believe that any years have passed without action on the housing front by the previous Yukon Party governments or by this government in the past number of years. In my previous response, I listed off a number of the projects that have been undertaken by the Yukon Housing Corporation, as well as my colleagues' departments, over the past year. I believe it was last week that I tabled a document in this House referring to the strategic plan for the Yukon Housing Corporation.

If she looks at the first three goals, she will see that one of them is to facilitate access to more attainable, suitable and sustainable home ownership in the Yukon. We are doing that. I expect to hear back from the Housing Corporation soon on a program to address that. The second one is to support initia-

tives to increase the availability and affordability of suitable rental accommodation in the Yukon. Developing strategic partnerships is the third goal, with a number of those organizations that I mentioned.

I know I have said this a number of times on the floor of this House in this sitting, but the federal NDP recognizes the great leadership that this government has shown in the area of housing. It's too bad their territorial counterparts don't do the same.

Ms. White: The minister's reference to this letter is getting a little tired. The praise given to the minister was unwarranted, and I've communicated the same to Ms. Morin. I'm sure homeless Yukoners are looking forward to home ownership; I'm sure that is going to help them out. There are examples from across this country of provinces and service providers developing innovative solutions to the problem of homelessness, including supports for those considered hard to house. Take the Bosman Hotel in Vancouver, for example, or look outside our national border to Fairbanks, Alaska. While other jurisdictions look for creative ways forward, Yukoners in need continue to sit and wait. Leadership is about making decisions, and we are calling on this government to make ending homelessness a priority, not only in words but also in action.

Will the minister review the housing success stories elsewhere and put a plan in place to end homelessness before yet another cold winter passes?

Hon. Mr. Graham: Mr. Speaker, in fact that's what we have been doing on a number of occasions and for some time now. As I have stated previously, we are currently in negotiations with the Salvation Army to expand not only the shelter that they currently run but to add transitional housing to that mix. It's not something that's going to happen overnight; it's something that we are currently negotiating for as I've said, and hopefully we will have a solution in the next little while.

It doesn't seem to matter what we do. As my colleague just mentioned, we have three housing projects. Maybe the folks opposite can't see the construction that's happening down at the end of Fourth Avenue, but we are doing things, Mr. Speaker. It seems that it doesn't matter what we do, they'll continue to criticize and ask for more. We're currently spending about — as I've said before — 70 times the amount of money that other provinces do in terms of social housing. That's what this government is doing and we will continue to do it.

Question re: Salmon fishery

Mr. Tredger: This year's run of chinook salmon on the Yukon River proved to be well below the goal set by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. 14,000 fewer salmon passed the Eagle sonar station than in average years with late runs.

There is a crisis in the Yukon River chinook salmon fishery. A healthy salmon fishery is important to many Yukoners, and especially to the First Nation people, who depend on this fishery for food security. Chinook salmon also play an important role in Yukon's First Nation culture. It is incredible to see what a good salmon run can mean, not only for food but for lifting up community spirit.

In light of this crisis, would the Premier please tell this House why his government has remained silent on the issue while Yukon First Nation governments sounded the alarm bell and the Alaska governor declared a state of emergency?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I thank the member opposite for the question. It's a relevant one and one we're discussing. I would note, though, that we haven't stayed silent at all. We have been engaged on a number of bodies that are in place to deal with the salmon issues, as it is a transborder issue. We are engaged through the Yukon River Panel, and the Yukon Salmon Subcommittee also has a role in this.

I should note that the Yukon government has repeatedly advocated the importance of addressing the low chinook salmon runs at meetings of the Yukon River Panel. However, while the Yukon government has a seat on the Yukon River Panel, the management of salmon within Yukon remains the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Yukoners are doing their part to protect weak salmon runs, and our partners in Alaska have recognized their need to do more in the future to meet treaty provisions and conservation targets.

As we know, over the past few years the Alaskans haven't met their treaty targets on a number of occasions, in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012. We're concerned by that and have made that clear to the Alaskans through our bodies that are in place, including the Yukon River Panel.

Mr. Tredger: It's good to hear this government finally break its silence and admit there is a problem.

It's true that salmon fishery issues are complex and involve many players, including Alaska, Ottawa and First Nation governments. That's no excuse for the Yukon government not to be doing more. Now is the time for action, diplomacy and leadership. Counts from the Blind Creek weir show that this year's chinook salmon run was roughly 10 percent of peak runs a decade ago. On top of the smaller numbers, the returning salmon are smaller and younger. There were fewer returning female chinook and they were carrying fewer eggs. These signs don't bode well for the future.

Will the Premier acknowledge the crisis in the Yukon River chinook salmon fishery, show leadership and reach out to his counterpart in Alaska, the minister in Ottawa and Yukon First Nation governments to find cooperative solutions to this problem?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: I can't be any more clear about this. Yukon government will continue to work through our representatives on the Yukon River Panel with federal fishery managers, DFO and our Alaskan counterparts toward the good management of this important shared resource. To hear the member opposite cry for action but then cry for diplomacy at once is interesting, because he seems to be asking us to get on a podium and shout at the Alaskans, but that is simply not diplomatic. We note that the Alaskans do need to take a new look at some of the practices they have undertaken. Some positive steps forward have been made, but more work needs to be done. We'll continue to work through the established bodies that are in the international treaty to advocate on behalf of Yukoners and Yukon First Nations alike — all Yukoners who value this important resource.

Mr. Tredger: I would remind the member opposite that diplomacy is action. Yukon First Nations, Yukon people and the salmon are in a mode of crisis. Yukon First Nation governments and people have been doing their part. I understand this year's subsistence catch for Yukon was less than 3,000 chinooks. The Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation, the Teslin Tlingit Council and others imposed voluntary catch restrictions.

The Teslin Tlingit Council even went so far as flying in fish from other areas with healthier runs at great expense to themselves so their First Nation people could benefit. First Nations are acting on this important issue. Words are not enough, Mr. Speaker. This situation calls for action and diplomacy from the Yukon government.

Again, will the Premier admit the Yukon River chinook salmon fishery is in crisis, demonstrate some leadership and work with his political counterparts at all levels to put a comprehensive action plan in place?

Hon. Mr. Dixon: It's humorous to hear from the member opposite that diplomacy is action, but then he says diplomacy is not enough when we need action. I'm a little confused about exactly what he is asking us to do here. We'll continue to work through the established panels that are there through international treaty and continue to advocate on behalf of Yukoners. Yukoners obviously value the chinook salmon in this territory and the important relevance it has to our health and our culture.

As I said, Yukoners are doing their part to protect weak salmon runs and our partners in Alaska have recognized their need to do more in the future to meet treaty provisions and conservation targets. I will continue to advocate through our established bodies to the Alaskan government and to the Alaskan people that they do need to do their part as well, as this is a shared resource.

What happens on one side of the border affects the other side and vice versa, so it's important we work collaboratively through established processes to deal with this important resource.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Motion No. 313

Clerk: Motion No. 313, standing in the name of Ms. McLeod.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Watson Lake THAT this House urges the Nobel Foundation to award Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her courage and dedication for the rights of girls.

Ms. McLeod: This is a true story of a bright young girl who believes in education for girls. This is a story that almost cost her her life because she believed in a cause and spoke up and worked toward girls being educated in the Swat District of Pakistan after the takeover by the Taliban.

Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in the Swat District of Pakistan. Malala was born into a Muslim family. She was named for a Pashtun poetess and warrior woman believed to be taken from Pashtun folklore. She lived with her parents and two brothers and two pet chickens, called her swats. Her father played an important role in shaping Malala's life. Her father was a poet, a school owner and an educational activist. She had once said she would like to become a doctor, but it was her father who encouraged her to become a politician. This all sounds fairly normal, doesn't it? Malala started speaking out about the right to education as early as 2008. Her father took her to speak at a local press club and in her speech she said, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?"

In 2009, two years after the takeover by the Taliban of the Swat District, the Taliban ordered all girls' schools to be closed and during that time many girls' schools were burned and destroyed. In the days following the order of school closures, the principal of her school asked the girls not to wear their school uniforms but their ordinary clothes so that they wouldn't attract any attention. In 2009 when Malala was 11-and-a-half years old and in the seventh grade, she began writing a blog for the BBC under the pseudonym name of Gul Makai.

Telling about her life in the Swat District under the Taliban rule, she exposed the hardships, brutality and suffering of the people caused by the Taliban under their rule. In 2010, a *New York Times* documentary was filmed about her life and Malala began giving more interviews on radio, in newspapers and on television about her position on girls' education in the Swat District.

I'd like to share with you a few excerpts from Malala's blog. January 3: "I had a terrible dream yesterday with military helicopters and the Taliban. I have had such dreams since the launch of the military operation in Swat. My mother made me breakfast and I went off to school. I was afraid going to school because the Taliban had issued an edict banning all girls from attending schools. Only 11 students attended the class out of 27. The number decreased because of Taliban's edict. My three friends have ... moved to other areas "... with their families ... On my way from school to home I heard a man saying 'I will kill you'. I hastened my pace and after a while I looked back if the man was still coming behind me. But to my utter relief he was talking on his mobile and must have been threatening someone else over the phone."

Imagine a child even imagining somebody was threatening her. Her blog started to appear in the local newspaper. In February 2009, the boys' school reopened and that was followed by the girls being allowed to return to school. But girls-only schools remained closed.

Some of her daily routines began to return to normal and she began to write more of her family life, from which one could gain insight into her personality. She talked about the

restrictions that the Taliban imposed — things like cable networks, which are something that we all take for granted.

Malala began participating in the Institute for War and Peace Reporting's Open Minds project. This program brought journalism training and open discussions of current affairs to 42 schools in Pakistan. Malala had inspired many young women, and many who took part in the program were girls.

In October of 2011, she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by Desmond Tutu, and was shortly after that awarded Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize.

As her name and face gained attention, the dangers in her life started to appear more often. The Taliban had been known to attack civilians who spoke out against them. Death threats started to appear in newspapers that were delivered to her door and on Facebook, but she vowed never to stop working for the education of girls.

On October 9, 2012, a masked gunman got on a bus that Malala was returning home on after attending school. The gunman shouted, "Which one of you is Malala? Speak up or I will shoot you all!"

After she was identified, she was shot. Two other girls were also wounded but were able to give an account of the attack. Malala was airlifted to a military hospital in Peshawar where doctors started operating on the left portion of her brain that had been damaged by the bullet when it passed through her head. The doctors successfully removed the bullet that lodged in her shoulder near her spinal cord. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and they claimed that if she survived, they would target her again, as well as her father.

In October of 2012, Malala was sent to the United Kingdom for further treatment and several days later she came out of her coma and started to communicate with written notes. By November she was able to sit up in bed and move around some. The assassination attempt outraged people from all over the world. World leaders have denounced the attack and find it disgusting and tragic. On October 15, 2012, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, now the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, launched a petition in Malala's name. The petition contains three demands:

"(1) We call on Pakistan to agree to a plan to deliver education for every child;

(2) We call on all countries to outlaw discrimination against girls;

(3) We call on international organizations to ensure the world's 61 million out-of-school children are in education by the end of 2015."

Also on October 15, 2012, Malala was given Pakistan's third highest civilian bravery award. UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon had announced that November 10 would be celebrated as Malala Day. A classmate of Malala has said that every girl in Swat is Malala — "We will educate ourselves. We will win. They can't defeat us."

A number of prominent individuals, including the Canadian Minister of Citizenship, are supporting a petition to nominate Malala Yousafzai for the Nobel Peace Prize. As we hope and pray for her full recovery, I ask that we in this Legislative

Assembly support this motion and nomination for this very brave young girl.

Ms. White: I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 313, brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake. A Nobel Peace Prize for Malala will send a clear message that the world is watching and will support those who stand up for gender equality and universal human rights, which includes the right of education for girls.

Malala was born into a Muslim family of Pashtun ethnicity on July 12, 1997. She was named after a Pashtun poetess and warrior woman and given her first name, Malala, which means "grief-stricken".

Mr. Speaker, had her parents known of the power this young woman would hold, they may have found a name with a different meaning. Perhaps Rasheena would have been a good fit. It means "one who gives light".

Malala was shaped in large part by her father, a poet, school owner and an educational activist himself. She received support and encouragement in her activism from her parents. With her father's support, Malala began blogging for the BBC about her experience as a girl in a country where women and girls had no rights under Taliban oppression.

On July 3, 2009, when Malala was an 11-year-old, she wrote this entry, under the title "I Am Afraid" — and I quote: "I had a terrible dream yesterday with military helicopters and the Taliban. I have had such dreams since the launch of the military operation in Swat. I was afraid going to school because the Taliban had issued an edict banning all girls from attending schools. Only 11 students attended the class of 27. The number decreased because of Taliban's edict."

Malala's primary concern was the Taliban's prohibition of female education. During 2009, Malala began to appear on television and publicly advocate for female education. She was becoming the progressive face of Swat due to her rising public profile. Malala was furious that militants had destroyed over 150 schools in 2008 alone. She believed, and still does, that education is a right for everyone.

In an interview this January with BBC Outlook, her father had this to say — and I quote: "Of course, it was a risk [to let her write the blog], but I think that not talking was a greater risk than that because then ultimately we would have given in to the slavery and the subjugation of ruthless terrorism and extremism."

On October 9 of this year on a bus ride home from taking an exam, a Taliban gunman shot Malala with one bullet. That bullet travelled through her head and neck and ended in her shoulder. Two other girls were also wounded in the shooting. Both were stable and able to speak to reporters to provide details of the attack.

The shooting caused international outrage. That a young woman should be the target of such hate and such discrimination brought the world to its feet. The assassination attempt received immediate worldwide media coverage and produced an outpouring of sympathy along with widespread anger. Protests against the shootings were held in Pakistani cities that day

after the attack. Pakistani officials offered a 10-million rupee reward to information leading to the rest of the attackers.

Responding to concerns about his safety, her father said, and I quote: “We wouldn’t leave our country if my daughter survives or not. We have an ideology that advocates peace. The Taliban cannot stop all independent voices through the force of bullets.”

Her shooting shocked the unshockable Pakistan. On the day of her shooting, a Pakistani journalist wrote, and I quote: “Hers was the voice which made us consider that indeed, there can be alternatives, and there can be resistance to all forms of tyranny. Today, the attempt to silence that voice shall only make her stronger; the blood stains on her school uniform shall only feed the conviction that as long as there is breath and life, there shall be struggle.”

In Pakistan there is an expression — “From what clay are you fashioned?” It’s an expression that changes meaning according to the context. Sometimes, as when it is applied to Malala, it’s a compliment — alluding to a person’s exceptional qualities. At other times it indicates some element of humanity that is missing.

The truth is that both Malala and the Taliban were fashioned from the clay of Pakistan. I will echo a sentiment expressed by the novelist Nadeem Aslam — and I quote: “Pakistan produces people of extraordinary bravery. But no nation should ever require its citizens to be that brave.”

Because the State of Pakistan allows the Taliban to exist and to grow in strength, Malala couldn’t simply be a schoolgirl who displayed courage in facing down school bullies, but one who instead appeared on talk shows in Pakistan less than a year and a half ago, to discuss the possibility of her own death at the hands of the Taliban.

She said — and I’m quoting again: “Sometimes I imagine I’m going along and the Taliban stop me. I take my sandal and hit them on the face and say what you’re doing is wrong. Education is our right, don’t take it from us. There is this quality in me — I’m ready for all situations. So even if they kill me, I’ll first say to them, what you’re doing is wrong.”

It’s only right to acknowledge that if different decisions had been made in Pakistan’s history, primarily by those within the country — but also by those outside it — the men issuing statements justifying assassination attempts on a young girl would have also been doing something else with their lives.

It isn’t the clay from which they were fashioned, but the patch of earth in which they grew up which made them who they are now. Malala became a warrior because that’s what her country, and even the world, needed of her. At 15, this exceptional young woman is receiving accolades that such bravery deserves. In the face of terror, Malala risked her life to speak out for the rights of girls everywhere. Malala’s bravery has sparked a global movement.

In October 2011, she was the runner-up for the International Children’s Peace Prize after being nominated by Desmond Tutu. Malala was one of the five nominees worldwide. She was the first Pakistani girl ever nominated for the award. The announcement said, “Malala dared to stand up for herself and other girls and used national and international media to let

the world know girls should also have the right to go to school.”

On December 9, 2011, Malala was awarded Pakistan’s National Youth Peace Prize, subsequently renamed the “National Malala Peace Prize” for those under 18 years old. The *Express Tribune* of Pakistan named Malala in their list of game-changers for 2011. On October 15, 2012, she received Pakistan’s third-highest civilian bravery award. In 2012, she was named by *Foreign Policy* magazine on its list of top global thinkers.

I think she might treasure another honour most of all and it’s that the authorities in Pakistan Swat Valley, the area she is from, said they would rename a government girls’ college in her honour. This year marked the first International Day of the Girl Child, designated by the United Nations on October 11. Girls and young women around the world contribute through leadership in their schools, organizations and communities, as Malala has. Her extraordinary example certainly deserves universal recognition.

Malala’s work and passion is not only about education for young girls; it is also about the cycle of violence affecting girls and women around the world. The ultimate violence against her by the attempted assassination is a symbol of the violence felt by women every day, particularly aboriginal women in this country.

Now, this month of November, when we focus on preventing violence against women, we are reminded that there is still much work to be done around the world. The NDP continues to fight for gender equality and is committed to the ideals fought for by women for a century or more. While we don’t have the dramatic attacks and intimidation experienced in countries like Pakistan, Canadian women risk losing ground in the fight for gender equality. From economic inequality to violence against women, to the attack on a woman’s right to choose, Canadian women have a lot to fight for.

The NDP proudly continues to fight with positive action for gender equality, building a stronger Canada and Yukon by supporting its women. Federal NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair has said, and I quote: “Sixty-four years ago the international community signed into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sixty-four years later, women are still not equal.”

Acknowledging Malala would reaffirm the world community’s commitment to women’s empowerment and equality for all persons.”

We’re going to be in good company. A number of prominent individuals are supporting a petition to nominate Malala for the Nobel Peace Prize. On November 21, Prime Minister Stephen Harper came out in support of the petition. Since then, every single federal party leader has joined the campaign to have Malala nominated.

I hope we learn from her lesson and her bravery. It would be amazing if she won the award.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: It gives me great pleasure to speak to Motion No. 313 today. Earlier this month, Mr. Speaker, you and I and a couple other Yukon Party caucus Cabinet members participated in the Remembrance Day ceremony at Porter

Creek Secondary School. As we paid tribute to Canada's soldiers, and as I spoke to the audience, I noted that Canada is an incredible country in which to live because of our rights and our freedoms.

I want to address the constitutional imperatives that underpin Canada's approach to human rights. In our Constitution, we have a section on the right to life, liberty and security of person. Let me mention section 7, where everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person and the right not to be deprived thereof, except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

In Canada, we have certain fundamental freedoms. We have the right to freedom of conscience and religion. We have the right to freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication. We have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, and we have the right to freedom of association. These are our values and Canada has stood firm for them, and Canada has committed to defend them no matter what the cost — even when that meant going to war.

Canadians understand the difference between “peace” and “appeasement”. One is strength; the other is servitude. We will engage the world from a position of strength, and I want to come back to that theme in a few minutes.

Earlier this week I read an on-line article about the rights of women in places like Saudi Arabia, where women face many restrictions. As I reflect on this article, I thought about the situation that women in other countries find themselves in, and I thought about how much Yukon has benefited from the contributions of women.

So I would like to take a few minutes to recognize some of the women who have made key contributions to Yukon's development. On October 14, 1935, Martha Black was elected the MP for Yukon. I believe at the time of her election she was only the second woman to be elected to the Canadian Parliament.

More than 40 years ago, on September 11, 1967, Jean Gordon of Mayo became the first woman in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Meg McCall represented the Klondike riding from 1978 to 1985 on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party. When Hilda Watson was elected to lead the Yukon Territorial Progressive Conservative Party in 1978, I believe that made her the first woman to be elected as leader of a Canadian political party. I'm pretty sure the MLA from Kluane will correct me if I'm wrong; he seems to have followed Mrs. Watson's career with some interest.

I would also note that the Yukon has also had three women as Commissioners: Ione Christensen, Judy Gingell and Geraldine Van Bibber.

Our history in Yukon is long and rich with women in positions of leadership, both locally and nationally. Martha Black, Angela Sidney, Jean Gordon, Hilda Watson, Ione Christensen, Audrey McLaughlin, Lucy Jackson, Annie Ned, Judy Gingell, and Pat Duncan have achieved historic firsts for Yukon women. I thank all of the women who have been the trailblazers thus far, and I encourage more women to take interest in Yukon's political parties.

I think it's clear from looking over the list that Yukon is a better place because these women stepped forward and participated in public service. We don't have to look far to take notice of some women in our community taking leadership roles in today's society. I'm sure we'll be speaking of them breaking the trail for others in decades to come.

When I was reviewing the news stories about women's rights, I came across a short book by a noted novelist, Dorothy Sayers, who wrote a book entitled, *Are Women Human?* The book is based on some lectures she gave and I want to share just one quote from that book: “What we ask is to be human individuals, however peculiar and unexpected. It is no good saying: ‘You are a little girl and therefore you ought to like dolls’; if the answer is, ‘But I don't,’ there is no more to be said.”

I think that the issue is that women want and fully deserve to be treated as human individuals. I don't really want to get into a discussion about Pakistan social context.

I don't pretend to comprehend all the nuances to their society, but it is deeply troubling to me that someone would feel justified in shooting a young girl just because she wants to go to school, wants to get an education, wants to do better for herself and perhaps make her family proud.

As I prepared for today I read about this young lady. At one point, she wanted to become a doctor, then she decided to become a politician or maybe a pilot. I think it's great that this young woman and others like her have the opportunity to dream about what they think would be a great career.

Due to the oppression of the Taliban, who were banning television, music, girls' education and women going shopping, the courageous grade 7 student began sharing what life was like under the Taliban with the rest of the world through her blog. Sadly, the Taliban seemed determined to prevent girls from getting an education.

I won't recount all the details I learned from the stories I read, but I do want to point out that, at that point in time, the Taliban had already blown up more than 100 girls' schools, and they would eventually blow up schools where she lived as well. They were also threatening teachers, policemen, parents and students who wanted an education.

It's stories like Malala's that make me appreciate how great a country Canada is. It's inspiring to read about students who love to learn when there are some pretty serious obstacles put in their way. As a husband of a teacher, I also want to point out that Malala must have had a pretty special teacher to nurture that love of learning in her.

Despite the threats to herself and her family, despite the Taliban blowing up buildings and murdering those who dared to speak out against this coercion, little Malala continued to speak up for the rights of girls to go to school. Despite the threats, she said she would never stop working for education for girls.

Earlier this year in October, the Taliban made good on their threat and attempted to assassinate Malala. The mere fact that a 15-year-old girl so intimidated the Taliban that they felt they had no choice but to kill her speaks volumes.

I believe that Canada's involvement created a context where young people were aware of a different option than the one put forward by the Taliban. I know that the fight against the Taliban has taken its toll, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, we were at the Remembrance Day ceremony, where we honoured Canadians who sacrificed their lives for our nation. Fortunately, as I said earlier, most Canadians understand the difference between peace and appeasement.

The *Foreign Policy* magazine, on Monday, November 26, 2012, released their top 100 global thinkers list. For standing up to the Taliban and everything they represent, they listed young Malala at the number 6 spot of the top 100 global thinkers list. This year *Foreign Policy* honoured people who spoke for freedom of speech — for making themselves heard.

I checked the Nobel website for information about the peace prize. The Nobel Peace Prize is to be awarded to “the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”

Alfred Nobel was interested in social issues. He developed a special engagement in the peace movement. In addition to humanitarian efforts and peace movements, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded for work in a wide range of fields, including advocacy of human rights, mediation of international conflicts, and arms control.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded by a committee of five persons who are chosen by the Parliament of Norway. In the section on submission documentation, it states that the nomination need not be lengthy, but it should include the name of the candidate and an explanation of why the individual or organization is considered by the nominator to be a worthy candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I'd also like to share with you some of the information about the peace prize itself. The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to 124 laureates; of those, 100 were individuals and 24 were organizations. Since the International Committee of the Red Cross was awarded three times and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was awarded twice, there are actually 100 individuals and 21 organizations who have been awarded.

I found it particularly interesting to learn that the average age of all Nobel Peace Prize laureates between 1901 and 2011 is 62 years old. To date, the youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate is Tawakkol Karman, who was 32 years old when awarded the 2011 peace prize. She was born on February 7, 1979. Karman is only 11 days younger than Mairead Corrigan, who was also 32 years old when awarded the 1976 Peace Prize, and she was born on January 27, 1944.

I also found it interesting to learn that of the 100 individuals to whom the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded, 15 were women. The first time a Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to a woman was in 1905, to Bertha von Suttner. The other women laureates were Jane Addams in 1931; Emily Greene Balch in 1946; Betty Williams in 1976; as I mentioned, in 1976 was Mairead Corrigan; Mother Teresa in 1979; Alva Myrdal in 1982; Aung San Suu Kyi in 1991; Rigoberta Menchú Tum in

1992; Jody Williams in 1997; Shirin Ebadi in 2003; Wangari Muta Maathai in 2004; and in 2011, the laureates were Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman.

As I look over the list of Nobel laureates, it seems fairly clear to me that Malala is a worthy candidate and seems to fit the criteria of the award. Certainly, she stood up to tyranny. She has worked to promote education, especially for girls. I see in her a young lady who wishes to enjoy the right to life, liberty and security of the person. I see a young lady who wants for her own country those fundamental freedoms that countries like Canada cherish: the freedom of conscience and religion; the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; the freedom of peaceful assembly; and the freedom of association.

Mr. Silver: I'm very pleased to stand up in support of Motion No. 313. Malala Yousafzai was an outspoken proponent for the rights of education for girls in Pakistan, and I would like to thank Sonali for helping me with the pronunciation even though I did pretty badly with it.

She began blogging under an alias for the BBC three years ago about life living under the Taliban at the time when the Taliban controlled the region and were burning schools around the area. After her identity was revealed, she became a public advocate for schools and for girls' education, winning the country's national peace prize in 2011 — but she also earned the wrath of the Taliban.

On October 9, 2012, Taliban insurgents boarded her school bus, asked for her by name and shot her in the head. Miraculously, Malala survived this assassination attempt. The day after Malala was shot was ironically the first-ever International Day of the Girl Child.

Malala lay in a hospital bed fighting for her life on that day. That day, the Taliban boasted proudly that they were responsible for the shooting, stating their feelings that girls' education is obscene. They also stated unequivocally that they would be back to finish the job.

The United Nations designated Saturday, November 10, 2012 to be Malala Day as a tribute to Malala and to highlight the lack of access to education for 32 million girls around the world. The UN Special Envoy for Global Education says that a new foundation has been made to honour Malala. The Malala Foundation will do the work the teen-age girl wanted to do, which is campaigning for the 32 million girls around the world who are not in school.

Malala has dedicated her childhood to champion education for girls like her in Pakistan. She was targeted for her outspoken and relentless objection to the Taliban's regressive interpretation of Islam that keeps women at home and bars girls from going to school. That outpouring of support worldwide for Malala is incredible. Her fellow students say that because of her, they aren't afraid to come to school and that they will not stop studying. Protests across the Muslim world condemn the Taliban's actions and nearly one million people stood with Malala to demand from Pakistan's president a plan to ensure access to education for all children. The Pakistani National Assembly has now promised that by 2015 every child will re-

ceive an education. A few weeks ago, a law was passed to ensure education for all children. This is a promising first step.

I join with my colleagues in advocating the Nobel Foundation to award this courageous young girl the Nobel Peace Prize. She stands as a symbol of hope, resistance, struggle, bravery and courage. She is an advocate for education and women's rights. She is an advocate for the children of the world. She deserves the Nobel Peace Prize for all that she has done and all that she has endured in the path of her struggle at such a tender age. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Pasloski: I rise today, too, in support of this motion. I want to begin by thanking the Member for Watson Lake for putting this motion forward.

Malala Yousafzai was born July 12, 1997. She is a student and an education activist from Pakistan. She is known for her education and women's rights activism in Swat Valley, where the Taliban have, at times, banned girls from attending school.

As early as age 11, Malala started speaking about education rights. "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?" Malala told her audience in a speech that was covered by regional newspapers and television channels.

In early 2009, Malala wrote a blog for the BBC, detailing her life under Taliban rule and her views on promoting education for girls. Sadly, on the October 9, 2012, Malala was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by a Taliban gunman while returning home on a school bus. The masked gunman shouted, "Which one of you is Malala? Speak up, otherwise I shoot you all," and, on being identified, she was shot. She was hit with one bullet that went through her head and neck and ended in her shoulder. Two other girls were wounded in the shooting. Offers to treat Malala came from around the world, with several from the United States. One offer came from former U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, who had been through a similar treatment after she was shot in the head in 2011. Malala ultimately travelled to the United Kingdom for treatment.

Since news of this terrible attack spread around the world, she has been nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize by Desmond Tutu and has won Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize. A number of prominent individuals are supporting a petition to nominate Malala for the Nobel Peace Prize, such as the Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the NDP; the Leader of the Liberal Party; Leader of the Green Party; Leader of the Bloc Québécois; Rob Ford, Mayor of Toronto; Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship.

Last month former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, now the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, launched a petition in Malala's name and in support of what Malala fought for. Using the slogan "I am Malala" the petition's main demand is that no children be left out of school by 2015, with the hope that girls like Malala everywhere will soon be going to school. The petition contains three demands: we call on Pakistan to agree to a plan to deliver education for every child; we call on all countries to outlaw discrimination against girls; we call on international organizations to ensure the

world's 61 million out-of-school children are in education by the end of 2015.

The interlinkages between gender inequality, economic growth and poverty are the main reasons why girls' education is a vital investment. For developing countries to reap these benefits fully, they need to realize the potential of their entire population. Educating all their people, not just half of them, makes the most sense for full economic potential. Systematic exclusion of women from access to schooling and the labour force translates to a less-educated workforce, inefficient allocation of labour, lost productivity and consequently diminished progress of economic development.

Evidence across countries suggests that countries with better gender equality are more likely to have higher economic growth. The benefits of women's education go beyond higher productivity for 50 percent of the population. More-educated women also tend to be healthier; they tend to participate more in the formal labour market; they tend to earn more income; they have fewer children and provide better health care and education to their children — all of which eventually improves the well-being of all individuals and lifts households out of poverty.

These benefits also transmit across generations, as well as to their communities at large. Gender inequality in education is extreme. For example, from 2007 to 2011 in Malala's home country of Pakistan, only 28.5 percent of eligible secondary school-aged girls were actually enrolled in secondary education. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve an education.

Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for a girl's development toward adult life. It should be a fundamental part of any strategy to address the gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. Basic education also provides girls and women with an understanding of basic health and nutrition, giving them choices and the power to decide over their own lives. Women's education leads directly to better reproductive health, improved family health, economic growth for the family and for their society, as well as lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition.

I am the father of four, three of whom are girls as well. I can speak to the importance that my wife and I have placed on our children to ensure that they pursued their dreams and that they were positioning themselves to be able to have the education they needed to be successful in whatever it was they chose to do. That varies, of course, for every child out there. The fact of the matter is that our children have the opportunity to do that here.

I just wanted to take a moment to ask members of this House, Yukoners and Canadians to reflect and to truly be thankful for where we live, which is this great country of Canada. Here we have these opportunities and we look at what happens in some of the situations such as we see in Pakistan where things occur every day that would be unthinkable in this

great country. We each have a role to play as individuals to do what we can to ensure that we can continue to make this world a better place for all of us.

Once again, I would like to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing forward this very important motion. Hopefully, with our unanimous support, there will be another impetus toward seeing that this motion be realized and this deserving child will be recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize. Thank you.

Ms. Moorcroft: I rise in support of the motion brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake regarding the recognition of Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan for her courage and dedication for the rights of girls.

In speaking in favour of this motion, as all members have done so far this afternoon, we support those who stand up for gender equality and universal human rights, which includes the right of education for girls.

The education of girls and women is such a powerful tool for societal change that many extremist governments oppose it. What that demonstrates is that misogyny is alive and well in contemporary society. We know the stark facts. We know that at the age of 11 Malala started writing a blog under a pseudonym detailing her life under the Taliban rule and her views on promoting education for girls. The Taliban then issued death threats and, in October of this year, shot her on a school bus as she was attempting to go to school.

I find it quite inspiring that this young girl has determined that she wants to turn her considerable energy and strength into becoming a political leader. On her blog, Malala said, "I have a new dream ... I must be a politician to save this country. There are so many crises in our country. I want to remove these crises."

She has also said that she will never stop working for education for girls. I think this is a model many of us should look to.

We're debating this motion during the 12-day campaign to end violence against women. This campaign started on November 25, which was the day recognized by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations have all been encouraged to organize activities to raise public awareness of the problem of violence against women. In our debate on this motion today, we're also bringing attention to this much-needed work. The campaign ends on December 6, which is Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women.

I want to note one of the comments that Malala's father has made, saying, "We wouldn't leave our country if my daughter survives or not. We have an ideology that advocates peace. The Taliban cannot stop all independent voices through the force of bullets."

We need to ensure that there are many independent voices speaking out for peace.

When we speak to this motion, we are letting Malala and other courageous Pakistani women know that they are not alone. There are hundreds of thousands of schoolgirls in Paki-

stan who are watching now as their future and their desires to go to school stand in the balance. The words of Malala can give them some strength when she says, "I have rights. I have the right of education. I have the right to play. I have the right to sing. I have the right to talk. I have the right to go to market. I have the right to speak up." I support this motion and, in closing, I want to note that education is not only a human right but is a tool for peace. I encourage every member of this Assembly to also support all of the advocates for the education of girls, all of the advocates for human rights education, all of the advocates for peace and all of the advocates for gender equality who work hard here and around the world. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I rise in great support of the motion put forward by the Member for Watson Lake. I want to thank the Member for Watson Lake for bringing this to the floor of the Assembly today. It is, as other speakers have already said, really adding Yukon's voice to the voices of the rest of our country by way of our national leaders and also to voices across the world. So I think it is an opportune time, as has already been stated. We are recognizing the month of November as woman abuse prevention month. As the member has also just stated, we just launched the 12-day campaign to eradicate violence against women. Over the next number of days, Yukoners throughout the territory will be hosting a whole series of events and initiatives in support of organizations and in support of the work that is being undertaken by many agencies, individuals and organizations at large to address violence against women — and children; I might add that.

Today's motion really speaks to a very brave young woman who, at the age of 14, in her home in Pakistan was really effectively targeted for speaking out on the rights of girls to education and to live free of violence. I was thinking about when I was 14. I had the liberty to go to school, having been born and raised in the Yukon. I had the privilege of going to school, going places and sharing with friends. I had the ability to play volleyball and baseball. I had the opportunity later to go to university and attend French immersion, something I continue to work on to this day. I was involved in many organizations throughout my childhood and now today, as an elected representative. I feel very privileged to be where I am today.

That unfortunately is not the case for many, many young girls across the world. I guess I want to state that, as I believe the Member for Takhini-Kopper King has already stated, on October 11 of this year, the United Nations declared that day for the very first time as the International Day of the Girl Child.

Of course, it also coincided with Women's History Month — each and every year Yukon has taken the privilege and opportunity to honour the many achievements and contributions of women around the territory through celebrating this particular month. We recognize these months and these days to really consider how equality of women and girls equality has effected change in our lives and has made a difference in all of our lives.

So on the world's first International Day of the Girl Child, I would like to say Canada has led the international community in adopting that particular day with the hope that it would make

a difference in the lives of girls and young women as citizens and as powerful voices of change in our families, our communities and in our nations.

The day has also helped serve to foster greater understanding of girls' specific issues.

It has been stated there are a number of statistics but, around the world, girls are three times more likely to be malnourished than boys. Of the world's 130 million out-of-school youth, 70 percent of them are girls.

In Canada alone, young women from 15 to 19 years of age experience nearly 10 times the rate of dating violence as young men. Nearly 70 percent of victims of Internet intimidation are women or young girls. Girls and young women are nearly twice as likely as young men and boys to suffer mental health issues such as depression, and issues of body image and self-esteem remain very prevalent among girls.

It has already been stated, but globally one in three girls around the world is denied an education simply by the sheer realities of poverty, violence and discrimination. Every day girls around the globe are taken out of school; they're married far too young and are subjected to violence. Not only is it unjust, it's a tremendous waste of potential.

In terms of education — and I'm sure members may have already touched upon this — to say that education is not a fundamental right in our lives is — I don't know how else to say that. We know this to be true of individuals who have been born and raised in Canada: Those who make it through both primary and secondary education — and particularly girls — are less likely to experience violence, are more likely to be literate, healthy and survive into adulthood, as are her children. They're more likely to reinvest individual income back into their families, communities and country, and girls who receive an education are also more likely to understand their rights and to be a force for change.

I want to go back to Women's History Month and the International Day of the Girl Child. On that particular day we were actually supposed to be in the community of Faro to recognize a group of girls who continue to advocate for change and continue to advocate for women's equality in all of their actions. I just want to recognize them again because this group of girls — otherwise known as the Faro Girls Night Out, in other words GNO, which they have commonly been known as — are an inspiring group of girls and they are just one group of girls among many groups throughout the territory. In particular, they actually entered a poster contest that was submitted and generated by the Women's Directorate as a way of promoting Women's History Month. The group of girls got together on the Faro bridge dressed in what has sometimes been coined as perhaps less traditional roles. I certainly advocate that everyone obtain a copy of this poster.

It's a group of these young girls out of Faro, each of them individually depicted as a firefighter, an RCMP member, a hunter, an emergency medical staff member, a construction worker and a lab technician. The image itself is a very powerful conveyance of women today. I just want to read the caption again — I think I've already stated this on the floor of the Legislature. But it was really, completely a very powerful state-

ment. It's the caption that goes alongside with a particular poster. It says, "We're powerful like fire, we fight crime against women, we provide for our families, we recognize our own intelligence, we are our own first responders, we construct equality." Exceptional words — and very powerful words from a group of women who are doing an incredible job as role models for the rest of the world. It really provides inspiration that each of our communities are really moving toward positive change and that girls are being taken seriously for their many contributions throughout our territory, throughout our country and throughout the world. I just want to congratulate these individuals for their work and for their support toward promoting women's and girls' equality.

Today's motion speaks to the very importance of this issue and how it is important that we continue to do what we can to be role models and to promote women's equality. An investment in a girl is an investment in the rest of the nation — for the well-being of our nation. Again, I want to say that, as an elected representative and as minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, we often receive all kinds of suggestions on how we can enhance women's equality. Through the Women's Directorate and working in collaboration with many departments, we remain very committed to doing just that, whether it's policy work, training initiatives or public education.

I believe we're all taking an active role in working to eradicate the barriers — removing those barriers to women's equality. I want to certainly recognize the ongoing work of women's organizations and organizations throughout the territory, in terms of their work in taking action and supporting women's equality, in terms of providing those services and programs for women, providing the research and the policy development, which help inform our work as legislators; promoting education in social action on women's equality. I want to certainly congratulate and thank each of the organizations for their ongoing work to further women's equality in the territory. We're very pleased to be able to continue to work with them and provide that ongoing funding support, as well as policy support and support throughout each agency in the Government of Yukon and the territory.

It was coined by a member of the United Nations that "Across the world, girls and women face violence as they try to exercise their basic rights, including education."

It has been stated that violence and its threat are key factors in forcing girls to drop out of school. It is a violation of individual human rights that certainly not only undermines the health of that individual, but also undermines the health of our complete and whole society.

It is very important that we take the time to honour this one young woman and this individual who believes very strongly in the rights of girls to education and to live a life free of violence, by stressing that every girl, no matter where that girl is born, should be able to express her views, live free of violence and discrimination and have a fair and equal opportunity to reach her full potential.

I will just end my remarks by saying that when it comes to freedom, justice and peace, they are built on the recognition of

the inherent dignity and equal rights of all human beings. I am very proud to live in a country where in fact we do honour these fundamental rights. While there is significant work left — and there will always be significant work — to enhance women's equality and girls equality throughout this good country and throughout the world, we should honour the ongoing work of individuals such as Malala and continue to encourage our own young girls in our society today. When it comes to women in trades and technology or young women playing hockey or young women serving as pages in our Legislative Assembly or young women aspiring to be elected representatives, I think it is up to each and every one of us to continue to support these girls' efforts for the betterment of our entire world. Thank you.

Mr. Barr: I am honoured to stand here today in this House and support this motion by the Member for Watson Lake toward Malala — I can't pronounce her last name — receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her courage and dedication to the rights of girls. I've been listening today to everyone and thinking about what I can say that could be close to some of what has been said today in honour of this young woman. I really believe that she deserves this honour. It made me think of my own personal life and it made me also think that we as leaders have a great responsibility to everyone to lead by example. All of us are leaders to someone — everyone, no matter who we are. I believe this. It's important that we also realize, I've been told and I also work on, that I'm a leader to myself. My spirit is strong enough and my own personal connection with a Great Spirit allows me this ability to walk through my own fears in times of great difficulties to come to some realizations that I cannot be silent about, just as this young girl has.

To think that at her age, this young girl is her own leader. Being able to live through and stand up and move forward under great odds is really unbelievable, when I think of it. It's kind of short of a miracle, really. It is a miracle. That's a miracle, really. I think of a miracle as being something that isn't necessarily a blinding flash of light or all of a sudden tears coming from Mother Mary's statue — and those are miracles but there are miracles that all of us sometimes have to recognize or could recognize if we choose to.

There's a long line of people — our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, Thomas Mulcair — all these leaders who are recognizing that this is an amazing young woman. We are talking about this today, that she's an amazing young woman, to be shot. A lot of people go and say, "Okay, I've had enough. I'll be quiet."

For a young girl to continue in her life and for people to acknowledge there's truth in her blogs — there's a truth that speaks to the greater truth that I think we all seek and we all try to aspire to at times.

I think of our own Yukon women here, and it was mentioned by the minister opposite that, even though we are what we call a "developed country" now — I understand they've taken classes out of this, speaking to first, second, third and all

that — we have a long way to go, yet we have come a long way in our own oppression.

Oppression still exists in Pakistan and various other countries that I have visited. I have come back to our great country of Canada and been really grateful for what we do have. We continue to fight and continue to grow as we learn from what we don't know to what we know now today, so we can put it into action.

When I think of all of the women, for example, who are elected members in this House: our Member for Takhini-Kopper King, Riverdale South, Copperbelt South, our Minister of Community Services, our Member for Watson Lake, our young pages, Whitehorse Centre — well, she's not here. We're not supposed to say those things and I apologize.

I recognize and I don't know if I can say names — I can't say anybody's name in this House? Okay, I would like to recognize a former chief in our midst; a woman who has fought all her life for the Carcross-Tagish First Nation — our Sergeant-at-Arms — who has fought all of her life and continues, and all of these young pages.

Wherever this starts — I think of my own granddaughter. She is a little leader and she's 19 now. It wasn't always easy. I can't speak on behalf of her, but I know it wasn't always easy in her life — my granddaughter's life — and I think then of the personal stories that Malala has spoken to, that people can identify with, and I just say, "Wow, I never knew that some people are living through these astronomical difficulties."

I myself hit the streets at 15 from North Bay, Ontario — ended up on the streets of Vancouver. Through my own struggles I had to come to some rude awakenings of my — as a person who thought I was doing the right thing as I grew up, but I was wrong for oppressing women and things that I speak of in other venues not such as this of detailed stuff that I regret, but things that I did, thinking I was doing something right, but now know that I was very wrong. I've had to take the time to go and apologize to the women I have offended in my life.

I believe that by being public about these things, as men, we honour our women to bring these things into a reality, because the more we hide as men, the more these atrocities toward women continue. I would like to say that the continued education, as has happened to end violence against women this week, is a way that men such as me — who are younger and didn't get to know what they don't know — can make a different action and do something about it. It's important to do that, because I think back to a law that really was a law in England: that a man could beat his wife as long as he didn't use a switch larger than his thumb. I think we have to recognize that we have a long way to go and that it's about equality.

I want to honour all the women in the territory, specifically in the Yukon, who attended residential schools — generations of women who attended horrific — day after day after day — atrocities and have continued to bring this truth forward so that we can put in programs to still help heal. When something happens in a person's life — man, woman or child — the event happened at the time, but the effects of that live on. I was told that, as it will continue to do so, we hand over the fears that we do not walk through in our own lives to our children.

Knowing this as leaders in this great country of ours, we can continue to recognize that we have to make decisions that enable people to become unstuck in their ways of thinking that oppress women. As a man, I continue to take the steps I need to. I believe and encourage every man, because this chain starts with ourselves, wherever we are in this world, at whatever place we're at, and it starts in our homes with our own families. I encourage every man everywhere to have a hard look at yourself. There are places to go to get help, to talk about these things, to start to unravel the unclear thinking that will empower women in our society. I challenge all men here today to do so, a little bit at a time.

I just want to end with that. This is quite an awesome young lady: Malala.

Ms. Stick: I'll keep this brief. I'd like to first thank the Member for Watson Lake for giving us the opportunity to support this motion and this young woman. I'm not going to repeat what everyone here today has eloquently said about the rights of women to education, to safety and non-violence. I am struck by this young woman that, in the face of terror, she risked her life to speak out for the rights of girls everywhere. Her bravery has sparked a global movement. That's an amazing thing and it's only right that she should be recognized for that.

We heard today of awards and accolades that she received and they're all very well deserved. This young woman is truly an inspiration and deserving for her work, promoting equality and human rights for girls, including education. We know her fight and her voice don't end there. It's not just education. She started something much, much larger.

Like I said, I'll keep this brief. Where I'd like to end, though, is that I think she has challenged everyone to think about what they can do, what they can stand up to. I think we would all do well to follow Malala's example and encourage our own Canadian government to look across the country and look where education isn't so great, where schools aren't so healthy. We should be really working hard to encourage that all of our young women, young girls — and boys — have access to safe schools, modern equipment, the best textbooks, the best teachers and the best education that will encourage and grow great citizens for this country too.

It's not just Malala. It's not just her fight for education for girls, but it should be all of our fight for education for all our children around the world.

Mr. Tredger: I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 313, brought forward by the Member for Watson Lake, and I thank her for that.

A Nobel Peace Prize for Malala will send a clear message that the world is watching, and we'll support those who stand up for gender equality and universal human rights that include the right to education for girls. At 15, this exceptional young woman is receiving accolades that such bravery deserves. In the face of terror, Malala risked her life to speak out for the rights of girls everywhere. Malala's bravery has sparked a global movement. As a principal, I've noticed first-hand and observed the difference an education can make in the lives of

people. If I can just quote briefly — I know it was raised earlier, but former British Prime Minister and current UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, launched a United Nations petition in Malala's name using the slogan "I am Malala" and demanding that all children worldwide be in school by the end of 2015. Mr. Brown said that he would hand the petition to Pakistan's president. The petition contains three demands: "We call on Pakistan to agree a plan to deliver education for every child." It also goes on to say, "We call on all countries to outlaw discrimination against girls." Finally, he challenges us all: "We call on international organizations to ensure the world's 61 million out-of-school children are in education by the end of 2015."

I think that's the crux. Malala has given us a challenge. It will be easy today to support this petition, but I call on all of us to be champions for the children of the world and to work "to ensure all of the world's 61 million out-of-school children are in education by the end of 2015."

I challenge everyone to do what they can to ensure that. Thank you.

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

Ms. McLeod: I want to thank all the members of the Assembly for supporting this motion. I think it's an important one. I think, as Yukoners, we can lend our support to this international movement to recognize this young girl's sacrifice and efforts and, really, maybe we can encourage and inspire other people to stand up for this very important notion of educating girls around the world. Thank you very much.

Speaker: Are you prepared for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Speaker: Division has been called.

Bells

Division

Speaker: 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.

Ms. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yea, nil nay.

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

Motion No. 313 agreed to

Motion No. 286

Clerk: Motion No. 286, standing in the name of Mr. Hassard.

Speaker: It is moved by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to implement a successor program to the seven-year, \$8.8 billion Building Canada fund that was established under the 2007 Building Canada plan, due to expire in 2012, that funded on a cost-sharing basis national, regional and local priorities and supporting projects designed to deliver results in three areas of national importance, namely a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and strong and prosperous communities.

Mr. Hassard: It's a pleasure to rise in this Assembly today to speak on behalf of Motion No. 286.

In March 2008, the Government of Canada and Yukon signed a framework agreement under Building Canada, the Government of Canada's new long-term infrastructure plan. Under the Building Canada fund the Yukon was to receive \$182.9 million from Canada over a seven-year period ending in 2013-14. This funding was to target priority infrastructure projects intended to drive economic growth, productivity, achieve environmental goals and build strong, sustainable communities.

Of the total funding, at least \$16 million of that was to be allocated for community-based public infrastructure initiatives. The Building Canada plan also provided First Nations and Yukon communities with a \$60-million extension to the gas tax fund for the years 2010-14.

Based on extensive community consultation during the spring and summer of 2009, the *Yukon Infrastructure Plan* was produced and included an extensive list of short- and long-term infrastructure priorities for the Yukon. There was a focus on five key categories identified under the Building Canada fund. They were drinking water, waste water, solid waste, roads and green energy.

The *Yukon Infrastructure Plan* was a guiding document from which to choose projects for a year's annual capital plan. Particular emphasis is placed on addressing issues and needs associated with existing development and existing infrastructure. By focusing on these areas, the Yukon will be able to help to ensure that base infrastructure for all Yukon communities is brought up to a standard that will be available to support the needs of communities well into the future.

The *Yukon Infrastructure Plan* will periodically be reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of communities over time. In terms of the gas tax, each year Canada's gas tax fund is delivered to municipalities across the country to support local infrastructure initiatives and encourage economic growth. It has increased to \$2 billion per year nationally in 2009 and made permanent in 2011. The gas tax supports municipal infrastructure projects that create jobs and help to protect the environment, contributing to cleaner air, cleaner water and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Between 2005 and 2014, Yukon will receive a total of \$97.5 million from the gas tax fund for local infrastructure priorities. To date, over 100 environmental infrastructure projects have been approved across the territory. Projects throughout the Yukon that have been completed or underway fall under the Building Canada fund, the gas tax fund, or MRIF as follows.

We have \$1 million in road repairs in Beaver Creek; Burwash Landing phase 1 and 2 of wellhead protection, as well as design on roads, totalling over \$3.5 million; Kluane First Nation has received money through their gas tax funding and they are either in the process or have completed eight projects valuing almost half million dollars; Carcross has seen five projects either complete or in the process — those projects just in Carcross alone total almost \$12 million, not including the \$1.5 million for the Carcross-Tagish First Nation for the four projects that they have undertaken; Carmacks has seen 10 or 11 projects with an estimated value of approximately \$11 million; Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation has seen almost \$3 million in six projects for them; Dawson City — we're looking at approximately \$46 million spent in Dawson City during this time; Haines Junction — while we haven't made their mountain any bigger, they have done seven or eight projects up there funded through this, to the tune of approximately \$7.5 million; Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have also done close to \$10 million worth of projects; Marsh Lake — just over \$4 million.

Not all of these projects are complete, so if they seem a little out of line, some of it is still in planning stages. Mayo — the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation is looking at just over \$14 million in that area. Water supply for the community of Mendenhall is valued at \$2 million. The community of Old Crow has seen upgrades in their water, solid waste and roads to the tune of just over \$10 million. Pelly Crossing and the Selkirk First Nation: \$4 million for four projects in their area. There is \$850,000 for the design stage in Tagish. Watson Lake has also benefited from this project. We're looking at almost \$9 million for Watson Lake. Whitehorse — many projects fall under this Building Canada or gas taxes and MRIF. There is approximately \$25.5 million for Whitehorse.

In my riding in Faro we had almost \$7.5 million in water and sewer pipe replacements, pumphouse, some smaller things such as replacements of boilers and removal of asbestos in the recreation centre. In Ross River we had over \$11 million, part of that with the arsenic removal road upgrades. In the community of Teslin, we have approximately \$9 million there through this project: arsenic removal as well there; road upgrades and waste water. The Teslin Tlingit Council has received over \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, this Building Canada fund has been very important to the Yukon over the past few years. The infrastructure improvements provided through this funding is fundamental to Yukon communities. Every year all Yukon communities, whether they be incorporated or not, struggle to come up with extra monies to either upgrade or build new infrastructure. It is very important that this government work with the Government of Canada to provide the Yukon with a

successor program as the Building Canada fund rapidly comes to a close.

To quote the Hon. Denis Lebel: “As the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, I’m very proud of the achievements that have been made possible through the partnerships with Yukon and its communities. Looking ahead, these strong ties will form the foundation of our next long-term infrastructure plan and ensure Canadian communities continue to grow and prosper.”

In closing, I look forward to hearing from others here in this Assembly today speak on behalf of Motion No. 286.

Mr. Barr: I rise on behalf of the Official Opposition on Motion No. 286 brought forward by the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin. We support this motion. It is important that the federal government receive a strong unified voice from all sides of the Yukon Legislative Assembly that infrastructure funding should carry on once the Building Canada fund expires.

The principles for federal infrastructure funding should be long term, sustainable, predictable, partner with territories and provinces, address municipal concerns, and address the most persistent and critical infrastructure needs.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities sets a target of \$5.7 billion annually over 20 years — \$114 billion — and the Association of Yukon Communities supports this. This is considerably more than the Building Canada fund allowed for.

The inaugural Canadian infrastructure report card was released September 11, 2012 by the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering, CSCE; the Canadian Public Works Association, CPWA; the Canadian Construction Association, CCA; and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, FCM. The report card represents the first time that the state of our municipal drinking water, waste water, storm water and road systems have been evaluated at a national level.

The report card was generated using survey results from 123 municipalities, representing almost 20 million Canadian citizens. The report card indicates that the total value of our municipal water, waste water, storm water and road systems across the country is approximately \$538 billion, \$50.7 billion of which was identified as being in poor or very poor condition.

A further \$121.1 billion worth of infrastructure is in fair condition. The total value of infrastructure in a fair or worse state equates to approximately \$13,000 per Canadian household.

The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card 2012 developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities says: The condition of “15.4 percent of drinking water pipes rank fair or below; replacement cost — \$25.9 billion, or \$2,082 per household in Canada.” The condition of “30.1 percent wastewater pipes rank fair or below; replacement cost — \$39 billion, or \$3,136 per household in Canada.” The condition of “23.4 percent of storm-water pipes rank fair or below; replacement cost — \$15.8 billion, or \$1,270 per household in Canada.”

It goes on to say the condition of “52.6 percent of municipal roads rank fair or below replacement cost, which is \$91.1 billion, or \$7,325 per Canadian household.

I would like to give a little bit of background on the Building Canada fund. It states: “Under the Building Canada fund, Yukon will receive \$182.9 million (\$26.13 million per year) from Canada over a seven-year period ending in 2013-14. Funding will target priority infrastructure projects intended to drive economic growth and productivity, achieve environmental goals and build strong, sustainable communities. Of the total funding, at least \$16 million will be allocated for community-based public infrastructure initiatives. The Building Canada plan also provides First Nations and Yukon communities with a \$60-million extension from the gas tax fund for the years 2010 through 2014.

“The Building Canada fund falls within the Canada-Yukon framework agreement, signed on March 17, 2008, and the Canada-Yukon base funding agreement, signed September 2, 2008. These agreements require the Yukon government to develop a long-term Yukon infrastructure plan. The plan identifies potential infrastructure gaps and priorities in the Yukon, including those within First Nation communities, municipalities and unincorporated communities over the next 10 to 15 years. The Yukon infrastructure plan will be used to identify projects for 2009 through 2014 of the Building Canada fund. The first two years of funding (2007/08 and 2008/09) will be allocated to priority projects already approved by Canada that are intended to provide immediate economic stimulus for Yukon’s economy, drive growth and productivity. Yukon is also required to submit annual capital plans to Canada outlining the proposed projects to be undertaken in each year of program operation. The maximum federal contribution toward any approved projects is seventy-five percent (75%) with the remaining funds to be covered by Yukon and/or other participants.”

There are a lot more infrastructure needs identified in the infrastructure analysis that was funded by the Building Canada fund. I know that there is a list from December 10, 2009 of projects that have been identified in our communities in the Yukon. Actually, several pages from all the various communities of the Yukon — some of which the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin referred to in his opening remarks. I would like to ask if the member would pass those along to this side of the House at this time. I see him nodding, so I would think that that’s a yes. That’s great.

Some questions come to mind when I look at this list. I see that some things that I know some of the communities are asking for are not on the list. I think of Carcross, for example, and some of the ongoing issues in Old Crow, Dawson City, Mayo, Pelly and Beaver Creek. There has been work done; however, the work on this list that I have is of community-specific projects.

It says the following potential projects were identified through the planning and consultation process — some have been worked on and there are some dollar figures allotted beside many of these projects which, I might add, far exceed the money from the Canada Building fund we have to actually fulfill the hopes and goals of each community in the territory.

Knowing that and realizing that leads us to the motion today, that this fund is ending prior to fulfilling the scope of what’s left to be done, I would like to know from the member

opposite how it's decided who gets what, where and when those timelines are decided upon. How then do you ask to put on the list projects that are not identified in 2009? Here we are a few years later; communities come forward and say, "We also need this", or some of the priorities have changed.

I'd like to know how that can be modified. I know that in some of the communities that I've travelled in and spoken to throughout the Yukon there is, I guess, a thankfulness for what has been put in place, but they feel that an end result of what has been built doesn't reflect what the community wanted. I would just bring that forward again, that different members of this House have stood and said, they would like a community centre, for example, or upgrades to their community centre or our emergency services buildings. They feel that if something happens, it's not what they wanted as the end result or it's not happening, period.

So some clarification on that would be very helpful as we proceed, because hopefully in our support — our unified support of this motion — we will have more dollars to complete these projects, so these are questions that I think need to be answered as we proceed.

I would also like to talk a little bit now about the specific infrastructure challenges in the north. From the "True North: Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change in Northern Canada" report authored by the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, which will close up shop in March 2013 due to the federal cuts, there are some conclusions and recommendations.

"Canada's North is on the frontline of climate change. The speed and magnitude of change in Canada's North and its uneven and limited response capacity to address this emerging risk highlight a clear gap in our allocation of resources and attention to this region of our country. This is clearly apparent with infrastructure vulnerability. Engineering in cold climates, a lack of redundancies in infrastructure systems, limited financial and human resources to assess risks, apply and enforce standards, are some of the characteristics that contribute to this vulnerability.

"A changing climate now adds to the complexity of managing risks to northern infrastructure — especially when combined with the social and economic transformations already occurring in the region. Driven by economic development and demographics and exacerbated by climate change, Canada's North is likely to experience unprecedented pressure on infrastructure systems. Infrastructure is both a means for adaptation and at risk from the impacts of climate change..."

"...many infrastructure systems will intensify over time as climate change accelerates. Yet, their resilience will be essential for sustainable regional development and for safeguarding national and northern security interests for all Canadians. Therefore, it is in Canada's best interest to ensure that sufficient regional capacity exists to successfully manage climate risks to infrastructure, and that national processes and mechanisms work for the North."

So I'm wondering what we are doing in regard to this report when we hear of the glacier in Atlin, for example — the lower ones; they melted. So our water flow is changing.

So in the studies we have, we have to reanalyze our snow-fall, our snow melt and our rainfall and the flow for our future energy resources. This is one of the situations that is being discussed with raising the level of Marsh Lake, for example, because the water is not there in some places from the glaciers, which we used to take for granted — they have melted. So it has a trickle-down effect, like putting a rock in a pond, and it ripples out.

Some people are calling for more stimulus spending. Let's not forget that the economic action plan, which has been marketed very well by the Harper Conservatives, was not on the government's radar. They are completely unaware of the global economic situation — the situation at home — and the government was about to be brought down. They reacted and prorogued Parliament. They listened to the critics and unveiled a stimulus plan. They did the right thing, not in terms of the anti-democratic prorogation, but in terms of listening to others — listening to critics and economists and committing to a stimulus program that has helped to lessen the impacts of the global economic crisis.

Recently, Canadian premiers met in Halifax to discuss important economic issues. There are many economic challenges that require strong leadership, including the increasing gap between rich and poor, getting a fair deal on our natural resources and making trade and investment agreements that work for Canadians. With the federal fall economic update showing slowing economic growth and a larger federal deficit, Canada's financial position is weakening. This has led to a call for a reversal in priorities from the federal deficit reduction to unveiling a new economic stimulus plan.

On November 20, 2012, before the Premier left, the NDP Official Opposition challenged the Premier to show leadership at the premiers meeting and work with his provincial and territorial colleagues to address the significant infrastructure gap between what we have and what we need in the north, which is an impediment to economic development and improved quality of life. We asked whether the Premier supported the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and their call for a new long-term federal infrastructure action plan, which would cost \$5.7 billion a year for the next two decades.

We asked the Premier to support the Association of Yukon Communities, which has fully supported the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' call for a long-term plan to address aging infrastructure that threatens Canada's economic development. The Association of Yukon Communities chair has said — and I quote: "We believe that in order to address the current and future infrastructure needs, both locally and across the country, there is need to act now by establishing a longer term infrastructure plan that involves all levels of government."

We trust that this motion is a response to the meetings, and we hope that all premiers are doing likewise and applying pressure to the federal government. Maybe it would be great if we could all sign a unified letter from all members in this House or all parties to the Prime Minister urging for the call by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for ongoing funding and increasing the numbers that we need to fulfill our goals here in the territory.

I would like to reiterate some of what I have said in the “Our Towns, Our Future” motion debate. We have raised the importance of infrastructure funding recently. Recently the *Vancouver Sun* ran an article entitled, “More money needed to deal with crumbling infrastructure, Canadian cities tell feds.” It went on to say that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities want \$5.75 billion a year, up \$2.5 billion a year, for the next two decades from the federal government to address aging infrastructure, which threatens Canada’s economic development. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities said that this funding should be matched by the province and the municipalities themselves to provide \$13.25 billion a year for municipal infrastructure.

Because the Building Canada fund ends in 2014, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is launching the great Canadian infrastructure challenge. They stated that this is the next phase of their efforts to ensure that the new long-term infrastructure plan is part of the 2013 federal budget and that it meets the needs of our cities and communities. The challenge will bring people from every corner of the country into conversation about municipal infrastructure and its importance in our everyday lives. The campaign will demonstrate how Canadians use local infrastructure to raise their families, build their businesses and take part in their communities.

It all starts with the launch of the campaign’s website, and I’ll repeat it again: www.fcmchallenge.ca. I encourage everyone to visit the site and invite members of their community to visit it. There is a time frame and a time limit to visit and put down your remarks in the hopes that we get the proper plan and investments for the communities that we are looking for.

We would also like to urge the Yukon Party government to support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities by talking to their federal counterparts. FCM also called on the government to tie the gas tax fund to a cost of living index and create a new core economic infrastructure fund in addition to continuing the Building Canada fund.

I look forward to listening to other members’ comments as we move forward through this motion, and I thank everyone for listening. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Ms. Taylor: I want to thank our own Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forward this important motion in support of infrastructure. It is an issue of critical importance to just about every Canadian in this country. It has been and will continue to be for many, many years. It’s no secret that there is a critical infrastructure deficit across the country. As we just heard from members earlier today and we continue to hear from municipalities and communities across the country, there is aging infrastructure when it comes to our roads, when it comes to sewer and water, when it comes to drinking water upgrades — there is a need to adhere to new standardized regulations, whether they are incorporated by the Government of Canada or elsewhere. These are all pressures that our communities and our respective territories and provinces continue to feel on a daily basis.

The Yukon Party government was recently elected on an election platform entitled “Moving Forward Together”. So

moving forward together means that the Yukon government, in this regard, will continue to focus on four pillars — specifically a better quality of life, environment, economy and good governance. At the same time, our efforts are also being designed to manage prosperity to meet the challenges that a growing, prospering economy brings.

Indeed we have seen over the last number of recent years our economic future or outlook has grown in leaps and bounds. With that growth so too have there been pressures on infrastructure. What this government has done and what previous Yukon Party governments have done in the past is to strategically invest in infrastructure that will serve as a catalyst for continued economic growth in all economic sectors in the territory.

The Government of Yukon is very much committed and has been when it comes to ensuring that infrastructure investments support vibrant and healthy and sustainable communities across the territory, all for the purpose of improving the quality of life that we as Yukoners have come to enjoy.

Over the past several years, Yukon specifically has had the opportunity and has really risen to the occasion to partner with the Government of Canada on some 60 infrastructure projects to help address those core infrastructure priorities identified by communities. These projects have supported economic growth and they’ve helped to provide real benefits to our communities across the territory in terms of real jobs, in terms of building capacity and in terms of spurring on that additional economic growth. Working together in partnership with Canada, First Nation governments and municipal governments, the Yukon government has supported a number of key important improvements to community infrastructure, specifically in areas of drinking water, waste water, solid-waste management, local roads and also green energy.

As a result, we have been able to leverage our resources, thanks to having a number of infrastructure funds made available to Yukon and to the rest of the country over the years. Specifically, I refer to gas tax funding, where we have a renewed commitment from Canada to continue to actually carry on with that renewal of gas tax funding specifically to communities and First Nation governments on a go-forward basis beyond 2014.

We have also enjoyed specific funding made available through infrastructure funds in the past — municipal rural infrastructure fund, which was really investments trilaterally by communities, by the Yukon and by Canada. We have also been able to subscribe to programs such as the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund on a 50/50 basis. So we have been able to really put all of those funds to work — specifically, when we look to waterfront improvements in the community of Carcross and the City of Whitehorse. That was primarily made due to Canadian strategic infrastructure funds.

More recently, we’ve been able to subscribe to funding made available under Building Canada fund for drinking water, upgrades in the community of Carcross. That’s just but one example of one community. To be very sure, through this — combined under the banner of Canada’s economic action plan and infrastructure initiatives such as the Building Canada fund,

the gas tax fund, infrastructure stimulus fund and the other infrastructure funds that I just alluded to — people across the territory have safer roads and cleaner water. They have improved their recreational and cultural infrastructure. The tangible benefits of having infrastructure investments such as these, which continue to be enhanced on a daily basis, are very immense. We're very appreciative of the opportunity to continue that partnership approach to the national, to the regional and to our own local infrastructure priorities. I can't stress the importance of partnerships when it means that every dollar invested will continue to be built on other dollars invested through other governments and leverage other resources and different means on a daily basis. What that means is that we will be able to continue to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

Today's motion really speaks about the critical importance of the Building Canada plan and the Building Canada fund that goes along with that plan. I want to go back to few years ago, when the Building Canada was first announced. I recall at that time there was a significant amount of discussion across the country about utilizing those funds immediately because of the world economic recession and certainly the impact that has had upon our global economy.

Yukon has not only subscribed to the stimulus funding made available under Canada's economic action plan, but we also went to work on designing a plan forward under the Building Canada fund. As a result of planning and making the best use of investment, such as all of the infrastructure funds that I have alluded to, we have been able to expand the reach of each of these funds over the course of several years, unlike other jurisdictions that literally have only been able to expand in a much shorter time frame because of various reasons.

Thanks to planning and the good work of our officials in collaboration with our communities, we have been able to spread the degree of investment in each of our communities over a given time. That's good — it's good because at the end of the day there is only so much capacity within our building community, our engineering and surveying community, to be able to deliver all of these good projects.

Yukon did come up with an infrastructure plan back in 2009 in consultation with communities, and it really was the road forward based on these five different planks of drinking water upgrades, roads and so forth. At that time it was identified to be about a billion dollars' worth of community infrastructure needs.

As a result of the funds that we have been able to subscribe to, just under the Building Canada fund alone — and again, that is a 25-percent Yukon investment, 75-percent investment by Canada — we'll have benefited by over \$265 million and that doesn't take into consideration other investments through some of these other infrastructure funds.

The infrastructure funds that referred to earlier do come to an end, and some have come to an end. Building Canada is coming to an end very shortly in 2014 and that is why we have gone to work over the past year on a renewal of the infrastructure funding. I can say that earlier this year I had the opportunity to co-host a roundtable discussion with community stakeholders across the territory, with the federal minister responsi-

ble for infrastructure, and was able to hear directly from representatives of the engineering community, recreation community, surveyors, the building, the trades, the Chamber of Commerce, First Nations, municipalities and many others.

It was a really great opportunity to hear first-hand, to be able to convey the benefits of having infrastructure funding made available for each of our communities — from which we've had tangible benefits ever since — but also to be able to articulate our experiences with respect to the Building Canada fund and the gas tax fund and the need for ongoing funding for Yukon infrastructure.

At that meeting, representatives talked about the important links between safe roads and bridges, water treatment, recreation, waste-water treatment, information technology infrastructure and, of course, our own Yukon economy. This infrastructure is absolutely essential for carrying forth on healthy and sustainable Yukon communities. I know the Association of Yukon Communities, under their leadership, has also had the opportunity to speak to Minister Fletcher on a number of occasions and we continue to work with our own Association of Yukon Communities on a way forward with Ottawa.

It's unfortunate I don't have the news transcript from the president of the Association of Yukon Communities, but her remarks have been — not only this current president, but also the previous president — very glowing about the strong relationship that communities have enjoyed with the Yukon government over the years, and that isn't necessarily the case across the country. In fact, I take great liberty in being able to talk about the benefits of working together with our communities and how we have been able to really put money to good use over the years, and that goes a long way through working together.

We have been working alongside our communities on infrastructure projects that continue to assist municipalities and our communities to overcome challenges when it comes to living in the north. It includes our own remote location, our smaller population, the increasingly variable northern climate, the aging infrastructure, need for additional capacity and the relatively underdeveloped nature of our own basic infrastructure when it comes to roads and bridges and IT and municipal infrastructure — and it goes on.

We recognize this and are very proud to have invested in areas where our most critical challenges lie, which are drinking water, waste water, solid waste, infrastructure and so forth. I know my time is waning here, but I want to say that we continue to work through the Premiers table, the Council of the Federation. We continue to work with our northern counterparts, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, on a pan-north approach for addressing specific infrastructure needs in the north — when it comes to base-plus funding, that it remains flexible and that we have that certainty of funding on a long-term basis so we can budget, plan and rely on the funding; that it remains adequate and we can truly address our infrastructure deficit in the territories and all the other provinces. Most importantly, we need that base-plus per capita funding.

Not only is our infrastructure somewhat difficult to construct in the territory, it's costly to repair and it's costly to op-

erate. The more remote the location the more costly the project; therefore, we need that added flexibility built in.

I believe that the investments that our government has made over the past number of years have really set the foundation for that long-term planning. It has really enabled us to demonstrate how our communities are very knowledgeable in developing plans and prioritizing projects. They've had significant results and we have been very pleased to partner with Canada in addressing these very challenges. The Building Canada funding has allowed us the flexibility to prioritize investments across all sectors. Working collaboratively together, we've been able to optimize the use of both funds.

Just in terms of investments — I know the member opposite had mentioned lists — one only has to look at joint news releases that we issue on a yearly basis. They spell out our annual capital plan and the infrastructure initiative list. In fact, earlier this year, Ryan Leef, the MP for Yukon, and I announced the initiatives for 2012-13.

One only has to go on the website for the Government of Yukon to take a look at all the infrastructure initiative lists. This year alone we have, I believe, just over \$37 million jointly funded by Canada and the Yukon government. It includes a whole host of initiatives, but specifically it has enabled us to invest in water projects in Burwash Landing, for example, of over \$2 million; Kluane First Nation's plan to utilize \$400,000 of their gas tax funds, coupled with that, for water upgrades; water treatment facility in Carcross for over \$4 million; over \$2 million toward well upgrades in Mayo; \$2 million for a community well in Mendenhall; and over \$1.5 million for water treatment improvements in Ross River.

What I want to say is that — and I know that my time is just about up — it is really critical that we continue to adhere to some of the new regulatory framework when it comes to drinking water upgrades, removal of arsenic and arsenic treatment. This is where that funding comes in most critically so that it enables all the communities.

That coupled with ongoing operation and maintenance funding available through the comprehensive municipal grant, to which all members subscribe or voted unanimously for a new five-year program. That too will assist communities in meeting their ongoing improvements.

It's unfortunate I don't have more time, because I have a whole list of added examples in every single community that has benefited from this fund and why it is absolutely so critical that we give our unanimous support to the continuation of this funding — that and more.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Barr: I'd like the House to recognize mother, volunteer, advocate and very hard worker, Robin Gilson, who is visiting.

Applause

Mr. Silver: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief and I will be in support of this motion. I'm not sure if there is anybody in the country who would not be — perhaps the federal Minister of

Finance, who is struggling to meet targets that have been set to try to balance the federal budget; perhaps he might be the only one.

It remains to be seen whether the scope of the Building Canada successor fund will have to be reduced because of the fiscal constraints the Government of Canada finds itself in. In the 2011 federal budget the Government of Canada committed to working with partners and stakeholders to develop a long-term plan for public infrastructure that extends beyond the expiry of the Building Canada plan for 2014. To meet this commitment, Infrastructure Canada is engaging provinces, territories, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other stakeholders to shape the development of a new long-term infrastructure plan.

The Building Canada fund has helped to build many infrastructure projects throughout the Yukon — as the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin has already outlined, and also the Minister of Community Services. I know that negotiations on a successor program continue across the country between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories. I know that the Association of Yukon Communities is interested in seeing a successor program to Building Canada, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has also presented their thoughts to the Government of Canada.

If the Government of Yukon has made a submission to the Government of Canada on this issue, it would be great to see it. Perhaps the Minister of Community Services can table it today if this does exist. I am pleased to add my voice to this motion and hope that it will move these discussions forward and that a new program will be announced in the next federal budget or sooner.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Motion No. 286. I think it's a wonderful motion. I want to quote a little bit first from comments made by the Hon. Denis Lebel, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, because they play into exactly how this government has developed and worked with our partners on this.

"Safe, modern and efficient public infrastructure is a key to Canada's economic growth and long-term prosperity. Knowing how important infrastructure is to our country as a whole, and to the quality of life of every Canadian, I am proud to be leading the development of a long-term plan for public infrastructure that extends beyond the expiry..." — the keyword "expiry" — "...of the Building Canada plan. A new long-term infrastructure plan will position our nation to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades."

Through Canada's economic action plan and our infrastructure programs, our government has maintained an open dialogue with partners and stakeholders about the best way to support national and local priorities through infrastructure investments. Moving forward we will continue to work closely on infrastructure projects and make a difference for communities large and small. From wind farms that power a region to safe and efficient highways, together we have made Canada a better place in which to live, work and do business.."

I can speak to the fact that this government — in our planning with Building Canada funding, we've done exactly what Minister Lebel had said. We've had an open dialogue with our partners, and the proof, for the lack of a better term, is in the pudding, if you look at the infrastructure upgrades going on in the communities.

We know Building Canada funding is \$8.8 billion and it's under the Building Canada plan. This fund addresses national, regional and local infrastructure priorities, a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and strong and prosperous communities. How the fund works is by making investments in public infrastructure owned by provincial, territorial and municipal governments, and in certain cases, private sector and non-profit organizations.

Cost-sharing was the key to this. All projects funded through the Building Canada fund are cost-shared, with the maximum federal contribution to any project being no more than 50 percent. Generally speaking, municipal projects were cost-shared with a one-third basis and the maximum federal share is limited to one-third, with matching contributions from the provinces and municipalities.

For projects where the asset is owned by a private sector entity, a maximum federal contribution of 25 percent, and the territories, funding is administered through the provincial-territorial base fund.

The two components of the Building Canada fund — the major infrastructure component and the communities component — research, knowledge, planning and feasibility studies were financed under these components. Building Canada fund's major infrastructure component, the MIC, targets larger strategic projects of national and regional significance. Under the MIC at least two-thirds of the funding supports projects and addresses national priorities to improve the lives of Canadians. These include projects related to — which I will speak to in a little bit — drinking water, waste water, public transit, core national highway systems and green energy. Canada's economic action plan announced in 2009 improved the MIC program by simplifying the federal approval process so that more projects could get done quickly and be underway.

I want to speak a little bit to some of the projects that I've seen in my riding. The first thing I wanted to talk about was the Building Canada fund, the municipal rural infrastructure fund and the gas tax fund. By having the Building Canada fund, by our government creating this and by having the municipal rural infrastructure fund, it alleviated a lot of pressure on our gas tax money so we could get more upgrades done in our municipalities and communities.

A good example of that is with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations — the Takhini River arsenic treatment was from the Building Canada fund — that was a \$580,000 fund. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations water truck shop was a Building Canada fund; it was \$375,000. Then you look down the water and sewer and roads and there was a rural municipal infrastructure fund of \$414,000. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Cultural Centre was also a municipal rural infrastructure fund, and that was an \$8-million partnership.

I would have this to say: I think every Yukoner and most Canadians, if they can come up here to see our beautiful riding of Kluane, should go through that cultural centre. It's an incredible centre; it's definitely worth the view.

I spoke to the Building Canada fund and the municipal rural infrastructure fund; now I will speak to the gas tax. Champagne and Aishihik First Nations were able to use some funding through Building Canada and some through the municipal rural infrastructure fund — the MRIF — and then we have the Klukshu Hall water systems upgrades, which was gas tax money, of almost \$15,000. I'm happy to say that the roof at our old Dä Ku building is going to be insulated and that's gas tax money — \$162,000.

We had municipal mayors and city mayors and councils out in the community and we got a chance — the Community Services minister — to get a one-on-one tour of where this money is going through our water treatment plant, our water reservoir pump system and our arsenic treatment. It was really good to take some of the officials through there to see exactly where their money is going and how important it is that, when Environment comes up with a set of standards, we adhere to those standards and we put money into our infrastructure.

Later on in the day, I took a few of the CEOs through the same tour the officials got to go through because some of them are having that infrastructure come to their communities too. It's really important to see that this is going a long way in our communities. We've got things from fire hall improvements to arena ice plant replacement. Our arena ice plant replacement was gas tax money, which we alleviated by having Building Canada funding, that's going to go toward green energy. We're going to use the heat from the ice plant to heat infrastructure around it — the new change rooms that we were approved for. So that plays into the green energy and having our emissions come down.

So another thing I did notice when I looked through this Building Canada fund, and I looked through every community in the Yukon. I'll say it again — every community — because the Yukon Party government, when this fund became available, looked at infrastructure. They didn't look at it as "who wants what". They went out there and looked at all the infrastructure and prioritized everything for the needs of all Yukoners, in all communities. So the money was spent equally in all communities for all Yukoners.

This Yukon Party government I'm proud to be part of believes that that's the direction and this is how we should go with this stuff. So when I got a chance to go through all the different communities, there was a lot of money going to those communities. I'd like to speak a little bit to the fact that the money in those communities created jobs in those communities. It created hotel rooms. The tourism industry is down a little bit. I've heard from all the tourism operators, and a lot of them are down a little bit. This is something that the Canadian government, through Building Canada, increased funding for us in the north, and we got to create more jobs in our communities, have people staying in our hotels, frequenting our bars, utilizing some of our existing infrastructure, whether it's the hockey areas or the pools, and being part of the community.

So this is a great thing that the Canadian government came up with. We are definitely looking forward to the next line coming through.

I would just also like to say that other jurisdictions that are part of Building Canada were quite fast with how they spent their money. This Yukon Party government looked at the money we had and did it as I alluded to earlier — we managed these projects to the point where the funding lasted longer and created more jobs for longer terms. I think that was the right thing to do.

I looked at all the community projects, as I said before, and I was very impressed with what each community got. I didn't realize how much of this money was going to critical infrastructure needs for the communities. On that note, when it comes to the next line of funding that comes from Ottawa, I look forward again to working with my counterparts on addressing the key issues for all Yukoners and working together with our First Nation governments, our municipal governments, our federal government, our local advisory committees that don't have the structure of a mayor and council, for the next phase of funding, so that all Yukoners can benefit. On that note, once again I would like to throw my support toward this motion. On behalf of all the residents of Kluane, I have heard a lot of positive thoughts and thank-yous to this government for taking into consideration the small rural communities — ones that are a long way from Whitehorse. They were happy to see that we didn't spend all the money just in Whitehorse and that we looked at rural Yukon.

Mr. Tredger: I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing forth this motion. The NDP supports this motion and it's important that the federal government receive a strong unified voice from all sides of the Yukon Legislative Assembly that infrastructure funding carries on once the current Building Canada fund expires. The principles outlined for federal infrastructure should be long-term; sustainable; predictable; partner with territories, provinces and municipalities; address municipal concerns; and address the most persistent and critical infrastructure needs.

When speaking and thinking about this, I thought that it's easy to spend money; it's more difficult to spend money effectively.

I was pleased to see and hear from members opposite the emphasis on community involvement. In order to spend wisely and to manage the money effectively, the people closest to where it's being spent need to be involved. It's up to the local communities to set priorities and to work hand in hand with the territorial government and agencies to take advantage of this funding. The examples I have seen in communities in my riding have built on that. I'm pleased to see that and say that their involvement in this fund has strengthened the community and built them to be stronger communities.

I would encourage the government to continue the work begun by communities and government in "Our Towns, Our Future" and to continue that dialogue, one with the other, so that they can work hand in hand to the advantage of their citizens.

I would emphasize wherever possible: Build the local workforce, hire local contractors, hire local labourers and professionals and use this as an opportunity to train people in the labour force, young and old. I was also pleased to see some of the emphasis on green projects. Considering the dilemmas we're facing in terms of climate change, we need to mend our ways. We need to lessen our impact upon the planet. It's important that we use this opportunity and the funds available to do so.

I noticed a number of the green projects identified in 2009 have yet to be completed and I look forward to talking to my communities and having them participate in this so they can help reduce Yukon's carbon emission and so people can get involved and work in order to make Yukon a leader in a green economy. Yukoners are innovative and they do come up with ideas. They are creative and entrepreneurial and they can take that and move forward.

I like the idea that it is long term and sustainable and will contribute to the lasting benefit not only to our labour force, but to our buildings and to our infrastructure. I would suggest that when the government is holding talks with the federal government, they should be encouraged to index the funds so the funds increase with the cost of living increases. If we sign another seven-year accord, by the time this runs out it will be 14 years and costs will have increased significantly to replace a structure.

I speak on behalf of all communities — unincorporated ones as well as the municipalities that are incorporated. They appreciate that fund. They have done some good things with it and they look forward to the next round. I do support this motion. As I said, it's important that the federal government receives a strong, unified voice from all sides of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

Ms. McLeod: My thanks to the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this forward. The matter of the Building Canada fund and all of the municipal sharing funds are of extreme importance to rural Yukon.

Watson Lake has received, in the last go-around, a total of \$7.5 million, which went toward water and sewer pipe replacements and various phases of the installation of a new wet well.

To see that project through to completion is about another \$15 million, which is, of course, difficult to generate from our small tax base, so we are really looking forward to an extension to this Building Canada. The money that we certainly hope is forthcoming will go toward expanding the water reservoir. It's only a quarter of the size that we need for a town our size and, in fact, when we have a fire, the well runs dry. We don't have enough water to manage our town and our fire services. We are not looking at frills like recreation and tourist attractions, like some people; we're looking at, really, the nuts and bolts of getting life done in a community. The use of this fund is extremely important for those necessities. Watson Lake has 40-year-old infrastructure, and the start of the replacement of the water and sewer lines is really an important step toward water conserva-

tion and protection of the environment. Anybody who has 40-year-old water pipes is in need of a redo.

I am thankful for the commitment that has been shown by the government to see this money spent strategically around the territory and, really, on things that the communities need. The repair and maintenance of our water distribution system is of great importance to the people of Watson Lake. It has been identified by the people of Watson Lake as a priority, and I certainly want to see the rest of that money come forward to finish the project.

The town is also looking for money for landfill management. Our mayor has advised that we're in need of \$3 million to \$5 million to satisfactorily manage our solid waste.

I look forward to moving this motion forward and seeing some pressure applied to the federal government to see that the fund is extended, under whatever form, and that's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

Hon. Mr. Nixon: I thank the Member for Pelly-Nisutlin for bringing this motion forward.

I rise to speak in support of this motion. I'd like to talk about what has been accomplished through the Building Canada fund. My intention here is to demonstrate that this program has merit and deserves to continue.

With respect to Building Canada, I understand that there have been some challenges facing the federal, territorial and local municipal governments. Several organizations and agencies have spoken to Canada's infrastructure deficit. Looking at news stories on the Internet, I've seen numbers between \$120 billion to over \$400 billion.

In my reading on the Parliament of Canada's website, in the information series area of government spending, debt and taxation, I came across an article by Jean Dupuis and Dean Ruffilli on the Government of Canada investments in public infrastructure.

They wrote: "Although a growing infrastructure 'gap' or deficit is widely recognized, there is little agreement as to whether any progress is being made to address the problem. For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has spoken of a \$123 billion municipal infrastructure deficit that persists in spite of nearly two decades of federal infrastructure investment."

I also want to note the Parliament of Canada's InfoSeries publication by John Christopher, entitled "The Arctic: Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication". This article flags several items of interest to this discussion.

He writes that the matter of Arctic sovereignty has "drawn attention to the lack of adequate transportation in the region and the associated infrastructure that would be needed to support improvements." In the section on infrastructure development within the Arctic, he points out: "For communities to take advantage of the expansion of resource industries, increased tourism and services for increased marine activities, Arctic communities will require marine infrastructure. This will be a critical step toward reducing costs and improving services to these communities." He observes that, "The federal govern-

ment is looking at the transportation infrastructure needs of the Arctic region."

He also looked at the benefits of improved communications, especially in the area of telemedicine, education and business and personal use. What I took away from that article is that there are many areas in which we could invest our infrastructure dollars. I think we need to be focused and strategic in our efforts. In looking at the costs involved, I also think we need to work in partnership with Canada. I do not see how a municipality or a territory could take on these projects without working in partnership.

Everyone agrees that public infrastructure is key to our economic competitiveness, but we are also seeing that some of our infrastructure is in need of upgrading. In response, the Government of Canada funded a series of cost-sharing programs. In the case of the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, the cost of major new projects was split 50/50 between Canada and Yukon. For the municipal rural infrastructure fund, the cost sharing was one-third to Canada, one-third to Yukon and one-third to the local municipality. These funds were set up to address different needs in our communities, but the focus was on road improvements, public transit, water and waste-water projects.

I'd like to mention the gas tax fund, which provides stable funding directly to municipalities to support improvements to local infrastructure. I read through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities website. While parts of it are not as relevant to Yukon as they are to larger centres, I did want to reference some of their comments around why Canada needs infrastructure.

"Canada needs fast, efficient transportation networks that connect suppliers to customers, workers to jobs, and importers/exporters to global markets." The FCM has noted that Canada has "...gaps in national transportation networks." Of interest to me was their observation that "...many rural, remote, and northern communities lack the bridges, highways and airports to stay reliably connected to urban markets and to sustain local economies and the quality of life." They also noted that municipalities did not have the tax base to respond to these growing challenges.

In response to the concerns brought forward in the budget 2011 and the economic action plan 2012, the Government of Canada has committed to working with partners and stakeholders to develop a long-term plan for public infrastructure that extends beyond the expiry of the Building Canada plan in 2014.

I want to acknowledge that the Government of Canada is stepping up to the plate. With respect to the gas tax fund alone, the total gas tax funds across the nation amounted to \$5 billion over five years from 2005 to 2010 and then continued at \$2 billion per year through to 2014. Yukon's share is .75 percent, currently \$37.5 million per year. I don't think there's a need to go through a detailed list of how the funds were allocated, but \$35.5 million a year can go a long way.

These infrastructure funds have resulted in many improvements for Yukon communities. As the Minister of Tourism and Culture, I'm deeply appreciative of these funds, as they

have resulted in substantial upgrades to the waterfronts in both Carcross and Whitehorse. The Whitehorse waterfront projects were funded through the CSIF for millions of dollars and I'm advised that the project is near completion.

I'd also like to mention the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre, through CSIF for \$14.8 million, which is now complete — and indeed it was a highlight for me to attend the grand opening of that centre earlier this year. Not all of the projects that we work on — not all of the priorities that we fund — result in a Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. Some of the projects are very important but largely unnoticed.

I want to turn my thoughts to the \$8.8 billion Building Canada fund. This fund addresses national, regional and local infrastructure priorities and supports projects designed to deliver results in three areas of national importance: a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and strong and prosperous communities.

In the territories, funding is administered through the provincial-territorial base fund. The Building Canada fund is made up of two components: the major infrastructure component and the communities component. The major infrastructure component of the Building Canada fund targets larger, strategic projects of national and regional significance. Under MIC, at least two-thirds of the funding supports projects that address national priorities and improve the lives of Canadians. These include projects related to drinking water, waste water, public transit, the core national highway system and green energy. The communities component of the Building Canada fund targets projects in communities with populations of less than 100,000. The fund recognizes the unique infrastructure needs of Canada's smaller communities and focuses on projects that meet environmental, economic and quality-of-life objectives. The program has funded more than 1,400 smaller scale projects that improve water, waste water, public transit, local roads and other types of community infrastructure.

We are also committed to improving Yukon's sewer and water systems. I want to mention a few projects that I think are also very important. These funds are being used to upgrade the Marwell water and sewer system with the Building Canada fund of \$6.5 million, which is to be completed this fall. Also in Marwell is a lift upgrade funded through the gas tax for \$355,850. I am given to understand that this project has been completed.

Let me mention some of the other water-, sewer- or waste-related investments funded through the gas tax fund. This is addressed in the area of a cleaner environment. I won't mention them all, but just to give members an example: water sampling stations, pumphouse and recirculation stations for \$160,000; Selkirk water pumphouse replacement for \$7.4 million; Selkirk well development for just under \$3.5 million; lift station upgrades of just under \$800,000; the Livingstone Trail sewage outfall pipe for just over \$5.7 million; and compost program improvements of \$2.7 million.

I'll also mention some of the road-related investments. We have the intersection upgrade at the Alaska Highway and Two Mile Hill, Building Canada fund, of \$750,000, which is now complete. There's a Building Canada fund investment of \$1.9

million for phase 1 of the asphalt overlay project. My colleagues were very pleased that the Hamilton Boulevard extension was built using an MRIF investment of \$10 million. This extension has eased the traffic substantially on the Alaska Highway and Two Mile Hill intersection.

I'd also like to take a moment to note the transit bus replacement project, which was funded through gas tax, for \$900,000. This speaks to the section of this motion on a cleaner environment, as well. For those of us who like to ride our bikes or go jogging, these funds have resulted in investments in asphalt paths and trail connections around the city for a combined total of \$322,000. I know from speaking to many of my constituents in Porter Creek South that people are pleased to see some of the work being done on the trails near Porter Creek as recently as this past summer and fall.

My point here was to showcase what it is these funds deliver, and I'd like to start my conclusion of my comments today by noting the famous line from the movie *Field of Dreams*: "If you build it, they will come."

Several times in the last year I've found myself thinking about that line. Many Yukoners approach us, and many of my constituents in Porter Creek South approach me with great ideas that really would benefit Yukon. Perhaps they are advocating for new public works projects; sometimes they are sharing their vision for a private development to address a need. I find myself thinking that, yes, if you build it, they will come.

In the November-December 2012 edition of *Beyond Numbers*, which is the magazine put out by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia, I read that very line. The author mentioned that in British Columbia municipalities undertake their own projects, building playing fields, community parks, recreation and convention centres and more, all in the hopes of attracting residents and visitors to their new facilities.

The reality is, however, that if we build it, costs will also come. Having said that, I'm hopeful that any new infrastructure program will include recognition of ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

As I look at this motion, I agree that we need to urge the Government of Canada to implement a successor program that is funded on a cost-sharing basis — national, regional and local priorities and support projects designed to deliver results in three areas of national importance, namely a stronger economy, a cleaner environment and strong, prosperous communities.

As we speak to this very motion, I cannot help but think of my constituents in Porter Creek South who are undertaking their own building projects. I know of two homes that are getting significant modifications to add second levels on to them. Just this morning on my way into the office, I noticed that one house is being strapped and reinsulated, and there are a couple of duplexes and single-family homes also being constructed.

So as Building Canada provides opportunities to better our community with new infrastructure, a few of my constituents in Porter Creek South are also bettering our community with their own home improvements. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

I support this motion and I look forward to the support of my colleagues of all political stripes in the Legislature here today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hassard: It's certainly nice to stand here after listening to all the people who spoke here today. It was nice that everyone sounded positive and it appears that everyone is speaking on behalf of this motion. I look forward to seeing this motion go to vote, and hopefully it's a unanimous decision. 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, 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. Stick: Agree.

Ms. Moorcroft: Agree.

Ms. White: Agree.

Mr. Tredger: Agree.

Mr. Barr: Agree.

Mr. Silver: Agree.

Mr. Elias: Agree.

Clerk: Mr. Speaker, the results are 17 yeas, nil nays.

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

Motion No. 286 agreed to

GOVERNMENT BILLS

Bill No. 48: Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act — Second Reading

Clerk: Second reading, Bill No. 48, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Istchenko.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: I move that Bill No. 48, entitled *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now read a second time.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Hon. Minister of Highways and Public Works that Bill No. 48, entitled *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, be now read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Istchenko: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to the proposed amendments to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The purpose of these amendments is to ensure that the confidentiality required for effective government decision-making is properly balanced with the public's right to access information. Under the existing legislation, ATIPP does not provide the support policy advisors require to deliver full and frank information to decision-makers.

Although existing ATIPP legislation appears to recognize Cabinet confidences and offers exemption for advice, recommendations, policy considerations, draft legislation and regulations, a lack of clarity does persist that makes the legislation appear to say one thing and do another. When the Cabinet confidences are not upheld and incomplete drafts and preliminary briefings are thrown into the public sphere, political crowing and scaremongering often ensues. Decision-makers are not given the opportunity to complete their work. Assumptions about direction or outcome often form before a decision is complete, making the work of public officials all the more time-consuming and costly, a burden that ultimately the taxpayers bear.

Furthermore, the spreading of inaccuracies and misinformation leads to confusion, both internal to government and within the public sphere.

This can lead to a perceived lack of clarity on the direction of particular issues still in the early stages of development. It is imperative ATIPP be allowed to operate as it was originally intended — allowing the public-wide access to government information and records, with only limited exclusions to information that may compromise personal privacy or prevent the development of sound public policy.

These amendments reinforce and clarify the concept of Cabinet confidences by striking a balance between the ability for the advisors to provide advice in a full and frank manner and being open and accountable to Yukoners. This provision helps to ensure ministers receive all the forthright advice they require to make good decisions on behalf of all Yukoners, which is the job they were elected to do — to represent the interests of the public and to develop and maintain good public policy.

These amendments are consistent with the legislation in most other Canadian jurisdictions. Both Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta have recently introduced amendments similar to ours.

Almost all other Canadian jurisdictions already have aspects of these provisions in their legislation, including Northwest Territories, Nunavut, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. By better defining the parameters of the act with this amendment, Cabinet confidences will be upheld and policy advisors will be able to provide the frank, non-partisan advice and recommendations needed for effective governance.

Again, this is not a heavy-handed attempt to restrict the flow of public information. Rather, its purpose is to strike an important balance to protect information that needs to be protected in order to uphold the values of our Westminster model

of government, while also ensuring a government that upholds the values of openness and accountability.

We believe that this amendment will provide communications between advisors and decision-makers by ensuring accessibility to all the relevant material that is required to make informed decisions.

The purpose of these amendments is to strike an important balance between maintaining the integrity of Cabinet confidences and the public's right to obtain documents.

Let me start by stating that this government has a strong record of responding quickly and completely to the access to information request. I am pleased to say that Highways and Public Works — my department — was specifically mentioned several times in Newspapers Canada's recent National Freedom of Information Audit, when the Yukon government was listed among the fastest responders of all Canadian jurisdictions and, in some cases, proactively publishing requests for information without restriction.

The amendments we bring forward today simply bring this act in line with its original intention. As we have worked with the legislation, it has become clear to this government that documents are disclosed through ATIPP that were never intended to be disclosed because of uncertainty in the way the legislation was written. These amendments bring clarity to particular wording in the section of the act where this uncertainty has been seen time and time again.

In its current state this act does not effectively recognize the essential need to balance the public's right to information with reasonable restrictions in the interest of good governance.

It is not uncommon for pieces of legislation to be amended from time to time. This is one such case. Changes to this act are required as a means of ensuring that Cabinet confidences can be respected as part of our Westminster model of governance. A key principle of the Westminster model is "collective responsibility". Cabinet confidentiality flows from this responsibility. Decision-makers and their advisors require the ability to have full and frank discussions in an environment where preliminary information will not be disclosed. Once a decision has been made, it is at this point that all ministers are responsible for supporting a decision. It is at this point that all ministers are held accountable for Cabinet decisions. I would like to point out that in its 2002 *Babcock* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that an important reason for protecting federal Cabinet documents was to avoid the creation of ill-informed public or political criticism — and I quote: "The process of democratic governance works best when Cabinet members charged with government policies and decision-making are free to express themselves around the Cabinet table unreservedly."

Advisors need to be able to offer decision-makers advice without being concerned that preliminary advice may be taken out of context. These amendments make it clear that matters will not be dropped into the public sphere for open discussion before they have been appropriately considered by Cabinet.

By upholding this integral part of our democratic process, the public can be sure decision-makers are receiving all the information they require to do the job they have been charged

with doing, which is to represent the best interests of the public they have been elected to work for.

Again, these amendments bring the right balance between the ability for advisors to provide advice in a full and frank manner and to be open and accountable to Yukoners. This amendment brings Yukon in line with numerous other Canadian jurisdictions that have similar provisions to ensure the integrity of their overall governance.

Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner has an important role to provide oversight and supervision in the government's implementation of this act. This independent and apolitical office represents the public and helps the Yukon's public bodies live up to the high standards we all expect. Central to the Yukon's Information and Privacy Commissioner's role is maintaining the important balance between access and restriction to help protect the important principles enshrined in the act and in these amendments. The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent position, and we intend to work very closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner to ensure that our act continues to meet its original intent.

Government of Yukon is committed to accountable government. As we move these amendments forward, the office of the IPC will continue to be tasked with the important role of reviewing requests that have not been fulfilled, thereby ensuring that the law is applied as it is intended. Furthermore, these amendments ensure that Yukon's ATIPP act can work effectively and they are consistent with the development of other legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions.

We are confident that the changes we are proposing will provide much-needed clarity on the type of information that Yukon government will not disclose in order to ensure Cabinet confidences are upheld.

As I referenced earlier, the purpose of amending ATIPP is to ensure Cabinet confidences are upheld in order that fair and effective governance can proceed. Over time, the existing ATIPP legislation has proven that clarification is required for the act to work as it was originally intended to balance and integrity of Cabinet confidences and the public's right to public documents. These amendments bring Yukon in line with most other Canadian jurisdictions where similar provisions have been introduced to uphold the Westminster model Yukoners respect and value to guide our democratic decision-making process.

As I have stated previously, this government is committed to accountable administration. As such, we are confident that the important role of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will continue to safeguard the law and make sure it is applied appropriately.

These amendments permit the democratic process to work as it was originally intended by bringing clarity to the forefront of Yukon's ATIPP act and to ensure that decision-makers receive frank and honest advice from advisors.

I would like to conclude by restating that this government will remain committed to the ATIPP and its goals. The purpose of these amendments is simply to allow the process of our democratic government to work as it was originally intended.

Ms. Stick: I'm not sure how to word this, but I'm wondering if I could ask for a 15-minute recess.

Unanimous consent re recess

Speaker: You would need unanimous consent. The Member for Riverdale South has requested unanimous consent for a 15-minute recess. Are you agreed?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is unanimous consent. We'll take a 15-minute recess.

Recess

Ms. Stick: I rise to speak to Bill No. 48, which is the *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Before I start speaking to that, I'm going to comment on the surprise of this bill coming forward this afternoon.

There has not been a government briefing on this bill, which we have been asking for on this side of the House, so that we would have more information on it. That has not been forthcoming, and it was a surprise at the end of the motion debate today to hear that we were moving to this bill that is so important to all Yukoners and to people in this House.

I would point out to the government that there is still a bill that we have not come to second reading on, which is Bill No. 47, *Act to Amend the Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act*. That we probably could have moved to second reading on, since we have all had the briefings on that and would have been prepared to speak to it today.

So — open and accountable? I'm not so sure and that concerns me, but I'll move on. Moving on, I rise today to voice my and my colleagues' objections to Bill No. 48, *Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In fact, I think the act should be withdrawn and go out to full consultation with the public before anything else is done. This act was introduced to the House with no forewarning and no consultation. Nothing has gone out to the public and it affects everyone in this territory. For these amendments to be made — and it has been suggested that they're not that big; they're more administrative amendments — is ludicrous.

I would go and look, which I did first thing, to see what the Information and Privacy Commissioner's comments might be on this act. The very first thing that this individual says with regard to these amendments: "I consider this a substantial amendment to the ATIPP Act that would have been better done through a review of the ATIPP Act where all the provisions of the Act could be considered and read together and where consequences of the amendment could be better considered." This is from the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

This is his job. It is important that he looks at legislation coming before this House to make sure that these things meet the requirements of this act. For his first statement to be that, to me, spells out the rest. There has been no consultation; this has not been an open and accountable government.

The minister assured us that the Information and Privacy Commissioner had been consulted, and it's true, but if you look further down through these comments that were tabled in this House, he has comments on every single amendment and they

are not glowing recommendations. There are a lot of concerns that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has brought forward.

I think that needs to be taken into account. This is his job — to look at what has been proposed and to make his comments, his suggestions and his recommendations.

This act has never been reviewed. This act was passed in 1996, and the very first commissioner in 2000 made the recommendation that this act should come for review — the whole act — to see, after four years, how it was working. Were there tweaks that needed to be done? Was there major work that needed to be done? It was not reviewed.

In 2008, amendments came forward to this Legislature to include and broaden the scope of this act to include Yukon College, Yukon Energy Corporation, the Yukon Hospital Corporation and all Crown corporations. At that time, a different Information and Privacy Commissioner picked up on the request made in 2000 by the first Information and Privacy Commissioner and asked again, in 2009, that this act come forward for complete consultation and review.

1996 — before Twitter and Facebook and iPads — things have changed since that time. Electronics have changed. Access to information has changed, and this act should be keeping up with those concerns that many people have.

But, again, it didn't happen. The amendments did go through. It did broaden who came under this. It gave access to the public to more information, which is a good thing. Information is not meant to be hidden away.

The purposes of this act are to make public bodies more accountable to the public and to protect public privacy by: (a) giving the public a right of access to records; and (b) by giving individuals a right of access and a right to request correction of personal information about themselves. This act specifies limited exceptions to the rights of access. It prevents unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by public bodies and provides an independent review of decisions made under this act.

This act applies to all records in the custody or under the control of a public body — open and accountable — not closed off, not hidden away and not inaccessible. There are reasons why people, legislators and the public want access. They want to know how government makes decisions, based on — what? Are they based on reports, on strategies, on briefings, on assessments or on all of these?

These are things government uses to make the best decisions for the public — for all Yukoners. These are substantial. These are substantial amendments, and they need to be scrutinized. This needs to go out for the public so they can comment on it before this door gets slammed shut on it.

The commissioner was very clear. This needs to go out to public consultation. At this time, I would like to propose an amendment.

Amendment proposed

Ms. Stick: I move

THAT the motion for second reading of Bill No. 48 be amended by adding the words “and it be referred to a select committee of the Assembly”; and

THAT the membership and mandate of the select committee be established by a separate motion of the Assembly following consultation among the House leaders.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Member for Riverdale South:

THAT the motion for second reading of Bill No. 48 be amended by adding the words “and it be referred to a select committee of the Assembly”; and

THAT the membership and mandate of the select committee be established by a separate motion of the Assembly following consultation among the House leaders.

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

Debate on the amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill No. 48, and on the motion for second reading of Bill No. 48, accordingly adjourned

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

The following document was filed November 28, 2012:

33-1-33

Yukon *Oil and Gas Act* (YOGA), letter re (dated October 23, 2009) from Hon. Archie Lang, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, to Chief Liard McMillan, Liard First Nation (Cathers)